

THE EVANGELIST VOLUME 6 1872

by H.H. Snell

A collection of articles and writings by H.H. Snell from The Evangelist Volume 6 1872, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

82 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. The Evangelist Volume 6 1872
1. Too Late
2. Have You Repented?
3. How a Priest Found Peace with God
4. "As it was in the Days of Lot."
5. A Purged Conscience, and a Rent Veil
6. 2 Chronicles
7. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
8. Ezra
9. "Bring a Bible and Read to Me."
10. My Conversion
11. Notes of an Address
12. (Continued from page 20.)
13. An Extract from a Letter
14. Jesus Seeking and Saving the Lost
15. "Oh, Sir, I am so Miserable!"
16. Psalms 139; 32:7
17. "When Shall I Get Enough?"
18. "The Greatest Pleasure I Have."
19. Nehemiah
20. The Need of My Conversion
21. The Praying Wife
22. The Pilgrim
23. Extract From A Letter
24. Paul's Voyage
25. Esther
26. "Behold, Now is the Accepted Time."
27. To One who had Written a Tract Denying Everlasting Punishment
28. Job
29. "Loved," "Washed," "Made."
30. Made or Born?
31. Acceptance
32. A Warning
33. Thoughts on Revelation
34. The Psalms
35. Christ! Who but Christ!
36. Two Million and a Quarter of Dollars Cannot Purchase Peace
37. [An Extract of a Letter.]
38. Trusting in Jesus

39. "An Holy Priesthood."
40. Proverbs
41. Ecclesiastes
42. The Song of Songs
43. Liberty of Conscience
44. Where the Heart Should Be
45. A Babblers
46. The Way to the City
47. Infidelity Never Gives Peace
48. Hartley Colliery
49. The Two Cups
50. The Widow's Dream
51. An Extract
52. Christ Inside the Veil, Outside the Camp
53. The Prophets
54. Isaiah. — No. 1
55. "Peace in Believing."
56. The Three "Nots."
57. Revelation 1:7
58. The Jew
59. Extract From Correspondence
60. A Word for the Conscience
61. Praise
62. No. 2
63. "Why am I so Sad?"
64. Feelings
65. The Watchman's Cry
66. The Bed Ridden Paralytic
67. Life and Righteousness
68. Who but Christ!
69. No. 3
70. "Come."
71. "The Works of the Flesh."
72. Luke 14:15-24
73. "Now No Condemnation."
74. Jeremiah
75. Lamentations
76. "Who Loved Me, and Gave Himself for Me."
77. "We Shall Not All Sleep."
78. Happiness
79. Sanctification
80. A Solemn Warning

81. Be Not Weary

The Evangelist Volume 6 1872

Too Late

THE stream of time rolls on. Eternity is nearer than it was. Another year has passed, it is gone forever, and can never be recalled. God has been speaking, working, saving souls. Some have received His word of grace; many have not. Some, during the past year, have been looking for the Lord from heaven, have been happily waiting to see His face; but He has not come. Still they look for the Saviour, they wait for God's Son from heaven. Another year has come, and we know not what a day may bring forth: one thing is certain, that in "a little while, He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," and we know it pleases Him that we should watch, and wait for Him with girded loins, and with trimmed lamps.

The clear, distinct, and thrilling warning testimony has gone forth— "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,"— but who heeds it? Where are souls saying, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth"? Where are hearts earnestly responding to the divine command to go out to meet Him? When are those who so feel the attractiveness of Jesus the Lord, who died for the ungodly, as to turn out of the long-trodden, well-beaten broad road, and go forth to meet Him at His coming? Thank God there are some, and our heart's desire and prayer to God is that many who read these pages may ere long turn to God from self and folly, to serve the living and true God, and wait for His Son from heaven.

Observe, it is not death we have here, but the Bride groom; for all those who go to the marriage depart at the same moment. (See Matthew 25:10.) Nor is it the day of judgment which is here referred to, for not one person is judged. Nor is it the scene of what people call a general resurrection, for none are acted on but those who are saved: the door is shut, and the unsaved are simply left for judgment. All the ready are shut in with Jesus the Bridegroom, all not ready are shut out forever from His presence. What an amazing difference! What a separation! How very solemn! Those who are shut out will call, and knock, and pray, but it is too late. The door cannot be opened. Professors they may have been, well-known boasters of Bible-knowledge, very assiduous in being useful, but alas! alas! they never knew the Lord Jesus— "They took no oil with their lamps." They had no Saviour. Hence, He from within will answer, "I know you not;" for "He knoweth them that trust in Him." The sufferings and death of the Son of God had been nothing to them—His wounds, and groans, and smiting's, and bruising's, and blood-shedding upon the tree, were little more to them than old historical facts. They had never loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and they must be accursed when the Lord cometh. They are in great distress, but it is too late. They knock with bitterest anguish, but they cannot enter now. They call and scream, and are only forever silenced by the thrilling words of the Bridegroom from within, "I know you not." The door had long, long stood wide open. The loving entreaty from within had long been, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." The messengers of the God of all grace, had long published the sweet story of the love of God in saving sinners by the death of His Son. Free, present, and everlasting salvation had been long given to everyone that believeth. But they slighted this love, refused the gift, despised the redemption-work of Jesus; and, aided by the great deceiver, preferred to go religiously and respectably to hell, rather than bow to the Saviour of sinners, come into personal contact with Him,

accept eternal life as a gift, and the present forgiveness of sins as an act of pure mercy on God's part by the precious blood of His beloved Son. And now, alas! alas! it is too late.

Late! Late! Too late!

Ye cannot enter in.

The door is shut, in vain ye wait,

The Bridegroom's gone within.

The hour of mercy now is o'er;

Judgment hath closed the open door;

Judgment from Him whose grace before

Ye spurned from love of sin.

Late! Late! Too late!

Ye cannot enter now—

The music wakes within the gates,

The garlands crown the brow

The heavenly strains that reach your ear,

Their very sweetness makes most drear;

Filling your hearts with boding fear,

Ye cannot enter now.

Late! Late! Too late!

Why came ye not before?

Did He not long with patience wait,

And open keep the door?

Did He not many a message send;

Did He not woo you as a friend?

Why did ye not His voice attend?

The day of grace is o'er!

Late! Late! Too late!

Ye cannot enter now.

Barred, and forever is the gate—

Mercy averts her brow.

The voice that called you to repent

Hath sworn, and He will not relent;

Your day of mercy all is spent,

Ye cannot enter now.

Have You Repented?

“GOD now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31.) Friend, have you repented? Have you ever yet truly bowed to the Name of Jesus? Not yet? Then don’t delay. God’s APPOINTED DAY draws near—how near you know not. Suppose IT dawned today. What a terrible state you would be in. Unrepentant, unforgiven, unprepared, uncleansed, Christless, LOST! Oh, dear soul, do not “mock” or say, like some in Athens, “We will hear thee again of this matter.” (Acts 17:32.) The mockers and the halters of that day were alike left to their own vanity and unbelief; for Paul departed from among them” (Acts 17:33) and you, if you halt, or hesitate to receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, can count on nothing but this coming judgment; for He said, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24), and Scripture adds, “after this the judgment,” saying, “and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; 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.” (Hebrews 9:27-28.)

Your portion is “death” and “judgment.” “It is appointed unto men.” Do you fear these two terrible consequences of sin? I have good news, “a message from God unto thee”— a message of grace: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” “Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” (1 Peter 3:18.) God thus opens a door of escape for thee, dear soul, whoever thou art. None are too vile or too far off for Christ’s precious blood to meet. It cleanseth from all sin. He is alive. “He is risen.” (Matthew 23:6.) “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3), and “was raised for our justification.” (Romans 4:25.) His resurrection is the clear proof of the value of His blood, which was shed in atonement for sins. “Raised up from the dead” (Romans 6:4), “alive,” “glorified,” He sits at God’s right hand, the exalted Christ and Lord. All things are His. All must soon own Him—every knee bow to, and every tongue confess Him. Do not wait for dire and awful, yea eternal judgment, to force from your lips a confession of His worth. Bow to Him now. Believe Him now, and the “salvation of God” (Acts 28:28) is yours. To delay even for a day is folly, and may cause your eternal ruin. Procrastinations is the thief of souls, as well as of time. Besides, the Lord may return. “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” (Matt. 25:6.) Do you say, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3:4.) I reply, in God’s everlasting Word, which further adds, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night!” (2 Peter 3:10.) Can you meet Him? Dare you, then, face Him as you now are, in your sins? No, sinner! no, thou canst not. Turn, then, to Jesus, now. Yes, this very day. “Now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2.) “Hear, and your soul shall live.” (Isaiah 55:3.) The Lord Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I said unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” (John 5:24, 25.) “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31), and, for eternity, and you will remember with joy this

“MESSAGE FROM GOD UNTO THEE.”

W.

ON the cross Christ made a just atonement for sin, glorified God, and obtained glory for us.

How a Priest Found Peace with God

WE have lately read the following interesting account of how an anxious soul found peace with God. The writer says: —

As I sat in the front part of a room, a young Roman priest slowly paced to and fro at the other end of it. He was nobly born—son of one of high rank in the army. From a pious mother he had received deep convictions about his soul. “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” followed him through all his studies and travels. Tormented by this, he at length entered the church, not to satisfy ambition, but if possible to find peace of soul. His lank form, his long face, pale and thin—his entire being—indicated suffering; and, without knowing why, I felt myself drawn to him. I remembered, as it were but yesterday, the agony of my own heart before knowing eternal redemption; and thinking that perhaps he suffered from the same cause, I at once asked him: “Have you peace with God, my dear friend?”

“Peace with God,” said he. “What do you mean by peace with God?”

“It is the effect,” said I to him, “of the forgiveness of sins. It is like the consciousness that would exist in the agonized spirit of an unfortunate criminal condemned to be guillotined, to whom a messenger comes suddenly, bringing this dispatch from the Emperor: ‘All your crimes are forgiven you; go forth in peace!’”

“Then,” replied he, “I have not peace with God, for I have never yet received such a message from God. For nearly three years I have been imprisoned between four walls, exercising the greatest severities against myself. I have fasted, prayed, ill-treated my body, until I am reduced to what you see, but I have not yet received this message from God.”

“You are a sincere man,” I said to him; “you are not one of those religionists who affect a heavenly air, and within have nothing but lust and wickedness.”

“How should I not be sincere, sir, when I know, that it is with God Himself I have to do. Appearance, you know, is only for this world. Reality is for eternity. A thousand times a fool is he who sees no further than this world. For my part it is eternity that occupies me.”

“Blessed be God! Blessed be God, my dear friend! He has shown you the curse of the law of God against every breach of that law; according to Galatians 3:10, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;’ and as you are not a hypocrite, but knowing well that you are violating this law constantly, even in spite of yourself, you at once apply the curse to yourself, well knowing in your conscience that you merit it.”

“That is it exactly! You have just laid bare my heart; that is my state precisely. I see the just wrath of God against me, and I much desire to be able to appease or escape it.” I took out my Bible, and pointing to Galatians 3:13 he read, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Suddenly his languid eyes lit up. The message of peace had come to him through the WORD.

“Do you understand now,” said I, “why Jesus upon the cross must needs cry out, ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’”

“It is clear, quite clear,” replied he. “If Christ has been made a curse for me, in order to redeem me from the curse of the law, it follows that He Himself sustained that curse. He thus becomes a substitute for me.”

“Exactly! a substitute. You cannot find a better word. ‘He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.’ (2 Corinthians 5:21.) ‘For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.’” (1 Peter 3:18.)

The heart of the young priest was evidently quite overcome. A pardon so sudden, a salvation so sure and so free, almost frightened him; he could scarcely believe himself in his proper senses. He appeared afraid to wake himself up, lest he should find his anguish had been calmed only by a cruel dream—cruel because of its very sweetness.

It was not a dream. It was the truth which had set him at liberty, according to John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” After this he gave himself much to the Scriptures, his peace became more settled, and his expression of suffering gave place to one of profound rest.

Dear reader! Have you this precious peace with God? Do you know what it is as a guilty, lost sinner, to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son?

Nothing else is real. All other peace is false. You must have to do with God. You are accountable to Him. His word must decide. Jesus, the Son of God, is the judge. What did He say? “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment (condemnation); but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24.) Would you not be happy if you were quite sure that you had eternal life? Well, hearken then to Jesus, receive Him as your Saviour, and you have everlasting life!

“As it was in the Days of Lot.”

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”— Luke 17:28-30.

“How can this be?” some of my readers may ask. “We thought Christianity would spread, until all the world would be converted. Does not the Scripture say, ‘The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea’? (Isaiah 11.) How, then, can this world become as wicked as Sodom; and that wickedness go on, until the very day that Christ is revealed from heaven?” The answer is very simple. The Scripture nowhere teaches, that the time of the earth’s blessing will take place before Christ comes, but after. There can be no doubt, but that it will be exactly as Christ says. As it was in the days of Lot; yes, until the very day that Christ is revealed from heaven. Yes, my reader may live to see that day. If not a believer, but a rejecter of Christ, you may be taken with as great surprise, as when they had just taken their shutters down in Sodom, to commence another day’s business, and another day’s sins.

But let us see how it was in the days of Lot. There are some most solemn lessons, connected with this subject. There was Abraham, the man of God, outside Sodom, in unhindered communion with God. There was Lot, in Sodom; and, consequently, out of communion with God; though saved so as by fire. And there was the doomed city of wickedness.

There was but one Abraham on the face of the earth. And how few, at any one time, have really walked with God. Of the first two men born of a woman, one set aside God’s sentence on the earth; and tried to bring the best he could grow, an offering to the Lord; and was rejected. The other Abel, owned the sentence of death, and approached God through the blood of a victim. Enoch also walked with God; but there was only one Enoch in his day. So of Noah; but there was only one Noah, out of the whole world. And in the new world, so soon filled with idolatry, there was only one Abraham. And again, only one Isaac. And only one Jacob. And only one Joseph. And then, not one man of faith is named for some hundreds of years. And then a little child is found hid by faith in an ark of bulrushes. But, on the face of all the earth, there was only one Moses. Aaron even worshipped a calf. And then a Joshua—a Samuel—a David. And what is the history of the Prophets but that of a very few men at any time, on the face of the whole earth, fully walking with God?

How often they had to walk alone; even the nation of Israel, utterly departing in heart from God.

And when Jesus came to His own, did they walk in His light? Alas! they rejected and killed Him. Aye, and after the resurrection, there was but one Paul. And since his day, how few have walked with God, in the power of the heavenly calling! Alas! how earthly, and worldly, the great house of Christendom has become. Sad contrast to the heavenly, exalted, Church of God.

And will it be so up to the very coming of Christ? There can be no mistake about it. He, who cannot lie, says it will be as it was in the days of Lot. Oh, far, far worse than it is now!

The Lord then appeared to Abraham, as he sat, pilgrim like, in the tent door, on the plains of Mamre. — Genesis 18. There was unhindered communion at once. Not so with Lot; the Lord would not even go into the city, where he was; but sent his messengers to pull him out. First the eye lusted after Sodom; then the tent pitched towards Sodom; then in Sodom itself. Where are you, my fellow-Christian? The eye on the world; the tent towards it; or are you in it? Sad place for a child of God! The Devil is the god of it. Destruction is its end. When a man has got his utmost wish of this world, what can it afford? Ask that gray-haired old man; what does the world afford you, prosperous, rich old man? I hear you have got a good bit of property in Sodom. Does it satisfy? He shakes his head. "What does it afford?" He says, "An empty, aching heart; that is all." What are all the riches and honors of Sodom to be compared with one hour's real, communion with God? Oh, for more real separation to Him; to feed on Christ with Him; to talk with God.

Not so, Lot. All confusion and vexation. He tries to reform Sodom! and loses all power, even over his own family. Child of God, is it not so? true picture of every worldly Christian! How can we say, Lead us not into temptation; and then settle down in Sodom? But God is rich in mercy. "Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and daughters?" Oh, precious grace; it is just what God is doing at this very time. The terrible day of the Lord is very near; but God still waits in mercy, and is awakening whole families. It is as though the Lord said, I would not have those, so dear to you, to perish; go and wake them; tell them of my mercy; and tell them of my coming judgment. Oh, my reader, if saved yourself, have you no sons, or sons-in-law, or daughters? Are there none you love, for whom you would pray; and to whom you would speak the warning word?

But Lot seemed, to his own children, as one that mocked. Oh, sad effect of Sodom. My reader, your children watch you; they may see you clinging and grasping at Sodom's property. You may get your heart's desire in this world; and when you warn your children, you may seem as one that mocks. Ah, you may see them left to perish. Still poor Lot lingers. His property is there; and "the men laid hold upon his hand," the Lord being merciful to him. Thus was he, his wife, and two daughters brought out. Not a word about sons, and sons-in-law. Even his poor wife looked back and perished.

The sun was risen. The city was astir. Lot was out. Oh, what a cry of wailing and bitterness, as the first drops of liquid fire fell. It was too late.

And is this the doom that awaits this deceived world? Yes: it shall come as a thief in the night. Roll on, poor world; thou hast rejected Christ; thou hast preferred a murderer for thy God. The Devil that deceiveth thee shall be cast into the lake of fire with thee. Oh, my reader, is this thy doom? art thou still a rejecter of Christ? Do ponder the end. Today there is mercy; pardon through the precious blood of Christ. God only knows tomorrow. Oh, may God speak to thee now, being merciful to thee. Remember, it is Christ who says, "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

C. S.

A Purged Conscience, and a Rent Veil

“The worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.... Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God.”—Hebrews. 10:2, 19-21.

OUR Saviour has rendered our conscience perfect, so that we can go into the sanctuary without an idea of fear, without one question as to sin arising in our minds. A perfect conscience is not an innocent conscience, which, happy in its unconsciousness, does not know evil, but does not know God revealed in holiness. A perfect conscience knows God; it is cleansed, and having the knowledge of good and evil, according to the light of God Himself, it knows that it is purified from all evil, according to His purity. Now the blood of bulls and goats, and the washings repeated under the law, could never make the conscience perfect. They could sanctify carnally, so as to make the worshipper to approach God outwardly, yet only afar off, with the veil still unrent. But a real purification from sin, so that the soul can be in the presence of God Himself in the light, without spot, with the consciousness of being so, the offerings under the law could never produce. They were but figures; but, thanks be to God, Christ has accomplished the work, and is present for us now in the heavenly and eternal sanctuary. He is the witness there that sin is put away, so that all conscience of sin is destroyed, because we know that He who bore our sins is in the presence of God, after having accomplished the work of expiation. Thus we have the consciousness of being in the light without spot. We have not only the purification 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 has so loved us as... Being perfectly cleansed in conscience from all that man dead in sins produces, and having to do with God in light and in love: there being no question of conscience with Him, we are in a position to serve the living God. Precious liberty! in which happy, and without question, before God, according to His nature in light, we can serve Him, according to the activity of His nature in love. Judaism knew no more of this than it did of perfection in conscience. Obligation toward God that system indeed maintained, and it offered a certain provision for that which was needed for outward failure. But to have a perfect conscience, and then to serve God in love according to His will, of this it knew nothing.

Christ has gone into heaven itself, the High Priest of good things, securing their possession to them that trust in Him. But we have access to God in the light by virtue of Christ's presence there. That presence is the proof of righteousness fully established; the blood an evidence that sin is put away forever, and our conscience is made perfect. Christ in heaven is the guarantee for the fulfillment of every promise. He has opened an access for us even now to God in the light, having cleansed our consciences once for all; for He dwells on high continuously, that we may enter in, and that we may serve God here below.

It is all-important thoroughly to understand that it is into the presence of God that we enter; and that at all times, and by virtue of a sacrifice and of blood which never lose their value. The

worshipper under the former tabernacle did not come into the presence of God; he staid outside the unrent veil. He sinned—a sacrifice was offered. He sinned again—a sacrifice was offered. Now the veil is rent. We are always in the presence of God without a veil. Happen what may He always sees us. But we are there now, by virtue of a sacrifice which has put sin away, which has accomplished the purification of our sins. I should not be in the presence of God, in the sanctuary, if I had not been purified according to the purity of God, and by God. It was this which brought me there. And this sacrifice and this blood can never lose their value. Through them I am, therefore, perfect forever in the presence of God. I was brought into it by them. (An extract.)

2 Chronicles

LITTLE need be added as to the second book of Chronicles. The time it embraces, and most of the events it records, have already passed before us when considering the books of Kings. It sets forth the reign of Solomon and his posterity, and extends to the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the children of Judah to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

The book opens with Solomon at the brazen altar which Bezaleel had made (compare chapter 1:5 with Exodus 31:9), thus connecting the king with the people Jehovah had redeemed out of Egypt. There is a veil made for the Temple (chapter 3:14), typifying Israel in Millennial days. We have also fuller details of the godly kings of Judah. The repentance and prayer of Manasseh are also noticed here (chapter 33). Nor does the Holy Spirit, in so graciously inditing this book, fail to allude to the return of the children of Judah from their captivity in the days of Cyrus (chapters 36:22-23).

Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther

THESE three little books present a beautiful cluster of divine truth, and may be, for a moment, looked at together. Ezra shows the power, goodness and faithfulness of God to His people when acting collectively, in returning to Him, and seeking to walk in His ways according to the authority of His word. In Nehemiah we see the same gracious acting's of God with an individual, who goes forth in faith and love in the energy of the Spirit of God, seeking the welfare of His people, and establishing the things of God in separation from all that is contrary to His Word. Esther touchingly teaches us how God loves and cares for all of His people, though they have not returned in separation to Him and His ways, but are still found in association with that on which He cannot inscribe His name. Self-judgment, humiliation, fasting, prayers, the assertion of the claims of God upon His people, the authority of Scripture, and strict discipline, especially characterize these books. These ways, too, must always mark the faithful who come upon a scene that has been connected with deep failure and departure from God. (Compare Daniel 9:3.) We will now consider each of these books separately.

Ezra

The book of Ezra gives us the return of a remnant of Benjamin and Judah from the Babylonish captivity, and the building of the temple; after which we have the ministry and faithful acting's of Ezra the priest. To accomplish God's purpose according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the declaration of the angel to Daniel, at the end of seventy years, He stirs up the heart of Cyrus, a heathen king, to open the way for His people to return to Jerusalem, and build the temple. Upwards of forty thousand, therefore, went out from Babylon to their much-loved city, and again took their place as the people of the Lord God of Israel. Now cleansed from their evil ways by the seventy years' chastisement, we are first told that the people gathered themselves together as the heart of one man at Jerusalem (chapter 3:1), which is generally a blessed token of divine power, and the usual forerunner of the Lord's abundant blessing!

God's order of priesthood being then acknowledged, the first thing they did was to build an altar to the Lord God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, because it was according to the law of Moses, the man of God, and they offered burnt offerings thereon. This is very significant, and serves to show us that whenever there is a returning to God, the person and work of His beloved Son will always occupy the place of highest importance.

After this, the foundation of the House of the Lord was laid with great shouting and rejoicing, yet weeping was mingled with the joy by the ancient men who remembered the first house. This, too, it is important to notice; for, however great the blessing which may be given to a returning, faithful remnant, we never find God re-constructing and re-establishing that which man's sin has ruined. (11, 13.) In proof of this we find no king in Israel now, no Urim and Thummim with the priest, and in this, the second temple, there was no Ark. We are not told what became of the Ark, whether it was seized with the other vessels of the sanctuary when the city was sacked, or whether it was hidden and afterward destroyed.

Again, we observe, as is commonly the ease, that no sooner did God's servants go forth to glorify Him in practically returning to His truth, than "adversaries" were stirred up to distress their minds, and to weaken their hands. In this case, it was first by seeking to induce them to accept the help of those round about, who were far from God. They said, "Let us build with you." This they faithfully resisted, saying, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God." (chapters 4:1-3.) Secondly, they hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, King of Persia, even until Darius. (5:5.) They wrote also accusations against them in the reign of Ahasuerus; and in the reign of Artaxerxes they represented to the King that Jerusalem was "a rebellious and bad city," who replied that the work was to be stopped. "So it ceased until the second year of Darius, King of Persia." (verse 24.) But it is very precious to trace all through their trials the guardianship of Judah's God. We are told that "the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius." (chapter 5:5.) The temple was finished in the reign of Darius; hence we read, "They builded and finished it according to the commandment of the God of Israel," &c. It was dedicated by the priests, Levites,

and the children of the captivity with joy, and accompanied with sacrifices according to the number of the tribes of Israel. The unity of these redeemed people is thus blessedly owned by this faithful remnant. The authority of Scripture (the law of Moses) is acknowledged, so that we read the Passover was killed, and they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful. (chapters 6:14-22.)

(To be continued.)

“Bring a Bible and Read to Me.”

“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.

A POOR sailor lay dying in his hammock bed, whilst the vessel in which he served was far out at sea. “Bring a Bible and read to me,” he said to one of the crew; but, alas, no Bible was to be found. “We have none,” was the confession of all. The poor man was in despair; he was thirsting for the water of life, and could not obtain it. Suddenly, however, a little cabin boy, hearing what was wanted, said he had a Bible in his chest, and producing it, offered to read to the dying man; and turning to the third chapter of John, read it slowly and distinctly. The sick man listened eagerly, but said nothing till he came to the 16th verse, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Read that verse again,” he said. The boy obeyed. Slowly it was repeated again. “Once again,” he asked—he cared for no more—over and over he repeated the words. He had got all he wanted; he saw God’s way of salvation.

How happy this was, and yet how simple! God makes known His will to us in His word; to bow, therefore, to His word, which tells us of our utter ruin and sinfulness, and points to Jesus, now in the glory, as the only Saviour, must deliver the anxious soul from all uncertainty as to salvation. It is God who speaks in the Scriptures, and there we find Jesus crucified as the alone ground of peace. We are told, “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12.)

As long as there is uncertainty as to salvation, there can be no peace, no progress in the life and walk of faith, no liberty to serve; for the heart will be occupied with its own need. But the soul that simply looks to Jesus, the risen and ascended Saviour, now glorified at the right hand of God, as the object of faith, and relies on what God says about Him and His finished work, must know present certainty as to salvation. The Spirit of God leads souls thus to find all their salvation in the Lord Jesus, “That no flesh should glory in God’s presence. For of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Corinthians 1:29,30.)

Dear reader! We affectionately ask, have you bowed to God’s verdict that you are guilty before Him? that in you—that is, in your flesh—dwells nothing good? Have you renounced every other ground of peace but the blood of the cross? And do you know Christ in the glory as your righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? If so, you can have no uncertainty as to your own salvation. May you then abide in the Lord Jesus, bring forth fruit for His glory, and wait patiently for His coming!

My Conversion

MY DEAR■, I don't think I ever told you and dear—what God has done for my soul. You remember me very well, I dare say, as to what I was twelve years ago—a lover of gaiety; fond, to excess, of hunting and shooting; addicted to almost everything that young men of the present day delight in. Until I came to Ireland I was, in my religious views, rather High Church, and used to like the beautiful chanting of the Temple Church and St. Paul's, Knightsbridge; and though I did not fast on a Friday, like some of my family, I had a certain respect for those who did, and felt sure that on account of it they would have a better chance of heaven than I would. I used to say a short prayer morning and evening, go to Church generally twice of a Sunday and almost always on saints' days, and occasionally taught in the local Sunday School.

Once I had a very severe illness, and was almost at the point of death; but I felt calm and happy, and almost sorry when they told me I was sure to get well. This, I must own, sobered me a good deal; and for a long time after this I tried to be good, read a portion of my Bible every day, and added a long prayer out of a book to my usual short one. I had, too, dreamy, romantic thoughts about God, and used to indulge in pleasant reveries concerning heaven. But, alas! as I got stronger the old tastes came back. A nice clever hunt was too good an opportunity to be missed. The tailor took my measure for a new scarlet coat; the gun was looked over and got into order; and the old saying was true of me, "When Satan was sick," &c. And thus time wore on.

As you know, I married; and then a neat phaeton and comfortable house and garden, with choice standard roses, &c., had to be attended to, and, I am afraid, like many others, I was decently religious on the Sunday, but careless all the week. However, I had family prayers every morning, with the help of a book, and sang at the harmonium in Church, and indeed took some pains to improve the singing.

All this time God was watching me, and, I believe, had marked me for His own. At length I heard of a gentleman in the County Kerry—whom I had known well as a most clever and agreeable, but apparently godless man—addressing meetings on religious subjects, and more than this, that a cousin of my own had become by this means impressed, and was addressing meetings of a similar nature. All this sounded very strange; for both of them, when I had lived amongst them, had been men completely of the world, and we had passed our time together in riding, boating, and the like pursuits. A vague curiosity, therefore, came over me to know what all this was about, and a strange, unaccountable feeling, half of interest, half of dread, lest I too should become in time in like manner influenced. I was most comfortable and happy as I was, and did not like to be disturbed; for I felt that that kind of thing must cut at the root of all my then joys and interests. And yet I felt, too, that they had got something that I had not, and I'd like to know something more about it.

I was not long to be doomed to disappointment. My cousin wrote, proposing a visit. I met him at the crossroads in my dogcart, and as we drove along I could not help thinking to myself, Why does not he, who is so religious, speak on religious subjects, and not on ordinary topics as of old? and

so uncomfortable I became on this score that at last I said, "Why don't you tell me something about the Revival?" "Ah!" he said, drawing a long breath, "have you got everlasting life?" "No," I said; "no, I wish I had, and then I'd have no more of this routine of prayers that so wearies me." For a moment he paused, and then said, quite solemnly, "Prayer is a joy to me now, and not a routine, for I am saved." "Oh," I said, "surely that's presumption to say you are saved now; perhaps you may be when you die, but surely you are wrong to say you are saved now." "No," he said; "God says, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' I do believe on the Son, and therefore I believe what God says, that I have everlasting life, and thus I know that I am saved." Well, by this time we had reached the house, and, between preparations for dinner, &c., much of our conversation passed off my mind; but I know my impression was, that in saying he was saved he was thinking a great deal too much of himself.

After dinner, he asked whether I would have any objection to get a few people together in the carpenter's shop (a large suitable room), for he would like to give them an address. "Oh," I said, "by all means, if you think it would do them any good." The appointed evening came, and as we drove in, he kept telling me "There'll be great blessing tonight." "Well," I said, "we'll see." Many came together, and he sang a hymn, and then prayed extempore, and afterward spoke, giving, as far as I remember, a slight sketch of Bible history, and then impressed upon us his favorite text, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." The meeting ended, and I asked, "Where was the blessing?" "Wait till tomorrow night," was the reply. Tomorrow came. In the morning we had rashly put a pair of half-trained horses into the carriage, and they ran away for more than a mile with fearful rapidity with us, and when they stopped from sheer exhaustion, I know the impression on my mind was that God had sent me this to stop me on my headlong course to hell; for I then began to feel I was unsaved.

The evening came. A young man spoke first, who had had deep religious convictions for some time before, and he said one word that went to my very heart: "Many of you, I doubt not, are religious—respectable—moral, but perhaps, as I was once, you are not ready to meet your God." "Oh," I said to myself, "that's just my case," and I thought, surely those words must have reached every soul in the room as they did mine. That night I asked no more "Where was the blessing?" I felt it had come, and come to me. For some days I was restless and uneasy. I could not go to a flower-show that I had intended to, for I felt the solemn question of my soul's salvation was unsettled. I tried to read my Bible, but could not understand it. I tried to pray, but utterly broke down. I had no rest, for I did not know God's Christ. My convictions of the necessity of knowing one was saved deepened, and one night I resolved to pray till my mind was at ease; and I prayed a long time, and again and again—aye, and with tears, too. I went to bed exhausted, and in the morning woke at ease and happy, I knew not well why. And yet I thought there must be a reason, and then I remembered the oft-repeated text, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36.) I believe on the Son, therefore I have everlasting life, for God had said so.

Oh! the joy of that happy, happy day. I knew God had had mercy on me, a poor, vile sinner. Was there ever any one so bad as I? I knew He loved me. I knew that Jesus loved me, that He died for me, and that His blood cleanseth from all sin. Oh! I was so thankful; but then next day I was unhappy again, and the next, and the next; for I didn't feel I was saved. And then at last, there came a dear kind letter by the post, to say, "If you look for feelings you are like the Jew that looked for a sign and never got one. Surely, the simple evidence of the written word is enough for you: 'He

that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” And now, once more I was at rest. “Oh!” I said, “he that believeth hath; I believe, and I have eternal life.” How can I doubt now; God has said it—that blessed God that sent His Son to die for me. Why should I doubt His word? I do believe it; I rejoice in the fact that everlasting life is mine.

Ten years have rolled away since then, and I have never ceased to know, and through His changeless mercy never will, that Christ has saved my soul from hell, and given me an inalienable title to pass eternity with Him in glory.

Dear—, can you say the same? May the Lord bless this simple story to you.

Ever yours affectionately.

