

THINGS NEW AND OLD VOLUME 13

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A collection of articles and writings by C.H. Mackintosh from Things New and Old Volume 13, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

47 Chapters

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Things New and Old Volume 13

And the Door Was Shut

Rejecters of Christ; cold empty professors; foolish virgins; a few more words and tears for you. Think of these words, “And the door was shut.” What will this world be to you when that door is shut? What will be the value of this world’s riches then? What pleasure will you find in sin then? What will the applause of men and the flatteries of Satan be worth then? Think, O think, dear reader; think seriously on that coming, solemn, hour! Look that day in the face, and tell me, what is there in the wide range of thy thoughts and visions worth having when compared with Christ? If Satan’s world be thy choice here, Satan’s hell must be thy portion hereafter. And oh, remember the time is short; the door will soon be shut, and shut forever.

Haste, then, O thoughtless, careless sinner: delay not; forget not; but at once, and with thy whole heart, flee to Jesus. He is waiting to receive thee; ready to pardon thee; willing to save thee. He invites thee to come to Himself; hear then His voice of love— “Hear, and your soul shall live.” Isa. 55:1-3.

Apostles in Counsel; or, Obedience to the Word

Acts 15

With the novel sight of a so-called Ecumenical Council in session at Rome, under the presidency of the Pope as the assumed successor of St. Peter, one turns instinctively to the inspired account of the only council at which Peter and the other apostles were present, to learn what likeness, or the reverse, can be traced between that now going on, and the one which was held at Jerusalem.

To Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas went up, with others whose names are not recorded, delegated by the Church at Antioch to confer with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. But Paul went up by revelation. (Gal. 2:2.) God's mind as to his journey thither, and conference with the apostles, had just been clearly expressed. He went as delegated by the Church, but he went because divinely directed. Neither Peter, nor James, nor John, summoned a council, and invited Paul and Barnabas to come up to it. It was the arrival of these laborers with others from Antioch which brought the question to a point, and made the apostles and elders come together about this matter.

It was an epoch of great importance in the Church. The truth had spread amongst the Gentiles, and the great center of missionary work was removed from Jerusalem to Antioch. Peter and John at an earlier day had gone out from Jerusalem to Samaria, seen the work there, acknowledged it, and returned to the metropolis of Judea. Now Paul and Barnabas had started from Antioch on a journey so fruitful in blessed results, and returned to that Church with tidings that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. To stop this work, if possible, was the aim of the enemy, and means were shortly found for attempting it. Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." The din of controversy was now heard to be silenced only by the letter from the council at Jerusalem. There, and there alone, could the evil which threatened the Church be averted. To it, therefore, Paul and Barnabas went up, where the full results at which these false teachers aimed were unequivocally brought out. At Antioch they had only urged on the Gentiles circumcision after the manner of Moses. But at Jerusalem the real aim of this teaching was fearlessly divulged: "It was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, and to command them to keep the law."

There, if anywhere, the supporters of this doctrine could carry their point. To settle this the apostles and brethren met. The discussion was doubtless earnest, it was certainly free; and, though Peter was present, he did not preside, or interfere with the freedom of speech of any of its members; many, apparently, spoke before he did, and Paul, and Barnabas, and James, spoke after him. Peter's speech was important, but the remarks of James were most needful. Peter's address was a fitting prelude to the recital by Paul and Barnabas of the miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them, as that of James was a fitting conclusion. Peter reminded them of what God had done by him for the Gentiles, and how those from amongst the Jews who believed should be saved even as the converts from the Gentiles. James took different ground, and turned to scripture, which threw light on the subject.

They were subject to the word, and hence, after James had spoken, all discussion ceased, and the conclusion he expressed was adopted and committed to writing, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

But the use of the word here demands more than a passing notice. The question was one which evidently stirred many hearts. It was felt, on both sides, to be a vital one, hence God's mind about it was most important. Never before had there been such a gathering of the Church for consultation; apostles and prophets were there with the Holy Ghost in their midst (ver. 28), yet no fresh revelation was that day vouchsafed them. The wisdom of this we can surely discern; God would teach us the competency of the written word to decide questions of doctrine and practice which concern the welfare of the Church. No new interpretation was then brought out, nor the passage quoted opened up by any new light which James threw on it. He quoted Amos, who had predicted that on some of the Gentiles the Lord's name should be called. Hence the work of grace amongst them was not a matter on which the word was silent, though they at Jerusalem, till that work began, might not have anticipated it.

Whose word was it? It was His "who maketh these things known from the beginning." But what about circumcising the Gentiles? On this the word was silent. It clearly intimated blessing for the Gentiles without their becoming Jews; but, though this was foretold, of their being circumcised there was not a word. Should they then supplement the word? No, they bowed to it. They interpreted its silence correctly. It said nothing about the question, so they imposed no such condition on the Gentiles. Thus the very silence of scripture was shown to be expressive, and, must we not add, instructive? And in this assembly, where four, certainly, out of the eight writers of the New Testament were present, three of whom took such a prominent part, all bowed to the silence of the word as expressing God's mind on the subject.

But, whilst giving a voice to the silence of scripture, they could not allow anything it had said to be disregarded; so the word of God to Noah and his sons was brought forward as binding on believers from among the Gentiles, as it had been on the Jews. God was wiser than man. Man's deductions from analogy as to what was suited for God's people were all wrong, for the word had said nothing about it; but to what it had said, though for ages the Gentiles had lost it, now that they owned the authority of the Lord, they must submit. How carefully the door was closed against all theories of development to bind men's consciences where God had not enjoined it, and how clearly they taught that what the word did say, believers must hearken to and obey.

Thus the council ended, to the discomfiture of the pharisaic party in the Church, and the joy of all the Gentile converts, and an example for after ages of perfect subjection to scripture, as containing His mind, "who maketh things known from the beginning."

The Blind and Aged Pilgrim Sufferer at Rest

The rest is gain'd! The race is run!
The weary pilgrim's now at home:
Nigh forty years, nor star nor sun
Shed one br'ght ray athwart the gloom.
Yet, the' earth's brightest scenes were gone
Forever from the darken'd eye,
Heaven's glory in bright luster shone,
And faith could bring that glory nigh.
His sufferings none but God can tell,
But, as his day his strength has been;
He knew the love of God too well
Upon an arm of flesh to lean.
The "peace of God" possessed his soul;
His word was both his meat and drink—
On Christ he did his troubles roll,
And knew He ne'er would let him sink.
God chose the path that He saw best,
And led him, in His grace, along
That path, until he gained the rest
Where, now he chants the victor's song.
He fought the fight of faith beneath
That well proved panoply divine—
The cross of Christ—the victor's wreath,
Henceforth, upon his brow shall shine.
His sufferings and his toils are o'er,
His work is done, he's now at rest

With Jesus, whom he loved before,
And leant, confiding, on His breast.
Jesus! the name, to him so dear—
The name in which he made his boast,
Was heavenly music to his ear,
And sweeter, still, by vision lost.
But ah! his eyes are open now,
Heaven's glories burst upon his view—
Heaven's hosts with him in worship bow
And chant the song forever new;
To Him who loved us, in our sins,
And washed us in His precious blood—
With Him the song of heaven begins—
The worship of a Savior-God.
And while eternal ages roll,
This song shall neither cease nor cloy;
To every ransomed blood-washed soul,
Praise in its sweetest, best employ.
And soon will come that glorious day
When all the ransomed church below
Shall be caught up and join the lay,
And reap, what now in tears they sow.
Bristol, October 31st, 1870.

Short Papers on Church History

Having briefly sketched the lives of the twelve apostles, we naturally come to what may be called the thirteenth—

THE APOSTLE PAUL.

In a former paper we have spoken of the “conversion,” and of the “apostleship” of Paul. We will now endeavor to trace his wonderful path, and note some of the prominent features of his labors. But first of all we would gather up what we know of him before his conversion.

It is very evident, from the few hints that we have in the sacred narrative of the early life of Paul, that he was formed in a remarkable manner by the whole course of his education, for what he was to become, and for what he was to accomplish. This was of God, who watched over the development of that wonderful mind and heart, from the earliest period. (Gal. 1:16.) Then he was known as “Saul of Tarsus”—Saul was his Jewish name—the name given him by his Jewish parents. Paul was his Gentile name; but we will speak of him as “Saul” until he is named “Paul” by the sacred historian.

Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, and, as Paul says, “no mean city.” It was renowned as a place of commerce, and as a seat of literature. The tutors of both Augustus and Tiberius were men of Tarsus. But it will be chiefly famous to all time as the birth-place and early residence of the great apostle.

But, though born in a Gentile city, he was “an Hebrew of the Hebrews.” His father was of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the sect of the Pharisees, but settled at Tarsus. By some means he had acquired the Roman franchise, as his son could say to the chief captain, “But I was free born.” At Tarsus he learned the trade of tent making. It was a wholesome custom among the Jews, to teach every child some trade though there might be little prospect of his depending upon it for his living.

When Paul made his defense before his countrymen, (Acts 22) he tells them, that though born in Tarsus, he had been brought up “at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.” History speaks of Gamaliel as one of the most eminent of the doctors of the law; and from the scriptures we learn, that he was moderate in his opinions, and possessed of much worldly wisdom. But the persecuting zeal of the pupil soon appears in strong contrast with the master’s counsels for toleration.

At the time of Stephen’s martyrdom, Saul is spoken of as yet a young man, but as consenting to Stephen’s death, and as keeping the clothes of them that stoned him. His conversion is supposed to have taken place about two years after the crucifixion; but the exact date is unknown.

From Acts 9 we learn, that he made no delay, after his conversion, in confessing his faith in Christ to those that were around him. “Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus: and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue that he is the Son of God.” This new testimony is specially worthy of notice. Peter had proclaimed Him as the exalted Lord and

Christ: Paul proclaims Him in His higher and personal glory, as the Son of God. But the time for his public ministry had not yet come; he had many things to learn, and, led of the Spirit, he retires into Arabia; remains there for three years, and returns to Damascus. Gal. 1:17.

Strengthened and confirmed in the faith during his retirement, he preaches with increased boldness, proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Jews, his unrelenting enemies, henceforward, are stirred up against him. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. (2 Cor. 11:32, 33.) He then found his way to Jerusalem; and through the friendly testimony of Barnabas, he found his place among the disciples. Wonderful, blessed triumph of sovereign grace!

Saul's first visit to Jerusalem about A.D. 39.

The apostle is now at Jerusalem—the holy city of his fathers—the metropolis of the Jews' religion, and the acknowledged center of Christianity. But how changed his own position since he started on his memorable journey to Damascus!

We may here pause for a moment, and notice in passing the hoary city of Damascus. It is intimately connected with the conversion, ministry, and history of our apostle. Besides, it is conspicuous all through scripture.

Damascus, is supposed to be the oldest city in the world. According to Josephus (Ant. 1:64) it was founded by Uz, the son of Aram, and grandson of Shem. It is first mentioned in scripture in connection with Abraham, whose steward was a native of the place: "The steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus." (Gen. 15:2.) It is thus a connecting link between the patriarchal age and modern times. Its beauty and richness have been proverbial for full four thousand years. The kings of Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Borne, have conquered it, and it has prospered under every dynasty, and outlived them all; but it owes its chief luster and its everlasting memorial to the name of the apostle Paul.

We now return to Jerusalem. After spending fifteen days with Peter and James, and reasoning with the Grecians, the brethren "brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Acts 9:26, 31.) For the moment, the adversary is silenced. Peace reigns, through the goodness of God. Persecution has accomplished the purposes of His grace. The two great elements of blessing—the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, prevail in all the assemblies. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they are edified, and their numbers greatly increase.

While Saul was at Tarsus, his native place, the good work of the Lord was making great progress at Antioch. Among those that were scattered abroad through the persecution which arose about Stephen, there were "men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11:19-21.) A new order of things commences here. Up to this time, the gospel had been preached to "none but unto the Jews only." When the report of this blessed work of God among the Gentiles reached Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent by the Church on a special mission to Antioch. "When he came, and had seen the grace of God, he

was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord.”

As the work increased, Barnabas, no doubt, feeling the need of help, thought of Saul; and, led of the Lord, he departed at once in search of him. Having found him, he brought him to Antioch; and there they labored together for a “whole year,” both in the assemblies of believers, and among the people. Barnabas still takes the lead. Hence we read of “Barnabas and Saul.” Afterward the order changes, and we read of “Paul and Barnabas.”

An opportunity soon occurred for the young converts at Antioch to show their affection for their brethren at Jerusalem. A prophet, “named Agabus, signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt at Judea; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

Saul’s second visit to Jerusalem, About A.D. 44.

Charged with this service Barnabas and Saul go up to Jerusalem. As yet, Jerusalem is owned as the center of the work, though now rapidly extending to the Gentiles. But union is preserved, and the link with the metropolis is strengthened by means of the collection now sent. Nevertheless, a new center, a new commission, a new character of power, in connection with the history of the Church, now come before us. Barnabas and Saul having fulfilled their ministry, they return again to Antioch, bringing with them John, whose surname is Mark.

Acts 13 opens up before us an entirely new order of things in connection with apostolic work, and we shall do well to mark the mighty change. The great fact here to be noted is, the place that the Holy Ghost takes in calling out and sending forth Barnabas and Saul. It is no longer Christ upon earth by His personal authority sending forth apostles; but, the Holy Ghost. “Separate unto me,” He says, “Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.....so they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.” Not, of course, that there could be any change as to the authority or power of either the Lord or the Spirit, but their mode of action was now changed. The Holy Ghost on earth, in connection with a glorified Christ in heaven, now becomes the source and power of the work that opens before us, and which is committed to Barnabas and Saul. Hence we now come to Paul’s first missionary journey, About A.D. 48.

And here, further remark, before setting out with the apostles on their journey, how changed everything is. They start, observe, not from the old center, Jerusalem, but from Antioch, a city of the Gentiles. This is significant. Jerusalem and the twelve have lost position, as to outward authority and power. The Holy Ghost calls Barnabas and Saul to the work, fits them for it, and sends them forth, without the jurisdiction of the twelve.

It will not be expected, that in papers of such a brief character, we can notice the many incidents in Paul’s journeys. The reader will find them in the Acts and in the Epistles. We propose merely to trace their outline; and to give prominence to certain landmarks, by which the reader will be able to trace for himself the various journeyings of the greatest apostle—the greatest missionary—the greatest laborer that ever lived—the blessed Lord excepted. But in the first place, we would notice

his companions and their starting point.

Barnabas has been for some time the close companion of Saul. He was a Levite of the island of Cyprus. He had been early called to follow Christ, and “having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” Comparing his liberality with the fine testimony which the Holy Ghost renders to him, he stands before us as a lovely—an exquisite character. And, from his early attachment to Paul, and from his heartiness in introducing him to the other apostles, we judge that he was more frank and larger-hearted, than those who had been trained in the narrowness of Judaism; but, he lacked in service the thoroughness and determination of his companion Saul.

John Mark was nearly related to Barnabas—“his sister’s son.” (Col. 4:10.) His mother was a certain Mary who dwelt at Jerusalem, and whose house seems to have been a meeting place for the apostles and first Christians. When Peter was delivered from prison, he went straight to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark. (Acts 12) It is supposed that on this occasion he was converted through Peter’s means, as he afterward speaks of him as “Marcus my son.” 1 Pet. 5:13.