Notes of an Address

WHAT a death! There never was, never will be, never can be another such death. None but Jesus, the Son of God, could be obedient to that death of all deaths, “even the death of the cross.” The scene is only rightly approached with worshipping, adoring hearts; for God was there, and on the person of His well-beloved Son, executing the just judgment due to sin and transgressions, that man—sinful man—might be saved. “Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” No creature can fathom these depths, no language describe their meaning, no human mind scan the shore or measure the infinite but perhaps, as bottomless ocean of love and sorrow. God alone could estimate the eternal worth of that death. It is a marvelous mystery that “the Son of the Highest” should be found in the lowest depths; that “the Lord of Glory” should be so abased; that “the Prince of Life” should be seen bowing His head in death. But so it was; and the magnitude and perfectness of the work are more and more opened up to us, as we are enabled, by the Spirit’s teaching, to consider the glory of His sacred person, the unutterable sorrow and anguish He endured, and the glorious results that follow.

Among men, it is the dignity of the office which gives honor and importance to the person. Not so, however, with the Son of God; for it was the infinite glory of His person, which gave dignity and value to all He did. It was the eternal Godhead of that blessed One, who laid down His life for us, which gave everlasting efficacy to the work that He accomplished. In that darkest hour, the glory of God shone forth. We are told, that, “being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” (Philippians 2:6.) Take away His divine glory, and you destroy the whole value of His atoning work. Admit the smallest taint or tarnish of His blessed person, and the efficacy of His sacrifice is undermined. Take away the reality of His perfect manhood, and you have no substitute, no sacrifice, no redeemer. Hence the same scripture tells us that, though “being in the form of God... He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men... found in fashion as a man” (verses 7-8). Elsewhere we have it, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Thus the mystery of His person, Immanuel, God with us, is plainly set forth—verily and truly man, as made of a woman and born of a woman, yet verily and truly God, the Word, the only-begotten Son, by whom all things were made, who, while perfectly subject to the Father’s will, could say, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” and “I and my Father are One.”

Jesus then was “God manifested in the flesh.” Because He was man, He was able to render to God all His demands of man; able to glorify God in the earth in a life of entire devotedness, and by obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. All through, God saw in Him everything He could desire in man, and could say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Man had sinned, and man must die under the judgment of God for sin, and, blessed be God, though “by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” (1 Cor. 15:21.) Because Jesus was God, He was infinitely qualified to suffer all from God, and render to God all that He required. He could fully satisfy all the claims of divine righteousness and holiness on account of our sin. Being infinitely perfect in His person, He did nothing that was not perfect. When He said, “It is

finished,” and bowed His head in death upon the tree, He accomplished eternal redemption for us. It was not only the purity, and guilelessness of Jesus, but His divine, eternal qualities which so fitted Him to finish the work He undertook, as He said, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God;” and gave such eternal efficacy to the sacrifice which He once offered when He offered Himself.

The unutterable sufferings of the Son of God on the Cross can never be fully comprehended by finite creatures. At the best we see, as it were, through a glass darkly. We know in part, and what we do know is known very imperfectly. We can look back on Calvary, and fall down and worship, but we have no line long enough to sound its marvelous depths. God only could deal out His infinite hatred to sin, and judge it in unsparing condemnation; and He only knew the sorrow and anguish this spotless One endured for us, when it pleased Him thus to bruise Him, and put Him to grief; when He was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sins of many, and poured out His soul unto death. In this, Jesus was alone. He only drank the cup. He said, “There is none to help.” By Himself He purged our sins. Alone, He met all the righteous claims of God’s throne. He vindicated God, glorified God, and saved us, by being “made sin for us.” On “His own Son,” God “condemned sin in the flesh.” He was wounded, smitten, bruised, and more than all forsaken of God, which wrung that bitterest cry from His holy, loving heart, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

“Yea; all the billows pass’d o’er Him,

Our sins—they bore Him down;

For us He met the crushing storm—

He met th’ Almighty’s frown.”

Our souls may gaze upon this perfect outflow of divine love to us even while we were yet sinners, and contemplate the man of sorrows bearing our sins, going under the billows of divine wrath, thus glorifying God, and purging our sins, and bow our hearts in worship; but we cannot go much further in the apprehension of these marvelous mysteries. We feel lost, as it were, in traversing this labyrinth of love and sorrow, where mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. The sons of Kohath had to carry from place to place some parts of the furniture of the tabernacle on which their eye had never rested, and which they dare not uncover lest they died (Numbers 4:15-20); so we have to bear about with us many precious mysteries of the personal glory and sufferings of the Son of God, well knowing that “no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” (Matthew 11:27.) We know, however, that He made peace by the blood of His cross, and there, too, we can always read the lessons of divine, unchanging love.

“Jesus bruised and put to shame

Tells me all Jehovah’s name;

God is love I surely know,

By the Saviour’s depths of woe.

In His spotless soul’s distress

I perceive my guiltiness;

Oh, how vile my low estate,

Since my ransom was so great!"

The terrible distress, however, of Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, helps much to shew how unutterable the woe of the Cross must have been. We see Him there with the cup presented to Him. It was given Him by the Father— "the cup which my Father has given me." But we know that He did not drink it there; for, after the garden scene is over, we hear Him saying, "Shall I not drink it?" (John 18) Still the anticipation of drinking it caused such abundant suffering that we are told He was in "an agony," and that "He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." And if the anticipation of the sorrow produced such unparalleled distress, what must the reality have been? Gethsemane sufferings, I say, were from anticipation, for there communion was not interrupted—it was still "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;" an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen Him, — He sought the companionship of others, and the cup, as we have seen, was not drank. But in "the death of the Cross" the utterance was not "Father," but the "man of sorrows" receiving the just judgment of His God due to sin, while God was smiting, and hiding His face, so that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" No angel was sent to strengthen, no companions were there, but solitary, and alone, He could say, "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." He drank the cup, He finished the work, He suffered for sins, He purged sins, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Well may our hearts Inquire when contemplating these sorrows of the Cross■

"Was it for crimes that I had done,

He groaned upon the tree?

Surprising mercy; grace unknown,

And love beyond degree."

The results, too, of "the death of the Cross" give us further help in intelligently estimating the infinite magnitude and perfection of that work. The Son of Man glorified God on the earth, and God hath glorified Him in heaven. Hence, when the Holy Ghost calls our attention to "the death of the Cross," He adds, "WEREFORE God also hath highly exalted Him." (Philippians 2:9.) That is, the work which He accomplished was so infinitely God-glorifying and meritorious, that the same hand which in righteousness smote Him unsparingly as the Sin-bearer, now righteously exalts Him to the highest possible character of glory and honor. "God hath glorified His Son Jesus." "Sit thou on my right hand" was what He was now worthy of in righteousness, (to say nothing of His claim as the only-begotten of the Father, and the intrinsic worthiness of His person,) because of the work He did, when He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." And this exaltation not only to the highest possible place of honor and dignity, but also that in heaven, on earth, and even under the earth in the infernal regions, every tongue should confess His name, and every knee bow to Him. Every creature shall yet proclaim His worthiness, and say, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." (Revelation 5:13.) How stupendous then in its moral worth and glory must that work have been, which so righteously entitled Him to such eternal exaltation and glory!

But more. All the present acting's and blessings of divine grace, present peace, justification, the gift of the Holy Ghost, joy and peace in believing, fellowship with the Lord Jesus, and with one another, entirely result from "the death of the Cross." The change, too, and catching up of the saints—the redemption of the body—when the Lord comes, when we shall reign with Him, and He will present His Bride to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, having the glory of God, when we shall see His face, and be with Him and like Him forever, all owe their source to "the death of the Cross." To the blessed Lord, the throne of God seemed only, as it were, one step from the Cross; for "after He had purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." Ah! we may well say that—

"Our every joy on earth, in heaven,

We owe it to thy blood."

And the nation of Israel is another range of glory resulting from the redemption-work of Jesus, for the glory of God shall yet rise upon that much-loved people. We must not forget that Jesus died, for that nation, as well as to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. When all the tribes of Israel shall be again in their own land, everyone in peace and plenty sitting under his own vine and fig tree, all the people righteous, all forgiven their iniquity, and the inhabitant no more saying, I am sick, and the Lord shall reign before His ancients gloriously, then will they, too, ascribe all their blessings to Him whom they pierced, for they will then be reconciled to God by the peace made by the blood of His Cross.

The Gentiles, too, shall know, not only that He sits on the throne of His father David, and shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, but that He is the Governor among the nations. He shall be king over all the earth—to Him every knee shall bow. He will be the light which lightens the Gentiles, as well as the glory of His people Israel. Not only was the writing over the cross in Hebrew, but also in Greek and Latin: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then the nations will assemble at Jerusalem to worship the King the Lord of Hosts. Then "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Creation also shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:21.) Delivered from its present groaning and travailing in birth, she shall be brought into her long-awaited-for blessing, and wear the smile of peace, and all through the suffering and death of "the last Adam." For if through the first Adam's sin God planted thorns in the earth in token of its curse, they were effectually worn away by the crown of thorns being planted upon the spotless brow of Him, who was "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

But great and marvelous as these blessings are, which result from the death of the cross, they are not all; for the NEW HEAVEN and the NEW EARTH shall yet bear eternal testimony to the matchless value of the work of Jesus on the Cross. (Revelation 21:1.) Then God will have his own eternal purposes accomplished of many "sons" being in glory before Him in love, and having men for His own habitation—"the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Then it will be fully manifested that Jesus came "to destroy the works of the Devil," that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," and that He made peace by the blood of the cross, not only that sinners might be saved, but "to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth,

or things in heaven.” (Colossians 1:20.) Observe, things under the earth, in the infernal regions, are never said to be reconciled, but will stand as an everlasting testimony to the wickedness of man, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the righteousness and holiness of God, and that on redemption-ground alone can anything stand in perpetuity and blessing before God.

Surely our best thoughts of the Lord Jesus and His humiliation and triumphs are but poor, but enough has been adduced to show that if we would have our souls instructed and enlarged in the knowledge of the unfathomable mysteries of “the death of the Cross,” we must contemplate Jesus there, under the full blaze of the glory of His person, and the wonderful ranges of glory that follow His sufferings and death. And while thus thinking of Him there, the remembrance of Him in Gethsemane also sheds a halo of glory upon “the death of the Cross;” for, as we have before said, if the anticipation produced such “agony, that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground,” what must the reality have been?

Oh, for more enlarged views of the magnitude and perfections of “the death of the Cross!”

Ezra.

(Continued from page 20.)

AFTER this, Ezra, a priest and scribe, who had been all this time in Babylon, is stirred up, evidently by divine energy, to go to Jerusalem. (chapter 7:6.) He is furthered in his service, through the providence of God, by a letter from Artaxerxes king of Persia, not the Artaxerxes we read of in the fourth chapter, but most likely Artaxerxes Longimanus. Many of the chief of the fathers accompanied him. We are told that before he left Babylon, "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (chapter 7:10.) In the way to Jerusalem Ezra "proclaimed a fast," as he says, "that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. So we fasted, and besought our God for this, and He was entreated of us." (chapters 8:21-23.) So they arrived safely in Jerusalem with all the vessels of gold and silver; and burnt offerings were offered to the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel. These ways of faith, and dependence, and worship are very precious, and show the divine energy that wrought in this servant of God.

These things being done, Ezra soon finds that the place of the faithful should be one of humiliation and confession before the Lord; with earnest prayer; for the people of Israel had not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, &c. When Ezra heard it he rent his garment and his mantle, and plucked off the hair of his head and of his beard, and sat down astonished until the evening sacrifice, when he fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, &c. (chapters 9:1-15.) After this, we read that Ezra the scribe stood up and said to the men of Judah and Benjamin, "Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do His pleasure; separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, "As thou hast said, so must we do." (chapters 10:10-12.) The result was that many put away their strange wives, and offered a ram of the flock for their trespass. Thus we see that the moment the authority of God is owned and subjection to his word, evil is brought to light, and separation is the necessary result. It has always been God's way. If an Old Testament writer declares that "the highway of the upright is to depart from evil," a New Testament writer insists on those who "name the name of the Lord to depart from iniquity;" and if an inspired prophet says, "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well," an inspired Apostle exhorts us to "Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good." May we know, in these last days, more real, practical separation unto Him who is holy and true!

BECAUSE God has connected His glory with His people, we should cultivate a heart for all saints, and yet evil should be intolerable to us—we should have no acquiescence in it.

An Extract from a Letter

"I desire too to stir up all those who are spiritually interested in the Gospel as a testimony flowing from God, whether they be old or young, men or women, English, or French, or German, &c., to join in prayer for the sounding out of the word throughout the world. If the Lord will graciously pour out a spirit of prayer and supplication, (surely I would say to all who love Him, the desire that He may do so is yours and mine, and the promise is to the prayer of two or three,) expectation of blessing will spring up, and bear fruit too. The Isles I have named (West India Isles), Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the East Indies are on my heart.

"Nor you nor I could send any one, even if any were ready to go, but we know the Lord of the harvest, and gladly shall we welcome His answers to prayer, and seek to comfort ourselves, and any whom He may incline to go. When Isaiah had had his iniquity taken away and his sin purged (chapter 6:7), he heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' (verse 8.) His ready answer was, 'Here am I; send me.' Oh that that voice which speaks in every pardoned soul who loves the Gospel, 'Who will go for us?' were more simply heard and obeyed, as by Isaiah of old! The night is now far spent, the dawn draws nigh; the testimony as to Christ should go forth everywhere and from every one of His, testimony as to Him in His past, in His present, in His coming service to God, and as to man.

"How few addict themselves now-a-days to the ministry of the saints. (2 Cor. 16:15.) How few having believed, therefore speak (2 Corinthians 4:13); compare Acts 8:4, 'they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.'

"If, as I trust, it is God who puts these thoughts and desires upon my soul, I may stay myself upon Him, and hope as to blessing to come. The Son is to be preached everywhere, the Spirit works towards this, and will work; and is there no chaste virgin espoused to Christ? It is written, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' (Revelation 22:17.)

"Pray. — None who can pray can say, 'As for me I can do nothing in this matter.' That the service in this testimony requires men in Christ, and not babes, is true. But there are evangelists who have been tried, and approved themselves in their work; let them bethink themselves of their work."

THE witness on earth of this world's guilt is the presence of the Holy Ghost.

You will never be separate from the world by trying.

When a man is dead, he is not of the world. We are "dead with Christ."

Christendom practically denies two things, the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, and the absolute judgment of the world.

Jesus Seeking and Saving the Lost

Notes of an Address.

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together His friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”— Luke 15:4-7.

WHEN the blessed Lord was charged by the Pharisees with receiving sinners and eating with them, it served as the fitting opportunity for bringing out the deep thoughts and feelings which were in the heart of God toward sinful and lost men.

Our Lord’s reply therefore opened out not only the marvelous grace, but the intense joy God has—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—in the salvation of “one sinner.”

In the first part of this wonderful picture of precious realities we have the activities of divine love, the almightiness of divine power, and the activity of divine joy, all about the salvation, security, and eternal welfare of one lost sheep.

First, we have the Shepherd seeking the sheep. In it He is most diligent and persevering— “He goeth after that which is lost, until He find it.” There is earnestness and decision; for divine grace is in activity. The sheep’s need is urgent; for it is “lost.” The Shepherd seeks till He find it. His heart yearns over the object of His love, and the wanderer has no idea what is in the Shepherd’s heart, knows nothing as yet of His bowels and mercies; for the blessing is only tasted when the loving Shepherd and the poor lost one meet face to face. The sinner must have to do with the Saviour. There must be this personal contact, this look of faith, ere blessing can be known; for there is salvation in no other. The Shepherd is a divine person. He is the Son of God. God thus makes Himself known to a sin-convicted soul in the person and work of Jesus, His beloved Son. The Shepherd died for the sheep. He gave His life a ransom for many. He shed His blood for the remission of sins. He now, by His servants and the word of His gospel, goes after the lost. His love is divinely active. Though raised from the dead because He accomplished eternal redemption, and righteously exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, the activities of His loving heart still go after the lost; still by His servants He proclaims present peace and eternal salvation to everyone that believeth. Thank God that His deep, unsearchable love is still active toward the lost!

When the Good Shepherd has found the lost one, what does He do? We are told that “He layeth it on His shoulders;” that is, He takes the entire responsibility of the security of the sheep thus found. He upholds and keeps. His almighty power is thus active. The sheep is on the Shepherd’s shoulder—put there and kept there by Him. How blessed! What Perfect security! We know this is God’s will; and it is well to be assured that what we hold is according to His will. Jesus said, “This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have

everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:40.) Nothing can be clearer. The will of God is, that every one who now believes on the Son of God shall be in glory. Christ thus makes Himself responsible to raise up in the last day every one who has believed in Him. Our everlasting security then is based, not on our faithfulness, but on Christ’s almighty power, His unchanging love, and His unfailing faithfulness. We now know, since Christ died, and rose, and ascended, and has sent down the Holy Ghost, that every believer is not only purged from sin, and has life in Christ, but is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost—made a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

How blessed then to be borne up by the almighty power of the ascended Son of God, and to be in Him—thus having divine love and power in constant activity on our behalf, reserving heaven for us, and keeping us for it, through faith; Christ pledging Himself thus— “I will raise him up at the last day.”

But this is not all. There is divine joy. “He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing.” Not only is this “one sinner” found, taken up, blessed, and kept, but there is joy in heaven on account of it, so great a matter in heaven is the salvation of one lost one. But who rejoices? Was it the sheep? No doubt; for, in the third part of the parable, after the kiss, and the robe, and the ring, we find not only that the father rejoiced, but that he says to the returning one thus welcomed, “Let us eat, and be merry;” and we are told that “they began to be merry.” Surely the poor saved one who is brought to God in such marvelous grace cannot but rejoice; but that is not the joy referred to in the verses we are now considering. Here we are told it is the Shepherd who so rejoices, and not only so, but He calls others to share the joy with Him, saying, “Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost” (verse 6), and it is plainly added, “Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” Whether the angels rejoice on the occasion we are not told, only that this outburst of joy is “in the presence of the angels of God.” (verse 10.) Clear it is that in heaven it is the Father who rejoices at receiving His lost one, saying, “It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” (verse 32.) The Saviour, too, as we have seen, rejoices. Thus our hearts are gladdened at seeing that divine joy is active, as well as almighty power and matchless love, in bringing “one sinner” to God. How this testimony of divine grace comes right home to our hearts, and attracts us, through Christ, to God, to whom we are already brought in Christ and through His precious blood; soon to taste the reality of this everlasting joy in the presence of God and the Lamb! And let us put it closely to our hearts, dear fellow-Christians, if love, and power, and joy are active in our souls in going after and, through grace, bringing back lost sinners? If not, can we be said in this respect to be godly? Is it like Christ?

“Oh, Sir, I am so Miserable!”

THE Lord was blessing in K—. For years the place had been slumbering in the cradle of death. Regular as their town clock, the people had filled their pews and joined in the various religious exercises from week to week, and as regularly had returned home in the full satisfaction of “duty” performed.

It was that Sunday Christianity which, beyond the limits of that day, is quite unrecognizable from the world itself, enjoying the same pleasures with it, courting the same honors, seeking the same paths, using the same means.

Surely, none but God can shake people from such deadly slumbers. God did shake them. Dead professors became alarmed at their deadness, and lost sinners fled to Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

While the blessing was quietly going on, despite the difficulties the great enemy of souls ever seeks to throw in the way, a young woman sent me word, through an elderly lady friend of hers, expressing a wish to see me.

Already I had been pointed to that young woman, who for several weeks had been coming to the meetings, and appeared very much exercised in her soul, but various reasons had led me to wait till persons thus exercised themselves expressed a wish to be visited, and I had left her to herself and the Lord.

As soon, however, as I knew her wish I called to see her.

“Why have you sent for me?” I asked, after I was seated.

“Oh, sir, I am so miserable!” was all the answer she could give.

“You have been attending the preaching several weeks, I said, and I am sure you have not failed to hear me speak of what Jesus, the Son of God, did on the cross. How that there ‘He bare our sins in His own body.’ (1 Peter 2:24.) You know when He was there how He cried, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ and yet He was not delivered, because the Lord had laid on Him ‘the iniquity of us all’ (Isaiah 53:6), and iniquity deserveth wrath.”

“O yes, I have heard all this,” she said, “but the more I hear it the more miserable I feel. I had never had an hour of trouble about my soul until I went to hear you the first time. My friend asked me to go with her, and I refused, saying I had heard many bad things about you; but she insisted the more, telling me I should not be led by prejudiced people’s talk, but go and hear for myself. I went, and that very night I came home with this unaccountable misery. I can’t explain it; I can’t analyse it. I hear people all around rejoicing and talking about the love of God and the cross of Christ, but the more I hear about that the more miserable I feel. My misery, sir, is very great. Can’t you do something for me?”

She had unburdened herself, and I now plainly saw that she was in that state where souls are in their last struggle against the grace of God, and try to cling to anything else.

"I can do nothing, nothing whatever for you," I answered. You must perish in your misery unless you are willing to receive what Jesus did for you. Were I to baptize you in water this hour; were you to come and make remembrance of Jesus in the breaking of the bread with us next Lord's day; were I to pray for you day and night; were you to fast till you are starved, all this would not, could not save you. Salvation is already finished, finished every jot. It is divinely complete. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. 'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.'" (Acts 14:38, 39.)

I said much more to prove to her that salvation is by grace alone, through faith, but all I could say was only met by sighs; so I left her with the Lord, praying Him to turn her self-occupied eyes "unto Jesus," that she might see that the same Jesus who once bare our iniquities is now risen and sitting at God's right hand—without our sins, of course. He left them forever on the cross, to be remembered against us no more forever.

She continued coming as before, and for several weeks I could see but little change in her state. One Lord's day afternoon she said to me, "I believe the light is dawning on me. I sometimes see something bright above. Could I see you again?"

I could not see her till the following Friday, when I had a blessed feast. Her very face beamed with delight.

"I found full peace at the meeting last evening," she said, "while you were comparing the various foundations people try to rest on with the foundation of God. I saw plainly the foundation I had been trying to rest on ever since I first saw my sinful condition was just this: putting my earnest resolution to lead a godly life together with my feelings of deep sorrow, and bringing that to God as recommendation. I would not have owned that even to myself, but when I saw the foundation of God, the deepest and most secret recesses of my evil heart were made evident to myself. When I saw the foundation of God, that eternal redemption which Christ, on the cross, obtained for us, I scarcely knew what to do with myself for joy. All the way home, after meeting, I could but repeat to myself: Oh, what a fool, what a fool I have been! always trying to do or to feel some great thing, instead of just believing what Jesus has done, and what my sins made Him feel, on the cross."

"Now," I said, "I am going to urge you on to what I discouraged you from a few weeks ago. I feel convinced you are alive from the dead now; you are born again, a converted soul, a child of God, an heir of His, and a joint-heir with Christ. Your heart is right now, so I don't care how much you do. You know Christ now. Live unto Him. Before you knew Christ, God looked for nothing but sin from you. It was all you could bring forth, and the end of that is death. But now God expects a holy life from you, a thorough separation from the world and the world's ways; in a word, He expects you now to follow Christ, to walk in the world as He walked in it. If you are faithful in that path, you will have to suffer much shame, for the world is no better now than it was in His day, despite all its profession; but knowing and believing now what He has done for you, you cannot but love Him, and love can suffer anything: indeed, it not only can suffer, but it counts it a privilege to suffer for Christ and with Christ. May God by the Holy Ghost work in you now for His glory, as Christ on the cross worked for you for your redemption."

“There is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3.)

Psalms 139; 32:7

VAIN the thought from God to flee,
Though in cave or cell we hide;
Dive into the deepest sea,
Or in forest's gloom abide;
Though upon the wings of morn,
With the sun we flee apace,
We the strife must yield forlorn,
Nature has no hiding-place.
Though the sinner far retreats,
Though his works his refuge be,
Or his thoughts, or his conceits,
He from God can never flee.
Him His piercing eye shall reach,
And his chosen covert trace;
There shall sound His solemn speech:
Come thou from thy hiding-place.
God in mercy calls thee hence,
Finds thee in thy place of pride,
Rends the veil from each pretence,
That in HIM thou mayst abide.
Hearken to His voice of Love,
Look on Him in Jesus' face;
He who died e'er lives above;
Make Him now thy hiding-place.
Then, though Satan rave and roar,
Loath to let a pris'ner free,

Thou shalt be his slave no more,
But a son of God shalt be;
Christ will be thy righteousness,
Robe of beauty, light and grace;
While with joy thou wilt confess
God in Christ thy hiding-place.

“When Shall I Get Enough?”

As a Christian traveler was one day wending his way along a quiet country lane he was met and accosted by a poor blind man, whose hoary locks and tottering limbs plainly indicated that his earthly journey was well nigh over. The old man's request for the bestowal of an alms was responded to; a few coppers were placed in his trembling hand, and the Christian stranger was again stepping forward, when the following words reached his ear: “When shall I get enough? When shall I get enough?” This arrested his curiosity, and he at once turned to learn the meaning of such strange expressions; whereupon the old man, moved by the kind and gracious manner of his benefactor, candidly told him that he was a Roman Catholic; that the priest could not, or would not, grant full absolution until a certain sum was paid down, and that to this end he had for many a day been denying and even starving himself, but feared after all he should never be able to get enough. By this time the traveler's interest was fully enlisted in the poor fellow's behalf, so he said to him, “If you will step inside this field, and sit with me on yonder sunny bank, I will tell you how your case, bad as it may appear, can be happily and instantly met. The old man agreed to this proposal, and the stranger opened his Bible at the third chapter of John's Gospel, and read the blessed story therein contained. The “lifted up” Son of man—God's Lamb—was pointed to as the One who had by His own precious blood made, once and forever, a perfect and sufficient payment for the guilt of lost sinners; and that all that was left for him was, not to find any additional payment, but only to believe and rest in the precious atoning blood of Christ. As the wondrous story of the cross was being unfolded to the anxious old man, tears ran freely from his blind eyes, for the light began to dawn upon his hitherto darkened soul; and at last he rose upon his feet, praising and blessing God whose great love had provided such a Saviour. “And now,” said the old man, “before we part, I have one request to make of you: Oh, do let me kiss the lips that told me this sweet story!” Dirty and squalid though he was, his request was freely granted, and they kissed and embraced each other, while God Himself looked on with joy. (Luke 15:10)

A few months after this, the Christian traveler had again occasion to visit that neighborhood, and well remembering the incident just related, he inquired in the village for the house of his old blind friend. The house was readily found, but the weary pilgrim was “forever with the Lord.” Upon inquiring of the old man's relatives (who were Catholics) what kind of end he made, the traveler was told that “he died raving mad,” that he refused the ministrations of the priest, and that all he talked about was “a serpent that bit him, and a serpent that cured him.” Blessed madness!

And now, dear reader, have you ever yet discovered that you are bitten of the Serpent? that you are “GUILTY BEFORE GOD?” God says you are. (Rom. 3:19.) Do you believe Him? Perhaps your heart's answer is, “Oh, yes; none but God and myself know how guilty I am.” Well, poor troubled soul, “stay not in all the plain,” linger not to search thy heart for any redeeming quality to recommend thee to God; but get thee at once to Calvary's cross, and “see that great sight”—that bleeding, dying Lamb; and as thou gazest in wonder upon that sinless One, made sin for the sinful, listen to those three peace-giving words, “It is finished.” Then let thy heart connect them with those He uttered in the publican's house at Jericho: “The Son of man is come to seek and to

SAVE that which was LOST.” (Luke 19:10.) Heartily believe those words, implicitly trust in that finished work, and salvation is thine—thine this moment, and forever. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31.)

But the gospel story is not yet complete. That righteous, holy God, who gave His Son to save the lost, must put His seal of approval upon that finished work. Will He do it? Thank God, He has, by raising the Lord Jesus from the dead: “He who was delivered for our offenses has been raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25), and “exalted by God’s right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.” (Acts 5:31.)

The trembling sinner feareth

That God can ne’er forget;

But one full payment cleareth

His memory of all debt.

When naught beside could ease us,

Or set our souls at large,

Thy holy work, Lord Jesus,

Secured a full discharge.

“The Greatest Pleasure I Have.”

READING God’s word is a happy employment to those who know what it is to have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

A child of God reads to know His Heavenly Father’s will. He searches the Scriptures to get his mind well stored with God’s thoughts, and ponders them in His presence, that his heart may be melted and molded to His holy will. He is assured that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.... that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17.) This he proves, and knows that he is practically sanctified by the truth.

In the study of Scripture, by the Spirit’s teaching, he finds so much to comfort, encourage, instruct, and to beget increasing confidence in God, that the more he reads the more he wants to read. As the Scriptures testify of Christ, the more the Christian knows of Him the more his heart is attracted to Him. Having known Christ by faith as a Saviour, he now discovers that Christ is the central object of God’s heart, the center of His ways and operations, and thus He becomes the attractive object of our hearts. Well, too, he knows that as Christ is enough to satisfy the infinite desires of God, so the Lord Jesus will now and forever be more than enough to fill these tiny hearts of ours. No wonder then that God’s dear children should find pleasure in reading the word of God; the only wonder is that it is not more loved, valued, and prayed over by us, because it is full of our Father’s thoughts, and, to the subject heart, gives a true acquaintance with His mind and will.

This delight in the Scriptures the men of this world do not understand. Why? Because they believe not. They think themselves competent to form their own thoughts of God; hence the terrible and fatal mistake they make—the ignorance and willfulness they manifest. The thought of many is that the Bible is a good Sunday-book, and suitable for old and dying people to read or listen to, now and then; but what it really contains they know not; they do not for a moment consider that it is God’s revelation of His own counsels, ways, grace and truth, in and through His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The above thoughts were suggested on reading the following extract, lately sent us by a kind friend:—

“It was late in the evening; the children were all in bed, except the two eldest, who had gone with their father to a working-man’s lecture; so Mrs.— hang supper all ready for them, had sat down to have a quiet time with her Bible, when in came Sam—, one of her neighbors; and seeing what she was about he laughed at her for her pains, as he expressed it.

“‘It’s no pains to me,’ she said, ‘but the greatest pleasure I have. Why, what should I do without it?’

“ ‘Well, as to that, some of it’s well enough; but there’s no denying that it’s too big by half.’

“‘I should like to know what part you would have left out.’

“ ‘Oh, ever so many; for instance: I like well enough to know that God is merciful, and that He is willing to forgive us; for I suppose when it comes to dying the best have something that they’d want forgiven; but as to all it says about God’s justice, truth, and power, they’re nothing to me. I’d have out every word about them.’

“‘If they’re nothing to you, I can tell you that they’re everything to me. What use would God’s mercy be to us without His justice, His power, and His truth?’

“Sam looked at her quite surprised; so she went on: ‘If you owed a thousand pounds and could not pay it, and your creditor was going to put you in prison, and I pitied you ever so much; would my pity keep you out of prison if I hadn’t the money to pay your debt?’

“‘Why, of course not!’

“‘Then if God only pitied us how could He save us?’

“ ‘I don’t know; I never thought of that before. I always thought we had only to say we were sorry for our sins, and that God would say, I forgive you, and that there was an end of it.’

“ ‘And where would God’s truth be? Does He not say: The soul that sinneth it shall die; and as He cannot lie, there’s only one way by which a sinner can be saved. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the debt the sinner owed—died instead of the sinner, bore every bit of the punishment the sinner deserved—so that God is not only merciful, but faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And His truth crowns all—He is a God of truth—so that when He says He will forgive us we may trust Him, and venture our souls on His word.’

Nehemiah

SEVERAL, years after Ezra the priest had gone up from Babylon to Jerusalem, and had set in order the service of God in relation to the temple, and in other ways pressed the authority of Scripture, another remarkable man was raised up to care for Jerusalem and His people. It was Nehemiah. He was the king's cup-bearer in the palace of Shushan. His heart was much set on the welfare of God's people, which is always a mark of a soul being under divine energy. Seeing some of his brethren, he inquired concerning the Jews and Jerusalem. He is told they are in great affliction and reproach, that the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and the gates burned with fire. This intelligence deeply affected this man of God. He wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed. He pleads with God for His redeemed people, and counts upon the God of heaven to prosper him, and to give him mercy in the sight of the king (chap. 2). Though his mind was specially set upon repairing the wall, yet the Spirit of Christ was remarkably manifest in his judging, feeling, and acting, in reference to the people, according to God. In their affliction he was really afflicted.

God answers prayer. He finds favor in the sight of the king. A time of absence is granted, and he goes to Jerusalem, though, however, under the guardianship and help of the Gentile king (chapters 2:1-9). Arriving at Jerusalem, after viewing the real state of things, he communicated to the rulers his desire to build the wall of the city, and their ready response is, "Let us rise up and build." No sooner is this known than adversaries arise. Sanballat and Tobiah are first grieved that a man is come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel, and then despised them and laughed them to scorn. No doubt the desire of Nehemiah that the people should be established in separation and security from the heathen greatly incensed these enemies of the Lord. It always does. (Chap. 2:10-19.) The next chapter shows them all busily building the wall. One thing is to be observed about it. It is this. In an evil time, because of previous departure and ruin, there must always be weakness, and more or less of irregularity, too. In a primary and normal state, everything is orderly and complete in arrangement; but when a few only are struggling for the rights of God and the authority of Scripture, there will not only be adversaries, but the great question being one of love and care for the things of God, there must necessarily be a lack of due order. Accordingly, we see here the high priest and priests, the rulers of the people, and even their daughters, engaged in building this wall. Those who were, however, known as "nobles," sad to say, put not their necks to the work of the Lord. (chapters 3:1, 5, 12.)