From these notices we learn, that he was neither an apostle nor one of the seventy—that he had not companied with the blessed Lord during His public ministry. But we may suppose he was anxious to work for Christ, and so joined Barnabas and Saul; though it afterward appeared that his faith was not equal to the hardships of a missionary life. “Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.” (Acts 13:13.) He is supposed to have written his gospel about A.D. 63.

Antioch, the ancient capital of the Seleucidae, was founded by Seleucus Nicator, about B.C. 300. Antioch was only second to Jerusalem in the early history of the Church. What Jerusalem had hitherto been to the Jews, Antioch now became to the Gentiles. It was a central point. From this time it occupied a most important; place in the propagation of Christianity among the heathen. Here the first Gentile church was planted. (Acts 11:20, 21.) Here the disciples of Christ were first called Christians. (Chap. 11:26.) And here our apostle commenced his public ministerial work.

We now return to the mission.

Barnabas and Saul, with John Mark as their ministering servant, are thus sent forth by the Holy Ghost. The Jews, in virtue of their connection with the promises, have the gospel first preached to them; but the conversion of Sergius Paulus marks, in a special manner, the beginning of the work amongst the Gentiles. It also marks a crisis in the history of the apostle. Here his name is changed from Saul to Paul; and now it is no longer “Barnabas and Saul,” but “Paul and his company.” He takes the lead; the others are only those who are with Paul. But the scene has also a typical character.

The proconsul was evidently a thoughtful, prudent man, and felt the need of his soul. He sends for Barnabas and Saul, and desires to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer withstands them. He knew well, that if the governor received the truth that Paul preached, he would lose his influence at court. He therefore seeks to turn away the deputy from the faith. But Paul, in the conscious dignity and power of the Holy Ghost, “set his eyes on him,” and, in words of the most withering indignation, rebuked him in the presence of the governor. “O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the

right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.....then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” The mighty power of God accompanies the word of His servant, and the sentence pronounced is executed at the moment. The deputy is overwhelmed with the moral glory of the scene, and submits to the gospel.

“I do not doubt,” says one, “that in this wretched Bar-Jesus we see a picture of the Jews at the present time, smitten with blindness for a season, because jealous of the influence of the gospel. In order to fill up the measure of their iniquity, they withstood its being preached to the Gentiles. Their condition is judged—opposed to grace, and seeking to destroy its effect upon the Gentiles—they have been smitten with blindness; nevertheless, only for a season.”

During this first mission among the Gentiles, a great and blessed work was done. Compare Acts 13; 14. Many places were visited, churches were planted, elders were appointed, the hostility of the Jews manifested, and the energy of the Holy Ghost displayed in the power and progress of the truth. At Lystra, Christianity was confronted, for the first time, with paganism; but in every place the gospel triumphs, and the various gifts of Paul as a workman, most blessedly appear. Whether in addressing the Jews who knew the scriptures, or ignorant barbarians, or cultivated Greeks, or enraged mobs, he proves himself to be a chosen vessel divinely fitted for his great work.

Antioch in Pisidia deserves a special notice from what took place in the synagogue. Though there is a strong resemblance in Paul’s discourse to those of Peter and of Stephen in the earlier chapters of the Acts, yet we discover certain touches strictly Pauline in their character. His conciliatory style of address—the way he introduces Christ, and his bold proclamation of justification by faith alone, may be considered as typical of his after addresses and epistles. None of the sacred writers speak of justification by faith as Paul does. His closing appeal has been a favorite gospel text with all preachers in all ages. In a few words he states the blessedness of all who receive Christ; and the awful doom of those who reject Him. Thereby proving that there can be no middle, or neutral ground, when Christ is in question. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, 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. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you.” Acts 13:38-41.

Their mission being fulfilled, they return to Antioch in Syria. When the disciples heard what the Lord had done, and that the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles, they could only praise and bless His holy name. We must now turn for a moment to Jerusalem.

The effect of Paul’s first mission on the disciples at Jerusalem led to a great crisis in the history of the Church. The jealousy of the pharisaic mind was so aroused, that a division between Jerusalem and Antioch was threatened at that early period of the Church’s history. But God ruled in grace, and the matter as to Antioch was happily settled. But the bigotry of the believing Jews was unquenchable. In the Church at Jerusalem, they still connected with Christianity the requirements of the law, and these requirements they sought to impose on the believing Gentiles.

Some of the more strictly Jewish minded Christians came down to Antioch, and assured the Gentiles, that unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, and kept the law, they could not be saved. Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them; but as it was too weighty a question to be settled by the apostolic authority of Paul, or by a resolution of the Church at Antioch, it was agreed that a deputation should go up to Jerusalem, and lay the matter before the apostles and elders there. The choice naturally fell on Paul and Barnabas, as they had been the most active in the propagation of Christianity among the Gentiles.

Short Papers on Church History

When they arrived at Jerusalem, they found the same tiling, not only in the minds of a few restless brethren, but in the very bosom of the Church. The source of the trouble was there; not among unbelieving Jews, but among those who professed the name of Jesus. "Then rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying That it was needful to circumcise them [the Gentiles], and to command them to keep the law of Moses." This plain statement brought the whole question fairly before the assembly, and their important deliberations commenced. Chapter 15 contains the account of what took place, and how the question was settled. The apostles, elders, and the whole body of the Church at Jerusalem were not only present with one accord, but took part in the discussion. The apostles neither assumed nor exercised exclusive power in the matter. It is usually called "The first council of the Church;" but it may also be called the last council of the Church which could say, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Many, according to modern notions of "essentials, and non-essentials," will no doubt say, that the mere ceremony of circumcising or not circumcising a child was very unimportant. But not so, according to the mind of God. It was a vital question. It affected the very foundations of Christianity, the deep principles of grace, and the whole question of man's relations with God. Paul's epistle to the Galatians is a commentary on the history of this question.

There was no rite or ceremony that the converted Jew was so unwilling to give up as circumcision. It was the sign and seal of his own relationship with Jehovah, and of the hereditary blessings of the covenant to his children. It has been the opinion of some in all ages, that "infant baptism" was introduced by the Church to meet this strong Jewish prejudice. But had it been so intended by the Lord, the council at Jerusalem was the very place to announce it. It would have fully met the difficulty, and settled the question before them, and restored peace and unity between the two parent churches. But none of the apostles or others allude to it.

Before leaving this important and suggestive part of our apostle's history, it may be well just to notice certain facts which he brings out in Gal. 2, but which are not mentioned in the Acts. It was on this occasion that Paul went up by revelation, and took Titus with him. In the Acts we have the outward history of Paul yielding to the motives, desires, and objects of men; in the epistle, we have something deeper—that which governed the apostle's heart. But God knows how to combine these outward circumstances, and the inward guidance of the Spirit. Christian liberty or legal bondage were the questions at issue—whether the law of Moses—in particular the rite of circumcision—ought to be imposed upon the Gentile converts. Paul, led of God, goes up to Jerusalem, and takes Titus with him. In the face of the twelve apostles, and of the whole Church, he brings in Titus, who was a Greek, and who had not been circumcised. This was a hold step—to introduce a Gentile, and uncircumcised, into the very center of a bigoted Judaism! But the apostle

went up by revelation. He had positive communications with God on the subject. It was the divine way of deciding the question, once and forever, between Himself and the Judaizing Christians. This step was needful, as he says, "Because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might remain with you."

The apostle, then, having attained his main object, and having communicated his gospel to them at Jerusalem, leaves, with Barnabas, and returns to the Gentile Christians at Antioch. The two delegates, Judas and Silas, bearing the decrees of the council, accompany them. When the multitude of the disciples came together and heard the epistle read, they rejoiced and were comforted.

Thus closed the first apostolic council, and the first apostolic controversy. And, from what we learn of these matters in the Acts, we might conclude that the division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians had been completely healed by the decision of the assembly: but we know from the epistles, that the opposition of the Judaizing party against the liberty of Gentile Christians, never even slumbered. It soon broke out afresh, and Paul had constantly to meet it, and to contend against it.

Paul's second missionary journey about A.D. 51.

After Paul and Barnabas had spent some time with the Church at Antioch, another missionary journey was proposed. "Let us go again," said Paul, "and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria, and Cilicia, confirming the churches." Chapter 15:36-41.

With a journey so important, so full of trials, and so requiring courage and steadfastness—before the mind of our apostle—he could not trust Mark as a companion—he could not easily excuse one whose home attachments rendered him unfaithful in the Lord's service. Paul himself gave up all personal considerations and feelings when the work of Christ was concerned, and he wished others to do the same. Natural affection on this occasion may have betrayed Barnabas, in again pressing his nephew into the service; but a severe earnestness characterized Paul. The ties of natural relationship and human attachments had still great influence over the mild christian character of Barnabas. This is evident from his conduct at Antioch on the occasion of Peter's weak compliance with the Judaizer's from Jerusalem. (Gal. 2) The spread of the gospel in a hostile world was too sacred in Paul's eyes to admit of experiments. Mark had preferred Jerusalem to the work, but Silas preferred the work to Jerusalem. This decided Paul as to his choice; though, no doubt, he was guided by the Spirit.

Barnabas takes Mark his kinsman, and sails to Cyprus his native country. And here we part with Barnabas, that beloved saint, and precious servant of Christ! His name is not again mentioned in

the Acts. These words, “kinsman” and “native country” must be left to speak for themselves to the heart of every disciple who reads these pages. Were we meditating on this painful scene, in place of giving a mere outline of a great history, we might say much on the subject; but we leave it with two happy reflections. 1. That it was overruled for blessing to the heathen; the waters of life now flow in two streams in place of one. This, however, is God’s goodness, and gives no sanction to the divisions of Christians. 2. That Paul afterward speaks of Barnabas with entire affection; and desires that Mark should come to him having found Him profitable for the ministry. (2 Cor. 9:6; 2 Tim. 4:11.) We have no doubt that Paul’s faithfulness was made a blessing to them both. But the honey of human affections can never be accepted on the altar of God.

Having been recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God, they start on their journey. All is beautifully simple. No parade is made by their friends in seeing them off, and no great promises are made by them, as to what they were determined to do. “Let us go again and visit our brethren,” are the few, simple, unpretending words, which lead to Paul’s second and great missionary journey. But the Master was thinking of His servants and providing for them. They had not to go far before finding a new companion in Timotheus of Lystra; and one who was to supply the void caused by the difference with Barnabas. If Paul lost the fellowship of Barnabas as a friend and brother, he found in Timothy, as his own son in the faith, a sympathy and a fellowship which only closed with the apostle’s life. “Him would Paul have to go forth with him,” but before they go, Paul “circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek.” Paul, on this occasion, stoops to the prejudice of the Jews, and circumcises Timothy to set it aside.

Timotheus, or Timothy, was the son of one of those mixed marriages, which have ever been strongly condemned, both in the Old and in the New Testament. His father was a Gentile, but his name is never mentioned: his mother was a pious Jewess. From the absence of any reference to the father, either in the Acts or in the Epistles, it has been supposed that he may have died soon after the child was born. Timothy was evidently left in infancy to the sole care of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, who taught him from a child to know the holy scriptures. And from the many allusions in Paul’s epistles to the tenderness, the sensitiveness, and the tears of his beloved son in the faith, we may believe that he retained through life, the early impressions of that gentle, loving, holy household. Paul’s wonderful love for Timothy, and his tender recollections of his home at Lystra and his early training there, have dictated some of the most touching passages in the writings of the great apostle. When an old man—in prison, in want, and martyrdom before him—he writes, “To Timothy, my dearly beloved son; grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day: greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in thee also.” (2 Tim. 1:2-5.) He urges, and repeats his urgent invitation to Timothy to come and see him. “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me—to come before winter.” We may be permitted to believe, that a son so tenderly loved, was allowed to arrive in time to soothe the last hours of his father in Christ, to receive his last counsel and blessing, and to witness him finish his course with joy.

Silas, or Silvanus, first comes before us as a teacher in the Church at Jerusalem; and, probably, he was both a Hellenist and a Roman citizen like Paul himself. (Acts 16:3.) He was appointed as a delegate to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their return to Antioch with the decrees of the council. But as many details both in the life of Timothy and of Silas will naturally come before us in tracing the path of the apostle, we need say nothing more of either at present. We will now proceed with the journey.

Paul and Silas, with their new companion, go through the cities, enjoining them to keep the decrees ordained by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The decrees were left with the churches, so that the Jews had the decision of Jerusalem itself, that the law was not binding on the Gentiles. After visiting and confirming the churches already planted in Syria and Cilicia, they proceeded to Phrygia and Galatia. They traveled “throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia.” Here we pause for a moment and wonder as we transcribe such words as these, “throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia.” Phrygia and Galatia were not towns merely, but provinces, or large districts of country. And yet the sacred historian only uses these few words in recording the great work done there. How different is the condensed energy of the Spirit, to the inflated style of man! We learn from Neander’s history, that in Phrygia alone, in the sixth century, there were sixty-two towns. And it would appear that Paul and those who were with him had gone through them all.

The same remarks as to labor would apply to Galatia. And we learn from Paul’s epistle to the Galatians, that at this very time he was suffering in body. “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.” But the power of his preaching so strikingly contrasted with the infirmity of his flesh, that the Galatians were moved even to extravagance in sympathy and generous feeling. “And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.” (Chap. 4:13-15.) We learn from history that the Galatians were Celtic in their origin, impulsive and changeable in their character. The whole epistle is a sorrowful illustration of their instability, and of the sad effects of the Judaizing element amongst them. “I marvel,” says Paul, “that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” But to return to the history in the Acts.

The character and effects of Paul’s ministry, as related in chapters 16-20, are truly marvelous. They must ever stand alone, on the page of all history. Every servant of Christ, and especially the preacher, should study them most carefully and read them frequently. “The vessel of the Spirit,” as one has beautifully said, “shines with a heavenly light throughout the whole work of the gospel; he condescends at Jerusalem; thunders in Galatia when souls are being perverted; leads the disciples to decide for the liberty of the Gentiles, and uses all liberty himself to be as a Jew to the Jews, and as without law to those who had no law; but always subject to Christ. He was also ‘void of offense.’ Nothing within hindered his communion with God: whence he drew his strength to be faithful among men. He could say—and none but he— ‘Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ.’ Thus also he could say, “I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

The way of the Spirit with the apostle in these chapters is also remarkable. He alone directs him in his wonderful course, and sustains him amidst many trials and opposing circumstances. For example, He forbids Paul to preach the word in Asia—He will not suffer him to go into Bithynia, but directs him, by a vision of the night, to go into Macedonia. “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony.” Chap. 16:9-12.

PAUL CARRIES THE GOSPEL INTO EUROPE.

This marks a distinct epoch in the history of the Church—the history of Paul, and the progress of Christianity. Paul and his companions now carry the gospel into Europe. And here we might be forgiven were we to rest for a moment, and recall the many interesting historical associations of Macedonian conquerors and conquests; and to dwell a little on the plain of Philippi, famous also in Roman history. Here the great struggle between the Republic and the Empire was terminated. To commemorate that event, Augustus founded a colony at Philippi. This was the first city at which Paul arrived on his entrance into Europe. It is called “the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony.” A Roman colony, we are told, was characteristically a miniature resemblance of Rome; and Philippi was more fit than any other in the empire to be considered the representative of Imperial Rome.