Adversaries again sought to hinder them. They were wroth, and manifested great indignation when they heard of the building of the wall, mocked the Jews, and said, What do these feeble Jews? &c. But Nehemiah and his brethren made God their refuge, as faith always does. So they built the wall, for the people had a mind to work. (chapters 4:1-6.)

The adversaries again tried to stop these faithful servants of God. Having despised, they now seek to fight. Still, the people of God made Him their refuge, and set a watch against these men day and night, and built the wall with one hand, while holding a weapon of defense in the other. At this time they find a serious occasion for self-judgment, for how could they expect to prosper in God's

service and overcome their enemies, if they themselves were acting contrary to God's mind? There was a charge of brother opposing brother. This was very serious. It was solemnly judged, and restoration was made by the erring brothers. It was well settled, and that too in the presence of all the congregation, and so unanimously, that "all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord." From that time, Nehemiah was appointed governor in the land of Judah.

But this is not all. The adversaries now try another plan. Having openly sought to withstand them and failed, they now seek to overcome Nehemiah by deception. Nehemiah, however, goes forward, and patiently and perseveringly resists every inducement to leave the work of the Lord; so that their adversaries were much cast down, for they perceived that this work was wrought of God. Some, however, as is usually the case, seemed carried away. (chapters 6:1-18.)

The wall being built, the doors set up, and the porters, singers, and Levites being appointed, and good order established, Nehemiah gathered together the nobles, rulers, and people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. (chapters 7:1-5.) Some among the priests, because they could not find their genealogy, were put from the priesthood as polluted, and not allowed to eat of the most holy things. (chapters 7:64, 65.) The census of the congregation was then taken, also the number of the servants, singing men and women, horses, camels, treasures of gold and silver, and priests' garments.

In the next chapter we see them "gathered together as one man," and they sent for Ezra to teach them the Scriptures. They own the authority of the word. Some wept when they heard it, but they were told to hold their peace; for the day is holy, to "eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Having discovered in the book of the law that God had instituted a feast of tabernacles, they kept it, according to the manner, with very great gladness; for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun had not the children of Israel done so. (chapters 8)

We next see the children of Israel assembled with fasting, and sackcloth and earth upon them, and they separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. One-fourth part of the day they read the book of the law of the Lord their God, and another fourth part of the day they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God. Their confession and prayer, as recorded in the ninth chapter, is most touching, and they entered into a covenant and signed it, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law which was given by Moses. Alas! how little did they know themselves! They solemnly took a place of thorough separation from the Gentile, stood firmly for maintaining the sanctity of the Sabbath, and many other ordinances, pledging themselves also not to forsake the house of their God. (Chap. 10.) How little they knew their own weakness!

There is something very humiliating in a time of such revival and blessing, to find the power of the Gentile king shewing itself in reference to their arrangements. (chapters 11:23, 24.) It must have made the faithful feel that they were not only a remnant, but reaping the bitter fruits of previous sins; just as it is with the faithful now. But the wall was dedicated. The Levites, priests, singers, and princes of Judah assembled together, and offered great sacrifices and rejoiced; for "God had made them rejoice with great joy." (chapters 12:27-43).

Still they read the book of the law; but, sad to say, that while Nehemiah was absent from Jerusalem, Eliashib the priest, who was allied to Tobiah, one of the great enemies of the work, acted very unfaithfully—he prepared a great chamber for Tobiah in the court of the house of God. This was terrible. But when Nehemiah returned and heard of it, he contended with the rulers, cast all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber, cleansed the chambers, and used them again for the offerings for the Levites. He also appointed men that were counted faithful over the treasuries. He firmly, too, withstood the inroads made on the observance of the Sabbath day, and dealt very decidedly with those who intermarried with the heathen. Another terrible failure at last came out. We have seen how the priest acted towards wicked Tobiah; now, sad to say, it came out that the son of the high priest married the daughter of the other great adversary to the work, Sanballat. Lord, what is man! No sooner is there reviving and pouring out of blessing from the Lord, than ways indicative of terrible declension show themselves. Nehemiah, however, was faithful to God. Speaking of this son of the high priest, he says, “Therefore I chased him sore.” “Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.” (chapters 13:28, 29.)

The Need of My Conversion

MY DEAR■, I am truly grateful to you for your kind reception of my letter giving the account of my conversion, though I own your comment on it much surprised me; and yet, when I remember my own wrong thoughts on these subjects, perhaps I should not wonder after all. You said (I am informed), “He must have thought me very wicked or he would not have sent it to me.” No, dear—, I did not intend to convey the thought to you that you were in my opinion an especially wicked person; on the contrary, as people go, I should have considered you decidedly above the usual level in the way of amiability and kindness; my every recollection of you leads me to this conclusion; but while I say this, I deem it right to set before you the ruin of the whole human family, and that you, amongst the number, share its consequences. If you intelligently grasp this truth, you will understand how all distinctions of class, education, and moral attainment are at an end, and the whole human family are on an equal footing in the sight of God.

As you have often read and know, the race of man takes its origin from Adam and Eve. He was formed out of the dust of the ground; she was made of his substance—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. When thus created they were set to stand for God, the center of the first creation, over which the dominion was entrusted to them (Genesis 1:28); but attached to their tenure of these rights for God was one condition. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (God’s prerogative) was absolutely and definitely debarred from them. You know their subsequent history, how Satan’s craft succeeds too well, how Eve becomes his victim, how her husband is seduced by her, and thus how the place allotted to them is forfeited and lost to them forever. Man in his first condition, created sinless but liable to sin, fails under the primal test applied to him, and thus becomes a fallen creature, and is consequently banished from the presence of God. God is changeless in His holiness. Adam and Eve are sinners now, no longer innocent, and consequently an insuperable barrier exists between them, and our forefathers are driven out from the face of their Creator. Does not this failure influence us? Do we not feel its effects? Most assuredly we do. Just as when a forest tree succumbs to the strokes of the woodman’s ax, every branch and tendril, every bud or blossom, each bough and leaf will feel the influence of its fall, and lose of course vitality. So with us: as yet unborn, but all foreseen according to the mind of God, the whole of Adam’s race must feel the effects of the one act of disobedience resulting in his banishment from God. He falls; his children yet unborn fall with him. When they enter the world in infancy, they are found shut out from God, “far off” from Him, and “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1:13.) What a solemn thought it is, and one we do well to ponder, that all alike are thus shut out from God by nature! The infant in its mother’s arms, the full-grown man in all the vigor of his maturity, the centenarian in his old age, are all alike in this their death by nature, and their natural distance from God.

This truth, once clearly grasped, sets at rest all thoughts of intrinsic goodness, natural fitness to approach God. We are a fallen race, a race in whom the poison of sin is found by nature, and as such cannot draw near to a holy God, who cannot for a moment brook the presence of evil. It is of course quite true that cultivation and moral attainment may work wonders, but where can the man

be found in whom there is not the germ, the root of evil? And even were this perfectly kept under by restraint and strict self-government, we must admit it were enough to forever preclude him from the presence of Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity." We value, and justly, the amiable and the good, and prefer association with them to companionship with the violent and corrupt; but alas! we must admit that those most gifted with the amiabilities of nature are before the Lord as much "the lost," as those whose walk and ways preclude us from their company. Adam and Adam's race are doomed forever. Not one exception to the rule has ever been or ever will be found.

Surely you too, dear—, are not without your place in this general ruin, universal failure; you too may trace your pedigree to Adam, and discover that through his transgression, you are amongst the banished from God's presence.

But perhaps it might occur to you that man in later days recovered himself, and was enabled to regain his lost position, and that thus like him you too might have a chance of earning God's good pleasure. On the contrary, the patient study of the Scriptures will most clearly prove that though the utmost opportunity was given to the race of man to show themselves once more the worthy objects of God's confidence, they only sinned more grievously than before, and thereby increased if possible the distance that already separated Him and them, and proved beyond all question that root and stem alike were past improvement. Like a farm that some adventurous agriculturist becomes the tenant of, he tries his utmost skill upon the land, the most approved courses of rotation, the most skillful husbandry, the various manures of the newest and best recommended kinds, but all in vain. Crop after crop fails—year after year results in sorrow and disappointment, so at last he gives it up reluctantly, and recommences laboring on new soil altogether, and under different auspices.

So with the human race. They had failed under the first experiment. God begins again, and now leaves them to themselves to answer to the dictates of the conscience they had obtained through the fall, and choose the good and avoid the evil if they could; the knowledge of which they had sought, obtained, but could not profit by. Under the light of conscience, man was left from Adam's day to that of Moses; but the murder of Abel, the wickedness that brought in the flood, the independent action of the building of Babel's tower, with many another, are the proofs to us that Adam's race, under this new experiment, only prove themselves more utterly unworthy than before of God's good pleasure.

This crop has failed as well as its precursor, and now the God of patience tries a new experiment, and puts one race, a sample of the whole family, under a revealed code of instructions. What nation more favored than they; what people therefore better entitled to respond to all the care and culture granted to them! But their ways from first to last reveal the utter vileness of the human heart. They had hardly got the law they'd volunteered to keep, when they are found, in rank defiance of its first enactment, worshipping a golden calf! Their subsequent history only shows them even more unworthy of their place as God's witnesses on earth, God's servants; and at last, after many a century of long-suffering and forbearance, God gives them up, and makes them the slaves of those who should have been their vassals, had they been obedient to His law. And now another plan begins, another course of testing what the heart of man is, and whether under any trial it can bear fruit for God. The Gentile might have said, "My Jewish neighbor I despise, and had

I had his privileges I had not been found like him so utterly disregardless of the claims of God and man,” and therefore God takes him up next, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon’s king, and puts the scepter of power into his hands. Can he say, “I have never sinned, my history records no failure?” On the contrary, scarcely had the reins of government been entrusted to him than, afraid to lose them, and without the holy fear of God that should have filled his soul, he plunges all within his realm into open idol worship. Thus the Gentiles too are found swelling the ranks of those whose ways are contrary on every hand to God. But yet again the balances of the sanctuary are put into exercise, and the most searching test of all is now before us. “It may be,” God had said, “they will reverence my Son when they see Him,” and Jesus enters on the scene. Could there be one more inoffensive, winning, gracious, gentle, one less calculated to provoke the enmity of man? He took no place when here; He interfered not with the schemes of man, and all their plans of human aggrandizement and worldly honor; but such was their natural hatred of God, that the very presence of one like God aroused their wrath, and in result we find that king and ruler, priest and elder, soldier and civilian of the lower rank, coined together to crucify the only one that ever thoroughly returned good for evil, blessing in exchange for cursing. How completely is now exposed the utter baseness of the human heart, the unreclaimable condition of the human race! What can God do now but give it up? His tests are all exhausted; experiments He has no more to try; and the Cross is not only the most glaring display of the corruption and wickedness of the natural heart, but the evidence that man has come to an end before God, and that in the last Adam the race of the first runs out and is no more seen.

Like an hour-glass, whose sand is gradually seen to ebb as moment after moment fleets away, the last grain has now passed through the narrow aperture and the space above is vacant, while the heap below has reached its fullest measure. In Christ crucified, the race of Adam, man in the flesh, is judged, ends forever before God.

But now the hand of God is seen to exercise its energies to turn the glass, and once more the sand is seen in motion—not the same ‘tis true, though similar in many ways. Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, the Head of a new race, the firstborn of the new creation, and from Him flows out, as formerly there came from Adam, the stream of life that widens out into the countless masses of the heavenly family. The source of the first race was corrupt and tainted, and, therefore, to everyone that took their origin from it, the taint was conveyed, and consequent corruption was their state.

The Headspring of the new stream is infinitely pure, and therefore all who draw from it their source of life are like it pure and holy and without the chance of decay. The first life was liable to fail, and before it came to us had failed; the new existence, placed within the reach of all, can never fail—it comes from an incorruptible source, it is preserved in One who is Himself the incorruptible. Christ is the source of this new stream of life, and all who receive Him (John 1:12, 13) have part in it, and swell the waters that are fast rising to their proper level. The first to have their part in it were those on whom the risen Saviour breathed (John 20:22), though centuries before God had a people spared amid the universal ruin, from Adam down to Christ, and from that day to this the stream has still been swelling on, and by the power of God souls “lost” through Adam’s fall have turned their eye to Christ, and thus, through faith in Him, exchanged their place in Adam for a place in Him, stepped out of the ruin of the first creation to stand before God in all the liberty and blessedness of the new race that He now sees in Christ, His own beloved Son.

This was the truth that He Himself explained to Nicodemus (John 3), this was the truth the Jewish teacher found so hard to understand, “Ye must be born again.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”— the first creation; “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”— the new race. But here He did not stop. He further said, “The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” And thus before the astonished ruler’s eyes was unfolded the way in which he was to be transferred from the low level of the first creation to the high platform of the new creation. And, as we judge from chapter 7 and 19, He believed on Jesus, renounced himself in Adam, and became possessor of eternal life in Christ the Son of God. As to the wondrous privileges and blessings inseparable from this life the scripture is not silent, as a careful study of John 14 to 20 will show clearly. His “life” is ours as we have seen, His “Father” thus becomes our Father, His “God” our God, His “peace” is ours, His “joy,” His “love,” His “words,” refresh our hearts, His “word” directs our pathway, until His “glory” becomes ours, and we become like Him, and, far more, live with Him forever. I do not dwell on these, but I would rather pause and ask you, dear—, whether it is not sadly true that you with all the human race are on an equal footing in the sight of God, and therefore need like I did “conversion.” This is freely offered to you now. Do not refuse it, but like me confess your lost, dread condition, and believe on the Lord Jesus unto everlasting life. (1 John 5:13.) Believe me, ever yours affectionately.

The Praying Wife

A POOR woman at B., in Wiltshire, the wife of a day laborer, being called by the grace of God, her husband became a bitter persecutor; and because his wife would not relinquish the service of God, he frequently turned her out of doors in the night, and during the winter season. The wife, being a prudent woman, did not expose this cruelty to her neighbors, but, on the contrary, to avoid their observation, she went into the adjacent fields, and betook herself to prayer. Greatly distressed, but not in despair, her only encouragement was that with God all things are possible. She therefore resolved to set apart one hour every day to pray for the conversion of her persecuting husband. This she was enabled to do without missing one day for a whole year. Seeing no change in her husband, she formed a second resolution to persevere for six months longer, which she did up to the last day, when she retired at about twelve o'clock as usual, and as she thought for the last time. Fearing that her wishes in this instance might be contrary to the will of God, she resolved to call no more on Him; her desire not being granted, her expectation appeared to be cut off. That same day her husband returned from his labor in a state of deep dejection; and instead of sitting down as usual to his dinner, he proceeded directly to his chamber. His wife followed, and heard, to her grateful astonishment, that he who used to mock had returned to pray.

He came down stairs, but refused to eat, and returned again to his labor till the evening. When he came home his wife affectionately asked him, "What is the matter?" "Matter enough," said he; "I am a lost sinner. About twelve o'clock this morning," continued he, "I was at my work, and a passage of Scripture was deeply impressed on my mind, which I cannot get rid of, and I am sure I am lost." His wife encouraged him to call upon the Lord, but he replied, "Oh, wife, it is of no use; there is no forgiveness for me." Smitten with remorse at the recollection of his former conduct, he said to her, "Will you forgive me?" She replied, "Oh! yes." "Will you pray for me?" "Oh! yes, that I will." "Will you pray for me now?" "That I will with all my heart." They instantly fell on their knees, and wept and made supplication. His tears of penitence mingled with her tears of gratitude and joy. He became very decidedly pious, and afterward greatly exerted himself to make his neighbors acquainted with the way of salvation by Christ Jesus.

How many Christian wives who read these pages will be ready to exclaim, "I also have an unsaved husband!" While enjoying peace with God in their own souls, how bitterly they feel the sorrow of having husbands who, if not persecutors, yet know not the Lord Jesus. Some of them may be both moral and kind; as they say, "not interfering with their wives in religious matters;" still the thought of being linked with one whose whole heart and moral being is without Christ, and that unless born again must be shut out from the presence of God and the Lamb forever, and shut into everlasting darkness, is such a burden and sorrow that the loving heart cannot but most keenly feel. To say nothing of the present distress of being linked with one in the closest natural ties, to whom the heart cannot unburden itself in matters of deepest interest; yet painful as this is, it sinks into comparative nothingness when compared with the vital and eternal view of the matter. How many wives feel this! And where can the heart of the loving, praying wife find repose but in pouring out

its deep yearning into the listening ear of her prayer-answering God and Father? “Long have I done this,” says one dear wife, “but the answer has not yet come.” Well, dear soul, pray on; “continue in prayer;” and see to it that there is no idol carried in your bosom, no sin excused, no evil tolerated by you. If you knew the Lord before your marriage, own the deep sin of being unequally yoked; make solemn confession to God; judge yourself about it in His presence; for “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 Corinthians 11:31); and again, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John 1:9.) With self-judgment, self-abasement, and deeply-felt weakness, plead with God your Father in the name of His beloved Son, and He will assuredly answer you. Doubt not; for Jesus said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be gloried in the Son.” (John 14:13.) Rely on the all-prevailing plea of the name of God’s only-begotten Son.

We have long said, from what we have seen of the work of the Lord, that He seems to delight to answer the prayers of wives for their unconverted husbands. We have known many of such marvelous acting’s of divine grace; and does not Scripture encourage us to hope that it would be so? “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” (1 Peter 3:1,2.) Do you think that God would thus speak of the believing wife winning the unbelieving husband unless it were His own purpose to bless? Believing wives, then, do count upon God! Do not reckon upon stratagem! Do not for a moment adopt crooked ways! Be upright before God! Be faithful, chaste, and godly in your conduct! Set your heart on God, that by His grace your husband may be won for Christ. Remember that “he that winneth souls is wise.” Above all, reckon only upon God for blessing. Encourage your heart in Him. Your path is very difficult and trying. He knows it, and He can and will give you grace to go through it. Look up and expect blessing from God, counting only on the almightiness of His arm, and the omnipotence of divine grace. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32.)

The Pilgrim

"The way is dark, my Father; cloud on cloud
Is gathering o'er my head; and loud
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered; Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom lead safely home
Thy child.

"The way is long, my Father! and my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal;
While yet I journey through this land,
Keep me from wandering. Father! take my hand,
Quickly and straight lead to heaven's gate
Thy child.

"The path is rough, my Father; many a thorn
Has pierced me, and my weary feet are torn,
And bleeding mark the way. Yet Thy command
Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand,
Then safe and blest, lead up to rest
Thy child.

"Thy cross is heavy, Father! I have borne
So long, and still do bear it. Let my worn
And fainting spirit rise to that blest land
Where crowns are given. Father, take my hand,
And reaching down, lead to Thy crown
Thy child."

"The way is dark, my child! but leads to light;
I would not have thee always walk by sight.

My dealings now thou canst not understand;
I meant it so; but I will take thy hand,
And through the gloom lead safely home
My child.

"The way is long, my child! but it shall be
Not one step longer than is good for thee;
And thou shalt know at last, when thou shalt stand
Close to the gate, how I did take thy hand,
And quick and straight lead to heaven's gate
My child.

"The path is rough, my child! but oh, how sweet
Will be the rest, for weary pilgrims meet,
When thou shalt reach the border of that land
To which I lead thee, as I take thy hand,
And safe and blest with Me shall rest
My child.

"The cross is heavy, child! yet there is One
Who bore a heavier for thee: My Son,
My well-beloved; with Him bear thine, and stand
With Him at last; and from thy Father's hand,
Thy cross laid down, receive thy crown,
My child."

Extract From A Letter

You insist upon the full accomplishing of the bruising of the head of the serpent, or of the destruction of the works of the devil by the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to annul or blot out all trace of the enemy's power. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15.) "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8.) The bruising of the serpent's head by Him who was to have His heel bruised by the same serpent is indeed a precious prophecy of the victory of the Son of God made the Seed of the woman; and it will without doubt or fail yet have its most complete accomplishment according to God's mind and word. But His own subsequent word, the further unfolding of His mind in the Scriptures, alone can bear light as to this earliest promise.

I might stand, however, on the very terms of this passage, as you do, and at once deny your thought upon it; for you say the promise is of a universal character. It is not what a "partialist," as you speak, would make it, but it amounts to the full blotting out of the power of the serpent. But if we take the very letter of the word, I say the letter of the word forbids the conclusion that the seed of the serpent are ever to be reconciled to the seed of the woman. Enmity, and nothing but enmity, is to mark their correspondence forever. The passage taken by itself does not hint at any change whatever. Enmity is put between the parties, and nothing beyond that is hinted at. This, if we are confined to the passages, is what we learn; and when I consult Scripture further upon it, I find in John 8 for instance, where the Lord very expressly takes up this thought of the two seeds, calling the Jews who were resisting Him, the seed of the devil, and telling them that the works of their father they would do, describing Himself as from above, and them as from beneath. Here in this most awful and serious discourse our blessed Lord directly says to them, "Ye shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come." "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

Now, dear sir, not to go beyond this, as to Genesis 3:16. I again say that were I to confine myself simply to the passage, I might insist that enmity between the two seeds is left incurable. No hope of reconciliation at any time, though you insist upon that; and when I open the place where our Lord specially has His thoughts upon the two seeds, He says to the seed of the serpent, "Whither I go ye cannot come," and faith in Him the only escape from dying in sins, and from this result of such dying not going where He was going.

The apostle is speaking to believers when he says, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Then as to 1 John 3:9, the apostle is speaking of the moral virtue of the seed of God in man—that it is a principle of holiness and obedience. That seed remains in the one that is born of God. Life in the Son of God by faith is the same as this being born of God, and in the Son of God is no sin. He is the beginning of the new creation. "He that committeth sin is of the devil;" and the Son of God was manifested for the very opposite purpose—to destroy the works of the devil, not to combine with them, or to aid or vindicate them, but to destroy them—to bring the very

contradictory principle into all born of God.

This is what we are taught here. But to argue from these words that the Lord Jesus Christ is so to act as to annul or blot out all the results of sin is wide indeed from the simplicity of the passage. Nay, the very passage maintains the strongest assertion to exhibition of the contrary; for it goes on to declare a manifestation of the works of the devil in the unrighteousness's and enmities of the devil's children.

Were the wicked one's works in Cain destroyed? Nay, they took their full course, and He slew his brother. Are the wicked one's works in the world destroyed? No; it hates the brethren, as with Cain, a murderous hatred; and no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. The whole world lieth in the wicked one instead of having his works in it destroyed.

J. G. B.

Paul's Voyage

"IT is a thought full of interest in connection with the subject before us that Paul's voyage to Rome gives us the history of the Church as regards its earthly destinies. The vessel sets out in due order, as a compact and well-regulated thing, framed to endure the violence of the stormy ocean over which it had to pass. After a time the apostle offers a certain suggestion, which being rejected, the ship is dashed to pieces by the waves. There was, however, an important distinction between the vessel and the individuals on board—the former was lost, the latter were all saved. Let us apply all this to the history of the Church in its earthly path. The testimony, as we know, emanated from Jerusalem, from whence Paul started on his way to Rome. Apostolic testimony was designed to guide the Church in its earthly course and preserve it from shipwreck; but this being rejected, failure and ruin were the consequences. But in the progress of the failure we perceive the distinction between the preservation of the Church's corporate testimony and individual faithfulness and salvation. "He that hath ears to hear" will always find a word of instruction and guidance for him in times of thickest darkness. The waves may dash in pieces the corporate thing, everything connected with earth may vanish away, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Esther

IN the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, there is frequent reference to God, and especially as “the God of heaven,” but in the book of Esther the names of God, Lord, or Jehovah do not appear. But though God is not openly alluded to, His acting’s, to a Spirit-taught mind, are clearly manifest in caring for His own, however low their condition and degrading the circumstances in which they are found.

The scene is the palace of a Persian king. With all its splendor it is man without God. Two Jews are found there, and so far sunken from the sense of their standing of blessedness, as the peculiar objects of God’s love and care, that they are hanging about the Persian court seeking its honor and favor’s. Besides these, multitudes of Jews are scattered throughout the king’s provinces. They had been left in captivity in weakness and reproach, and still are under the world’s power. They are not therefore now standing in open relation to God. It is no marvel then that the name of God does not appear throughout this little book.

Mordecai was a Benjamite. He had been carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. He had brought up Esther, his uncle’s daughter, because she was an orphan. Her beauty was proverbial, and she was taken to the palace to be the king’s wife, because he had set aside Vashti, the Gentile wife. The king delighted in her, and she and Mordecai kept quite secret that they were Jews. The king made a great feast, and called it Esther’s feast. Mordecai was faithful to the king, and when he knew the king’s life was in danger through two of his chamberlains, he told Esther, the queen, and the facts being brought to light, both of the chamberlains were hanged on a tree. In all this we see nothing superior to heathenism. (chapters 2:5-32.)

The man, however, who was in the highest office in the empire, even above all the princes, was Haman, an Agagite, a descendant of Amalek. To him therefore Mordecai refused to pay any respect. This was faithful as a Jew. No doubt he remembered that God had sworn that He would have war with Amalek, from generation to generation. (Exodus 17:16.) In this he firmly persisted, and it so wounded this Amalekite that he got the king to issue a proclamation, that on a certain day all the Jews in all the king’s provinces should be killed. (chapters 3:1-3.) But this was not all, Haman also ordered a gallows to be made fifty cubits high to hang Mordecai thereon.

At all this Mordecai and Esther were greatly distressed, and in fact Mordecai also rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the middle of the city, and cried a loud and bitter cry; he came to the king’s gate, and sent word to Esther to make supplication for him and his people. In every province also there was great mourning and fasting among the Jews. (chapters 4:1, 3, 8, 16.) Haman’s hatred to Mordecai becomes intensified (chapters 5:13, 14), but when at its height, and before Esther had made supplication to the king for the Jews, the power of God is manifestly put forth on their behalf; for however sunken and degraded they may be, God is still Israel’s God. In a certain sense it is still true, that “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. God brought them out of Egypt.... Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel,” &c. (Numbers

24:21-23.) Observe, therefore, that “On that night could not the king sleep,” and he orders the word of the chronicles to be read before him. In this way he heard of Mordecai’s faithfulness in saving the life of the king, and that nothing had been done for him. (chapters 6:1-3.) The result was that Mordecai was exalted to honor; and observe, Haman was commanded by the king to take “royal apparel and the king’s horse, and he arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor” (verse 11). But Haman was hanged on the gallows he had made for Mordecai. Haman’s sons also were hanged upon the gallows, because he had his hand against the Jews. Through the intercession of Esther the queen, a proclamation was sent through all the provinces, that the Jews were to “stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and cause to perish, all that would assault them.” (chapters 7:3-10; 8:1-11.) The result was that the Jews had rule over them that hated them, and the whole thing turned from sorrow to joy. Mordecai (no doubt a type of Him who was first hated and rejected, but will yet be ruler over Israel) was “great among the Jews, accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.” (chapter 10:3.)

“Behold, Now is the Accepted Time.”

NOT next year, but now; not tomorrow, but today; for we know not what an hour may bring forth. Your case is urgent. To you it may be said, “This night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Tomorrow you may be in eternity. Beware then, we most lovingly say, of trifling with your soul’s salvation, for every one shall give account of himself to God. Remember the solemn, searching questions of Jesus, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Consider then, dear reader, that “now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Turn to the Lord now. Oh, do not put it off! It is of vital moment. God says, “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Do hearken to God’s voice now, and do not harden your heart. You are doing one or the other—hearkening to His voice, or hardening your heart. Which is it? How very solemn is the fact that under the sound of the gospel men are hardening their hearts, refusing God’s voice, not receiving His word, many hearing as if they heard not, making a thousand excuses for not coming to the stretched out arms of the sinner-loving Saviour, and receiving forgiveness of Him and eternal life. Do, dear reader, solemnly think of this. Beware of refusing Him that speaketh, for God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son, and still He speaks about His Son, His love, His finished work upon the cross, His atoning death, His being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and now crowned with glory and honor at His right hand. I say, God now speaks to us about His Son, as the only salvation, the only righteousness, the only way of access into God’s most holy presence. How can you escape then, if you neglect this great salvation? You perhaps, like many others, intend to be saved one day; but if you refuse the Saviour now, how do you know that that day will ever come? How many souls are caught in this snare of Satan! They try to satisfy themselves that they intend at some future time to come to Jesus; and, if not before, on their death bed. But, alas! alas! they refuse God’s “now;” they will not come “today;” so that instead of a lingering death-bed, as they imagined, they may be suddenly surprised to find themselves in eternity. How solemn this is, and yet how often true!

Beware then, dear reader, of procrastination! Time is short. Your life is but as a vapor. Eternity may be nearer than you think. The Lord Jesus is coming quickly. You know you are not saved—that you have not peace with God. Still the door is open, and God in His rich mercy still calls to you in the gospel to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that you may be saved. Do think of this. The gospel is God’s message to you, and He says “today”—“now.” Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.

Once more, beware of refusing Jesus. He delights to save a lost one. He welcomes, cleanses, saves forever, and casts out none that come to Him.

“Stop, poor sinner, stop and think,

Before you further go;

Will you sport upon the brink

Of everlasting woe?

Once again I pray you stop,

And Christ as Saviour take;

Or, ere you are aware, you drop

Into the burning lake.”

It was a bright clear night in December, and the good ship Harriet, under reefed topsails, was coming up the Channel before a stiff breeze. Every heart on board was glad; for, after a long and perilous voyage, she was “homeward bound.” On the quarter-deck Capt. H. and Edward L., his first mate, were standing talking together. “We shall be in dock before Christmas, if the wind holds,” L. said. “It is not well for a sailor to set his mind too much on anything, but I have set mine on being in the dear old home at Christmas this year. It is four years since we all met at home, and father and mother say it hasn’t been half Christmas without me.”

Captain H. listened to the young sailor’s eager words; then laying his hand kindly on his shoulder, said gravely, “I do not wonder at your wish, Edward. It is a great pleasure to get home, especially to such a happy home as yours is at Christmas time. But there is something I should like you to wish for still more than that. I want you to be sure that when the voyage of life is passed, there remaineth for you a rest in the glorious home above—

‘Where all the ship’s company meet,

Who sail’ d with their Saviour below.’”

L. was silent for a moment, and grasped the captain’s hand in his. “Captain, you have been a kind friend to me ever since I can remember. If all Christians were like you, I can only say I wish there were more of them. And more than that, what you have so often said to me about religion has made me think very seriously. I really intend to serve Christ too, but not just yet.”

“And why not now, L.?” asked his friend. “I am afraid you will think me cowardly, if I tell you, captain. The truth is that our people always give a ball at Christmas, and it would be a terrible disappointment to them, if I were to hold aloof. They would say I had turned Puritan, and lost my spirits, and I don’t know what else, and it would seem hard to give them pain just on first going home. So I have made up my mind to keep on as usual till after that. Besides, he added, with the frankness of a true English sailor, I expect it will be a downright jolly time, and I’m not inclined to give it up on my own account. But after Christmas, captain, I will turn over a new leaf; see if I don’t.”

The captain felt that human pleading would have little power to overturn the young man’s purpose. In his anxiety, he had recourse to prayer. Standing still, with uncovered head, on the heaving deck, he prayed earnestly, though silently, to his Father in heaven, who could convince his young friend that now was the only certain day of salvation.

L. understood, and felt the unspoken prayer, the words of which he could not hear. His head was bowed too, and his spirit deeply moved; but the tempter was at hand with the deadly suggestion that it was quite as safe, — far better to wait awhile. As the captain bade him “good night,” before

turning in, he said gaily, "Now don't be anxious about me, captain; Christmas will soon be here, and you have my promise after that."

The captain went below, and left the brave young fellow on deck, bright and mirthful, and ready to quench every feeling of misgiving that the captain's prayer had caused by lively anticipations of home.

Not ten minutes had passed, when the captain heard hurried footsteps on the deck, then the sharp, clear cry, "Man overboard;" when in another instant he had dashed up the companion-ladder, and looked around. He scarcely needed to ask, "Who is it?" for had it not been Edward L. he would have seen him at once among the gallant fellows who were lowering the boat, ready to peril their own lives to rescue the man in danger. Yes, it was Edward L. Reaching over the quarter-deck to draw an entangled log line he had lost his foothold, and fallen overboard, and the ship went on her rapid way without him. Everything was done that stout arms and brave hearts could do; but all was in vain. The men strained at the oars only to see him throw up his arms and sink. Christmas with its mirth and festivity came to others, but not to him; and as he went down in the cold waters, leaving hope and life behind him forever, it would add a terrible keenness to his agony to remember that not many minutes before that eternal life had been offered to him through Jesus, and he had refused it.

Again, dear reader, we beseech you, in the name of the sinner-loving Jesus, to lay to heart this matter of eternal importance—your own soul's salvation. God says now, — what do you say? Do you at this moment bow before God to His judgment of your state, who declares you to be guilty before Him? Edward L. did not believe that God meant what He said; but alas! alas! how soon, how very soon, he found himself in eternity! Oh, then, dear reader, accept God's truth now; bow before Him confessing yourself a guilty sinner now; flee to the outstretched arms of Jesus now; rely on His precious blood now—yes, "today," "now,"— tomorrow may be too late!