To many of our young and inquiring readers, this short digression, we feel sure, will not be uninteresting. Besides, a knowledge of such histories is useful to the student of prophecy, as they are the fulfillment of Daniel’s visions, especially of chapter 7. The city of Philippi was itself the monument of the rising power of Greece, that was to crush the declining power of Persia. Alexander the Great, son of Philip, was the conqueror of the great king Darius; or, the “Leopard” of Greece, overcame the “Bear” of Persia.

In looking back from the time that Paul sailed from Asia to Europe, nearly four hundred years had passed away since Alexander sailed from Europe to Asia. But how different their motives and their objects—their conflicts and their victories! The enthusiasm of Alexander was aroused by the recollection of his great ancestors, and by his determination to overthrow the great dynasties of the East, but, though unconsciously and unintentionally, he was accomplishing the purposes of God. Paul had girded on his armor for another purpose, and to win greater and more enduring victories. He was sent forth by the Holy Spirit, not only to subdue the West, but to bring the whole world into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Christianity is not for one nation, or one people only, but for man universally; or, as Paul himself expresses it in Col. 1, “For every creature which is under heaven.” This is the mission of the gospel, and this is its sphere.

But there is another thing we must notice here before proceeding with Paul’s journey.

Luke, the “beloved physician,” historian, and evangelist, appears to have joined Paul at this particular time. From the tenth verse he writes in the first person plural: “We endeavored to go into Macedonia.” It is supposed that he was a Gentile by birth and converted at Antioch. He seems to

have remained the faithful companion of the apostle, till the close of his labors and his afflictions. 2 Tim. 4:11.

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The number of Jews at Philippi appears to have been small, as there was no synagogue in the place. But the apostle, as usual, goes first to them, even when it is only a few women come together by the river side. (Acts 16) Paul preached to them, Lydia is converted, the door is opened, and others also believe. It was in this unpretending place, and to these few pious women, that the gospel was first preached in Europe, and the first household baptized. But its quiet beginnings, and its peaceful triumphs, were soon to be disturbed by the malice of Satan and the covetousness of man. The gospel was not to be advanced in the midst of heathenism with ease and comfort, but with great opposition and suffering.

As the apostle and his companions were going to the oratory, or place of prayer, a damsel possessed of an evil spirit followed them, and cried, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." At first, Paul took no notice of her. He went on with his own blessed work of preaching Christ, and winning souls for Him. But the poor possessed slave persisted in following them, and in uttering the same exclamation. It was a malicious attempt of the enemy to hinder the work of God, by bearing a testimony to the ministers of the word. It will be observed that she does not bear testimony to "Jesus," or to the "Lord," but to His "servants," and to "the most high God." But Paul did not want a testimony to himself, nor a testimony from an evil spirit, and he, "being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

As the damsel could no longer practice her arts of soothsaying, her masters saw themselves deprived of the gains which they had hitherto derived from that source. Enraged at the loss of their property, and moving the multitude to side with, them, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the magistrates. As they were well aware that they had no real charge to bring against them, they raised the old cry of "troubling the peace"—that they were attempting to introduce Jewish practices into the Roman colony, and to teach customs which were contrary to the Roman laws. And, as it has often been since, the clamor of the multitude was accepted in the place of evidence, examination, and deliberation. The magistrates, without further inquiry, commanded them to be publicly scourged and cast into prison. And thus it was; these blessed servants of God, wounded, bleeding, and faint, were handed over to a cruel jailor to keep them safely, and he added to their sufferings by making their feet fast in the stocks. But in place of Paul and Silas being depressed by their bodily sufferings and the gloomy walls of a prison, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and pain for the sake of Christ and in place of the silence of midnight being broken with the sighs and groans of the prisoners, they "prayed and sang praises to God: and the other prisoners heard them."

If Satan is not without resources to carry on his evil work, God is not without resources to carry on His good work. He now makes use of all that has happened to direct the progress of the work of the gospel, and to accomplish the purposes of His love. The jailor is to be converted, the Church is to be gathered out, and a witness set up for the Lord Jesus Christ, in the very stronghold of heathenism. At midnight, while Paul and Silas were singing, and the prisoners listening to the unusual sound, there was a great earthquake. God enters the scene in majesty and grace. He

utters His voice, and the earth trembles: the prison walls are shaken; the doors fly open, and every man's fetters fall off. And now, what are Roman prisons? —what are Roman legions?—what is the whole power of the enemy? God's voice is heard in the storm: but the violence of the tempest is succeeded by the still small voice of the gospel and the peace of heaven.

Awakened in a moment by the earthquake, the jailor's first thoughts were of his prisoners. Alarmed at seeing the prison doors open, and supposing that the prisoners were fled, he drew his sword and would have killed himself. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." These words of love broke the jailor's heart. The calm serenity of Paul and Silas—their refusing to avail themselves of the opportunity to escape—their tender concern for him—all combined to make them appear in the eyes of the astonished jailor, as beings of a higher order. He laid aside his sword, called for a light, sprang into the prison; and, trembling, fell down at the apostle's feet. His conscience was now reached, his heart was broken, and there was something like the violence of an earthquake agitating his whole soul. He takes the place of a lost sinner, and cries, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He does not say, like the lawyer in the tenth of Luke, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" It was no question with the jailor of doing something for life, but of salvation for the lost. The lawyer, like many others, did not know himself as a lost sinner, therefore he does not speak about salvation.

In reply to the most important inquiry that human lips can ever make, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostle directs the mind of the jailor to Christ—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." God gave the blessing, and the whole house believed, rejoiced, and were baptized. And now all is changed; the jailor takes the prisoners into his own house—his cruelty is changed into love, sympathy, and hospitality. In the same hour of the night he washed their stripes—set meat before them—rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. What an eventful night! What a change in a few hours! and what a joyful morning dawned on that happy house! The Lord be praised!

Like Darius of old, the magistrates appear to have been disturbed during the night. The news of the earthquake might have reached them, or that Paul and Silas were Romans. But as soon as it was day, they sent word to the jailor to "let those men go." He immediately made known the order to Paul and Silas, and wished them to depart in peace. But Paul refused to accept his liberty without some public acknowledgment of the wrong he had suffered. He also now made known the fact that he and Silas were Roman citizens. The famous words of Cicero had passed into a proverb, and had immense weight everywhere; "To bind a Roman citizen is an outrage, to scourge him is a crime." The magistrates had evidently violated the Roman laws; but Paul only demanded, that as they had been publicly treated as guilty, the magistrates should come and publicly declare that they were innocent. This they readily did, seeing what wrong they had done. "And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city." The apostles readily complied with the magistrates' request, left the prison, and openly entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.

We would only further add before leaving this memorable chapter, that it is very pleasant to find in Paul's epistle to the Philippians, the proofs of an attachment which bound them together, and which continued from "the first day" even until Paul's imprisonment at Rome. His affection for his beloved Philippians was wonderful. He addressed them as—"my brethren dearly beloved and

longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” And he acknowledges, with no small joy, their unwearied fellowship with him in the gospel, and the many practical proofs of their loving care and tender sympathy for himself. As early as his residence at Thessalonica they thought of his need. “For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.” Phil. 4:15-19.

PAUL AT THESSALONICA AND BEREIA.

Paul and Silas now directed their course to Thessalonica. Timothy and Luke appear to have remained behind in Philippi for a short time. Having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas arrived at Thessalonica. Here they found a synagogue. It was a commercial town of great importance, where many Jews resided. “Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.” The hearts of many were touched by his preaching; and a great multitude of devout Greeks, and women of high station, believed. But Paul’s old enemy again appears. “The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out unto the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.” These verses may suffice to give us the character of the universal enmity of the Jews against the gospel and against Paul its chief minister.