To One who had Written a Tract Denying Everlasting Punishment

IF it be in degree so far behind, yet in the character of it I am reminded of the Epistle to the Galatians. Paul had the happiest recollections of them in all former and personal intercourse with them, and this aggravated his sorrow, and gave tenderness to his mind, when writing on their error; but it did not abate the decision with which he removed the evil and wrongness of their thoughts.

And the history of the Galatians is specially serious, because it is witness to us that the very disciples who stood for a time highest in their devotedness to the truth, and dearest in the love of the apostle, were those among all the churches who were the most beguiled, and led from the simple truth of God. Those who would have plucked out their eyes for him now cause him to say, "I stand in doubt of you." Serious and sorrowful, surely, dear sir, this is. But it is written for our learning, that we may not be taken by surprise by anything, however strange, in the progress of our walk across this evil scene of Satan's subtlety and delusion.

It is not my desire to go through the scriptures which your pamphlet has cited. It is enough for me to say that there is not one of them, I think I may say, that, rightly judged, gives even color to your conclusion. If I were seated by your side, I would gladly with you, one by one, try their real value and your interpretation of them by the light of their several contexts, trusting the Spirit of truth to guide through them into the mind of God.

But I could not now as with paper and ink go through this large body of scripture texts. One thing I would, however, be exact and fuller upon; it is this, that the very principle on which you proceed to the consideration of these scriptures, and of all scripture, may account for any measure of error. You decide on what you term "the attributes of Deity," and reason from them, and you call on us to refuse any sentiment or opinion which will not flow from them. At the very first, I would say that this expression, "the attributes of Deity," or of God, is itself heathenish or philosophic, and the idea that it covers is no better. It does not convey the print of a divinely-taught mind, subject to God and His word, but comes from no higher than a human source. It is what flesh and blood reals to every man. It assumes that by wisdom we can know Him; it undertakes to discuss His nature, and it subjects Him to our minds, that we may hold Him to be just whatever they make Him; instead of being, as He is, above all that is in us, as well as of us. It is this that lies at the root of all this sad defilement, which has overspread your mind, and it would be in vain for anyone to draw your heart from the false light in which you have interpreted the scriptures without expressing this to you. Instead of coming to God's mind to be taught, not only the higher knowledge, but the very elements of divine light and wisdom, you bring certain elements with you. You have your own alphabet, your own language; you have your own first ideas, and all that is subsequently learned must either confirm them, or flow from them. I am aware that you judge yourself to have got these elements from Scripture, as well as your deeper and further knowledge; but in this you deceive yourself—I am thoroughly and altogether assured that you do. Insensibly you assume that certain "attributes" must belong to Deity, and in this light you test and interpret Scripture itself. I am

assured that in this way something disguising itself, as a minister of righteousness or as an angel of light, has beguiled you from the truth and corrupted your mind, once so pure in the knowledge of God, from the simplicity that is in Christ. And, oh my heart desires that you may be rescued from "this snare of the fowler." The virgin mind of Eve was deceived and defiled by the serpent. The virgin mind of the saint, when Christ was all its light and wisdom, may so be defiled likewise. (2 Corinthians 11) I know not where to look for defilement if I do not mark it in this independent exercise of the intellect or of the human affections. To judge of God previous to or independent of the revelation which He has given of Himself, is of the deepest departure from the principle of faith. I know you will tell me that you do not attempt this; but, whether consciously or unconsciously, it is plain to me that you do. Your constant mention of "attributes" expresses this character of mind very strongly, and you draw conclusions from the doctrine of endless punishment, as you speak and ask, How can they be viewed as consistent with love, which God is? All this sadly, sadly savours of the mere exercised intellect and affections of men; sweet and amiable they may be, but they are human. Oh, how truly grieved am I to find all this in one with whom my soul was once so sweetly knit in the truth and in the bowels of Christ Jesus. Indeed, I can say that this corruption of your mind has made me still increasingly long for that happy and perfect day of His presence when all human thoughts shall have perished, and the light of the Lord be the unrivalled and commanding light forever. Oh that the Lord may deliver your thoughts from this taint! Let me just ask you for an instant to set your way of stating God as love with the divine or Scripture way of stating it. You assert that God is love, and that it is our glory and joy to know this. This is not His "attribute," but His nature; but from this you draw your own conclusions. You take this blessed, sure, revealed truth as it is, and make it sustain all that your human heart wishes and your own reasoning suggests, and you call on us all to say, Can this be a truth if endless punishment be a truth? But all this is your own; I know that God is love, but then I read this, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Is this your conclusion? is this the language of your thoughts? No, this tells me the manner in which the love of God is acting among us, not in interposing to cut endless punishment short, but to provide a Saviour, faith in whom shall deliver from perishing. I must take the blessed One's own interpretation of his own counsels and acts, and I am forbidden by this Scripture to judge of the divine love as though it hindered, by its sovereign acting, the perishing of any creature; but I am taught by it to know what the way of this love is—that it has prided a Deliverer from perishing for all who will trust in Him. Your way of reasoning on what God is would lead you to deny that there could be in any part of His creation a single pang, were it not that the daily, hourly history of this evil and revolted world would be more than enough to condemn your conclusion as the vainest imagination. But I have no pleasure in exposing your mind even to yourself. You have been beguiled from the simplicity of faith. You do not now take the wisdom of God as all yours. There are ten thousand scriptures, as well as ten thousand daily providences that you must set aside by a bold hand (for I will not in your case say daring) ere you can make room for this freer human and philosophic conclusion. And, oh, that this may not be! May the light of God's precious words rebuke you, and restore your thoughts to their only path of righteousness, because your Shepherd and Teacher loves you, and will have you in mind subject and conformed to Himself.

I am quite sure that in our meditations on the ways of God our thoughts will often meet things that are too big for us, and may harass us for a season, and we may bring that trial of mind to the Lord

to have it subdued and removed. I see this in Scripture; I see it in Psalms 73 and Psalms 77; I see it in the opening of Jeremiah 12. There the prophet saw the wicked prospering, and he begs to plead with the Lord about that, for it was difficult and trying for him, and the Lord does not censure him, as in time, he allays the trial of the psalmist's mind on the same subject in Psalms 73. So in the Epistle to the Romans, the third, sixth, and ninth chapters give us instances of certain doctrines, stated by the apostle in the course of his teachings, awaking anxious thoughts in the minds of his hearers or disciples; and he allays these anxieties. As when the hearer of the precious doctrine that the Jew is equally with the Gentile in a state of guilt and condemnation, asks, "How then has the Jew any advantage?" (Romans 3:1), the apostle answers this anxiety. So in chapter 6, he corrects the conclusion of another on the doctrines of grace, that they would amount to a warrant for continuing in sin. Thus the Spirit meets the rising difficulties of the mind. He entertains the thoughts of man to a certain point, and allows Himself to be pleaded with and questioned; but if man will go too far, if man will dare to measure the divine procedure by his own understanding, or to question the revelation of God and charge it with wrong, then man must be silenced. It would be altogether unworthy of the Spirit of God to deal with Him in any other manner. "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" The condescending's of the Spirit to the thoughts and difficulties of the human mind must bear their measure, and if that mind exalt itself, if what at first was an infirmity became "the opposition of science," or the way of man who would be wise though he be but a wild ass's colt, then he is to be silenced. For God will be God. The intellectual man seeks to dethrone Him as much as the sensual man. But let who may eat of the tree and affect to be as God, he must be put outside the garden, like Adam of old. And so the Spirit treats the one who replies against the sovereign grace of God in Romans 9.

Yes, God will be God. He will silence the proud thoughts of our human intellects, and have them all in captivity. It is His right to have them there. I bless Him that He will not allow me to eat the tree, or affect His rights, or judge and discuss His ways independently of the light which He has given me Himself, or beyond the measure of that light. And now I do trust that you may be restored to see that He will not allow you to do this, and that you have been attempting this in a way suited, indeed, to alarm the saints of God with whom you once took such sweet counsel. Human affections are no more to be our light than the intellect. There is nothing in man that we can trust. One passage in your pamphlet makes conscience the arbiter of God's revelations; but conscience made Saul a persecutor of the Church, and will lead, and has led, many to judge that they did God service in the like persecutions. But will the principle avowed both in your paper and in your kind and indeed loving note to me (for which personally I have much more to thank you), bear the searching scrutiny of God's revealed will? You have, as I said at the beginning, disclosed the source of all this defilement—for I cannot call it less—which now overspreads your mind. You make yourself the judge of God's word, and do not receive that word as the former of all your thoughts and judgment. Anything may come of this, and if the mind be not restored to its righteous place of subjection, no amount or measure of departure from truth could possibly surprise me. I have known a sad history like this beginning with the point on which you now decide. "I speak as a man," says the apostle, in Romans 3. What is that but his owning, that, while he was opposing objections to the simplicity of divine doctrines, he was betraying the mind of a mere man? But what does that intimate but that the human mind, instead of being trusted, is to be thoroughly suspected, when it comes to handle the mysteries of God?

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Simple word, most clear and certain. It is also written, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in nowise enter therein. “The Scripture cannot be broken.” Remember that we are to tremble at God’s word (Isaiah 66)—that is, to trust it as God’s word, with reverence, bowing to it as our teacher, and not daring to make it speak the language of our hearts or understandings, but to bring every thought into captivity to its declaration. How can you—I do seriously ask you, and do put it again calmly and tremblingly to your heart—how can you treat the ten thousand passages which speak of God’s judgment against the unrepentant sinner as you do? Indeed, I know not. “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” If this thought about endless punishment arose in your heart and gave you uneasiness, or raised perplexity, as I have before spoken of, as a dear child of God, in the spirit of Jeremiah, you might have taken your anxiety of mind to the Lord, and laid it out in His presence, and spoken to Him upon it; or, in the spirit of fear that trembled at the word, you might surely have communicated your doubt to a brother in a fitting season. But to print and to publish as you have done so bold a questioning of the plainest words of God, and given them a sense which the honest conscience of the people of God, who in all ages have loved, served, and suffered for their Lord would have been thoroughly startled at, this is a bold deed on your part. And I ask you—I would ask any dear single-hearted saint who knows the way of the Spirit of God—what unction, what trace of the Spirit’s teaching, what that reaches the conscience or the affections in the Holy Ghost is there in the whole of the pamphlet? But you will excuse me all that I say and receive it in love. You have spoken as a man, as a mere man; but the Lord, I do trust, will lead you to speak again as one taught of Him.

The apostle avenged God’s quarrel on himself, as it were, when he found himself speaking as a man; and may you soon do the same, dear Mr. O—. Even a Peter had to be rebuked, and a Barnabas was led astray by others. What wonder, then, that any of us should be beguiled from the simple path for a season?

But “He restoreth my soul,” He is still the Shepherd. To His grace and teaching I do desire lovingly to commend you. The Lord lead you back out of this path into which another has led you, dear, dear sir, and believe me, in the Lord Jesus Christ, your affectionate,

J. G. B.

Job

THE book of Job shows us God's dealings with an individual soul, irrespective of dispensational acting's. In it different agencies are employed, but all of God. It is not a case of chastisement for sin, such as God's dealings with His servant David for numbering the people; but it is God disciplining the best man He then had in the world. God said, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." (chapter 1:8.) Clear however it is, that with all this blamelessness, he knew little of himself or of God. In these weighty lessons, God, through a path of deep, but necessary, sorrow, instructed and blessed His much-loved servant. In the scene of action we find God, Elihu, Satan, Job, his wife, children, property, men around, and friends. Satan accuses, and is allowed to bring fire down "from heaven" to burn up his sheep and servants, to stir up the Sabeans to take away his oxen and asses, slay his servants with the sword, and to move the Chaldean to carry away his camels, and slay the servants with the sword. Besides these calamities Satan is allowed to bring a great wind, and cause the house to fall upon his sons, and kill them where they were feasting; and moreover so to afflict his body with boils that he took a potsherd and scraped himself. His wife too, at this time, instead of being a comfort, bade him "curse God and die." This brought out not only the afflicted patriarch's rebuke, but he added, "What? shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" and the Holy Ghost tells us, that "in all this did not Job sin with his lips." (chapter 2:10.) These activities of the patriarch's faith in receiving every calamity from the hand of God, and his entire submission to His will, were all precious fruits of the Spirit in their season. But there are other lessons to be learned in the school of God. However unconscious to himself, his "friends" are now permitted to search him. Their sympathy was very sweet (chapters 2:11-13.) but, in his contentions with them, his own weakness, pride, self-confidence, and other fleshly workings are brought out. Chapters 3 to 31 are taken up with Job and his friends, making statements and replying. In this controversy Job says, "I am not wicked." (chapter 10:7.) "I know I shall be justified." (13:18.) "He breaketh me with breach upon breach.... Not for any injustice in mine hands; also my prayer is pure." (16:14-17.) "His way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips." (23:11-12.) "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (27:6.) "If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot has halted to deceit; let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." (31:5,6.) At the close of this chapter we read, "The words of Job are ended." Thus we see that this controversial intercourse manifestly brought out the pride and self-confidence of nature, before, perhaps, hidden from his view; and wholly failed to show him, that in him, that is in his flesh, dwelt no good thing.

Next we are told that Elihu's wrath was kindled against Job, "because he justified himself rather than God;" and against his three friends, because "they found no answer, and condemned Job." (chapters 32:2, 3.) He refers Job to the Almighty as the giver of understanding, reproves Job for saying, "I am clean without transgression; I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me. He findeth occasions against me; He counteth me for His enemy," &c. He assures Job that God is greater

than man, that His purpose in His dealings is to hide pride from man, to bring down in order to lift up, and that “He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.” (chapters 33:12-29.) Elihu also charges Job with multiplying words against God, and multiplying words without knowledge, and bids him hear attentively the noise of His voice, and the sound that goeth out of His mouth. (See chapter 34:37, 35:16, 37:2.)

After this God Himself speaks to His servant, not, as on another occasion to another servant, in “a still small voice,” but “out of a whirlwind.” We are told in the thirty-eighth chapter, “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me,” &c. God then speaks to him of His mighty power in creation, of His marvelous ways in providence, His variety of dealings with His creatures, and thus searches Job as to his knowledge and wisdom. Thus Job is now necessarily compelled to weigh himself, and his words and ways, not however in the company of fallible friends, but in the light and presence of Jehovah. Had he ever been really in God’s presence before?

Again, in the fortieth chapter, God speaks to Job as one who was contending with the Almighty, and reproving God. How very solemn! These charges though bring from the patriarch’s lips for the first time the confession, “Behold I am vile.” But true, most true as it was, this general acknowledgment was not enough; God must have particular confession of sins and failure, and the patriarch must be found in his true place, before God can exalt him. Once more the terrible whirlwind is hurled around this learner in the school of God, and again, out of it Jehovah speaks to His servant. Again, He bids him to gird up his loins as a man, and declare unto Him. “Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him? Deck thyself now with majesty,” &c. And again seeks further to instruct Job as to the almightiness of His power, &c.

All this makes Job feel thoroughly what it was to be in God’s presence. Accordingly, we read in the last chapter, “THEN,” not till then, Job answered Jehovah, and said, “I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee.” Thus was he conscious that he himself and every secret thought were before the eye of God. The words that God had spoken to him so fastened themselves on his mind that he repeats them: “Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?” The effect of which brings the confession, “Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.” Then he seems to repeat more of the words which God had spoken to him— “I will demand of thee, and answer thou me,” which bring him truly into the sense of being in God’s presence, and to find his becoming place before Him. Owing the previous soul-distance there had been between him and God, and with all his former knowledge and blamelessness of walk, he with brokenness of spirit exclaims, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” The discipline at last has its right effect. The God-fearing man has now to do with God as it were face to face; and he finds his true place, has a repentant mind, judging himself and his words according to God. He acknowledges that the place of “dust” becomes him as having a sinful nature, concerning which God had said, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;” and he takes the place of “ashes” too, because he feels that the lowest place of humiliation becomes him on account of practical failure; that he is only fit to be consumed by the fire of divine

holiness. He not only hates his ways, but he loathes himself. This is enough. Now, Job having got right with God, God reproves Eliphaz and his two friends for their folly, commends Job to them, and expresses His confidence that he will pray for them, when they offer for themselves the burnt-offering which He commanded them to bring. Job is now back again to the altar of burnt-offering, where he had not been since the beginning of his trial. (chapter 1:5.) Thus God begins to restore and honor His tried servant; for “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Lord, help us!

Now look at Job. Instead of being at a distance from God, he is in felt nearness to God— “now mine eye seeth Thee.” Instead of being upon a judgment-seat he falls before it. Instead, therefore, of justifying himself, he condemns himself. Instead of being occupied with the failure and wrong thoughts of others, he sees no one so vile as himself; he says, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Instead of contending with Mends, he prays for them. The trial therefore is at an end. Such discipline is no longer needed. Hence we read, “The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his Mends.” What important and needed lessons all this sets before us. New companions return, friends are restored, gifts liberally flow in, so that he soon becomes possessed of “twice as much as he had before;” he had too, far greater family comfort and blessing than ever. (Read prayerfully chapters 42:1-15.) No marvel then that the Holy Ghost should say by James, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” (James 5:11.)

“Loved,” “Washed,” “Made.”

Notes of an Address.

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him, be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindred, of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”— Rev. 1:5-7.

WE notice here three things Christ has done for His people, first, “loved us,” secondly, “washed us,” and thirdly “made us.” And we read of two classes here, those who would welcome the coming of the Lord, and those who would wail at the sight of Him. At any moment, Christ is ready to come. He is ready to “judge the quick and the dead” (1 Peter 4:5); “salvation also is ready—ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:5.) So He is ready to judge, and the salvation of His people is ready. It never could have been said that Christ was ready to be revealed in glory until redemption was an accomplished fact, until Christ had taken His seat in heavenly glory. But the session of the Lord at the right hand of God, and the descent of the Holy Ghost are unquestionable proofs that redemption is accomplished.

Man is no longer in a state of probation. His case has been thoroughly investigated, and he is proved to be a hopeless wreck. Man has been proved to be in the springs of his being, in the sources of his nature, and in the roots of his moral character, a hopeless ruin. But salvation is ready. God is ready too to judge. And what is He waiting for? Is it not for you? for you who have not yet received His salvation. (2 Peter 3:9.)

Here we read that He has “loved us.” This takes us back to the heart of Christ. His name is love: His heart is love. That Christ loves the sinner is the sweet assurance that the gospel gives to every soul. He died for sinners. He wept over impenitent sinners—over the city that rejected Him. He who shed these tears was God manifested in the flesh, — thus God’s tears flowed through human eyes. This is the heart of Christ; and He is the same, the very same, now upon the throne of God. “Oh that thou hadst known,” He said, as He wept over the sinners who would not have Him, “the things which belong unto thy peace.” O that you knew the depth of His love for your precious soul! But you say, “If you knew what a life I’ve lived, and what sins I have committed, you would never say that Christ loves me.” Ah, dear friend, He does know all about you, and in the full knowledge of all that you were, He became a man, and died for you. “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10.) And with triumph I ask you, Did Christ come from heaven to die because you were good? Did He not come into the world to save sinners? Are we not told that Christ died for the ungodly? Think then of His marvelous, matchless love!

Hebrews 9:26, is often misunderstood. “The end of the world” should be “the consummation of the ages.” It is not a question of chronology at all, it refers to God’s moral dealings with man in various ages, or dispensations. God had been testing and proving man. He had been found wanting, proved to be lost and ruined; and so the probationary period is closed, and “Christ appeared to put

away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

2. Christ has “washed us.” Christ can wash the vilest sinner, and wash him so white that even God’s eye will not detect a single spot. God uses in Scripture the most beautiful figures to fawn the all-cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” (Isaiah 1:18.) How striking the contrast! How perfect the cleansing. What can be whiter than the snow flake as it falls?

Remember what it cost Jesus to do this mighty work. His heart might yield up its treasures of affection, His tears might flow, but His tears of affection could not wash away sin. His blood only could do that. His love was not an inexpensive love, a love that cost Him nothing. Oh no, it cost Him His own life. He bore the judgment, and the wrath of God against sin, and to believe it for yourself and to trust in Him, you will know what it is to be washed from your sins in His own blood. Give Him then the confidence of your heart, only trust Him, and instead of feeling the dreadful burden of your own sins, you will know that the blood of Jesus has put them all away. The blood of Abel spoke from the ground condemnation; the blood of Christ speaks from the throne justification—infinite, entire remission of all sin.

3. “Made us”—“hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.” All believers are priests unto God (1 Peter 2:5); and this is the work of God, one of the substantial verities of His word. You no more made yourself a priest, than you washed away your sins. What I have to do is to walk in the place in which God has set me. The priestly service has to do with things pertaining to God. Its service is offering up spiritual sacrifices. The priests of old worshipped God in the temple, we too are called to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15.) This is what God seeks from us. Our hearts should utter a constant hallelujah. Our occupation in heaven will be to praise the love that brought us there. He hath made us priests unto God and His Father.

May we more learn Christ’s heart. He has “loved us,” “washed us,” and “made us.” He has made all believers “priests,” we shall soon reign with Him as “kings.” May we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, more fully realize what we are!

Made or Born?

RELIGION is fashionable and respectable, and most persons profess to practice it more or less.

They can tell you how they have been baptized, or made members of one denomination or another—attended church or chapel regularly—taken the sacrament—heard mass—said prayers—told their experience, and a number of other things, all of which are supposed by them to be so many steps towards heaven.

But when you talk to them of the Lord Jesus, you find that they have not yet accepted Him as their Saviour, but are in reality trusting to their religion, good desires, and good works, to obtain salvation for them. In fact they are like Nicodemus, of whom we read in John 3, full of religion, but utterly ignorant of Christ.

With all their religion, however, they cannot compare with Nicodemus, for the religion which he pressed was formerly authorized by God. While the religions they practice, when tested by God's word, are all found to be more or less opposed to God.

In all ages men have practiced religion with the object of gaining heaven, and the common notion is that without religion it is impossible to get there. But when Nicodemus presented himself to the One who says, "I am the door" (John 10:9), he found his key of religion of no use whatever, and heard those solemn words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.)

The very thing he had expected to obtain by his religion was exactly the thing which the Messiah Himself declared could not be had except on the ground of a new birth, of which truth Nicodemus, with all his religion, was so completely ignorant that Jesus said to him, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (verse 7.)

Dear soul, the Lord Jesus says to you, as He said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (verse 3.) Not, mark you, except he be religious—not except he has been baptized—not except he be a teetotaler—not except he take the sacrament—not except he go to class—not except he be a member, a priest, or a minister—but "except a man be born again, or anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

One of these "religion" men was trying one day to show an old believer in Christ Jesus that baptism was absolutely essential to salvation, and advising her that unless she submitted to this ceremony according to the forms of "his church," as he called it, she would certainly be lost.

"Ah!" said she, as in the light of God's truth she discerned the character of her adviser, "ye don't born em—ye mak' em—ye don't e'en give God fair play."

Dear soul, Are you a man-made Christian—or one born of God?

By nature you are a child of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalms 51:5), and it is absolutely essential, if you are to enter heaven, that you must be born anew! (John

3).

Not made—but born—born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:13.)

Unless you have received the Lord Jesus as your Saviour—unless you have accepted Him as the purger of your sins (Hebrews 1:3)— unless you have looked away from religion and self to Him as lifted up and bearing God's wrath in your stead (Romans 5:6-8; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28)— unless you are believing in Him only for your salvation—you have not been born again!

But if you have believed God's testimony about His Son, that He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring you to God (1 Peter 3:18); that He has met and fully satisfied all God's claims against you as a sinner, so that you are at peace with God through Him (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14-17; Colossians 1:20), if you can say from your heart that on account of what Jesus has done God in the riches of His grace has given you eternal life (Romans 6:23), and that you shall never perish (John 10:28), and shall not come into judgment (John 5:24)— you have received the Lord Jesus—and “as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12, 13.)

Dear reader, which are you? Made religious by man, or born of God!

Acceptance

THE conscience is made by many the measure of acceptance, instead of God Himself. I must know that He justifies me by the perfect One having gone down into death under judgment for me as the ground of peace, and what God says about that work in His word as the sure warrant for perfect peace in His presence. No doubt the conscience in this way will be purged by the blood of Jesus; but my comfort is, that God accepts and justifies me. It is God which justifieth. A believer is not only justified by faith, but he is called to live by faith.

“IF you look both to the laughing side and the weeping side of this world, and if you look not only upon the skin and color of things, but into their inwards, and the heart of their excellency, you will see that one look of Christ’s sweet and lovely eye is worth ten thousand worlds of such rotten stuff as the foolish sons of men set their hearts upon.”— RUTHERFORD.

A Warning

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” ■ 2 Cor. 6:14.

Passing through a quiet village in Somersetshire, we lately called on a Christian woman now somewhat advanced in life. We found her bright and happy, just beginning, as she said, after well-nigh forty years' knowledge of Christ as her Saviour, to have her soul drawn out to Him as the attractive and commanding object of her heart, and to practically own the authority of His word.

We talked happily together of the blessedness of being in Christ, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us as “the earnest of the inheritance.” But on inquiring after her husband, we quickly perceived that a tender cord was touched. With deep emotion, she replied that he was still unconverted, adding that she had deeply sinned against the Lord in having married an unbeliever, and then went on to say what soul-distress it had occasioned her, and what a hindrance she had felt this unequal yoke had been to her spiritual progress.

“When a young woman, about thirty-three years ago,” said she, my heart was full of the love of God. I was very happy in the Lord, united in fellowship with His people, and took the greatest delight in His service and ways. But a young man came in my way, whom I knew to be unconverted, to whom I gave my company, persuaded to do so by an aged relative. Thus I became ensnared, and one Lord's day evening he asked me to stay home with him instead of going to the preaching. Though shocked at the idea at first, I afterward foolishly yielded, hearkening to this unconverted young man instead of obeying the word of the Lord. After this I yielded in one way or other to this young man's solicitations, until one evening he sat down with others of my family to play with cards, and so pressed me to join them that, though I declined at first, I afterward yielded, and consented to what I knew was very displeasing to the Lord. No sooner, however, had I taken the cards into my hands than an indescribable pang seized me; in an instant I felt as if my body had suddenly swollen to enormous dimensions, and such darkness came upon my spirit as if the Lord had left me. This agony of mind, however, soon left me, and I went on with the game as one who entered into the sinful pleasure.

“At last the time drew near for our marriage, but one day, while sitting in that place” (pointing to a seat in the window), the words of Scripture, ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,’ came with such power to my soul that I could not forbear saying to my father, who was in the room at that time, Father, what am I going to do in marrying an unbeliever? “Here again,” said she, “I refused the word of God, and began to reason about the matter, so that I foolishly persuaded myself that, after a little while, he would be so benefited by my influence as to be truly converted to God. Thus I again and again deliberately sinned against God, listened to other voices instead of the authority of His word, and at last was married.”

“After this,” she added, “I became a prayerless soul. Sorrow upon sorrow came upon me. He proved to be a drunken husband, and my life was one of great misery. Within a year of our marriage, I was so unhappy that I resolved on committing suicide. Accordingly I went upstairs fully

determined to perpetrate the dreadful act. But, though Satan's power was so great, yet God had said, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further;' for, on reaching my room, I found myself suddenly dropping on my knees before God. Instead of destroying myself, I began to pray. From that moment I was again a praying woman, and began once more to enjoy something of God's love to me in Christ."

"Still my husband was a great sorrow. Drink he would have. My distress about him was sometimes very intense. On one occasion, I was in most earnest prayer to God for him, bathed in tears, for perhaps twenty minutes, and when I rose from my knees, to my astonishment I discovered that he was within hearing. Thirty-three years have passed, and though he is now sober, and does not object to listen to the Gospel, and is somewhat outwardly reformed, still he is unsaved."

"No one but God knows," said she, "what bitter fruits I have reaped for so willfully disobeying the word of the Lord in marrying an unbeliever. It is, indeed, an unequal yoke. My only reason for naming these particulars to you is, that you may repeat them to others, and warn them against this dreadful snare of the enemy."

Little need be added to the statement of this Christian woman, who often wiped off tears from her face while relating the solemn facts above mentioned. We must remember that God has given to us His word that we may know His will, and by obeying it do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Our minds are very capable of reasoning ourselves into an evil path, and Satan helps such by painting false hopes of the future to beguile the unwary into the present snare; but the word of the Lord endureth forever, and Jesus said that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words would not pass away. Nothing can be plainer in Scripture than the path of separation marked out for God's children from unbelievers. Instead of being yoked with them in marriage or partnership, we are to "come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing." "What can be the harm," say some, "of intimate association with a moral, well-behaved, upright man of the world, whose kindness, benevolence, and integrity are proverbial?" Thus man's heart reasons; it is rationalism, instead of obedience. The answer is, because God says it is His word, and therefore His will, "Come out from among them, and be separate." It is, then, simple obedience to do so. Those who decide on reasoning themselves into disobedience must reap bitter fruits, must learn that "the way of transgressors is hard," and that the path marked out in the word of God for us is that of "obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (I Peter 1:14-16.)

Should this paper fall into the hands of any who are exposed to this common snare of Satan of the unequal yoke, our hearts' desire and prayer to God is, that such may be so effectually warned as to look to God their Father in earnest prayer for deliverance, and to strengthen them in faith and godly purpose to stand upon this plain declaration of God's will, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Or should these lines meet the eye of one who has thus dishonored God, we most earnestly beseech you to turn to God with confession of the sin, acknowledging this deep dishonor to His name, and honestly and unreservedly cast yourself upon His grace and power, and He will assuredly give you to prove in your own soul not only that He is faithful and just to forgive you, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness, but, in some way or other, His mercy and goodness will be with you.

Thoughts on Revelation

AROUSE thee, my soul! look up,
And view what mortal eye cannot discern;
But faith can pierce the distance,
And behold the scene.
Lo! 'tis a radiant glory where
The Eternal sits enthroned—
Most wondrous sight! — and in the midst
“A Lamb as it had been slain.”
O precious “Lamb of God!” what love
To ruined man express'd in this,
Which wondering angels look into.
There, see the elders seated—
Hark to their song!
With golden harps supplied, they sing
“Worthy the Lamb who hast redeemed us
By Thy blood to God.”
Such the bright glimpse of the futurity
That waits the Bride of Him
Who once was slain—alive for evermore.
But stay, my soul! yet thou art here
Awhile to this dull scene of earth in bondage;
Redeem the time, dear saint, for
Thou canst not recall it.
With girded loins and well-trimm'd lamp,
Be active in the service of the Master;
He was the servant here, to show thee

What thy daily task should be;
He went about doing the Father's will—
Thus should the faithful servant
Wait his coming Lord,
With joy to hear the merited "Well done"
From lips that ne'er spake aught but good.
"Come, Lord Jesus," come, and take us
Where we long to be— "caught up,"
To "be forever with the Lord."
A. M. H.

The Psalms

MANY of the psalms were written by David. We are told so. We also find that other psalms were written by Asaph, the sons of Borah, Ethan the Ezrahite, and Moses.

David is emphatically called “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1); and surely no heart taught of God could sing of Israel, either as to her sorrows or blessings, and forget Israel’s king. Messiah’s sufferings therefore, and the glories which follow, are every here and there touched on. No doubt the Spirit of Christ energized the writers to set forth much concerning the remnant of Jews, who will be taught of God, and brought upon the scene after the church is gone. Inspired with Jewish hopes, and upright in heart, but fearing divine wrath, — finding themselves too in the midst of an apostate nation, surrounded by wicked Gentiles, and the terrible power of Satan let loose upon them, their afflictions will be very deep. We have, therefore, in the Psalms, besides the utterances of the remnant, sufferings of Jesus directly from God in atonement, on which all their blessings are securely founded, as Psalms 22; sufferings of Messiah by wicked hands, which bring judgment upon the people, as Psalms 69; and we find too that Jesus passed through sorrows in grace as will enable Him to sympathize with the faithful remnant by and by; “for in all their afflictions He was afflicted.” Parts of Psalms 102 and 89 show this.

Those who are acquainted with what Scripture teaches about “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” out of which he will be saved (Jeremiah 30:7), know something of the unparalleled suffering they must pass through until their Deliverer comes. The faithful putting their trust in Jehovah, relying on His faithfulness to accomplish His own promises, and their longings for deliverance, frequently occur; such as, “Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when God bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.” They will hope for Messiah’s reign, the greater than Solomon, as set forth in Psalms 72; for they know that their blessings will be associated with the manifestation of His power and glory. “Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion... When the Lord shall build up Zion, He will appear in His glory.” (Psalms 102) “For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it: and they that love His name shall dwell therein.” (Pe. 69:35, 36.)

That the Psalms treat of Israel, and not of the church of God (though there are many passages which believers now can take up for blessing and profit), has been lost sight of by many. The consequence has been much confusion as to interpretation, and necessarily loss of soul-blessing. Assuredly there are in this, as in every other inspired book, great principles of faith, and the expression of pious thoughts and feelings, which individual saints in all ages might take up; for whatever change in dispensation there may be, God is unchanged. We have in the Psalms many expressions of prayer, faith, and dependence, making God a refuge in trouble, as well as utterances of thankfulness, praise, and rejoicing. We do not, however, meet with what may be called proper and distinctive characteristics of Christianity, such as the spirit of sonship, worship in the holiest through the rent veil, the conscious indwelling of the Holy Ghost as the earnest of the

inheritance, and the hope of being caught up “to meet the Lord in the air.” The reason is obvious, because the Holy Ghost is here writing about Israel, whose calling, hope, and experience are so different from ours.