The apostle had evidently preached to the Thessalonians the truth respecting the exaltation of Christ, and His coming again in glory: “Saying there is another king, one Jesus.” Hence the constant allusion to “the coming of the Lord,” and to “the day of the Lord,” in Paul’s epistles to that church. From what Paul says in his first epistle we learn, that his labors were most abundant, and greatly owned and blessed of the Lord to many souls. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 2:10, 11.

The apostle now proceeded to Berea. Here the Jews were more noble. They examined what they heard by the word of God. There was great blessing here also. Many believed; but the Jews, like hunters after their prey, hastened from Thessalonica to Berea, and raised a tumult which forced Paul to leave the place almost immediately. Accompanied by some of the Berean converts, he directed his course to Athens. Silas and Timotheus were left behind.

Paul’s visit to Athens.

The appearance of the apostle in Athens is an event in his history of great importance. It was, in some respects, the capital of the world, and the seat of Grecian culture and philosophy; but it was also the central point of superstition and idolatry.

It is very interesting to observe, that the apostle was in no haste to enter upon his work here. He allowed time for reflection. Deep thoughts, and how to weigh up everything in the presence of God, and in the light of the death and resurrection of Christ, filled his mind. It was his first intention to wait for the arrival of Silas and Timotheus. He had sent back a message to Berea, that they were to come to him with all speed. But when he saw himself surrounded with temples, and altars, and statues, and idolatrous worship, he could keep silence no longer. As usual, he begins with the Jews, but also disputes daily with the philosophers in the market place. Christianity and paganism

thus openly confront each other; and, be it observed, the apostle of Christianity was alone in Athens; but the place swarmed with the apostles of paganism; and so numerous were the objects of worship, that a satirist observed, "It is easier to find a god than a man in Athens."

Some scornfully derided what they heard, others listened and wished to hear more. "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." Thus we learn what said in his daily conversation had been pressing on the attention of the people, and the different classes of philosophers. It was "Jesus and the resurrection." These words had made the greatest impression, and remained the most distinctly in their minds. What a new thing, and what a blessed reality for souls! The Person of Christ; not a theory: the fact of the resurrection; not a gloomy uncertainty as to the future. The minister of Christ lays bare to the learned Athenians their fearful condition in the sight of the true God. Nevertheless, they sought to have a fuller and more deliberate exposition of these mysterious subjects, and they brought Paul unto Areopagus.

This place, we are told, was the most convenient and appropriate for a public address. The most solemn court of justice had sat from time immemorial on the hill of Areopagus. The judges sat in the open air, upon seats hewn out in the rock. On this spot many solemn questions had been discussed, and many solemn cases decided; beginning with the legendary trial of Mars, which gave to the place the name of "Mars' hill."

It was in this scene that Paul addressed the multitude. There is no moment in the apostle's history, or in the history of the first planting of Christianity, more deeply interesting or better known than this. Inspired by feelings for the honor of God, and filled with the knowledge of man's condition in the light of the cross, what must he have felt as he stood on Mars' hill? Wherever he turned his eyes, the signs of idolatry in its thousand forms rose up before him. He might have been betrayed, under the circumstances, to have spoken strongly; but he mastered his feelings, and refrained from intemperate language. Considering the fervency of his spirit, and the greatness of his zeal for truth, it was a remarkable instance of self-denial and self-command. But his Lord and Master was with him, though to the human eye he stood alone before the Athenians, and the many foreigners who flocked to that university of the world.

For wisdom, prudence, sound reasoning, and consummate skill, Paul's address stands alone in the annals of mankind. He did not begin by attacking their false gods, or by denouncing their religion as a satanic delusion, and the object of his utter detestation. Zeal without knowledge would have done so, and been pleased with its own faithfulness. But in the address before us, we have an example of the best way of approaching the minds and hearts of ignorant and prejudiced persons in every age. May the Lord give wisdom to all His servants to follow it!

His opening words are both winning and reproofing. "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." He thus begins by acknowledging that they had religious feelings, but that they were wrongly directed; and then speaks of himself as one who was ready to lead them to the knowledge of the true God. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." He wisely selects for his text, the inscription, "To the unknown God." This gives him an opportunity to commence at the lowest step in the ladder of truth. He speaks of the oneness of God, the Creator, and the relationship of man to Him. But he soon leaves the argument against idolatry, and

proceeds to preach the gospel. And yet he is careful not to introduce the name of Jesus in his public address. He had done so fully in his more private ministrations: but he was now surrounded by the disciples and admirers of such names as Socrates, Plato, Zeno, and Epicurus—and he sacredly guards the holy name of Jesus from the risk of a comparison with such. He well knew that the name of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, was “to the Greeks foolishness.” Nevertheless, it is easily seen, that towards the close of his address, the attention of the whole audience is concentrated on the man Christ Jesus, though His name is not mentioned in the whole speech. Thus he proceeds, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but 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.” Here the patience of his audience failed—his discourse was interrupted. But the last impression left on their minds was one of eternal weight and importance. The inspired apostle addressed himself to the consciences, not to the intellectual curiosity, of the philosophers. The mention of the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment of the world, with such commanding power and authority, could not fail to trouble these proud and self-indulgent men. The essential principle, or the highest aim of the Epicurean philosopher, was to gratify himself—that of the Stoic, was a proud indifference to good and evil, pleasure and pain. Need we wonder then, that this remarkable assembly should have broken up, amidst the scornful derision of some, and the icy indifference of others? But in spite of all, Christianity had gained its first and noble victory over idolatry; and, whatever may have been the immediate results of Paul’s speech, we know it has been blessed to many ever since, and that it shall yet bring forth much fruit in many souls, and continue to bear fruit to the glory of God forever and forever.

Paul now departs from among them. He does not appear to have been driven away by any tumult or persecution. The blessed Lord gave him to taste His own joy, and the joy of angels, over penitent sinners. “Among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” But in the military city of Philippi, and the mercantile cities of Thessalonica and Corinth, the number of conversions seems to have been much greater than in the highly educated and polished city of Athens. This is deeply humbling to the pride of man, and to the boasted powers of the human mind. One epistle was written to the Philippians, two to the Thessalonians, and two to the Corinthians: but we possess no letter written by Paul to the Athenians, and we do not read that he ever again visited Athens.

Short Papers on Church History

The connection of Corinth with the history, teaching, and writings of our apostle, is almost as intimate and important as either Jerusalem or Antioch. It may be considered as his European center. Here God had “much people;” and here Paul “continued a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.” It was also when at Corinth that he wrote his first apostolic letters—THE TWO EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS.

Corinth, the Roman capital of Greece; was a large mercantile city, in immediate connection with Rome and the west of the Mediterranean, with Thessalonica and Ephesus on the Egean, with Antioch and Alexandria in the East. And by means of its two noted harbors, it received the ships of both the Eastern and Western Seas.

Paul appears to have traveled alone to Corinth. If Timotheus came to him when at Athens (1 Thess. 3:1), he was sent back again to Thessalonica; which place, as we shall soon see, was much on the apostle's heart at this time. Soon after his arrival, he unexpectedly found two friends and fellow laborers in Aquila and his wife Priscilla. At this particular time there must have been a greater number of Jews in Corinth than usual; "because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome." The Lord thus used the banishment of Aquila and Priscilla to provide a lodging for His lonely servant. They were of his own country—of his own trade—of his own heart and spirit. And being "of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent makers." Acts 18.