As long as souls are in bondage, not clear as to deliverance from the world, the flesh, and the law, and unconscious of their new place, character of blessing, and relationship, as having redemption in Christ Jesus and through His precious blood, they naturally turn to the Psalms, and try to comfort themselves by the thought that others have been equally in bondage and misery as themselves. But as soon as they enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and realize their nearness to God, and acceptance in the Beloved, they go to the epistles and other parts of Scripture, because they instinctively feel that much in the Psalms, not being proper Christian experience, does not suit them. There are parts which a faithful follower of Christ could not adopt, such as calling for vengeance on enemies, worshipping afar off “at His footstool,” the longing of the righteous to “inherit the land,” &c. This can be easily understood as referring to Israel, a people having the expectation of earthly blessings in their own land, and taught righteously to exact “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” Whereas the saints who compose the church of God are heavenly people, partakers of an heavenly calling, now seated and blessed in heavenly places in Christ, having the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, with liberty of access into the Holiest where Jesus is, and taught by Him to love our enemies, and meekly suffer for righteousness’ sake, while waiting for His return from heaven to catch us up to meet Him in the air. What a different experience of feeling and desire then such must have! As before noticed, some exercises might somewhat characterize both—such as God being our refuge, present help, strength, and source of blessing; for all are taught to walk by faith, and glory only in the Lord. This similarity and difference is noted by the apostle Peter in a quotation from Psalms 34:15,16. In chapter 3:12 of his first epistle he quotes: “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” Here he stops, because this quotation is equally true of the saints composing the church as of those who compose Israel; but he omits the last clause— “to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”— as not suited to us, though it is to Israel. Again, in the eighth of Romans, the Apostle Paul quotes from the forty-fourth Psalm, applying it to the path of the Christian now— “For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (verse 22.) But here the quotation ends, for, instead of in the spirit of the Jewish remnant, in their time of trouble, crying out to God saying, “Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? why hidest Thou Thy face?” &c., the apostle, as becomes followers of Christ, accepts it—and adds, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” (Romans 8:36, 37.) In Israel’s future (See Psalms 103:6), God will execute righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Now, however, we are taught to do well, suffer for it, and take it patiently (1 Peter 2:14); and that if we suffer for righteousness’ sake we should count ourselves happy. Did God execute righteous judgment for Jesus in the days of His flesh when He was oppressed? Did He do so for the apostle Paul when faithfulness to God brought him, through wicked men’s oppression, into prison? Did He so act on John’s behalf when banished to desolate Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ? But when Israel comes upon the scene of divine favor and blessing, after the church has been caught up, they will then know that God favors their cause and blesses them, and will do so more than ever He did in the earth; for the hope of the meek among them is to “inherit the earth.”

We have, therefore, in the Psalms promises to the faithful to “dwell in the land,” and “inherit the earth.” We have also such texts as the Lord is against evil-doers, — “to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.” “Such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of Him shall be cut off.” (37:22.) “Thou hast scattered us among the heathen.” (44:11.) “Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.” (59:5.) “God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah.” (69:35.) “O God, why hast Thou cast us off forever? why doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture?” (74:1.) “He shall cut off the spirit of princes; He is terrible to the kings of the earth.” (76:12.) “Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place.” (79:6, 7.) “Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera... Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb.... O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flames setteth the mountains on fire; so persecute them with Thy tempest.” (83:9-18.) “Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land... I will early destroy all the wicked of the land.” (101:6, 8.) “Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion.... So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory.... This shall be written for the generation to come.... The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee.” (102.) “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.” (107:2, 3.) “The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure.” (135:4.) “He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him.” (148:14.)

How could any one who knows that he has passed from death unto life, is now seated in Christ in heavenly places, and called to follow Christ, who loved His enemies, prayed for His murderers, and died for the ungodly, adopt such language as we have just quoted? And yet a little spiritual discernment is enough to show how consistent such utterances will be for an upright Jew by and by.

The Psalms are divided into five books.

For the reasons we have given, is it not clear that the Psalms cannot now be used for the expression of Christian worship? The coming of the Son of God from heaven, the rent vail by His death, and the gift, indwelling and operations of the Holy Ghost, have necessarily altered the character of true worship. Our Lord declared the Father, and He said, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” (John 4:23.) No doubt when Christians lost the sense of their distinctive character as heavenly, and members of the body of Christ, that they gradually sank back more or less into the Jewish order of distance from God, and an earthly class of priesthood; thus lowering Christianity from heavenly to earthly characteristics.

Christ! Who but Christ!

“CHRIST! Christ! who but Christ! I know this much of Christ, He is not ill to be found, nor lordly of His love; woe had been my part of it for evermore if Christ had made a dainty of Himself to me; but God be thanked, I gave nothing for Christ, and now I protest before men and angels Christ cannot be exchanged, Christ cannot be sold, Christ cannot be weighed.”— RUTHEFORD.

Two Million and a Quarter of Dollars Cannot Purchase Peace

A SHORT time ago a man died in this city worth two million and a quarter of dollars. I heard that He offered the doctor at last all he was worth, if he could prolong his life for one single day; but no! it was impossible. The summons was come, and he was called into the presence of a heart-searching God.

The other day a young man died here under different circumstances. His name was little known, but he was well known to many of the Lord's people, and beloved by many as Willie. He was poor, but perfectly happy.

He had been in deep distress about his soul about ten months ago, and used to sit up night after night with C. M., about the all-important question of how he could be saved. He had been a great sinner, and had lived without God all his life, though with occasional feelings of great remorse for his sins. He was led at length, by the Spirit of God, to see that the Lord Jesus had died for such, had shed His blood to make an atonement before God for sin, that His sacrifice had been both provided and accepted by God; and now He could act justly, and yet be the justifier of him who believed in Jesus. He cast himself on Him, by believing in Him—nothing more; not by giving up the sins first, but just by simply believing on Him, as having died for his sins and risen again for his justification. And Jesus saved him.

He was soon after received into fellowship with the saints at the Lord's table, and that day he stood up and said how happy he was that he could take his place among them, for that now he knew that his sins were all washed away by the precious blood of Jesus; and he broke the bread and drank the wine in the full consciousness that that death had availed for His sins, that the body of the Lord Jesus had been broken for him, and that the precious blood had redeemed him. Swearing, cursing, etc., fell off him like withered leaves, and the new eternal life in him began to bring forth fruit and blossoms to the praise and honor of Christ in him.

"If ever there was a true Christian, it was Willie," as one said, who had worked with him for a long time. His gentleness won the hearts of many, and he ever showed forth Christ in his life.

He got consumption and rapidly wasted away; his brother had died of it before him; it was in the family; — and his friends saw surely and clearly how it would, end. A doctor came to him, and consoled him as he thought, by telling him how he would soon have him on his feet again, but he still grew worse. Another doctor came and just said to him, "Would you like me to tell you the truth?" He was silent. "Well," said this kind, faithful man, "I may tell you that I cannot cure you; I will take no money from you, but I will attend you and relieve you as well as I can."

Dear Willie was very calm, and just said, "I like you all the better for telling me the truth."

He was often in prayer, but he never seemed to be-praying for himself; it was always for others. He lay like a little child in his Father's arms.

Daily he wasted away, and at midnight, surrounded by his friends, his soul winged its way right into the very presence of Christ, to be with Him forever; and the believers will meet him in the air, coming with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. He is to come in glory with Christ, when He shall appear in all His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords. He shall share His glory and reign with Him. He lived and died poor here, but he was in perfect peace and happiness from the time that he came to know Christ as his own Saviour.

Reader, are you like the rich man, who would give all he had for another day on earth; or are you like dear Willie, who could not pray for himself, but only for the conversion of sinners? This was one of his last prayers—May God bless you, and may you accept (by believing) of Christ's salvation, while God is beseeching you to be reconciled to Him. — An Extract.

[An Extract of a Letter.]

... When I wrote to you last, I did not forget that you knew all that I was writing, so far as mere theoretical knowledge is concerned, and I did but seek to remind you of truths which I knew you had already heard. But it is one thing to hear all these truths from a preacher, and quite a different thing to be convinced of their truth in such a way that your life shall be changed, both as to the manner and prospects of it—a change that is not attained either by education, self-improvement, imitation of good examples, good resolutions, or anything in yourself; but it is the result of vital faith, the free and undeserved gift of God to all who receive Christ Jesus as their Saviour, and believe on Him as the Son of God.

You say that an example is needed, and there I quite agree with you; but I do not know of any man either here or elsewhere fit to be an example for a Christian man. There is but one example for such a one, and that is His Lord, whose life is minutely recorded, that we may study Him as our example, and by so doing be directed along the narrow path, which is Himself—the way. It is quite a mistake to imagine that self-improvement in any way is that which God expects from any of His wandering creatures as the first step in their return to Him. If this were required, none would ever return to Him at all, for the best man living never did nor could improve himself to such a degree as to be worthy of God's forgiveness. All ideas of self-improvement, or services being required to propitiate God and to induce Him to receive you, are but inventions of Satan to prevent you. God is already propitiated by the atonement of Christ, who is "the propitiation for our sins and the whole world."

The moment a sinner takes his true place, feeling and confessing himself one thoroughly lost, guilty, and undone—one who is so bad that he cannot possibly be worse, there is an immediate, perfect, and divine settlement of the question of himself and his sins. The grace of God deals with sinners, not self-improved men; and when you know yourself to be a sinner, you know yourself to be one whom Christ came to save, and the more clearly any one can prove you to be a sinner, the more plainly he establishes your title to the love of God and the work of Christ. For "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," and therefore—

"Just as I am—without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidest me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come!"

I wish you could be induced to take the step pointed out in this little verse. It is a hard matter for a man to be convinced that he is really a sinner and needs a Saviour, for an unconverted man often does that which seems perfectly right and reasonable, and therefore is not easily convinced that his whole life has been wrong; but if you compare your life with the requirements of God's law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy soul,

and thy neighbor as thyself," then you must see that you have failed to do that which it requires, and therefore, with all the rest of Adam's sons, you are a sinner. But God, when He pronounced the curse upon all Adam's race, provided the means by which all might return to Him; for He desires that none should perish, but that all should come to Him and have life, and by that very means Christ Jesus (I think His word will warrant me in stating) is ready and anxious to receive you now. If you could indeed realize the fact that God is love, and loves you and wishes your return, I think you would not refuse much longer. What other principle but love could ever have induced Him to allow His holy One to die for sinners? the most perfect manifestation of perfect and divine love. You remember that in the parable the prodigal returned to his father in his rags, and that the father did not reproach him for his ragged condition, but received him just as he was, and further ordered the best robe to be put on him. So with our Father; if you will return to Him in your rags (that is, your sins), with the prodigal's confession, He will not reproach you for your sins, but will at once forgive you, cleanse you from all of them in the blood of Christ, and clothe you with perfect righteousness.

Trusting in Jesus

Jesus, I will trust Thee, trust Thee with my soul;
Guilty, lost, and helpless, Thou can't make me whole.
There is none in heaven or on earth like Thee:
Thou hast died for sinners—therefore, Lord, for me.
Jesus, I will trust Thee, Name of matchless worth!
Spoken by the angel at Thy wondrous birth;
Written, and forever, on Thy cross of shame:
Sinners, read and worship, trusting in that Name.
Jesus, I will trust Thee, pondering Thy ways,
Full of love and mercy all Thine earthly days:
Sinners gathered round Thee, lepers sought Thy face—
None too vile or loathsome for a Saviour's grace.
Jesus, I will trust Thee, trust Thy written word,
Though Thy voice of pity I have never heard.
When Thy Spirit teacheth, to my taste how sweet—
Only may I hearken, sitting at Thy feet.
Jesus, I will trust Thee, trust without a doubt:
“Whosoever cometh, Thou wilt not cast out.”
Faithful is Thy promise, precious is Thy blood—
Thou my soul's salvation, Thou my Saviour-God.
M. J. W.

“An Holy Priesthood.”

“And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.”— Exod. 29:33, 34.

“And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and dean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses. And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy: and ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons’ due, of the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire: for so I am commanded. And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for they be thy due, and thy sons’ due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. The heave shoulder and the wave breast shall they bring with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave offering before the Lord; and it shall be thine, and thy sons’ with thee, by a statute forever; as the Lord hath commanded.”— Lev. 10:8-15.

IN the Now Testament scriptures the fact is plainly stated, that all those who are loved by Jesus and washed from their sins in His own blood are made priests unto God. (Revelation 1:5, 6.) They are called “an holy priesthood” and “a royal priesthood.” (1 Peter 2:5, 9.) The life also of such is spoken of as one of entire dependence and faith, as, for instance, in such a general statement as— “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20.) But in the typical instruction of Old Testament scriptures we have abundant details as to the characteristics, life, and occupation of priests.

We know from the epistle to the Hebrews that the Aaronic high priest was in some respects typical of the Great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. It is well also to see that only those were priests who were washed, clothed, consecrated by blood, anointed with oil, and in real relationship by birth with the high priest. All pretensions to priesthood apart from these realities were accounted false. When any did come forward professing to be priests, and could not trace their genealogy, they were put from the priesthood as polluted. (Nehemiah 7:64.) So now, Scripture presents to us those who are washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus as made priests unto God. They are also spoken of as “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” (Compare 1 Peter 1:23 with 2:5.) They are therefore “sons of God,” in real relationship with Christ, the great High Priest, anointed, indwelt, and united to Him by the Holy Ghost. Thus they are a royal and a holy priesthood. Nothing, then, can be clearer than that God’s priests on the earth now are those who

are washed in the blood of Jesus, children of God, indwelt by the Spirit, and that all such are priests. All have everlasting life as a present possession, they are said to be “lively (or living) stones, and are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.” (1 Peter 2:5.)

But God not only makes priests, He has provided everything also for their sustenance, and ordered everything as to their service; for He never employs us to do anything without qualifying us for its fulfillment. Hence we find that the food, the details of the work of the priests, what they were to avoid, and their conduct in general, were all ordered of God.

As to their daily sustenance for the due performance of priestly functions, they were to feed upon the sacrifices. To neglect this would have rendered them unfit for the true work of priesthood. Nothing else could consecrate them to this service. This food, too, was only for the priests— “a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.” Thus God provided for His priests. “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made to consecrate and to sanctify them.” They were to eat, not merely to look upon, but to handle and receive, so as to derive nourishment and strength, refreshing and comfort, from the same sacrifice by which atonement had been made; thus teaching us that it is personal communion with the Lord which alone fits us for carrying out our priestly functions. It is the believer who is accepted in Christ, washed from his sins in His own blood, who is to find his daily strength for priestly service in feeding upon that one Sacrifice which was once offered. We are to feed on Him—to taste, enjoy, and enter into the qualities, worth, perfections, and glory of Him who redeemed us by His death upon the cross, so as to be strengthened for the faithful discharge of our priestly office. The written word reveals Him, and the Holy Ghost testifies of Him; thus entering into the thoughts of God about His beloved Son and His finished work, what He is in Himself, what He was and is to God, our hearts will be so attracted to Him, so taken up with His perfections, that in our measure we shall be able say, “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” This is our strength for service. It is communion—finding satisfaction and delight in that same Object which perfectly satisfies and fills the heart of God. The priests were to feed to the full and be satisfied, and the remainder was not for a stranger, as we have seen, but for God; it was to be burnt, and offered to God by fire. “If ought of the flesh of the consecration, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.” (Exodus 29:34.)

They were not to drink wine nor strong drink, so that they might put a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean, and that they might teach, &c. (Leviticus 10:9-11.) And no doubt the instruction to us is, that we should avoid the indulgence of the fleshly appetite— “abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul;” for they so damage our souls as to hinder our spiritual discernment, so necessary to priesthood, and disqualify us for teaching others. That which excites the desires of the flesh and of the mind take us away from communion with Him, who is our alone source of real strength. The fleshly appetite, then, must be denied, the claims of self-indulgence set aside, if we would have that spiritual discernment so necessary to priestly office. The Hebrews were dull of hearing, unable to discern and enter into the Lord’s things. Hence the apostle said to them: “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 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. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:11-14.)

Avoiding wine and strong drink for the reasons given, they were to eat the meat offering in the holy place, and the peace offering in a clean place. How significant this is! The consciousness of being in God’s presence, apart from everything unclean in His sight, is necessary for true enjoyment and appreciation of the food which God provides for us. The parts, too, of the peace offering given to them it is important to notice— “the wave breast, and heave shoulder.” (Leviticus 10:14.) So God presents to us in His precious word the perfect love of Jesus and His almighty power to us-ward, to strengthen and comfort our hearts; thus by the word and Spirit, in God’s holy presence, tracing, entering into, and enjoying His unsearchable love and infinite power—love that met us when dead in sins, and knows no change; power that has triumphed over all our enemies and death itself, and taken the place of Headship over all principality and power. What joy, and peace, and strength the reception into our hearts of those glorious realities impart! What encouragement all this instruction gives us to keep close to the Lord Jesus! How it attracts and binds our hearts to Him, and how absolutely necessary to abide in Him in order to be faithful priests unto God!

Now as to priestly service. No one could trace the inspired account of the “sons of Aaron,” the priests, without being struck with how much they had to do with the sacrifices. They were constantly serving in the sanctuary— “the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.” (Hebrews 9:6.) Being there, and in constant intercourse with the high priest, their head, and in communion with God’s revealed will, it was for them on certain occasions to sound the silver trumpets, to make known what they had learned in the service of the sanctuary; it might be to “blow an alarm” for the camps to “go forward” and “take their journeys,” or to “blow” for the gathering together of the congregation. (Numbers 10:2-8.) Sure it is that those now who are abiding in the Lord Jesus—our Sanctuary—living by the faith of Him, in communion with Him, will know His mind, and be able to make it known to others. They only can intelligently discern and enter into the blessedness of going forward in His name, following Him, or of being gathered together in His name, or in time of difficulty and distress thinking of His name, and being saved from their enemies.

But priestly work now is spiritual. These shadows instruct us, but are not the very image. Jesus, the Son of God, has come, and is gone up into heaven, and given us the Holy Ghost. Thus we have the Spirit of “love, and of power, and of a sound mind.” The darkness, too, is past, and the true light now shineth. We are then, as “an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Priestly work, then, I repeat, now is spiritual, and “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” (Galatians 5:22, 23.) We are, as God’s priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices; not carnal activities— “the desires of the flesh and of the mind”— but that which is in the energy of the Holy Ghost, who glories Christ in all the variety of His workings in bringing forth fruit in its season. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise! We read, too, of sacrifices of joy, of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice; and those who are so practically linked with Christ as to be outside the camp, bearing His reproach, are exhorted “by Him to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15.)

“Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.”

Proverbs

WE find Christ in the book of Proverbs. In the eighth chapter He is spoken of as “wisdom,” “the wisdom of God,” “set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was... daily Jehovah’s delight, rejoicing always before Him, whose delights were with the sons of men.” (12-36.) Again, who else but God and His beloved Son could be referred to in such questions as, “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (30:4.) But further; who can read such detached sentences as, “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,” and not think of Jesus? (17:17.) Or, “A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth” (17:6), without being reminded of “the unspeakable gift?” There are many other such allusions in this blessed book.

There are many quotations from the book of Proverbs in the New Testament which thus attest its divine authorship. Our Lord seems to have referred to this book in His ministry. Compare Matthew 15:4 with Proverbs 20:20, and Luke 14:8 with Proverbs 25:6, 7, and John 7:38 with Proverbs 18:4, and verse 16. The apostle Paul also quoted from Proverbs. Compare Romans 12:20, 21 with Proverbs 25:21, 22, and Hebrews 12:5, 6 with Proverbs 3:11, 12.

James also in his epistle evidently referred to Proverbs. Compare James 4:6 with Proverbs 3:34.

Peter too, in both his epistles. Compare 1 Peter 4:8 with Proverbs 10:12, and 2 Peter 2:22 with Proverbs 16:11.

It is not so clear as to whether John quoted from this book, but 1 John 1:8 and Proverbs 20:9 look something like it.

Proverbs is a peculiar book. We do not find the work of redemption in it, nor dispensational truth, nor the history of God’s people, or of God’s ways with them, as in many other parts of Scripture. But it is full of instruction as to wisdom, the wise way of walking through the earth, and of managing many of its daily details. It is emphatically the children’s book—instruction to those who have to walk here as being in relation to God. The apostle teaches us this in Hebrews 12, “Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,” and then quotes from Proverbs 3:11, 12. Hence the repeated use of the words “my son” in the earlier chapters.

The first nine chapters give us general principles, beginning with the object of the book “to know wisdom and instruction.” It shows us that what especially marks “a wise man” is that he will “hear,” that the foolish refuse to hear, that “the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge,” and that such should practically be separate from “sinners.” The second chapter shows that the fear of the Lord and knowledge of God—true wisdom—is found by those who receive His words, hide them, incline their ear, apply the heart, cry after knowledge, lift up the voice for understanding, seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure. Such too will be kept from the two prominent evils - “the evil man”—rebellion, the spirit of the antichrist, and “the strange woman”—the corruptions of

the truth and ways of God. In the third chapter we are taught the blessedness of wisdom's ways. The fourth that we should cling to wisdom as the principal thing, enter not into the path of the wicked, keep in the straight path, setting a watch on our heart, our tongues, and our feet. The fifth chapter shows the sorrow and distress connected with having to do with the "strange woman." The sixth gives still further warnings against slothfulness, and the corruptness, setting also before us the six things which the Lord hateth, and the blessed peace and security enjoyed by those who bind the words of God upon their heart. In the seventh chapter we learn the absolute need of keeping the words of God, laying them up, being so familiar with them as to have them as it were bound upon the fingers, so as to be kept from the fatal seductions of the enemy. The eighth chapter tells us who wisdom is, and the ninth the two voices round about us; the glad tidings of the grace of God—wisdom's voice; and the seducing voice of the corruptress—"the foolish woman"—whose guests are in the depths of hell.

From the tenth chapter onward, we have a series of brief, pointed, detached sentences, no doubt deeply important as marking out the wise way of meeting the daily matters of life, some of them giving remarkable allusions to Christ, His ways, and throne. Chapters 25 to 29. are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out. Chapter 30 are the words of Agur, and Chapter 31 the words which the mother of King Lemuel taught him.

Ecclesiastes

HERE we have the experience of a wise man—endued with wisdom by God, having almost everything on earth that his heart desired, and finding “all vanity and vexation of spirit.” He looks too at others in their various circumstances, and notices many sore evils. Even as to knowledge, he found “in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” It is an important book, because it answers the question which almost everyone is trying to solve, “Is there an object on the earth that can satisfy the heart of man?” The reply is, No— “all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

It hints, however, at the fact that God is the alone spring of joy. “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.” (chapter 9:7.)

There are also two exceptions made to all being vanity under the sun. One is a figurative or parabolic allusion to the finished work of Jesus, who by His death delivered us from the wrath to come. “This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me. There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it; now there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he, by his wisdom, delivered the city.” Surely the death of Christ was enacted under the sun, and great indeed was that work. He was emphatically the poor, wise man, and He delivered us from death, and him that had the power of death. This surely is not vanity—all is substantial and everlasting in its value and results. Yet how true it is that “no man remembered that same poor man.” (chapters 9:13, 15.)

The present service of the Lord is another exception. Surely it is not vanity, and instead of being connected with vexation of spirit, we all know that “His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.” Hence we read, “Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days.” (chapter 11:1.)

The great lesson drawn from the book is to fear God, and be obedient to His word. (chapter 12:13.)

The Song of Songs

This book is the converse of Ecclesiastes. There the heart sought for an object, and could not find one; it had to conclude that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” But here the heart has an attractive object, and the more the thoughts and feelings are drawn after it the more delight there is, because the beauty and perfectness of Himself become better known.

In the Song of Songs, therefore, the desires and affections are drawn out after Him who is “the king.” (chapter 1:12.) It is, no doubt, the Jewish remnant in whose hearts these desires and affections are wrought by the Spirit, especially Judah and Benjamin; for the ten tribes come in after, and we know that “He will save the tents of Judah first.” (Zechariah 12)

It is the working of desire and affection, and a sense too, in some measure, of His excellencies which we find in Canticles; those feelings which will really be created in the hearts of the Jews according to their calling and hope by and by. It is not desire and affection flowing from the consciousness and joy of relationships already formed, as characterizes the Church, and the difference is immense. The affections and delight of saints now who form the Church are based on the consciousness of being redeemed by His blood, already delivered from the wrath to come, now sons of God, partakers of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. While, therefore, in the Song of Songs we have not, properly speaking, the true character of Christian worship and affection, yet the Lord Himself being the object of both people—each, too, loved by the same blessed Person—the heart of every heaven-born soul can delight in pondering the blessed interchange of affection and desire, and that too in a higher way than those to whom this precious little book primarily refers. Surely we who are longing now by faith for closer personal fellowship with Himself can fervently exclaim, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for thy love is better than wine.” We too can speak of His precious name “as ointment poured forth,” and while rejoicing in Him as “the altogether lovely,” we can sing, as we often do■

“O draw me, Saviour, after Thee!

So shall I run and never tire;

With gracious words still comfort me:

Be Thou my hope, my sole desire.

On Thee I'd roll each weight and fear,

Calm in the thought that Thou art near.

“What in Thy love possess I not?

My star by night, my sun by day;

My spring of life when parch'd with drought;

My wine to cheer, my bread to stay;
My strength, my shield, my safe abode;
My robe before the throne of God.”

Liberty of Conscience

LIBERTY of conscience is of the very essence of true worship. Not what men call liberty of conscience, but the ability to approach God without any sense of guilt on the conscience—that having been put away by the sacrifice of Christ.

Where the Heart Should Be

“A WISE man’s heart is at his right hand; but a fool’s heart at his left.” (Ecclesiastes 10:2.) In Psalms 16:8 we read: “I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.” If then He be at my right hand, where must my heart be if I am wise? The fool’s heart being at his left hand is that it is set upon other objects, not upon the Lord.

A Babblers

“SURELY a serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.” (Ecclesiastes 10:11.) A serpent bites because it is a serpent; it wants an opportunity rather than a provocation; it is its nature. So, whatever may be a babbler’s pretext, however pressing he may urge the reason to be why he “ought” to speak his mind or “discharge his conscience” with respect to others’ failings, he babbles because he is a babbler. “God is not mocked,” and knows how to distinguish between the exercise of a Christian grace and the indulgence of a carnal propensity, if I do not.

The Way to the City

“THE labor of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.” (Ecclesiastes 10:15.)

It is written (Proverbs 1:7), “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;” and we may safely affirm, that he who is actuated thereby will find in Christ all that his conscience or his heart can crave after. HE is the “city of refuge,” where the soul finds not only shelter from the avenger of blood, but a settled and abiding habitation of security, sustenance, and rest. “Fools despise wisdom and instruction,” seeking for these things elsewhere; but their labor can only weary and disappoint.

Infidelity Never Gives Peace

THE pride of the infidel mainly consists in opposing the truth of what God has revealed in His holy word. It protests against what is true and certain, and gives nothing positive to lay hold on. "Hold fast, Mary," said an infidel visitor to a dying woman; "hold fast, Mary." But Mary, half-choked, scarcely able to articulate, replied, "You have given me nothing to hold!" And so it is. It suits man's conceit and pretended acuteness and greatness to bring God before his tribunal, instead of being judged by God; consequently there is no certainty, no peace; no rest for the conscience, no assurance of safety, no hope as to glory.

How different is the gospel of God! It meets man exactly as he is—a sinner lost and guilty, as judged in the light of God's most holy presence. It assures the sinner of God's deepest love and interest in him as a sinner, though He perfectly hates sin: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8.) It is this wondrous love of God in giving His only-begotten Son to die for lost and guilty man, brought home by the Holy Ghost, that melts the heart, and gives it true confidence in God as the sinner's friend, the God of peace. And when he learns that salvation could be in no other way, that none less than the holy Son of God Himself could be a fit sacrifice for sin, that He only could answer all the claims of divine righteousness from man as a sinner, He alone satisfy the demands of God's throne, or meet the need of lost, guilty sinners, then it is, through Jesus and His precious blood, he finds peace with God. He is reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Every question of sin and transgression is then righteously cleared up—his conscience is purged, and his soul made happy in God's most holy presence. How blessed this is! How different to the proud mind of fallen, rebellious man, boasting itself in the conceits of a depraved imagination, and seeking praise among his fellow-mortals for bold assertions and out-spoken sentiments, becoming, as they would insinuate, a free-thinker, and a being endowed with such noble faculties and abilities as man!

The soul that looks to the Lord Jesus now in the heavens as the object of faith, His precious blood-shedding and death as the ground of peace, and His infallible word as the immovable basis of confidence, can triumph both in life and in death; for of such God declares, "Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The infidel, while blooming with bodily health, when pressed hard about the wrath of God abiding on all those who have not the Son of God as their Saviour, says, "I'll chance it!" but alas, alas, there is no chance about it. Nothing can be more certain than eternal salvation, and eternal damnation. The word of God abounds with the certainty of these realities. Many, however, tell a different story when nearing the regions of eternity. They are often serious then, and many go down to their dark abode in terror and anguish.

The author of "the Leviathan" was a celebrated infidel of the last age, the man whose writings poisoned the mind of the Earl of Rochester, as that nobleman himself declared after his conversion. He lived to be an old sinner; for he was upwards of ninety when he died. His life was rendered remarkable for the many blasphemous expressions he uttered against God and His holy

word. It is said that he was always bold in impiety when in company, but very timid when alone. If he awoke in the night, and found his candle extinguished, he was full of terror. His last words, as related of him, were, "I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world."

The Great Apostle of Infidelity, as he affected to be called, of a neighboring nation, in great agonies of mind, exclaimed to his physician, "I am abandoned both by God and man! Doctor," cried he, "I'll give you half I am worth if you can give me life six months!" And upon the doctor telling him he feared he could not live six weeks, "Then," he replied, "I shall go to hell!" and expired soon after.

A celebrated historian of our own spent his last days in playing at cards, in cracking jokes, and in reading romances. He is said to have acknowledged that, with his bitter invectives against the Bible, he had never read the New Testament with attention.

How many others, who have despised the gospel of God when in health and strength, have cried out with bitterness and despair, when finding themselves on the confines of eternity, "Too late! Too late! I'm lost, I'm lost!" To one, the trifles of everything of time and sense, its wealth, pleasures, honors, and amusements, seemed so worthless, that he with anguish exclaimed, "I've sold my soul for a straw!" Another cried out, "I shall be in hell at six o'clock!" and just as the clock struck six her eyes closed in death. Solemn indeed is the wise man's testimony concerning those who deliberately refuse the glad tidings of God's present and everlasting salvation: "Because I called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." (Proverbs 1:24-27.)

And now, dear reader, we would most lovingly ask if you have received God's testimony concerning the atoning work of His beloved Son? Have you given up reasoning about it? or are you still priding yourself on your "powerful arguments on religious subjects," as some say? Remember that God has given us His word to believe, not for us to reason about; and "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Romans 10) Rationalism is not faith. Many souls are ruined by reasoning; many saved by believing. Beware, then, of fatally wasting your time, of letting slip the present precious opportunity of knowing peace with God! Refuse the temptation to reasoning about what God's word declares, instead of receiving it into your heart as worthy of your soul's trust and full confidence because it is His word. This is faith. All the time you are reasoning about it, arguing and judging as to how you think you can be saved, you are discrediting His word, refusing to hearken to His voice, neglecting His great salvation; or, as Scripture so solemnly puts it, making God a liar, because you have not believed the record that God gave of His Son.

Happy indeed are those who have received God's glad tidings concerning His Son Jesus Christ. Such have present peace, real rest of heart and conscience before God. Well indeed hath the apostle said, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1.) Such, too, can sing—

"A mind at 'perfect peace' with God:

Oh, what a word is this!

A sinner reconciled through blood—
This, this indeed is peace!
“By nature and by practice far,
How very far, from God!
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him
Through faith in Jesus’ blood.
“So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son
I am as near as He.
“So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be:
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.
“Why should I ever careful be,
Since such a God is mine?
He watches o’er me night and day,
And tells me, ‘All is thine!’”

Hartley Colliery

THE revelations of God's word respecting death and its issues, respecting hell and its everlasting horrors, are unambiguous. If we die in our sins, if we die impenitent, die unregenerate, die unforgiven, our everlasting prison-house is the blackness of darkness and despair forever. Now, if ever, must be made up the quarrel between ourselves and our incensed God. Now, if ever, the controversy must be settled. Now, if ever, we must be "washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Now, if ever, we must be made "meet for the inheritance of saints in light." Not a ray of hope shines in the prison-house of hell! That pit's mouth is shut!

Two solemn passages from the lips of God will serve to establish this doctrine—that the lost are hopelessly lost, and that a limit is assigned to our opportunities.

The first passage is from the Old Testament, Proverbs 1:24-28. Weigh its import, and remember they are the words of that Being from whose judgment there is no appeal: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

The other passage is from the New Testament, Matthew 25:6-12. Weigh its import, and remember they are the words of the Redeemer—for mercy must not ignore justice: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Time was when oil might have been had. Time was when mercy could have been obtained. Time was when all thy sins could have been blotted out. Time was when thou mightest have had a wedding garment, and entered into the banquet chamber, and been an everlasting guest. But not now! not now! Too late! too late! "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Oh, my God! what a tremendous discovery for an immortal soul to make! No hope—none! We traverse the dark galleries of that pit to find some "staple" avenue; but in vain! We reach the pit's mouth, but the hatches are down! The very "brattice" is broken up. The beam of the engine has snapped. There is no hope—none! none! That mine will be worked no more. It is abandoned! There is no hope! The dreary wretches there shall never see light. The pit has shut her mouth

upon them! For the soul once lost is lost forever! "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! It is an ocean of which we never see the shore.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Debtor as I am of more than ten thousand talents, and having "nothing to pay," this pit need not be my prison-house! I hear a voice from heaven, saying, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." It is the voice of that same Infinite Majesty whom I have so aggrieved. It is the voice of Infinite Love. He has found the Lamb in His own bosom! As Abraham said to his son Isaac, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Yes! low as I may have sunk in guilt and misery, even from the lowermost seam I may be got up safe and sound, to the light of day, the light of glory! A ladder has been set upon the earth, the top of which reaches to heaven. Oh! what amazing mercy! What a great salvation! The suppliant cry of the atoning Saviour will avail for all who believe on Him; for "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Doubting, despairing sinner, Jesus is mighty to save! "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us!" Oh! that glorious uttermost! And shall we turn a deaf ear to the voice that tells us to be saved?

Every lost soul has a last call. But let the glimmering light of that last entreaty, that last warning, be quenched; let that last whisper of persuasive love die away; then, though no angel of love be seen, with averted countenance, slowly retiring from his ministry—though no muttering thunder be heard rolling portentous signals of woe, the pit's mouth is closed.

Oh! memorable will be this terrible calamity at Hartley, if God, by His Spirit, lead some soul to cry with a Jacob's importunity, that will take no denial, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me!"—
Extracted,

The Two Cups

“MY cup runneth over.” That is to say, the blessing is greater than we can appropriate. “He is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.” (Psalms 16:5.) It is infinite—it is Himself. Made ours for time, and for eternity; filling the heart with worship and the lips with praise. Made ours, too, according to the purposes of His own love, and that we should be to the praise of His glory (see Ephesians 1:11,12), in virtue of that other cup, which was sorrow indeed to Him, and that wrung from Him that marvelous and bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hath thou forsaken me?”— the cup of divine judgment due to our sins. That too was a full cup, and to any but to Him, who was Himself infinite, it must have been overflowing and inexhaustible. But He drank it to the very dregs. It did not run over; not a drop escaped His holy lips; there was no miscarriage of justice with respect to sin on the part of God on the one hand, nor any incapacity of endurance on the part of the blessed Lord on the other; all was infinite, all was perfect, in that terrible transaction, and the results to Him and to us are perfect too. He is ours and we are His in fellowship and in glory forever and ever. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Jesus said, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:31.)

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?”

The Widow's Dream

(Vouched for as strictly true.)

An Extract

THE widow slept; and while her eyes
Were closed in slumber, a dream she dreamed,
Filling her soul with sweet surprise,
So strange and yet so true it seemed.
When morning dawns, and the widow wakes,
“It could only have been a dream,” she cried.
“How swift a journey the spirit takes!
I thought at first I had surely died.”
Her scanty store for a scanty meal
She carried in to a neighbor’s near:
“I should like the warmth of your fire to feel,
And to eat my morsel in comfort here.”
“Ay, ay, come in; there is always room,
And put thy chair in the old man’s nook,
And tell him something, to chase his gloom,
Out of thy favorite, holy book.
“Thou hast a scanty breakfast.” “Nay,
It is enough,” she quickly cried.
“The promise fails not from day to day;
I know my Father will still provide.
“And if so be He should want me home,
It is a token that’s easily read:
Whenever He means to bid me come,
And not before, He will stop the bread.”
“You’re happy, Nancy?” “Ay, ay,” she cried;
“And so would you be if you were me.

There's never a sinner for whom Christ died

Whose life on earth should unhappy be.

"And yesternight I was dreaming, too,

A happy dream you would like to hear;

A dream, I know, which is mostly true:

I wish the end might be true and near.

"I thought I stood by a river side,

And far away on the other shore

Was the golden city, its gates flung wide:

But there was no one to take me o'er.

"I saw the 'shining ones' in the street;

I heard their harp-strings music pour;

I saw them waiting my soul to greet:

But there was no one to take me o'er.

"I thought I saw where the Saviour's throne

Shone in the midst of that city fair:

Oh, how I longed to be up and gone!

And suddenly, suddenly I was there!"

She ceased; and after a pause they said,

"And what did you see in that city fair?"

No answer. The spirit to heaven had fled:

Suddenly, suddenly she was there.

Christ Inside the Veil, Outside the Camp

An Extract.

I find Christ, as it regards my conscience, "inside the veil;" I find Christ, as it regards my heart, "outside the camp."

It does not become us to take only the comfort which flows from our knowing Christ to be within the veil—the comfort His sacrifice gives us; I must seek practical identification with Him outside the camp. Christ within the veil tranquillizes my conscience; Christ outside the camp quickens, energizes my soul to run more devotedly the race set before me. "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Hebrews 13:11-13.) No two points are morally more remote than inside the veil, and outside the camp, and yet they are brought together here. Inside the veil was the place where the Shekinah of God's glory dwelt; outside the camp, the place where the sin-offering was burned. No place gives such an idea of distance from God as that. It is blessed to know that the Holy Ghost presents to me Jesus filling up all that is between these two points. I have nothing to do whatever with the camp. The camp was the place of ostensible profession—in type, the camp of Israel; in antitype, the city of Jerusalem. Why did Christ suffer without the gate? In order to show the setting aside of the mere machinery of Israel's outward profession.

How can I be enjoying Christ if I am not walking in company with Him? We know that we cannot enjoy the company of a person unless we are where that person is. Where then is Christ? "Outside the camp." "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." This is not to go forth to men, or to opinions, to a church, or to a creed, but to Christ Himself. We are not of the world. Why? Because Christ is not of the world. The measure of our separation from the world is the measure of Christ's separation. When the heart is filled with Christ, it can give up the world; there is no difficulty in doing it then. The men saying, "Give up this," or "Give up that," to one loving the world will be of no avail; what I have to do is to seek to minister to that soul more of Christ.... I am within the veil with Christ, outside the camp in the world, "bearing His reproach; "and whilst thus delivered from the profession around me that is not of Him, I am engaged in worship and doing good to all. In regard to my hope, it is not, as people say, the "holding the doctrine of the Second Advent," but "waiting for God's Son from heaven." This is not a dead, dry doctrine. If we are really waiting for God's Son from heaven, we shall be sitting loose to the world. I have Christ for my soul's need, and I am only waiting for God's Son from heaven, for Christ to come to take His Church unto Himself, that where He is, we may be also.

The Prophets

PROPHETIC testimony occupies a large and important part of Old Testament writings. It was when God's people, the Jews, had terribly turned away from Him and His word that the principal prophets were raised up. They therefore testified against their evil ways, reminded them of former blessings through divine favor and goodness, and set forth God's faithfulness. By their word they encouraged the true-hearted, and warned the unruly of divine displeasure and judgment. They generally brighten the dark page by bringing in the hope of Messiah's coming, by whom all their blessings will be established on entirely new ground; for in Israel's future glory they will know Him who died for that nation as the One by whom all their blessings are secured, and all God's promises established. Daniel gives us "the times of the Gentiles." The post-captivity prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, only mention Israel, or Judah, as the people of God in connection with the future when their blessings will be established by Messiah. In tracing the history of God's earthly people, we learn deeply-precious lessons of the goodness, patience, and faithfulness of God.

The prophets do not speak of "the Church," though they do refer to blessing coming on the Gentiles. But this itself is not "the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." The revelation of that "mystery" was reserved for an after age. It was not known till revealed to the apostles. (See Ephesians 3:2-10.)

Isaiah. — No. 1

The prophet Isaiah tells us that his vision and word are “concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” (chapter 1:1 and 2:1.) Nothing can be plainer. It is unaccountable how, in the face of the plainest possible evidence, so many have declared that this most blessed book is concerning the Church. To say that Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, the house of David, the house of Jacob, and such like names, mean the Church, is totally unsupported by Scripture testimony; and those who adopt such phraseology clearly show that they do not know what the Church is. A spiritual mind is subject to God’s word, and He says that Isaiah’s writings are “concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”

It has been noticed by many how rich and frequent are the allusions of this prophet to Christ; so much so, that he has been styled the evangelical prophet. But so it is, and no doubt because Isaiah more largely enters into the details of the ruin of the people, and their future establishment in the goodness and faithfulness of God, in connection with the Messiah, than any other prophet. We have therefore early in the book the person of the Messiah—the virgin’s child, Immanuel (chapter 7:14); afterward He is more largely set forth in connection with the establishment of His kingdom in chapters 9:6, 7, and many other parts which speak of “the day of the Lord.” But not only His birth, but His life of suffering, rejection, and sorrow—His death, burial, and future reign and establishment of Israel in glory, are largely entered into in many parts of this precious book. Nor should we fail to notice the sympathy with that faithful remnant which will come upon the scene after the Church is gone, of which you see a sample in the days of His flesh, as recorded in Matthew 24:16-22. Our prophet declares, that “in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” (chapter 63:9.)

Nothing can exceed the description of the moral degradation of God’s people as set forth in the first chapter. And yet there is a remnant left, and God is presented as ready to wash their scarlet sins white as wool; there is the hope of redemption, but accompanied with judgment (verse 27); for judgment always characterizes the period of their future blessing. And yet the second chapter opens with a glance at Israel in millennial times, when the word of the Lord shall go out from Jerusalem in blessing to “many people;” while the judgment upon the living wicked at the personal return of the Lord Jesus is described, when many shall cast away their idols, and go into the clefts of the rock to hide, for fear of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. We are led back in the third chapter to the cause of the people’s fall, and dishonor to Jehovah, being in their pride and haughtiness. We have also Jehovah’s governmental dealing with them in consequence, again reminding us of the divine statute, “He that exalteth himself shall be abased.” The Lord help us to lay it afresh to heart! This is followed by a touching prophetic testimony of future blessing, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. (chapter 4)

In the fifth chapter the prophet looks back on Israel's history—the vineyard of the Lord, which, instead of bringing forth grapes, brought forth wild grapes. Their terrible failures are traced to casting away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despising the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, but His hand is stretched out still. The sixth chapter discloses the infinite holiness of God's presence, when the prophet discovered that he was a man of unclean lips, and dwelt among a people of unclean lips, and there, in the very presence of the Lord of hosts, he learned that God was able, by the live coal from off the altar, to cleanse such, and take them up in His service. A remnant is referred to in the last verse.

As before noticed, the promise of Immanuel is presented, the hope of Israel, in the seventh chapter. In the eighth we see that He would be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and offense to both the houses of Israel. The absolute authority of the Scriptures “the law and the testimony”— is again insisted on. (chapters 8:14, 20.) In the ninth chapter, the Messiah, of whose increase of government and peace there should be no end, is the child born, and the son given.

The judgment of the Assyrian is then set forth, immediately before the millennial reign is introduced. We are told that he boasted of his own strength and wisdom, and the faithful are enjoined not to be afraid of him. This Assyrian reminds us of the destruction of the antichrist, the great oppressor, at the coming of the Lord. (chapter 10:13, 24-26.)

The eleventh chapter most blessedly gives us Messiah's reign in righteousness, the gathering together of His people for blessing, and the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption. Then the Messiah, the “root of Jesse,” will be for an ensign of the people. To it shall the Gentiles seek, and He shall assemble both “the outcasts of Israel” and “the dispersed of Judah” from the four corners of the earth. Observe here the perfect accuracy of Scripture. The ten tribes of Israel are cast out, but where, no one knows; they are, therefore, most significantly called “the outcasts of Israel,” in contradistinction to “the dispersed of Judah,” who, for their sin in rejecting Christ and the Holy Ghost, are scattered in judgment among all the nations of the earth. Both families will then be united, and Ephraim will not envy Judah, and Judah will not vex Ephraim. (verses 12, 13.) There will be a highway left for the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria. The people of Israel's joy in millennial times is recorded in the twelfth chapter. They will praise Jehovah that His anger is turned away from them, and that He comforts them. They will sing and praise Jehovah, and say, “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

From chapters 13 to 27 we have the judgment of God upon the Gentile nations. Babylon stands first and foremost, and then Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Dumah, Arabia, Shebna, and Tyre pass before us under the judgment of God. All, however, is interspersed with promise and hope as to the people of Israel. While in chapter 14 judgment is executed upon Babylon, so that it shall be said, “How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!” (verse 4), it is also said, “The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land...and it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from thy hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.” (verses 1-3.) Again, in chapters 17, when judgment on Damascus and Israel are referred to, it is said, “In that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall be made lean.... Yet (referring to the remnant) gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two

or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel." (verses 4-6.) In chapters 18 we are told, "In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion." When Egypt and Assyria have gone through the discipline of the Lord, it is said, "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." (chapter 19:21-25.) In chapter 24 we are told, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." (verse 23.) In chapter 25 God is praised, known too as the God of resurrection, who will swallow up death in victory. In chapter 27 it is declared that "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the whole earth with fruit; that the children of Israel shall be gathered one by one; and when the great trumpet shall be blown, those ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, shall come and worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." (verses 12, 13.)

“Peace in Believing.”

“WHERE can a heavy burdened soul like mine find rest?” thought I; for now I felt I could do nothing. There I stood, helpless before God. My soul seemed to groan within me.

As I was retiring one night I passed through the sitting-room, when my attention was attracted by some little tracts which the Christian man of the house had laid on the table for his boarders to read. While I stood looking at them, my eye fell on one bearing this title: “How can I be accepted as righteous?” In an instant it came into my mind, this is just what I want to know. So down I sat, and began to read what, it seemed to me, I had never heard before—not what I must do to be saved, but what God has done to save the sinner. Oh, what news this was to me! This was what I, a poor sinner, who could do nothing, wanted; and now I was led to see that Jesus came into the world in obedience to God’s will, and took the sinner’s place. He bore the sinner’s sins, and made such atonement for him that God declares Himself satisfied with it, by raising Him (Jesus) from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand. Oh, what glad tidings! Such news I never heard before. Christ has made atonement for me. God is satisfied, and this satisfies me. So I found peace in believing what God says He has done to save sinners.

The Three “Nots.”

WE were waiting for the Birmingham train, which arrived at the time appointed. No sooner, however, had we taken our seats than we were struck with the solemn and peaceful appearance of a respectable-looking old man, who was the only occupant of that carriage. His appearance and manner so claimed our respect, that the possibility of his being a follower of the Lord Jesus presented itself most irresistibly to our minds. After traveling together for some time, I could not help saying, “May I ask you, sir, if you have eternal life?”

“Yes, certainly. Christ is my life; and I have enjoyed His love for upwards of thirty years.”

You see, then, that Christ, who died for sinners, and is now in the glory, is your life—eternal life; as the Scripture saith, “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” How very simple this is! and yet how very blessed to know that God speaks of us now as having the present possession of everlasting life! “You see, also, sir, I suppose, your everlasting security; for if Christ in the glory is your life, how can you ever perish? Moreover, has He not given us, among other very precious Scriptures, three nots? — shall “not perish,” “not be ashamed,” “not be confounded.”

“Oh, yes,” said he; “I shall never perish!”

By this time we had arrived at Leicester, and had to separate from this old disciple, this dear child of God, as he seemed to us to be. We could but affectionately shake him by the hand, and commend him to the blessing of God. He said, on leaving us, “I never saw these three nots before, and believe I shall not easily forget them.”

After this, as we traveled along the line, we could not help thinking what a deep reality it is to be “in Christ Jesus;” and how few, even if they know their sins forgiven, seem to enter into the blessedness of Christ now being their life, and that they stand before the eye of God, “not in the flesh,” but in Christ risen and ascended; as the apostle hath it, “quickened together, raised up together, made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!” How delightful to know ourselves thus on the other side of death, on new-creation ground, beyond the reach of Satan, the world, or death, as to standing and acceptance, because we are accepted in the Beloved, blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, made nigh to God in Him, and through His precious blood! What cause for praise! What ground of worship and thanksgiving the sinner that believes is brought into! Sins judged, the old man crucified, all God’s just claims met for us in the death of Jesus under the judgment of God, as in our stead, and bearing our sins! How fully reconciled to God we are! everything being cleared up by the death of His Son! and now having new life “in Him,” “the righteousness of God in Him,” cleansed by His blood, justified by His blood, sanctified by His blood, in whom we have redemption through His blood, and the One who thus redeemed us being now our great High Priest before God. What can be more secure? and how could we be given greater ground of confidence as to present access to God, and future enjoyment of glory? Well may we sing■

“How can I sink with such a prop
As my eternal God,
Who bears the earth's huge pillars up,
And spreads the heavens abroad?
“How can I die while Jesus lives,
As risen from the dead,
Since life and grace my soul receives
In her exalted Head?”

Dear reader, may we lovingly ask, Have you been reconciled to God? Have you known what it is to have had every question of sin, guilt, fear of death and judgment, all cleared up between you and God? Have you so credited God's own account of the death of Jesus, as having suffered for sins, under the judgment of God, and thus put away sin, that you believe the truth that sins were so purged? — what God says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more”? See how blessed the testimony of God the Holy Spirit is— “There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Only think, “No condemnation!” And how could there be, if Jesus bore the condemnation for you? Oh, dear reader, if you have not yet fled to the Lord Jesus as the only refuge for your sin-burdened soul, the only Saviour for a sinner, flee now, we beseech you, as the manslayer fled to be inside the city of refuge, that you may know that you are reconciled to God—not condemned—justified from all things—in Christ Jesus! Then will you be able to enter into the threefold comforting assurance— “not perish,” “not be ashamed,” “not be confounded.”

Revelation 1:7

THE Lord, whom scoffers scorn and slight,
Will shortly come again
With two-edg'd sword, when He will smite
Ungodly, sinful men.
No soul, not sheltered in the Lamb,
Can face that dreadful day;
For Jesus is the great I AM,
And over all hath sway.
When every eye the Lord shall see,
And judgment falls on men,
How will it fare, dear soul, with thee?
Oh! where wilt THOU be then?
When Balaam, with prophetic eye,
That day beheld with awe,
He knew that he should not be nigh
To HIM whose day he saw.
Sin's wages He both loved and earned,
Rejecting truth and grace;
And they who Christ have scorned or spurned,
With woe shall see His face.
When every eye the Lord shall see,
And judgment falls on men,
How will it fare, dear soul, with thee?
Oh! where wilt THOU be then?
All kindreds of the earth shall wail—
Each tribe from pole to pole;

With terror shall the boldest quail,
And each unrighteous soul;
While they who're Christ's shall be with Him,
His holy image bear;
Have joy that overflows the brim,
And all His honors share.
When every eye the Lord shall see,
And judgment falls on men,
How will it fare, dear soul, with thee?
Oh! where wilt THOU be then?
That solemn day must come to pass;
Yea, soon it will be here,
And fall upon the faithless mass
Who will not heed and fear.
But now is Jesus on the throne,
And grace still shows to those
Who trust in Him, and Him alone,
Although they were His foes.
When every eye the Lord shall see,
And judgment falls on men,
How will it fare, dear soul, with thee?
Oh! where wilt THOU be then?

The Jew

An Extract.

THE instant we rose from the table, as before observed, there crossed the court-yard of the inn opposite to the room where we were sitting a Jew, as he appeared to be, with a basket of pens. My friend seeing him, hastily ran to the door, to inquire of him whether he knew a man of the name of Abraham Levi, one of their people. "Yes," he said, "I know him very well; but he is not one of my people." "How is that?" replied my friend; "are not you a Jew?" "No," the poor man said, "I thank the Lord, I am not! I was once, indeed; but I trust I am now a lover of the Lord Jesus." The effect wrought on my mind by this short conversation was like that of electricity. "Pray, my friend, do us the favor," continued my companion, "to walk into this room. We are both lovers and humble followers like yourself, if you are so, of the Lord Jesus, and we shall much rejoice if you will communicate to us the pleasing information how this change was wrought." "That I will most readily," replied the man; "for if it will afford you pleasure to hear, much more will it delight me to relate, a change to which I owe such unspeakable mercies."

"Without going over the whole of my history from my childhood," he said, "which hath very little interest in it, and is unconnected with the circumstances of my conversion, it will be sufficient to begin at that part which alone is worth your hearing. It is about two years since that I first began to feel my mind much exercised with considerations on the deplorable state of our people. I discovered, from reading the Scriptures, the ancient love of God to our nation. In our history, as a people, I saw the many wonderful and distinguishing mercies with which from age to age the Lord had blessed us. I remarked also how, for the disobedience and ingratitude of our people, the Lord had punished us; but what struck me most forcibly was that prophecy of Scripture, 'That the scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until the Shiloh should come' (Genesis 49:10); whereas I saw very plainly that our nation was without a scepter, without government, without temple. I remarked, moreover, that our people were a light, vain, and worldly-minded people, who took it not to heart; and if the Lord had punished our fathers for their sins, ours deserved His displeasure more. Added to all these considerations, which very powerfully operated upon my mind, I saw a great mass of people living around me who professed themselves to be followers of the true God, and who asserted, in confirmation of their faith, the Shiloh was come, and that to him was the gathering of the people. Distressed and perplexed in my mind, by reason of these various considerations, I knew not what to do, and could hardly find power or inclination to prosecute my daily labor.

"It happened one day, while walking over the bridge of the city, that, my mind being more than usually affected, I could not refrain from pouring out my heart in prayer to God. I paused as I stood on the bridge, and lifting up my eyes towards heaven, I cried out, 'O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who hast declared thyself as keeping covenant mercy for thousands, look down upon me, a poor Jew! vouchsafe to teach me what I must do! Thou knowest, my desire is to serve thee, if I knew the way! Thou art greatly displeased with our nation and with our people, for we

have broken thy commandments. But, O Lord, direct me!’

“It was with words something like these,” continued the poor man, “that I prayed; in which I wept much. At length, I walked on; and passing by a (so-called) place of worship, where I saw many assembled, I found my heart inclined to go in. Who knows, I thought within myself, but the Lord may have directed me hither! I went in, and near the door finding a seat unoccupied, I entered into it, and sat down. The minister was discoursing on the mercies of God in sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world. If this Saviour were my Saviour, thought I, how happy should I be! I felt myself considerably affected, and frequently turned my face to the wall and wept; and many times, during the continuance of the discourse, so much was my heart interested by what I heard, that I wept aloud, and could not refrain.

“I had disturbed some of the congregation, it appeared, by my behavior; so that as soon as the service was finished, two or three of the men came toward me with much anger, asking me what I meant by coming there to interrupt the worship with my drunkenness; but when they discovered the real state of the case, and I had told them the whole desires of my mind, they almost devoured me with kindness. This served very much also, under God, to convince me that their religion must be the true religion, which produced such effects.

“Not to fatigue you with my relation, it will be sufficient to observe, that from that hour my mind began to discover hope; and as the kind people into whose congregation I had thus entered undertook to instruct me in the principles of the Christian faith, I soon learned under God.

“One little event more,” he added. “After this my business of selling pens obliged me to go to another city, about twelve miles distant from the one where I dwelt; and calling at a pastry-cook’s shop, who occasionally dealt with me, a circumstance occurred which became highly serviceable to me in my new path of life. There sat in the shop a venerable gentleman dressed in black, the mistress of the house stood behind the counter, and I was just within the door. A poor beggar, looking miserably ill, came in for a tart.

‘Ah! John,’ cried the old gentleman. ‘What, have you left the infirmary? Is your disorder declared to be incurable?’ ‘Yes, sir,’ replied the poor man; ‘they say they can do nothing for me.’ ‘Well, John,’ answered the old gentleman, ‘there is one Physician more which I would have you try; and He never fails to cure, and He doeth it also without money and without price.’ The poor man’s countenance brightened at this, and he said, ‘Who is He?’ ‘It is the Lord Jesus Christ,’ said the gentleman. ‘Pray go to Him, John, and if he be pleased to heal your body, it will be a blessed recovery for you indeed; and if not, He can and will heal your soul!’ The poor man did not relish the advice; for he went away looking angrily. As for me, I cried out (for I could not refrain), ‘May the Lord bless you, sir, for what you have said in your recommendations of my Master and Saviour! He is, indeed, all you have described Him; for He hath cured both my body and soul.’ Astonished at what I said, the gentleman expressed his surprise in observing, ‘I thought you were a Jew!’ ‘I was, sir,’ I answered, ‘once; but by grace I am now a Christian.’ He caught me by the hand, and entreated me to go with him to his house, when I related to him, as I have to you, the means, under God, of my conversion; and when I had finished my story, at his request, we dropped on our knees in prayer; and oh, sirs, the fervor and earnestness with which he prayed, and the thanksgivings which he expressed for the Lord’s mercy to my soul, never shall I forget! The recollection even at this distance continues to warm my heart...”

The poor man took his leave, after mutual wishes and prayers for our spiritual welfare; and the night being now advanced, after reading the Scriptures and prayer, we departed each to his chamber.

Extract From Correspondence

(Revised by the Writer.)

I THANK God with you for His mercy to your son and daughter, and trust you may have the comfort of seeing them grow in the knowledge and likeness of the Lord, walking in the truth, and being ensamples to their brethren, as well as witnesses to sinners.

What a marvelous thing Christianity is I would that we realized far more than we do its character and power. In olden times God was hidden behind the veil, and man could not get near Him. It would have been death to him, "save the high priest once every year, not without blood." "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (Hebrews 9:8.) The light that in those days shone "at sundry times and in divers manners.... unto the fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1), served only to make the darkness and distance from God to be the more painfully felt by the godly. The prophets themselves, as the Holy Ghost tells us in 1 Peter 1:10-12, searched diligently into their own testimonies, and the most enlightened of them all was constrained to cry, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." (Isaiah 45:15.) Enough had been revealed to enable the prophet to call God a Saviour, and at the same time to convey the sense of His hiding Himself. When the blessed Lord came upon the scene, there was no longer a hiding. It was God come out from behind the veil, in the person of His Son, that man might know Him, and be blessed with His presence. The true light was now amongst men. This introduced a great change; but it only made manifest man's moral ruin to the full. The ways of God's goodness before the law, and under the law, had proved the incompetency of man to meet the righteous claims of God; so the presence on earth amongst us of Him in whom all goodness dwelt, and displayed itself in every act, and in every word, only found that in his best estate, as descended from Adam, man was incapable of appreciating even the goodness of God Himself; for he hated and crucified the Lord of life and glory. The cross of Christ was thus the undeniable expression of our natural enmity against God, and at the same time the highest possible expression of the love of God to us; and in virtue of the atoning work accomplished thereby, the God of all grace—having raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, and given Him, as man, a place in the heavens—is calling sinners into eternal life and blessing in association with Him there through faith. The believer is blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ; for we are accepted in Him, and His hopes and interests are ours. (Read Ephesians 1 and 2. Our citizenship is no longer in this world, "but in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," &c. (Philippians 3:21); when we shall be taken to be with Him also, where He now is, forever (read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15); where this coming of the Lord to receive us to Himself, according to His promise in John 14, is presented to us in detail as our immediate hope.

In the meantime the believers are, by one Spirit, baptized into one body, of which Christ is the Head. This is what distinguishes Christianity from all that went before it. The blessing committed to

Adam's keeping was earthly, and he forfeited it through sin. The blessing presented to the Jews was earthly also; it was national pre-eminence, with Jehovah for their God dwelling with them, the fountain of all blessing down here upon earth— "Immanuel, God with us." But Immanuel was rejected and crucified, and the blessing of Israel, and of the nations of the earth under His blessed rule, is in abeyance until the Lord shall have completed His parenthetical work, which occupies the interval between His being rejected, and crucified in weakness, and His coming forth again in the day of His power. But if, as we have seen, man would not have gone with Him to bless Him on earth, how marvelous is the grace of God that will have men with Himself, in His own blessed sphere and region! How marvelous the grace that turned men's shutting out from earth of the Son of the living God, into the opening of the way for men into heaven itself! "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."

May your children so learn their true place and blessedness in Christ, as to have their hearts set upon Him; and that communion with Him may be the home of their spirits, and the doing of His good pleasure, the sufficient reward of their service of Him, in a world that calls itself Christian, but sees no beauty in anything that is His.

A Word for the Conscience

IT is written, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

Reader, it is a terrible mistake that is made, in supposing that profane cursing and swearing is what this Scripture refers to. You are, most likely, not guilty of that, and yet it may be that you lie under the awful guilt of daily and hourly breaking this commandment. You call yourself a CHRISTIAN; THAT is taking the LORD'S NAME. Beware, I pray you, lest it be indeed in vain—in profession merely. If you have taken it in life eternal, through faith in the blood of Christ, happy are you; go and bring forth fruit; but if in profession only, THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD YOU GUILTLESS. Don't let any say this is going back to the law, &c. Surely truth in the inward parts is as important now as it ever was.

Praise

THERE is no book of the New Testament so full of praise, and the spirit of praise, as the gospel by Luke. As Genesis is the record of the birth of the old creation, so the gospel by Luke is the minute and interesting account of the birth of Him who is “the beginning of the creation of God.” Did “the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy, when He laid the foundations of the earth and the corner stone thereof”? (Job 38:7.) So when His new creation was begun in the person of His glorious Son, “a multitude of the heavenly host praised God, and said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The book begins with praise, and alludes to it verbally five or six times, and in sentiment many more times, and ends by “they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.” Natal joy seems to pervade this inspired writing of the evangelist, and gives peculiar freshness and vigor to its contents. Should not the praise and joy thus commenced in connection with Him who is emphatically “the beginning,” be continued in His members? Am I, a member of Christ, the exalted One in glory, to be found hanging down my head like a bulrush? He who hath redeemed us will by-and-by lead the praises of His Church— “In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee.” We do not find praise so much in the New Testament as a marked feature in the Old—the gospel of Luke is rather an exception. The reason is, doubtless, that the spirit and practice of thanksgiving, praise, and worship, are mature fruits of the Holy Ghost’s operations in the new nature, brought only, not by exhortation, but the soul’s discovery of a rich, spiritual, practical exercise. How often do the richest gems of truth lie scattered over the sacred volume! and found only by those who will profit by them, who are earnest, experienced searchers in the soil; but, when found and put into use, are discovered to be a grand secret of inestimable value. We pray, and ask, and seek, and sometimes are impatient in our importunity. Very blessed and very right to pray— “Pray without ceasing;” but I have too tried the more excellent way of praise, of thanksgiving. Have we cultivated a spirit of direct praise to the Lord? rejoicing in the Lord always? in everything giving thanks? for “this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” If we have, the testimony must be, and is, that the more we have praised Him and blessed Him, the more reason has He given us to thank Him and praise Him. For every blessing we have given Him thanks, He has added further mercies for which to thank Him; commencing in our souls with a rill of thankfulness, it has grown a river of praise and joy. We have found that mere asking and receiving are incipient blessings, an early fruit of redemption; but thanking and praising have superseded, in many ways, prayer, (blessed as that is,) by our gracious Lord “daily loading us with tender mercies, even the God of our salvation.” We have found, and every saint sincerely practicing it will find, that his desires are forestalled, his highest hopes accomplished beforehand, through the exercise of a thankful heart. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” He will soon be able to say, “I have all, and abound; I am full.” He will soon know what it is to want a larger heart—more room to give place to the blessings descending in such copious abundance. As God abhors murmuring, complaining, so He delights in praise and thankfulness.

A more practical, precious, and spiritual truth cannot be brought to our notice than praise. Try it. Prove God herewith, and see if He will not pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. It is a medicine, really and truly. A large part of our sufferings arise from too exclusively cultivating an asking, and, therefore, in a sense, an unsatisfied frame, and neglecting our mercies. Bless God for the first mercy you have, or can think of, and be assured another is not far off. It is a perfect cure for melancholy and depression. It helps wonderfully mind and body, without money and without price; and specially in this connection is it most precious, because, in the attitude of praise, and in its exercise, we are placed entirely out of the reach of the adversary, whose influence is ever exerted to depress, deprive, hurt, and destroy, but “out of the mouths of babes and suckling’s thou hast perfected praise.” Why? “That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” He who is praising is out of his sphere and influence. The enemy is compelled to be still as a stone; he can make nothing of the one who is occupied in praise; he can only stand by in silence. What a marvelous truth! What a spiritual fact! The adversary can divert during prayer—cause wandering thoughts; but whilst praising he is kept at a distance; he cannot enter the sanctuary or sphere; there is full deliverance from his darts, and thrusts, and suggestions. I say, who can estimate the value of this fact, only known to the habitually praiseful, thankful soul? Try it, and great will be your joy, success, prosperity, and praise.