Most gracious, and marvelous too, are the ways of the Lord with His servant. In a city of wealth and commerce—surrounded by native Greeks, Roman colonists, and Jews from all quarters, he quietly works at his own trade that he may be burdensome to none of them. Here we have at any rate one example of the deepest and loftiest spirituality, combined with diligent labor in the common things of this life. What an example!—and what a lesson! His daily toil was no hindrance to his communion with God. None ever knew so well, or felt so deeply, the value of the gospel he carried with him: the issues of life and death were bound up with it; and yet he could give himself up to ordinary labor. But this he did, as really as preaching, for the Lord and for His saints. He frequently refers to this in his epistles, and speaks of it as one of his privileges. "And in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you. and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia." 2 Cor. 9:7-12.

There is another thing connected with this feature of the apostle's course, which adds great interest to it. It is generally believed that he wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians about this time; and some think the epistle to the Galatians also. These are still before us as the true witnesses of his nearness to God and communion with Him, while he labored, "working with his own hands." But the sabbath of rest comes—the workshop is closed, and Paul goes to the synagogue. This was his habit. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded both the Jews and the Greeks." But while Paul was thus employed, week-day and sabbath-day, Silas and Timotheus arrived from Macedonia. It is evident that they brought some assistance with them, which would meet the apostle's need at the time, and relieve him from such constant labor with his hands.

The coming of Silas and Timotheus seems to have encouraged and strengthened the apostle. His zeal and energy in the gospel are evidently increased. He "was pressed in the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ;" but they opposed his doctrine and blasphemed. This leads Paul to take his course with great boldness and decision. He shakes his raiment, in token of being pure from their blood, and declares that now he turns to the Gentiles. In all this, he was led of God, and acted according to His mind. So long as it was possible, he preached in the synagogue; but when he could no longer go there, he was compelled to use the most convenient place he could find. At Ephesus, he preached in the school of one Tyrannus; at Rome, he "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house;" and here, in Corinth, a proselyte, named Justus, opened his house to the rejected apostle.

At this particular crisis in the apostle's history, he was favored with another special revelation from the Lord Himself. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak

and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.” But again his unrelenting enemies are astir. The great success of the gospel among the heathen excited the rage of the Jews against Paul: and they sought to use the coming of Gallio, a new governor, to accomplish their wicked intentions.

Gallio was the brother of Seneca the philosopher, and, like him, given to much learning. He was wise, fair, and tolerant as a governor, though contemptuous in his treatment of sacred things. But the Lord, who was with His servant as He had said, used the unbelieving indifference of Gallio to defeat the malicious designs of the Jews, and to turn their false accusations against themselves. Thus frustrated in their evil purposes, the apostle had greater liberty, and less annoyance, in carrying on the work of the gospel. Its blessed fruits were soon manifest throughout the whole province of Achaia. 1 Thess. 1:8, 9.

Paul’s passing visit to Ephesus.

The time had now come when Paul thought it right to leave Corinth and revisit Jerusalem. He had a great desire to be at the coming feast. But before his departure, he took a solemn farewell of the young assembly; promising, the Lord willing, to return.

Accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, he leaves Corinth in peace. But when at the harbor before sailing, a ceremony was performed which has given rise to much discussion. Paul, being under a vow, shaves his head at Cenchrea. In his own mind, and as led by the Spirit, we feel sure that he was far above and beyond a religion of feasts and vows; but he stooped in grace to the customs of his nation. To the Jew he becomes a Jew. Their constant opposition to his doctrine, and their violent persecution of himself, never weakened his affections for his beloved people: surely this was of God. While he sought in the energy of the Spirit to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he never forgot, in faithfulness to the word of God, to preach to the Jews first. He thus stands before us, as the bright expression of God’s grace to the Gentiles, and of his lingering affections towards the Jews.

The missionary had land at Ephesus. Paul goes to the synagogue and reasons with the Jews. They seem inclined to hear him, but he has a strong desire to go up to Jerusalem, and keep the approaching feast. So he “bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem; but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.”

Paul’s fourth visit to Jerusalem.

We are not supplied with any information by the sacred historian of what occurred in Jerusalem on this occasion. We are merely told, that when Paul had “gone up and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.” But his intense desire to pay this visit may assure us of its great importance. He may have felt that the time had come, when the Jewish Christians, assembled at the feast, should hear a full account of the reception of the gospel among the Gentiles. Roman colonies and Greek capitals had been visited, and a great work of God had been accomplished. All this would be perfectly natural and right, but we need not seek to remove the veil which the Holy Ghost has drawn over this visit.

Paul goes down from Jerusalem to Antioch, visiting all the assemblies he had first formed; and thus, as it were, binds all his work together—Antioch and Jerusalem. “So far as we know, Paul’s present visit to Antioch was his last. We have already seen how new centers of Christian life had been established by him in the Greek cities of the Egean. The course of the gospel is further and further towards the West, and the inspired part of the apostle’s biography, after a short period of deep interest in Judea, finally centers in Rome.”

THE RETURN OF PAUL TO ANTIOCH.

After a journey which had extended over the space of three or four years, our apostle returns to Antioch. He had traveled over a wide circuit, and disseminated Christianity in many flourishing and populous cities, and almost entirely by his own exertions. If the reader would keep up his interest in Paul’s history, he must mark distinctly, and keep clearly before him, the great epochs in his life, and the main points in his different journeys. But before starting with Paul on his third missionary journey, it may be well to notice another great preacher of the gospel, who suddenly comes before us just at this time, and whose name, next to that of the apostle, is perhaps the most important in the early history of the Church.

Apollos was a Jew by birth—a native of Alexandria. He was “an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures; but knowing only the baptism of John.” He was devoted, earnest, upright, and publicly confessed and preached that which he knew; and the power of the Holy Ghost was manifested in him. It does not appear that he had received any appointment, ordination, or sanction of any kind, from either the twelve or Paul. But the Lord who is above all had called Him, and was acting in him and by him. We thus see in the case of Apollos, the manifestation of the power and liberty of the Holy Spirit, without human intervention. It is well to note this. The idea of an exclusive clericalism is the practical denial of the liberty of the Spirit, to act by whom He will. But though burning with zeal and a powerful speaker, Apollos knew only what John had taught his disciples. This the Lord knew and provided teachers for him. Among those who were listening to his earnest appeals, two of Paul’s well instructed disciples were led to take a special interest in him. And though he was both learned and, eloquent, he was humble enough to be instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. They invited him to their own house, and, no doubt in a humble spirit, “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” How simple!—how natural!—how beautiful! All is of the Lord. He ordered that Aquila and Priscilla should be left in Ephesus—that Apollos should come and stir up the people at Ephesus before the arrival of Paul; and, after being instructed, should go on to Corinth, and help on the good work there, which Paul had begun. Apollos watered what Paul had planted, and God gave abundant increase. Such are the blessed ways of the Lord in His thoughtful love and tender care of all His servants, and of all His assemblies.

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Having “spent some time” in Antioch, he leaves that Gentile center, and commences another missionary journey. Nothing is said of his companions on this occasion. He “went over all the country of Galatia, and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples;” and also giving directions for the collection on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2.) In a short time he reached the center of the work in Asia.

Ephesus.—At this time it was the greatest city in Asia Minor, and the capital of the province. Owing to its central position, it was the common meeting place of various characters and classes of men. By this time Apollos had departed to Corinth, but the remaining twelve of John's disciples were still in Ephesus. Paul speaks to them about their position. We must give a passing notice of what occurred.

John's baptism required repentance, but not separation from the Jewish synagogue. The gospel teaches that Christianity is founded on death and resurrection. First, the death of Christ, as accomplishing redemption; and our death and resurrection with Him; so as to place as in Him, and as Him, in the presence of God, cleansed by His precious blood from all our sins. Christian baptism is the significant and expressive symbol of these truths. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. 2:12, 13.) As these men were entirely unacquainted with the foundation truths of Christianity, we suppose they had never mingled with Christians. The apostle, no doubt, explained to them the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. They believed the truth and received christian baptism. Then Paul, in his apostolic capacity, laid his hands on them—they were sealed with the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues and prophesied.