Thank the Lord for every saint you know. Praise Him for all saints. Bless Him for Himself, His word, His cross, His table. Rejoice for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Bless Him for daily mercies, for the assembly of the saints, for every truth that edifies, for every ministry He owns. “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice,”

No. 2

IN chapter 28 the final history of Israel is referred to. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, will be trodden under feet; while in that day the Lord of hosts will be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people. (verse 5.) The rulers in Jerusalem, scornful men, make an agreement with death and hell, to escape the overflowing scourge; but their refugee are found to be false. God has laid in the Messiah the only and sure foundation, a tried stone, and safety is alone in believing on Him. (verses 14-18.) The fact is that God is wroth, and He will distress Jerusalem, and they shall be brought down, and visited of the Lord of hosts in judgment; while deep sleep shall be poured upon the people, and their eyes closed. (29:1-10.) Their blindness and unbelief are manifested in chapters 30, in going down into Egypt for help instead of to Jehovah, and in despising the word of the Lord (verses 2-12), which iniquity brings further judgment. The end, however, is always bright for the people and the land. "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?... The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.... Those also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that mourned shall learn doctrine." (chapters 29:17-26.) "Then shall He give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.... And there shall be, upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold," &c. There will be judgments, as always, in connection with Israel's time of blessing, as we have here, for He will show the indignation of His anger, when the Assyrian shall be beaten down; and fire and brimstone, and the deep and large pile, are prepared for the false and willful king. (chapters 30:23-33.)

Chapter 31 again sets forth Jehovah's displeasure with those who go down to Egypt for help, shows His deep interest in Jerusalem, while He enjoins the people to turn to Him, from whom they have deeply revolted, when they will each cast away their idols, the Assyrian shall fall by the sword, and everything shall be established in Messiah's hands, the King who shall reign in righteousness. (chapters 32)

In chapter 33 two classes are found—sinners, and the remnant who walk righteously, who will dwell on high, and see the Messiah when He appears in royal beauty, when Jerusalem shall be "a quiet habitation, a tabernacle which shall not be taken down." "But there the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars.... For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us." So full of blessing will the people be as not only to have their iniquities forgiven, but delivered from bodily sickness. (chapter 33:14-24.)

Chapter 34 gives the Lord's judgment of the nations who have oppressed Israel. It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. This is followed in the

next chapter by “the ransomed of the Lord” returning to Zion with songs and everlasting joy—millennial glory—when blessing will flow out from them to the wilderness and the solitary place. (chapter 35)

The next four chapters (36–39) give us the blasphemous king setting himself against the son of David, God's people, and the holy city; which calls out the faith of the faithful, when, after being sustained by the prophetic word, God appears for their deliverance, and for the overthrow of their enemies by judgment from heaven. No doubt a striking picture of the willful king and the faithful remnant in the time of Jacob's trouble. It will be encouraging, too, to the remnant to wait on God, and hope in Him, in that time of unparalleled blasphemy and affliction. The marvelous raising up of Hezekiah, the son of David, from being as good as dead, may set forth the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, by whom all Israel's future blessings will be established.

The fortieth chapter begins the second part of the prophet's writing. From it to the end of the forty-eighth chapter God expostulates with the people about the folly and wickedness of idolatry. He declares that “all flesh is as grass,” and that it passes away like the flower of the field, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Yet God still owns His people. He says, “Israel is my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” He declares His readiness to help and uphold them, and that He will not forsake the poor and needy (the remnant), but open rivers in high places. (chapter 41:8-18.) This is very touching. In chapter 42 blessing is promised through Messiah, who will open blind eyes, and bring the prisoners out of the prison. He again charges them in chapter 43 not to fear, because they are His, and declares that He will be with them, and bring them through fire and through water; and though they have been weary of Him, and turned from Him, yet for His own sake He will blot out their transgressions, and will not remember their sins. But being His chosen, how could they fall down to idols of wood and graven images! Yet, notwithstanding all these things, God still declares that Israel is His servant, shall not be forgotten of Him, and that He has blotted out their sins as a thick cloud, and their transgressions as a cloud. (chapter 44) He speaks also of the remnant as “mine elect;” and though the makers of idols will go to confusion, yet “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” (chapter 45:4, 16, 17.)

In chapter 46 the idolatry of the transgressors is exposed, while “the remnant” (verse 3) are assured of Jehovah's unchanging faithfulness. Chapter 47 records the judgment of Babylon; and in chapter 48 the inspired prophet expostulates with the house of Israel because of their unfaithfulness, declaring that Jehovah for His own praise defers His anger, and refrains from cutting them off. He bids them to come near unto Him, their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, while He reminds them of the vast blessings they have lost by not hearkening to His word. The chapter concludes with the declaration that. “There is no peace to the wicked.”

“Why am I so Sad?”

IT may be that some of the readers of these pages have often asked themselves the question, “Why am I so sad?” So long as they are busily occupied with the daily avocations of life, there is little time for serious reflection or soul-anxiety; but quiet moments do occur, or the stillness of the night-watches steal upon them, and then the perturbed conscience manifests itself, and solemn thoughts of death, judgment, and a never-ending eternity, produce many a sigh, and the deeply-felt utterance of the heart is, “Why am I so sad?”

After all, death and judgment are dread realities to every reflecting mind; for it is written, that “every one of us must give account of himself to God.” How, then, can any right-minded souls who have not peace with God be otherwise than sad, when they consider in how brief a period of time this brittle thread of life may snap, and land them forever in eternity? Nor will false religiousness suffice to permanently console such perturbed consciences; for their minds being occupied as to how matters stand between them and God, nothing can really give them peace but the certain assurance that every question about sin has been set right between their souls and God. That many do go on year after year trying by their own efforts to find rest for their burdened consciences is, alas! most true; but never finding it either in the way of works, or in keeping ordinances, religious duties, or self-amendment, despondency and gloom so often possess them, that with deep sorrow of heart they exclaim, “Why am I so sad?”

Such persons little think that “salvation is of the Lord;” that “by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight;” and that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Hence it is that many sincere souls have not peace. They are looking for peace in almost every conceivably wrong way, instead of looking alone to the Lord Jesus Christ, who made peace by the blood of His cross, and is now in the presence of God, in heaven, “for righteousness to everyone that believeth.” Like the Jews of old, “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, they are going about to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” No wonder, then, that they cry out, “Why am I so sad?”

Such cases are, with sorrow we state it, very common. One occurs to us while we write; it is this. Mrs. B—was a respectable farmer’s wife, and every now and then much distressed about her soul’s salvation. So miserable at times was she, that in deep, heartfelt bitterness, she would inquire within herself, “Why am I so sad?” She tried to be as moral and upright as possible; but again and again the distress of an evil conscience, and a sense of utter unfitness for the presence of an infinitely holy God, so seized her, that she became wild, and wondered if self-destruction would not put an end to her misery.

What can I do? naturally became her anxious inquiry; and knowing that a farmer in the neighborhood was noted for his piety, she occasionally repaired to him to pour out the doleful tale of her deep sense of sin, and intolerable fear of death and judgment. But he seems to have been very blind and self-deceived; for he told her she could not be happier till she got better, that she ought not to expect to be happy while she was such a sinner; and after exhorting her to go home

and try to lead a new life, and keep the commandments, she would return home, resolving again to persevere in a better and more religious life. This, however, as might be expected, did not last long. Again a sense of God's eye being upon her, and of her responsibility to Him, lay bare her conscience, and sometimes while feeling thus she would run out of her house in a frantic state, and consider if there were no way of escape from her intolerable misery. Again she would take refuge in her religious friend, but always with the same result. This continued for many years. At length she heard that a few Christians met together to read God's word in a village within two miles of her residence, and she determined on going. On her first entering the room, someone was reading the Saviour's precious words— "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." In a moment she saw there was peace, not by doing, but "in believing," and at once looking to the Lord Jesus, she was relieved of her burden, and filled with joy and peace. Her delight was intense, and her decision for the Lord most marked. Her husband was a very wicked man, and though he persecuted her most vigorously, her testimony for the Lord was so firm and unyielding that he soon turned to the Lord, and was enabled to openly confess Him before men; so that they walked happily together in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. How true it is that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely this is the only cure for the wretchedness of a sin-convicted soul, whose heart's utterance is, "Why am I so sad?"

The well-known Martin Boos also passed through much misery. He thus relates his conversion to God from Roman Catholicism: "I lay for years together upon the cold ground, though my bed stood near me. I scourged myself till the blood came, and clothed my body with a hair shirt; I hungered, and gave my bread to the poor; I spent my every leisure moment in the precincts of the church; I confessed and communicated every week." He "gave himself an immense deal of trouble to lead a holy life;" and was unanimously elected a saint; but the saint was miserable, and cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" Going to see a pious old woman on her death-bed, he said wistfully, "Ah! you may well die in peace!" "Why?" "You have lived such a godly life." "What a miserable comforter!" she said, and smiled; "if Christ had not died for me, I should have perished forever, with all my good works and piety. Trusting in Him, I die in peace." And from this time the light fell in upon his soul; the dying woman had answered his miserable cry— "O wretched man that I am!"

Let the reader observe that both these instances of long and bitter distress of soul were greatly owing to false teaching. No doubt, God overrules it, and, through all the distress, gives souls to learn experimentally that in them, that is in their flesh, dwells no good thing; and thus they become more thoroughly settled in the grace of God in Christ, rest more simply on His written word, and consequently have great peace. Still, such distress is not necessary, nor could it be known if God's word were listened to instead of the opinions of men. Surely, it may still be said of many, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark 7:9.) Happy indeed are those who have so heard the voice of the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, as to have turned to Him, and received Him as their alone way of peace, and thus know what it is to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Such are "in Christ Jesus," and can triumphantly exclaim—

"He raised me from the depths of sin,

The gates of gaping hell;
And fixed my standing more secure
Than 'twas before I fell.
“Satan may vent his sharpest spite,
And all his legions roar;
Almighty mercy guards my life,
And bounds his raging power.”

Dear reader! what say you to these things? Has ever the secret utterance of your heart been, “Why am I so sad?” Do you reply, No? What! Is it possible you have never felt the terrible solemnity of having to give account of yourself to God? Has your conscience never owned its guilt to God? Has your heart never been melted under a sense of the amazing love of God in giving His beloved Son to die for sinners? Only think what it must be to be before the eye of an all-seeing, heart-searching God!

Feelings

FEELINGS seem to be the stumbling-block of many now. The unconverted build upon them, and so do the converted. Whereas, neither of these are right, and until both the converted and unconverted get their salvation based on what God looks on as the basis of their salvation, they cannot be of the same mind as God, and consequently can enjoy no peace.

God looks on the blood of Christ as forming the basis of the foundation upon which He can now justify an ungodly man; and you, dear reader, must look upon it too in the same light and way that God looks at it. “When I see the blood I will pass over you,” He said to the Israelites, and He says the same now— “In whom we have redemption through His blood.” God has looked on the blood, “the precious blood” of Christ, and it is precious in His sight, as an eternal atonement for sin—root and branch.

Can you look at it as such? If so, you have the mind of God on that great subject, and perfect should be your peace.

“I do believe; but I don’t feel that peace.”

But you are justified by believing. As a man said to me the other day, “I was unhappy for a long time; but I read that verse, ‘Abraham believed God, and IT was counted to him for righteousness.’ When I saw that word IT, I was satisfied.” (Romans 4:22.)

“That is to say, your simply believing what God told you, was counted to you for righteousness.”
“Yes; I am counted righteous, though I am not righteous, because I believe in God’s word about Christ having died for my sins, and risen again for my justification.”

“I found full peace at the meeting last evening,” said a young woman, “while you were comparing the various foundations people try to rest on with the foundation of God. I saw plainly the foundation I had been trying to rest on ever since I first saw my sinful condition was just this—putting my earnest resolution to lead a godly life, together with my feelings of deep sorrow, and bringing that to God as recommendation. I would not have owned that even to myself; but when I saw the foundation of God, the deepest and most secret recesses of my evil heart were made evident to myself. When I saw the foundation of God, that ‘eternal redemption which Christ on the cross obtained for us,’ I scarcely knew what to do with myself for joy. All the way home, after meeting, I could but repeat to myself, ‘Oh, what a fool—what a fool I have been; always trying to do or to feel some great thing, instead of just believing what Jesus has done, and what my sins made Him feel on the cross.’”

The Watchman's Cry

Enquire, my soul, enquire!

What doth the watchman say?

Is the One object of desire

Upon the way?

What doth the watchman say,

Whose cry the slumberer wakes?

"The night hath nearly passed away:

The morning breaks."

"The night is coming, too!

A night of speechless woe:

But there shall be no night to you

Who Jesus know."

"Come, whosoever will,

Ere God's right hand He leaves:

He waits till He His bosom fill

With all His sheaves."

"God speaks—shall we be dumb?

Watch, that your lamps may burn:

Come, all ye weary wanderers, come!

Return, return."

Take up the watchman's word;

Repeat the midnight cry:

"Prepare to meet your coming Lord;

The time draws nigh."

Make ready, O my soul!

Make ready, Christians dear!

Yield up the heart's affections whole;

Our Lord is near.

The hours with eager flight

Pass on, till He appear:

The moment of unknown delight

Will soon be here.

And in that blissful day,

When saints around Him dwell,

'Twill be their joy to hear Him say,

They loved Him well.

The Bed Ridden Paralytic

WE had scarcely finished our repast, says a Christian writer, when the mistress of the house came in, to inform us of the situation of a poor man in the street, who had been bed-ridden from the age of fifteen. "He is a very pious creature," added the mistress, "and a great number of gentry go to visit him. I thought it might be pleasant to you to hear of him." "That it is," replied my friend, "and we thank you for it; we will go to see him. Where is his dwelling?" "Five doors only below our house," she answered, "and the waiter will show you."

When we came to the poor man's room, though everything manifested the indigence of his circumstances, yet it was that kind of poverty which recommended itself by its cleanliness. There stood a lady at the foot of his bed, in conversation with the sick man. "How do you live?" I heard her say, as I entered the chamber. "Live, madam!" replied the poor man; "I am in very good circumstances; I am not only rich by reason of present possessions, but I am heir to a large estate." "Astonishing," said she; "you were pointed out to me as a very poor man, and I came to give you some relief." "That you may still do, madam, if you please," answered he; "for the riches I possess, and the inheritance to which I am born, do not at present make me above charity. I am only rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom." "Oh," replied the lady, "is that all? but in the meantime, how do you manage for this world?" "My God," cried the poor man, "supplies all my need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. When my worldly stock is reduced low, and I have neither scrip, nor bread, nor money in the purse, I make use of "bank-notes." "Bank-notes!" exclaimed the lady.

"Yes, madam," he answered; "here is a book full of them," taking up a Bible which lay upon the bed, and opening it; "and oftentimes I find many folded up together in the same place to which I open. Look here, madam," he continued; "see, here is a promise suited to every man's case—'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them. I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys.' (Isaiah 41:17, 18.) And the high value of these promises is, that they are sure and certain. Faith draws upon the Almighty Banker, and He is all prompt payment." While the poor sick man said this, he opened his Bible in another part, and he exclaimed again, "See, madam, here is another promise to a soul under doubts and fears, 'I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.' (Psalms 32:8.) And thus, madam, in every state, and in every circumstance of life, in this blessed book, are assurances exactly suited to the wants both of my body and soul. Promises of provision for the way; deliverances under danger; preservation in seasons of affliction; support under trouble; direction in times of difficulty; and the Lord's assured presence in every time of need. 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'" (Isaiah 41:10.)

The lady, without adding anything, put a piece of money into the poor man's hand, and withdrew. What her sentiments were I know not; but as soon as she was departed, my companion addressed the sick man. "I am much delighted," he said "to see you, my friend, so cheerful. It is a pleasing consideration that your sickness is sanctified; but are you enabled always thus to rejoice?" "Oh, dear sir," the poor man answered, "no; very frequently, through unbelief, I am tempted to exclaim with one of old, 'My hope is perished from the Lord.' I have seasons of darkness, and times of temptation; notwithstanding all, I can and do say, through grace strengthening me, sometimes under both, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: for though I fall, I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.' (Micah 7:8.) Yes, in my heart I cry out, all men are liars; but, blessed be the Lord, under all, MY GOD IS FAITHFUL. He is better to me than all my fears."

At the poor man's request, my friend and I sat down, and we had a most refreshing season. I could truly say, it is good to be here!

We parted not till we had spent a few minutes in prayer; and at the conclusion the paralytic broke out in a faint and trembling voice—

"My willing soul would stay

In such a frame as this;

And sit and sing itself away

To everlasting bliss."

How different would have been the experience of this beloved child of God, had he seen his standing in Christ Jesus, the Head of all principality and power. A sense of this, through faith, wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, alone delivers from self. Then again as to his every day need, the first Scripture that he quoted is for us, and is enough: "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The other quotations are concerning God's earthly people, the Jews. Still, his reliance on God, and on His faithfulness were very sweet. And we surely know that the Lord's love and care over us will not be less than over His earthly people; only we should never forget that this is especially the place for the true followers of Christ to suffer for His name's sake, and to prove the sufficiency of God's grace and faithfulness to bring them through every trouble, and to rise superior to it, by occupation with the Lord Himself, their Forerunner. The promises to the Jews are blessings in the earth.

Life and Righteousness

“Christ, who is our life.”— Colossians 3:4.

“Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us righteousness.”— 1 Cor. 1:30.

THE life which we receive is Christ our life; and this is not to make good our place in the flesh. It makes me own that there is in me, that is, in my flesh, in me as a child of Adam, no good thing. (Romans 7:18.) And hence, knowing that Christ has died to put away my sin, so that God's glory is maintained and enhanced as to it, I reckon myself dead, and accept my condemnation as such, but find myself (Christ being in me) in Christ. I have put on the new man, and that is all I am before God. I have given up, died to, owned the just condemnation of (only that condemnation borne on the cross) the old man. (Rom. 6:6.) I am not in the condition, status, responsibilities of a child of Adam at all. As such, I have owned myself as wholly lost; I have, through grace, put it off; am dead and risen with Christ. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God;” but I am not in the flesh, because the Spirit of God dwells in me. (Romans 8:8,9.) I do not look for any recapitulation of the old man by any performance of its duties. I have given it up as wholly bad and condemned, and take my place, through grace, in Christ. For all that I was in the flesh, Christ died. He has put it away, and I reckon myself dead. I am in Him, with Him as my life, and accepted in Him my righteousness... My righteousness under the law is absolutely null. The contrary is there—sin. There is in God's sight evil, and nothing else. The flesh is thus judged. Then Christ dies for me, because I am such, and I am born again—receive Him as eternal life. Is Christ now, as to righteousness, a maker up of defects, or absolutely my righteousness? Defects of what? Is my righteousness—what I am, as living after the Spirit—made up as patchwork by Christ's acts when I have acted after the flesh? Is that the idea of divine righteousness? of Christ being of God made unto us righteousness? The new man has in himself no defects—it is Christ as my life; and the old man has no good in it. Scripture says we have put it off (Colossians 3:9); we are not seen in it at all; we are not now in the flesh. If I have the life of Christ in me, I stand before God in Christ's present perfectness. He, in all that He is, is my righteousness; and the workings of the old man, while they have been borne as my sins, and God glorified as to them, do not enter into account at all. I am not seen in flesh, but in Christ, in His absolute perfectness, apart from flesh altogether. “I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” “If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world,” why, as though living (alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? If I am really alive in Christ, I have not a righteousness to be made up at all, since Christ is in the presence of God for me. I have to overcome. If I fail, Jesus Christ the righteous intercedes; God chastens me, if needed; but I am not seen in flesh at all...

Here, then, is the question: Is the old man to have a righteousness made out for it as still alive and responsible under law? or, is the Christian accounted crucified as to that with Christ, alive only in Him, and having no other standing before God than His abiding perfection, and all his conduct here measured by that? If I am to believe Scripture, the answer is plain “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “Ye are not in the flesh.” We are created again in Christ, placed on a

wholly new footing; have nothing to do with the old man (save as an enemy, which is no longer I), but are alive, and the righteousness of God in Christ. — An Extract.

Who but Christ!

MAKE tight work at the bottom, and your ships shall ride against all storms, if withal your anchor be fastened on good ground—I mean, within the veil; and verily I think this is all to gain Christ—all other things are shadows, dreams, fancies, nothing.

I never believed till now that there was so much to be found in Christ on this side of death and heaven. Oh, the ravishments of heavenly joy that may be had here in the small gleanings and comforts that fall from Christ! What fools we are who know not, and consider not, the weight and the telling that is in the very earnest penny, and the first-fruits of our hoped-for harvest! How sweet, how sweet, is our enfeoffment! Oh, what then must personal possession be!

I bless the Lord that all our troubles come through Christ's fingers, and that He casteth sugar among them, and casteth in some ounce weights of heaven, and of the spirit of glory, that resteth on suffering believers, in our cup.

Every one knoweth not what a life Christ's love is. Scare not at suffering for Christ; for Christ hath a chair and a cushion, and sweet peace for a sufferer; Christ's trencher from the first mess of the high table is for a sinful witness. Oh, then, brother, who but Christ! who but Christ! Hold your tongue of lovers where He cometh out! O all flesh! O dust and ashes! O angels! O glorified spirits! O all the shields of the world! be silent before Him; come hither and behold our Bridegroom; stand still and wonder for evermore at Him! Why cease we to love, and to wonder, and adore Him?

S. RUTHERFORD.

Isaiah.

No. 3

THE forty-ninth chapter shows us Messiah rejected. Though Jehovah's "servant was to bring Jacob again to Him," yet He says, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught;" and adds, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God shall be my strength. And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (verses 3-6.) Observe, we have not the Church here, but the circle of blessing extended from Israel to the Gentiles, as it will be in millennial times.

Chapter fifty pronounces Israel to be divorced, put away; the Messiah suffering from the people, giving His back to the smiters, &c.; and the remnant—those who fear the Lord—exhorted to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon His God. The followers of righteousness are then assured of future blessing, through the mercy and power of Jehovah. (chapter 51)

In chapter fifty-two, though Messiah's "visage was more marred than any man," yet "He shall be exalted," and "kings shall shut their mouths at Him."

In chapter fifty-three atonement is set before us through Messiah's death. We have His burial, too, in the grave of the rich, and many justified by His work; but He shall yet see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. The elect of Israel will by and by utter the language of this chapter. As a consequence of the atoning work, Israel is richly and abundantly blessed, and called on to rejoice; for the people now desolate will have many more children and richer blessings than Israel before the divorcement, when she was the married wife. (chapter 54:1, &c) They are, therefore, called on to hear Jehovah's word, and receive His gracious blessing freely, "without money and without price." (chapter 55) Then Jehovah's house of prayer will not be restricted to Israel, but be "for all nations," even for the strangers that join themselves to the Lord, who shall be joyful in His house of prayer. (chapter 56) The righteous, then, who are true-hearted, may perish at this time, but they are taken from the evil to come. But the wicked are dealt with in judgment; for they are like the troubled waters, casting up mire and dirt; and again the divine testimony is, "There is no peace to the wicked." (chapter 67) The seed of Jacob must be told their sins. The hypocrisy of those who pretended to serve the Lord is set forth, the true character of service enjoined, and the blessings accompanying it. (chapter 58) Notwithstanding, however, all their failure and ruin, and that they had no intercessor, Jehovah's arm was not shortened; He would interfere and recompense their enemies, so that His name should be feared from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. "The Redeemer, too, shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." (chapter 59)

Then the sixtieth chapter gives the most blessed account of Israel's glory in that day, when Zion shall be an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations; when "the people shall be all righteous, and they shall inherit the land forever."

In the next chapter (61) Christ Himself is seen as personally bringing in blessing upon His people. To those who will mourn at the sight of Him, He will give the oil of joy and the garment of praise. The old wastes shall be built, and former desolations repaired; strangers shall feed their flocks; they shall be named the priests of the Lord, and everlasting joy shall be unto them. He will direct their work in truth, make an everlasting covenant with them, and cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Then they shall have a new name, be a crown of glory in Jehovah's hand, and a royal diadem in the hand of their God. They shall no more be termed forsaken, nor the land desolate; "for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. They shall be called, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: Sought out; A city not forsaken. (chapter 62) These are some of the blessings Israel will be brought into when "the Redeemer shall come to Zion."

In chapter 63:1-6, the Lord is seen returning from Bozrah, as having executed judgment in fury and anger upon His living enemies; for while it is the acceptable year of the Lord as concerns His redeemed, it is the day of vengeance and indignation of the Lord upon His enemies. The gracious sympathy of the Lord with His people is most touchingly alluded to, rebellious as they had been—"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (verse 9.)

From verse 15 to end of chapter sixty-four the earnest pleadings of the remnant with Jehovah for deliverance in their distress, because they were His, are recorded in the most affecting way, as, no doubt, the two last chapters of this book give us Jehovah's answer. They entreat Jehovah, though even Abraham did not know them, and Israel—their own brethren in the flesh—are so led away as not to acknowledge them, to "look down from heaven," to "return," to "rend the heavens and come down," to "be not wroth very sore," for we are all thy people. They appeal, too, on the ground of the temple being destroyed—"Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"

As we have said, God answers this appeal in the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth chapters, where the remnant is remarkably distinguished from the wicked in Israel. God begins by informing them that the Gentiles had turned to Him, but that to them he had been spreading out His hands all the day, as to a rebellious people, who provoked Him to anger with their sins. (verse 5.) He declares that He must execute judgment and recompense for such things: "Ye are they that forsake the Lord.... Therefore, will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not bear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not." (verses 11, 12.) The remnant, however, shall be blessed. "I will bring forth out of Jacob, and out of Judah, an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me." The remnant are characterized as poor in spirit and trembling at His word. Upon "this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word... Hear the word of Jehovah, ye that tremble at His word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let Jehovah be glorified: but HE SHALL APPEAR to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (chapters 66:2, 5.)

The faithful are assured that a new order of things shall be established, when the former troubles shall be forgotten, and Jerusalem shall be created a rejoicing, and her people a joy. "The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; but the sinner an hundred years old shall be accursed." Creation, too, as we saw in the eleventh chapter, shall be delivered from its groanings; and as the serpent was pronounced in Genesis 3:14 to be "cursed above all cattle," so at that time we see that "dust shall be the serpent's meat." (Chap. 65.) We are afterwards told that "a nation shall be born at once;" and Jehovah declares, "I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall see my glory. And from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come and worship before me, saith Jehovah." Thou people of Israel shall be gathered out of the nations, and brought on horses, mules, and litters, to Jerusalem, and their blessing shall be as permanent as the new heavens and the new earth. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." (chapters 66:8, 18, 20, 22.)

“Come.”

THIS was, and is, and so long as the gospel is preached will be, the loving word of the Lord Jesus to sinful, rebellious man. To the burdened and heavy-laden, He graciously said, “Come”— “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” To a publican anxious to see Him, He said, “Come”— “Make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.” To others He cried out with arms opened wide, and a heart burning with love, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” What wondrous mercy! No barrier now to any one and everyone who desires it, coming at once to the Lord Jesus, and having eternal life: “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

And yet how few are coming to the Lord Jesus and receiving this free gift—eternal life! How many are vainly spending their time, and efforts, and money, in trying to make themselves better; hoping to amend; endeavoring to patch up the rotten garment of a depraved and incurably bad nature; turning over, as they say, a new leaf; foolishly thinking that they may commend themselves to the favor of God; in some way or other blindly seeking to work out, either wholly or in part, eternal salvation; instead of believing God’s word, and coming simply, and only, and at once to the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can give rest and peace to a sinner’s conscience! How different, then, are God’s thoughts to man’s thoughts! Man thinks he must commend himself to God; whereas God in the gospel commends His love to us. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Man thinks if he loves God he will be saved; but God shows that the only ground on which a sinner can be saved is His love. “For 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.)

Did men believe this, how eagerly and at once would they come to the Lord Jesus, who was crucified for sinners. They would have confidence in God, by seeing His marvelous mercy in the gift and death of His beloved Son. Thus they would know there is no other mediator between God and men than the man Christ Jesus; no other name to trust in; no foundation to build on but His death and blood-shedding; no other way to the Father than by Him; no true righteousness but the “righteousness of God, which is, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.” Instead, then, of thinking only of God as an angry judge, they would be melted by His rich mercy, bowed down by thoughts of the unutterable sufferings and atoning death of His beloved Son, and through Him, now risen and ascended, and by His precious blood, find access with confidence into God’s most holy presence.

The way then, believe me, is not circuitous. It is simple, direct, and attractive. It is the Saviour calling, and the sinner coming to Him who said, “I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” Jesus, in the depths of divine love, says, “Come;” and the sinner that hears and believes waits for nothing, looks for nothing, tries nothing, makes no excuse, but in deep, grateful response, in the obedience of faith, comes. The language of his sin-convicted soul is■

“Just as I am! and waiting not

To rid my soul of one dark blot;

To Thee! whose blood can cleanse each spot,

O Lamb of God, I come!"

How alarming, then, is the thought, that when Jesus thus welcomes sinners to His loving heart, men should say it must be through ordinances, priests, the Virgin, or some other fancied medium, that this Saviour of sinners is approached; as if He did not love sinners, welcome sinners, and save sinners! How such thoughts dishonor Christ, tarnish the glory of His finished work, undermine the gospel, set aside the true grace of God, deceive sinners, and set up a false way! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

"A German Duke lay dying. Anxious about his soul and eternity, he spoke to some around him. One advised him to pray to the Virgin, another to Saint This, and another to Saint That, when a trusty, godly courtier said, 'Your Highness, straightforward makes the best runner! Go direct to Christ, and turn not aside to Virgin, Saint, or Pope.' Jesus says, "Come unto me;" and, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." We need no spokesman, nor saint, nor angel, between us and our Saviour. We may go on our own errands to God. He who bids us come, will bid us welcome. There is no impertinence in coming to the throne when we are called; but rather is it unmannerly to go to a servant when the Master invites to Himself."

How blessed it is to have true thoughts of God!

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." How blessed too to contemplate the posture which God now takes in the gospel concerning His beloved Son, who is the way, the alone way, and the way of perfect peace into His most blessed presence. Him God sent, God gave, God delivered up for us all, God laid on Him our iniquities, God condemned sin in the flesh, and, when thus bruising Him upon the cross, hid His face from Him, so that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But Jesus bowed His head in death, and said, "It is finished!" and God, who had put Him to grief, raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory. And that blessed Saviour, now crowned with glory and honor, is expecting to come forth and put all enemies under His feet. And blessed be God, concerning Him and His finished work, God still says, "Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:38, 39.)

Dear reader! dost thou believe on the only-begotten Son of God? Is His atoning death thy ground of peace with God? Dost thou know what it is to come unto God by Him? Is Jesus crucified, risen, and ascended, thy way into God's holy presence? Then indeed thou art among the blessed; thou hast passed from death unto life; thou art a child of God; for "we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Then surely the Lord Jesus is precious unto thee, and His ways, His honor, and His praise, are what thou art now seeking.

“The Works of the Flesh.”

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditious, heresies, envying’s, murders, drunkenness, revelling’s, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”— Galatians 5:19-21.

How few think that those who are practicing “the works of the flesh,” whether looked at in their coarse, immoral character—such as drunkenness, and the like—or in their more quiet and refined activities—as idolatry, emulations, and heresies—are both alike exposed to the solemn doom pronounced in the divine verdict, “shall not inherit the kingdom of God!” Such conduct shows that the hearts of those who walk in these ways are ignorant of themselves, and know not God and the Saviour whom He hath sent. They are simply in their natural state; and “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.” (1 Corinthians 2:14.) Vain, indeed, is it to cultivate such a corrupt tree, which can only bring forth corrupt fruit. A new life, a new nature, is what the natural man wants, however refined he may be, in order to “bring forth fruit unto God.” “The works of the flesh” are one thing, “the fruit of the Spirit” another. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” A believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is born of the Spirit; for “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” How true it is, then, that “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” can be never better than flesh, and can only do “the works of the flesh,” concerning which it is written, “that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” How solemn and decisive this is! And yet how suitably it links itself with another inspired declaration, that “they which are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:8.) It does not say that they that are in the flesh cannot be polite, virtuous, moral, or practice outward proprieties so as to gain the esteem of men; but that such, do what they will, “cannot please God.” How sweeping is this divine statement! How clearly it shows that the natural man, whether educated or uneducated, religious or irreligious, needs life, a new nature, to be born of God, in order to bring forth fruit—to do works which can please God. For this it was that God sent His Son, not to improve man’s evil nature, but to give life—eternal life. “I am come,” said He, “that they might have life.” It is life that the natural man needs; and we have life through, or in, our Lord Jesus Christ. God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. “He that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Accordingly, those who are born of God know the inward conflict of “the flesh” and “the Spirit.” Hence we are told in this same chapter, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would,” or, that ye should not do these things that ye desire. It is blessed to know the Son of God crucified, risen, and ascended, as the source of spiritual life, and, while abandoning all hope of improving man’s fallen nature, look to Him by faith, and receive the gift of eternal life, without which no one can see or enter into the kingdom of God.

A lady told us that while cultivating morality in herself, and seeking as much of the quiet, respectable pleasures of life as she wished, her conscience was arrested, and her heart bowed down before God, by the words of Scripture, “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” (1 Timothy 5:6.) “Is it possible,” said she within herself, “that I who am so moral, so virtuous, so careful in my ways, can be dead—dead before God?” She had no rest until she obtained life—risen life, everlasting life—through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another says, she resolved every now and then to live better, be better, be more religious; to mourn more over her sins, live more systematically religious, arrange in her purpose a course of life for almost every hour. But all constantly broke down. Every resolution failed. All her plans proved useless; until at last, burdened with sin and guilt, she was compelled to look up to the Lord Jesus Christ for peace and reconciliation to God through His death, and now she knows that she has eternal life.

Another says: “The first twenty-five years of my life I lived only for this world, joining in all the pleasures and amusements of fashionable society, and was altogether forgetful of God. To ease my conscience, however, I used to say my prayers night and morning; but I never read the Bible, and whenever a serious thought of the future flashed across my mind, I used to console myself with the idea that there was plenty of time for that yet. I was still young and strong. I entertained the hope that after having had my ‘fling,’ and become tired of this world’s pleasures, I should then commence to lead such a steady and correct life as in the end to obtain an entrance into the kingdom of God.

“Of the real simplicity and plain truths of the gospel I had no clear idea. No Christian friend had ever spoken out plainly to me upon the subject of my salvation. On one occasion, when ill, I was visited by one making a high profession of religion; but his inquiries did not go beyond the state of my bodily health. His conversation turned on the topics of the day, and the prevailing amusements of the place we were quartered in. I have often regretted that not a single one of my numerous Christian friends ever opened his lips to warn me as to the awful termination of the ungodly course which I was pursuing.

“One day, whilst in this state, a friend said to me, ‘Come with me to church this evening, and you will hear a good sermon from the rector of the adjoining parish.’ I went out of curiosity, and paid little or no attention to what was being said, until my attention was arrested by the preacher reading out from the fifth chapter of Galatians these words, Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying’s, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.’ I have no doubt I had often heard them before; but when at the conclusion of this fearful catalog of sins, many of which I knew I was indulging in, he read this awful sentence, ‘Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,’ I felt I could go on no longer. I felt I must give them up, or there would be no hope for me. My mind was deeply impressed with what I heard. I came home changed in my views and feelings; for the Holy Spirit not only brought me under deep conviction of my sinfulness in God’s sight, but also showed me that the perfect righteousness which as a sinner I needed was only to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. I also felt that the Lord alone could give me strength, and sustain me in the narrow path which leads to everlasting life.

“Still, for another month or so I continued joining in balls, operas, concerts, and such like amusements; but finding I had lost all relish for them, I gave them up entirely, and sought the society of those who had renounced the deceitful vanities of the world, and who were living for those glorious realities which are the eternal portion of all who follow Christ here below.

“This change took place a short time before the extraordinary awakening which the Spirit of God has recently produced in various parts of the globe. Prior to that awakening of the Church of God, Christians, as far as I had seen, seldom, if ever, spoke out faithfully and boldly to those around them respecting their personal salvation. Plain speaking and earnest exhortation were not the fashion. Books may have been lent, and tracts given; religious conversation, if on general subjects, may have been frequent; but if Christians were assured of their own salvation, there was a shameful and inconsistent indifference about the salvation of others. There was a strange shrinking from coming to close quarters, and from dealing faithfully and personally with others as to whether they were on the road to heaven or hell

“I have been much struck with the change which took place in many of my friends who visited the north of Ireland, where the power of the Spirit was so largely and blessedly manifested. They returned altered in their sentiments and their habits. Their faith and assurance of their own salvation were greatly strengthened. They were much bolder in speaking to all they met concerning that present peace and future happiness which are to be found only in Christ Jesus. I give an illustration.

“One Sunday I was walking with Captain—and a friend of his, shortly after the former had returned from Ireland, when we stopped and conversed with a poor old woman in the street about her soul. She said in a very dubious tone, she hoped she was in the right way. ‘Only hope!’ said my friend, to my astonishment; ‘that is scarcely enough. You ought to be sure.’ I reproved him, and called him presumptuous. He immediately opened his Bible, and showed me John 3:36— ‘He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life;’ and his friend to whom I referred took precisely the same view. This was all new to me. I knew I was a believer; but I did not feel or like to say I was saved. I went home, thinking seriously over it. I made it the subject of earnest prayer, and about a fortnight afterward, when speaking to one apparently unconverted about the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus, my own safety in Christ seemed to flash upon my mind, and I was enabled to rejoice much in the strength of my salvation.

“Still, I was ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and dared not openly to confess Him, or indeed to make any open profession even of religion. If any friend came into the room whilst I was reading my Bible, I immediately hid it under the table.

“One fine spring morning very early I was sitting in my room, with my window open, reading God’s word, when a friend of mine, who was taking a morning walk, stood up at my window, and looking in called out, ‘Halloo! what are you up to?’ I got red in the face, and said, ‘Reading my Bible.’ ‘Very good,’ he answered; ‘I don’t mind you. I like your religion. You are not one of those fellows who are always pushing it down people’s throats. You keep it to yourself. Good-bye.’ So saying, he went away.

“Thus left, I was led to ponder over this commendation of my style of religion. I thought within myself, ‘Who is that man serving? Not the Lord Jesus Christ. His life gives no evidence of it. Then

that word of commendation cannot come from God. It must be of Satan.' Reasoning in this way, I determined no longer to merit such praise; and from that time, by prayer, grace and strength have been given to me to acknowledge Christ before men. And when the devil was cast out 'the dumb spake, and the multitudes marveled.'" (Matthew 9:33.)

How blessed it is to "have peace with God;" to be "reconciled to God by the death of His Son;" to know Him "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;" to be consciously united "to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God!" How easy, and how happy, then, it is to confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus; to confess Him before men, who loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!

Luke 14:15-24

THE supper's spread, the time is late,
The midnight hour is near,
And God invites both small and great
To come and taste His cheer.
The Lamb is slain, yea, lives again—
All things are now prepared;
Let none the message hear in vain,
Whom grace till now hath spared.
The poor, the halt, the maimed, the blind,
Each one, howe'er opprest,
May now the fullest access find,
And be a welcome guest.
The feast is rich; there yet is room—
The door wide open thrown;
God willeth not a sinner's doom,
Oh, seal not, then, thine own!
Come as thou art; He nothing wants,
Except that thou shouldst come;
The suited robe Himself He grants,
And makes each feel at home.
No more do thou thyself excuse,
But to the supper haste;
Lest, shouldst thou still His grace refuse,
His judgment thou shouldst taste.
T.

“Now No Condemnation.”

An Extract.

“THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1.) The apostle does not here speak of the efficacy of the blood in putting away sins (all essential as that blood is, and the basis of all the rest), but of the new position, entirely beyond the reach of everything to which the judgment of God applied. Christ had indeed been under the effect of the condemnation in our stead; but when risen He appears before God. Could there be a question of sin, or of wrath, or of condemnation, or of imputation there? Impossible! It was all settled before He ascended thither. He was there because it was settled; and that is the position of the Christian in Christ. Still, inasmuch as it is by resurrection, it is a real deliverance. It is the power of a new life, in which Christ is raised from the dead, and of which we live in Him. It is—as if the life of the saint—the power, efficacious and continued, and therefore a law, by which Christ was raised from the dead— “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus;” and it has delivered me from the law of sin and death, which previously reigned in my members, producing fruit unto death. It is our connection with Christ in resurrection, witness of the power of life which is in Him, and that by the Holy Ghost, which links the “no condemnation” of our position with the energy of a new life, in which we are no longer subject to the law of sin, having died to it in His death, or to the law, whose claims have ceased necessarily for him who has died, for it has power over a man as long as he lives. Christ, in bearing its curse, has fully magnified it withal. We see at the end of Ephesians 1 that it is the power of God Himself which delivers; and assuredly it had need be so—that power which wrought this glorious change—to us this new creation.

This deliverance from the law of sin and death is not a mere experience. It will produce precious experiences; it is a divine operation, known by faith in His operation who raised up Christ from the dead; known in all its power by its accomplishment in Jesus, in the efficacy of which we participate by faith. The difficulty of receiving it is, that we find our experience clashing with it. That Christ has put away my sins, and that God has loved me, is a matter of simple faith through grace. That I am dead is apt to find itself contradicted in my heart. The process of chapter 7 must be gone through, and the condemnation of sin in the flesh seen in Christ's sacrifice for sin, and I alive by Him, judging sin as a distinct thing (an enemy I have to deal with, not I), in order to have solid peace. It is not all that Christ has put away our sins. I live by Him risen, and am linked with this husband; and He being my life—the true I in me—I can say I have died because He has. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”....

Before God we are “not in the flesh.” This indeed supposes the existence of the flesh; but, having received the Holy Ghost, and having life of the Holy Ghost, it is He who constitutes our link with God.

Jeremiah

JEREMIAH has been called the weeping prophet, so much did he (no doubt by the Spirit of Christ) enter into the sorrows of his own people, and also into the terrible judgments he, in the faithful discharge of his prophetic functions, was called on to utter. His prophecies were especially concerning Judah and the surrounding nations, though the dark scene then present was lighted up with the hope of all Israel's establishment in blessing in their own land, on the ground of the "everlasting covenant." But with all this he did not, like Isaiah, treat of the personal glory, sufferings, atoning work, and ways of the Messiah. He was before the people warning and predicting judgments, and often suffering in consequence, for more than forty years.

The prophet from the first felt his weakness and insufficiency for the work. Its arduousness, and need of more than ordinary courage, must have been very manifest, especially when he considered how deeply the people had revolted, and what severe judgments awaited them. God, however, in His never-failing kindness, so considered his servant's plea of weakness, as to assure him that He would strengthen and deliver him, and that he should be an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land.

God's words were precious to Jeremiah. He says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (chapter 15:16); and, from the many quotations he makes from the Scriptures he then had recourse to, it is evident that he not only waited on God for fresh revelations, but diligently addicted himself to the study of what had been already written. The book shows how knowledge thus gained was used by the Holy Ghost in the prophet's service, and is another witness to us, that those whom God uses and honors in His work, heartily acknowledge the value and authority of Scripture. His confidence, too, in God's faithfulness to His own word shone forth every now and then very brightly. The purchase of the field of Hananeel strikingly illustrates this.

Jeremiah strikes at the root of the people's iniquity at the outset of his ministry. He says, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." (Jeremiah 2:13.) This has always been the source of ruin. From this to the end of the sixth chapter he exposes the general characteristics of their corruption, and among them may be noticed these two things, — no one seeking the truth, and none executing judgment. He most touchingly entreats them to acknowledge their iniquity, and return to Jehovah.

From the seventh to the tenth chapter he promises that they shall dwell in the land if they choose God's ways, though he charges them with idolatry. His distress at their condition causes him to cry out, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (9:1.) But he is moved to predict the most terrible judgments, while exposing the folly of their falling down to idols, the work of cunning men like the heathen. (chapter 7-10)

In the eleventh and twelfth chapters, he charges them with covenant breaking, thus exposing them to God's judgments, when they shall cry unto the gods to whom they have offered incense, but they shall not save them. Jeremiah is not to pray for them. (11:14.) Though God has forsaken His house, and given His dearly-beloved into the hand of her enemies, yet He will by and by return and have compassion on them, and bring them again every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. (chapter 12)

The prophet is next shown by a linen girdle, which he hid in Euphrates, the thorough ruin and unprofitable state of Judah, whose pride God purposes to humble. (chapter 13)

By the famine, the prophet's heart is so touched that he most feelingly intercedes for the people; but he is told that even if Moses and Samuel stood before God, it would not hinder His casting them out of His sight.

Jeremiah feels himself to be a man of strife; but God's word is precious to his soul, and he is taught that the only path for the faithful is separation. (15:16,19.) Decision on this point is so practically enforced, that he is neither to go into the house of mourning or feasting with them. (16:5-8.) The seventeenth chapter sets forth the blessedness of the path of faith.

In the potter's house the prophet was shown that God could do as He pleased with His own, only coupled with it was the promise of blessing to them if they obeyed His voice and turned from their evil way. (chapters 18:1-8.)

We next have the judgment of Jerusalem. (chapter 19:20.) From chapters twenty-one to twenty-four, judgment is pronounced on the royal descendants of David, Zedekiah, Shallum, Coniah, and Jehoiakim; but the days will come when God will raise unto David a righteous branch, and "in those days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (23:6.) This is still future. There is now no hope of Judah's escaping being carried away into Babylon; but the captivity is to be limited to seventy years. The cup of fury is now to be drunk by the nations, beginning first with Judah. At the end of the seventy years the King of Babylon is to be punished, and the land to become a perpetual desolation.

It is important to notice here that the government of the world is given to the King of Babylon because of Judah's unfaithfulness. But Babylon failed at once, not only by oppressing God's people, but in commanding all people to be idolaters; for Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, and commanded all nations to fall down to it. These things called afterward for God's judgment upon it.

But to return. The prophet is now commanded to say to his people, that if they do not hearken to God's word, He will make their city a curse to all the nations of the earth. (chapter 26:6.) He informs them that they must bow to Nebuchadnezzar, God's servant, to seek the peace of the city whither they are carried away captive, and that when they turn to God with all their heart, He will be found of them. (chapter 27-29) The next four chapters are occupied with the most gracious promises of mercy, and of future restoration and blessing in the last days, on new covenant ground, and in connection with the Branch of Righteousness which shall grow up unto David. (chapter 30-33)

Jeremiah again declares that Nebuchadnezzar shall fight against Jerusalem, take it, and burn it with fire, and that the cities of Judah shall be desolate, without an inhabitant. (chapter 34) The house of the Rechabites is commended and blessed for their obedience to their father. (chapter 35) A curse is pronounced on Jehoiakim for burning the prophet's roll—God's word. (chapter 36) Jeremiah is imprisoned in a dungeon for his faithfulness for many days; but through the kind intervention of Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, he is drawn up out of the dungeon with cords, but remained in the court of the prison till Jerusalem was taken. (chapter 38)

From chapters thirty-nine to forty-three we have the account of Nebuchadnezzar taking Jerusalem, carrying Judah away into captivity, except a few of the poor whom he left, and gave vineyards and fields. He gave special charge to do Jeremiah no harm, but to look well to him. The state of confusion with those who were left in the land is then recorded, their opposition to the prophet's counsel and warning, and their fleeing into Egypt, where Johanan carried captive Jeremiah and Baruch. In this way was brought to pass the judgments God pronounced, until an end of them had been made by the sword and by famine. (chapter 44) Baruch's life is given him for a prey. (chapter 45) We have then the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the judgments to fall on the Gentile nations, and lastly on Babylon. The last chapter is not by Jeremiah.

Lamentations

Judah is in deep affliction. They have been carried away into captivity. They are under God's governmental "wrath." (chapters 2:1-7.) Nevertheless, they are His people. Jeremiah's heart is therefore deeply moved, no doubt by the Spirit of Christ, to express most touching feelings concerning them, again reminding us of the precious Scripture, "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." And did not, at a later time, the sad condition of the nation, in rejecting God's message both by the Baptist and by the Messiah, give no sorrow of heart, no inward suffering, to the Lord Himself? Most assuredly it did; for they were still "His own;" and He could not but weep over their doomed city. And who can read His tender care for the suffering remnant in the coming time of Jacob's trouble, without being struck with His deep love and sympathy for them? (Matthew 24:16-22.) So we find the prophet in Lamentations, under the power of the same Spirit, giving utterance to the most touching exclamations, while acknowledging the sins of the prophets, priests, and people bringing deserved chastisement, and most feelingly entering into their sufferings under "the rod of His anger," and their deep humiliation by the Gentile power. Still there is hope; "for the Lord will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." (chapter 3:31, 32.)

“Who Loved Me, and Gave Himself for Me.”

How wonderful, and yet how blessedly true, that the holy Son of God should love me! Yes, me, who was so unclean, so far from God, so self-willed, so proud, so sinful, as to present nothing to His eye but evil, and that continually! How strange! and yet it is a most precious fact that, notwithstanding all, He loved me. Oh, yes! His pitying eye beheld me when madly posting on the broad road which leads to everlasting destruction, and His compassionate heart moved tenderly toward me. Yes, He loved me then, and in richest grace drew near and spoke to me. Yes, He spoke to me. His still small voice my inmost conscience reached, saying “Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?” What, said my wounded heart, am I so bad, so unclean, so undone, that death, the second death, is but just before me? Where am I going? Whither are my steps inclining? Is it possible that all along my quiet, amiable life, every movement has only hurried me along the broad and downward road? Is this a fact? Can it be that until now my sinful feet have only walked in paths where He is not? Is it true that all my best enjoyments, thus far, have been with my back quite turned to Him, ears deaf to His loving words, and heart unmoved by all the groans, and sufferings, and death, of the loving Son of God upon the tree? And yet when thus so loathsome, so unclean, in purpose and in not, that He should then love me! Oh, yes! It was for “sinners,” “enemies,” “ungodly,” that Jesus died; and this He plainly tells me. Such is His love; ‘tis love divine, and such His love to me. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

When in my sins, my folly, and my pride, it was that Jesus loved me. He looked upon me, felt deepest feelings of affection for me, and when nothing less than His own death, and that too “even the death of the cross,” could meet my case—nothing but His own life’s blood poured out could cleanse me from my sins: “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Yes, He gave Himself; he willingly died in my stead. He lovingly poured out His soul unto death. He offered Himself without spot to God. He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He did by Himself purge our sins. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. What perfect love! What abounding grace! What rich mercy! Many a man has given large sums of money to benefit others, but that is not himself. Some, too, have even sacrificed their lives for others, because they were good and worthy, as Scripture says, “For a good man some would even dare to die.” But “Christ died,” not for good people, but “for the ungodly.” He came into the world to save sinners. When Saul of Tarsus was madly persecuting and hating Christ’s members “members of His body”—and thus showing himself to be the chief of sinners, then it was that Jesus met him, and arrested him with His loving, tender voice, saying— “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” The Acts of the Apostles teaches us what mercy followed. Well then might the apostle in a later day exclaim— “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” And consider what a stupendous work He must have accomplished when He gave Himself! What an everlastingness of value must it have had by reason of the infinite glory of His person! What eternal efficacy there must have been in the sacrifice of the Son of God, that one offering which He once offered! No wonder that it tells us of remission of sins, of the “old man”

crucified with Him, of redemption accomplished, of peace made, and of reconciliation to God! No marvel that when He bowed His head in death upon the tree, saying, "It is finished!" that God was fully vindicated, the infinite claims of His righteousness and holiness fully met, a just atonement made for all our sins, God just, and yet the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. Well, indeed, might the apostle, when contemplating the death of Christ, say, "I am dead to the law;" "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless (in Him risen and ascended) I live; yet not I (not the old man, but a new life now in Christ risen, a new nature), Christ liveth in me." Henceforth, therefore, all his resources were in Christ; his joy and hope, his spring of life and strength, were all in Him; so that he added, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:19,20.)

"Oh, wondrous truth! that Jesus came

Into this world of sin to suffer shame;

That He, the Lord of glory, Lamb of God, the Christ, should be

A homeless wanderer, with sorrow pressed and bitter agony;

And all for me.

"Oh, precious truth! that Jesus bore

The weight and burden of my sins—and more

Did He; for with the precious blood He shed on Calvary

Bought He redemption's priceless gift—secure through all eternity;

And all for me.

"Oh, glorious truth! that Jesus lives

Enthroned on high; and in His mercy gives

So free, the blessed Spirit now within my heart to be

My Light, my Guide, my Comforter, to immortality;

And all for me."

“We Shall Not All Sleep.”

THE expectation of God's Son from heaven is the believer's hope. When the Lord Jesus left this world, He did not speak of death as that which we were to look forward to, but His own coming. He said, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:3.) Blessed hope! And yet it is remarkable how often Scripture is flatly contradicted, and even by those too who would not intentionally do so for the world. For instance, how common it is to hear it insisted on that “we must all die.” Whereas Scripture most plainly states the contrary. “We shall not all sleep”—that is, that when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven to receive us unto Himself, He will find some believers living on the earth, and those will never die; but be “changed in a moment,” and “caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so be forever with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4)

Again, we are sometimes met, when this glorious subject is introduced, by the reply, that Scripture says “It is appointed unto all men once to die;” but they are surprised at being informed that there is no such text in the Bible. There is something like it. It is this: “It is appointed unto men (not all men, but men) once to die, but after this the judgment;” and to this it is added, that instead of all dying, “unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Hebrews 9:27, 28.) The bright and blessed hope there set before the believer is not death, but the coming of the Lord from heaven, when his body will be changed, and fashioned like unto His glorious body; when mortality will be swallowed up of life, and we shall be caught up to be with Christ in glory, and like Christ forever.

Still, it is a fact that before the Lord comes believers do die, or rather fall asleep in Jesus. They do depart, Which, the apostle is directed to tell us, is to be with Christ, and that it is “far better” than to remain here; for to be “absent from the body,” is to be “present with the Lord,” Though compelled to leave the body behind, because of its unfitness for the Lord's presence until “changed,” nevertheless they are happy “with the Lord,” their bodies are under His guardian eye, and all are waiting for the glorious moment to arrive when “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,” and His saints be “caught up to meet the Lord in the air.”

Meanwhile, as we have said, God's dear children are falling asleep in Jesus; and happy indeed are those who are so attracted by the Lord Himself as, like the apostle, have a desire to depart to be with Him. Surely it is the path of faith, the way of triumph and victory; for while such are assured that “the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law,” they can also exultingly add, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:56, 57.) The eye of the heart being thus fixed on the Lord Himself, a Lamb as it had been slain now in the midst of the throne, their happy spirits go upward, ascribing victory, victory to the blood of the Lamb. Because they are thus occupied with the Lord, many find their death-bed the happiest part of their earthly pilgrimage. Having done with everything else, the Lord fills the vision of their souls. They are occupied with precious thoughts of His glory, and work, and worth. Surely this is the true secret of happiness in every part of our journey, and will be the source of endless, eternal joy

when in glory with Him. It is often brought out most brightly on a death-bed, because then the comparative worthlessness of everything here appears in its true character, so that the heart finds nothing to attach itself to but Christ Himself, and finds an overflowing cup of joy in Him. It has been so with many. We have often recorded such blessed instances. It has been so in various times since Christ has been known as crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God. What was the secret of Stephen's joy and strength when suffering martyrdom by being stoned to death? Are we not told that his whole soul was occupied, not with self, or his circumstances, or his sufferings, most painful as they were, but with Christ Himself? "Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And so it has been in their measure with many others of the Lord's servants. We have lately read an account of the last moments of an honored servant of the Lord, Augustus Toplady, who fell asleep in Jesus nearly one hundred years ago. We are told that as he approached nearer and nearer to his decease, his conversation seemed more and more happy and heavenly. He frequently called himself the happiest man in the world. 'Oh!' says he 'how this soul of mine longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in a cage, it longs to take its flight. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest forever! Oh, that some guardian angel might be commissioned! for I long to be absent from this body, and to be with my Lord forever.' Being asked by a friend if he always enjoyed such manifestations, he answered, 'I cannot say there are no intermissions; for if there were not, my consolations would be more and greater than I could possibly bear; but when they abate, they leave such an abiding sense of God's goodness, and of the certainty of my being fixed upon the eternal rock, Christ Jesus, that my soul is still filled with peace and joy.' At another time, and indeed for many days together, he cried out, 'Oh, what a day of sunshine has this been to me! I have not words to express it. It is unutterable! Oh, my friends, how good is God! almost without interruption His presence has been with me.' And then, repeating several passages of Scripture, he added, 'What a great thing it is to rejoice in death!' Speaking of Christ, he said, 'His love is unutterable!' He was happy in declaring, that the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, the thirty-third and the six following verses, were the joy and comfort of his soul. Upon that portion of Scripture he often descanted with great delight, and would be frequently ejaculating, 'Lord Jesus! why tarried thou so long?' He sometimes said, 'I find as the bottles of heaven empty they are filled again;' meaning, probably, the continual comforts of grace, which he abundantly enjoyed. When he drew near his end, he said, waking from a slumber, 'Oh, what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven?' And a little before his departure, he was blessing and praising God for continuing to him his understanding in clearness; 'but,' added he in a rapture, 'for what is most of all, His abiding presence, and the shining of His love upon my soul. The sky is clear; there is no cloud; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'

"Within the hour of his death he called his friends and his servant, and asked them if they could give him up? Upon their answering in the affirmative, since it pleased the Lord to be so gracious to him, he replied, 'Oh, what a blessing it is you are made willing to give me up into the hands of my dear Redeemer, and to part with me; it will not be long before God takes me; for no mortal can live (bursting while he said it into tears of joy) after the glories which God has manifested to my soul.' Soon after this he closed his eyes, and fell asleep."

Happiness

This is a soiled and blighted world!
Its joys are poisoned at their source!
Within its roses worms are curled,
Who work with sure, though silent, force;
It carries in its seeds decay,
And all its glories fade away.
How vain the thought, for man to strive,
And fix his roots for blessing here,
Where only worthless weeds can thrive,
And flaunting flowers a moment cheer;
Where all is fleeting as a stream,
And unsubstantial as a dream.
Yet I, like others, once assayed
To find on earth the flower of bliss;
I sought beneath the sun and shade,
O'er hill, through vale, by dread abyss;
But though I sought with earnest power,
I never found the unfailing flower.
At length, with sad and sickening heart,
And many wounds from thorns and briers,
With nothing that could heal their smart,
Or quench my bosom's fervent fires,
I felt the weight of woe and care,
And well-nigh perished in despair.
But One there was—His name, how blest!
The Saviour—God, who dwells on high!

Who saw my bruised and burdened breast,
And looked on me with pitying eye:
He led my soul His Son to see
In death upon the cross for me.
And then He drew my eyes above,
And showed that One upon His throne;
And thus I knew that God was love,
And He had claimed me for His own.
He kissed me with the Father's kiss,
And led me to the fount of bliss.
And though awhile I tread the waste,
The desert whence no water flows,
Of heavenly joys I freely taste,
Which cheer my heart, and soothe its woes;
But soon shall I, my journey o'er,
Have joy unmixed for evermore.
T.

Sanctification

SUPERSTITION is not faith. Human sanctity is not holiness before God. It is easy to venerate what may be hateful to God. Nor can feelings be trusted as to these things; for we know nothing of God or of His matters but what He has revealed. God tells out divine truth in His word. His love He has shown in the gift of His Son. Everything of man fades rapidly before our eyes, but the word of God abides. Happy thus to have a divine standard, a just weight and balance. Faith knows no other ground of confidence.

The popular thought of sanctification is, that God by His Spirit so works in the heart as gradually to convert an evil nature into a good one. But this is entirely untrue. As long as this wrong thought possesses the mind, the false expectation is cherished, even by sincere souls, of “getting better,” “experiencing a change of heart,” “improvement of the old nature,” “development of the noble faculties of the mind,” and such like; the consequence is, that if they have God before their souls, they go on thus for many months, or years, and do not find “peace with God.” The fact is that God searches the heart, and He has pronounced it to be not only wicked, but “desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things;” and as to its being capable of being improved, or changed, He assures us that “the carnal mind is enmity against God, that it is not subject to God’s law, neither indeed can be.” How clear this is! That the natural mind cannot be made subject to God’s law proves its totally unimprovable, unmendable character in God’s sight. No wonder, then, that it is added as a direct and substantial verity, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” How true it is, therefore, that God pronounces the tree of fallen human nature to be so corrupt, that do what you will with it, it cannot be made subject to God’s law, cannot possibly bear other than corrupt fruit—“cannot please God.” Hence it is that God has not even proposed to mend up man as a sinner, but to give him eternal life—a new nature. “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 John 5:11, 12.)

And yet some people are spoken of in Scripture as sanctified, even some who were once “thieves,” and “covetous,” and “drunkards,” and “revilers,” and “extortioners;” and it is now said of them, “ye are washed, but ye are sanctified;” but they are sanctified and justified, not by their old nature being improved and made better, but “in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” And this, too, not by the Spirit helping, as people say, their own fleshly endeavors; but, as before alluded to, by giving new life, and that in a risen and ascended Saviour. Hence the Corinthian believers are addressed as those who are “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Sanctification therefore is “in Christ Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 1:2 and 6:9-11.)

By sanctification, we understand separation unto God. The vessels of the tabernacle were separated to God, made holy vessels, by being sprinkled with blood and anointed with oil. (Hebrews 9:21; Exodus 40:9.) Aaron and his sons also were thus consecrated to God, fitted for His service. So now the believer in the Lord Jesus is sanctified, not by priestly rites and ordinances, but by the grace and power of God in and through Christ Jesus. Hence we read of ■

1st. Sanctification by God the Father (Jude 1), showing us that the Father, in His own purpose and grace, separated us unto Himself, chose us in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world.

2nd. Of sanctification by the Son— “Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:12.) Here we find the redemption work of Jesus separating us unto God, according to the will of God. “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” (Hebrews 10:10.)

3rd. Of “the sanctification of the Spirit.” (1 Peter 1:2.) Here we see that the first action of the Spirit on the soul is to separate us unto God, to sanctify, and that too even before justification can be known, by leading “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”

Thus we see the Father’s purpose and grace, the Son’s blood, and the work of the Spirit, all sanctifying —separating us unto God.

4th. The measure and character of this sanctification and nearness to God is said to be “in Christ Jesus;” that is, that God has made Him who is at His own right hand unto us sanctification. Thus we are near to God, and separated off unto God in all the nearness and acceptability of Christ Himself. Sanctification is then a present blessing. We are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

5th. Sanctification by the truth. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth,” was the prayer of our adorable Lord. (John 17:17.) This may be called practical sanctification, that which must result from the marvelous realities of the Father’s purpose and grace, the Son’s blood, and the Spirit’s work being known in our souls, in thus separating us off unto God, as “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” But it is by the truth. The word which testifies of Christ, searched into and unfolded to us by the Holy Ghost, God’s revealed mind and will made known and received into our hearts by faith, practically separates us off in affection, obedience, and devotedness to God. Hence we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A Solemn Warning

READER, let me ask you a solemn question. Worlds cannot tell—eternity cannot tell—how awfully momentous a question it is. You may soon be lying on the bed of death. The sunken cheek, the glazed eye, the last convulsive gasp, are CLOSE upon you. Just imagine it for a moment, and with the dark picture before your mind, let me ask, How will it be with YOU then? How is it with you now? Have you FELT yourself to be a lost and guilty sinner? and have you fled to Jesus for refuge as your ONLY hope for time and eternity? If not, what reason have you for believing that you WILL BE ABLE to do so THEN? Delay hardens the heart, darkens the mind, aggravates your sin, makes heaven farther, hell nearer, warnings powerless, the world stronger, Satan mightier, and condemnation certain.

Oh, reader, heed this warning! God is speaking to you now. He has spoken to you hundreds of times, and you have turned away. He has whispered to your inmost soul that He is willing to receive you just AS YOU ARE, in all your sins, in all your deadness, and darkness, and unbelief, and with all the guilt of a past life pressing you down beneath its heavy load, and still you have turned away! Often and often has He pressed you with sweet encouragement to take His offered hand of welcome, telling you that His grace has met your case, that His blood should cleanse you, His love forgive you, and His fullness supply all your need, and still you have turned away! He has whispered that this world, with all its pleasures and amusements, its mirth, merriment, and revelry, can never make you happy; that apart from Him life is not life, but death, and out of Him all joy is madness; that there is a dreary blank in the midst of all you enjoy; that the secret, undefinable want which you feel is the want of His friendship; and that nothing else will ever remove that sense of hollowness within which now casts a shade over your life; and still you have turned away and refused to be blessed!

Oh, reader, God has had long patience with thee, and thou halt not given heed! That patience will soon be exhausted and turned into wrath, and that wrath shall turn all thy hope into despair. In that solemn hour what will you do? Will pleasure be pleasure then? Will it not be gall and wormwood? Will the world's gay glitter bewilder you then? Where will be the spell of its beauty, the music of its syren song? Will not its joys be forgotten dreams? Will not the freshness of youth be faded, the ties of kindred be broken, the gladness of companionship be at an end, and the old familiar voices of earth have died away? Will not all be covered with a cloud in that day? Have you, then, made up your mind to "sleep on and take your rest?" to love darkness now, and to dwell in darkness forever? to be a sinner now, and a companion of devils hereafter? Is heaven a dream, and hell a fable? Is there nothing terrible in the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings? Is there nothing bitter in the dregs of the cup of trembling, in which is filled up the wrath of God? Is there nothing sweet in the light of heaven, or the glory which God hath prepared for them that love Him? Is there nothing desirable in the joy of the Lord, the peace that passeth all understanding, the rest that raineth for the people of God? Is guilt better than pardon? Is wrath better than love? Is death better than life? Is damnation better than eternal blessedness? Are the burning flames as pleasant as the cool waters of the fountain of life? Oh, reader, trifle not with thy Maker! The door of mercy is still

open, and again God is pressing thee to enter. Be persuaded. Arise! flee to the refuge! The fountain for sin is open, and Jesus waits to welcome thee. He asks no price, no gift, no preparation. Come just as thou art, in all thy sin. No matter how guilty you are, how far you have strayed, or how long you have slighted Him. Only come! "The blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin," says, Come! Every voice above you and around you says, Come!

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18.)

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3.)

Be Not Weary

“Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”— Gal. 6:9.

“Are you tired of laboring, servant of Christ?

Do you wish that the work were done?

Are you weary beneath the heavy load,

And faint in the mid-day sun?

Are you tired of laboring so oft in vain

For the souls you seek to win?

Is the harvest white? Are the laborers few?

Is your spirit worn within?”

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net