Immediately after the mention of this important occurrence, our attention is directed to the apostle's labors in the synagogue. During three months he preached Christ boldly there; reasoning and endeavoring to convince his hearers, of all "the things concerning the kingdom of God." The hearts of some "were hardened," while others repented and believed; but as many of the Jews took the place of adversaries, and "spake evil of that way before the multitude," Paul acts in the most definite way. He "separated the disciples" from the Jewish synagogue, and formed them into a distinct assembly, and met with them "daily in the school of one Tyrannus." This is a deeply interesting, and instructive action of the apostle; but he acts in the consciousness of the power and truth of God. The Church in Ephesus is now perfectly distinct from both Jews and Gentiles. Here we see what the apostle elsewhere refers to in his exhortation, "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." (1 Cor. 10:32.) Where this important distinction is not seen, there must be great confusion of thought, both as to the word and ways of God.

The apostle now appears before us as the instrument of the power of God in a remarkable and striking way. He communicates the Holy Ghost to the twelve disciples of John—he separates the disciples of Jesus and formally founds the Church in Ephesus—his testimony to the Lord Jesus is heard in all Asia, both by Jews and Greeks—special miracles are wrought by his hands—diseases depart from many if they but touch the border of his garment—the power of the enemy disappears before the power that is in Paul, and the name of Jesus is glorified—the evil spirits acknowledge his power, and put his enemies to shame and loss—the consciences of the heathen are reached, and the enemy's power over them is gone—fear falls on many who "used curious arts," and they burn their books of magic, the cost of which amounts to nearly two thousand pounds in English money. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (See Acts 19:1-20.) Thus the power of the Lord was displayed in the person and mission of Paul, and his apostolate established beyond a question.

The apostle had now spent about three years of incessant labor in Ephesus. As he says himself when addressing the elders at Miletus; "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." It is also supposed by some, that during this time he paid a short visit, and wrote his FIRST EPISTLE, TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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A great and blessed work had now been accomplished by the mighty energy of God's Spirit, through the instrumentality of his chosen servant Paul. The gospel had been planted in the capital of Asia, and it had spread throughout the whole province. The apostle now felt as if his work had been done there, and he longs to go to Rome, the capital of the West, and the great capital of the world. Greece and Macedonia had already received the gospel, but there was yet Rome. "After these things were ended, said purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome." Acts 19:21.

But while Paul was thus making arrangements for another journey, the enemy was planning a fresh attack. His resources were not yet exhausted. Demetrius excites the thoughtless multitude against the Christians. A great tumult is raised—the passions of men are stirred up against the instruments of the testimony of God. The workmen of Demetrius raise the cry, that not only is their craft in danger, but that the temple of the great goddess Diana is in danger of being despised. When the multitude heard these things, they were filled with wrath, and cried, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The whole city was now filled with confusion; but Paul was mercifully preserved by his brethren, and by some of the chief rulers in Asia, who were his friends, from showing himself in the theater.

The Jews evidently began to fear, that the persecution might be turned against themselves; for the majority of the people knew not for what purpose they had come together. They therefore put forth a certain Alexander, probably with the intention of shifting the blame from themselves upon the Christians; but the moment the heathen discovered that he was a Jew, their fury was increased—the rallying cry was again raised, and for two whole hours the people shouted "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Fortunately for all parties, the town clerk was a man of great tact and admirable policy. He flattered, calmed, soothed, and dismissed the assembly. But to faith, it was God using the persuasive eloquence of a heathen magistrate to protect His servant and His many children there.

The far famed temple of Diana was reckoned by the ancients as one of the wonders of the world; the sun, it was said, saw nothing in his course more magnificent than Diana's temple. It was constructed of the purest marble, and was two hundred and twenty years in building. But with the spread of Christianity it sank into decay, and scarcely anything of it now remains to show us even where it was. The trade of Demetrius was to make small models in silver of the shrine of the goddess. These were set up in houses, kept as memorials, and carried about on journeys. But as the introduction of Christianity necessarily affected the sale of these models, the heathen artisans were instigated by Demetrius to raise a popular cry in favor of Diana and against the Christians.

Paul's departure from Ephesus for Macedonia.

Acts 20. After the cessation of the tumult, the danger being over, and the rioters dispersed, Paul sends for the disciples, embraces them, and departs for Macedonia. Two of the Ephesian

brethren, Tychicus and Trophimus, seem to have accompanied him, and to have remained faithful to him through all his afflictions. They are frequently mentioned, and have a place in the last chapter of his last epistle, 2 Tim. 4.

The sacred historian is exceedingly brief in his record of Paul's proceedings at this time. All the information which he gives us is compressed in the following words:—"He departed to go into Macedonia: and when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months." It is generally supposed that these few words embrace a period of nine or ten months—from the early summer of A.D. 57, to the spring of A.D. 58. But this lack of information is happily supplied by the apostle's letters. Those that were written on this journey supply us with many historical details, and what is more and better, they give us from his own pen, a living picture of the deep and painful exercises of mind and heart, through which he was then passing.

It appears that Paul had arranged to meet Titus at Troas, who was to bring him tidings direct from Corinth, of the state of things there. But week after week passed, and Titus came not. We know something of the workings of that great mind and heart at this time, from what he says himself: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia." (2 Cor. 2:12, 13.) His personal anxiety, however, did not hinder him from going on with the great work of the gospel. This is evident from verses 14-17.

At length the long expected Titus arrived in Macedonia—probably at Philippi. And now Paul's mind is relieved and his heart is comforted. Titus brings him better tidings from Corinth than he had expected to hear. The re-action is manifest—he is filled with praise. "Great is my boldness of speech toward you," he says, "great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." 2 Cor. 7:4-6.

Soon after this, Paul writes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians; which we find addressed not to them only, but to all the Churches in all Achaia.

They may have all been more or less affected by the condition of things at Corinth. Titus is again the apostle's willing servant, not only as the bearer of his second letter to the Church at Corinth, but as taking a special interest in the collections then making for the poor. Paul, not only gives Titus strict charges about the collections, but writes two chapters on the subject (chap. 8 and 9) though it was more deacons' than apostles' work. But, as he had said in answer to the suggestion of James, Cephas, and John, that he should remember the poor—"The same" he replied, "which I was also forward to do."

The space which the apostle devotes to subjects connected with collections for the poor is remarkable, and deserves our careful consideration. It may be that some of us have overlooked this fact and suffered loss in our own souls thereby. Notice, for example, what he says of one Church. We have good reason to believe that the Philippians from the very beginning cared for the apostle—they pressed him to accept their contributions for his support, from his first visit to Thessalonica, down to his imprisonment in Rome, besides their liberality to others. (See Phil, 4; 2

Cor. 8:1-4.) But some may imagine from this, that they were a wealthy Church. Just the opposite. Paul tells us “How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” It was out of their deep poverty that they gave so liberally.

What the Philippians are in the epistles, the poor widow is in the gospels—two mites were her all. She could have given one and kept one, but she had an undivided heart, and she gave both. She too, gave out of her poverty; and wherever the gospel is preached, throughout the whole world, these things shall be told as a memorial of their liberality.

After Paul had sent off Titus and his associates with the epistle, he remained himself in “those parts” of Greece, doing the work of an evangelist. His mind, however, was set on paying the Corinthians a personal visit; but he allowed time for his letter to produce its own effects, under the blessing of God. One of the objects of the apostle was to prepare the way for his personal ministry among them. It is generally thought, that it was during this period of delay that he fully preached the gospel of Christ round about unto Illyricum.” (Rom. 15:19.) It is probable that he reached Corinth in winter, according to his expressed intention. “It may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you.” (1 Cor. 16:6.) There he abode three months.

All are agreed, we may say, that it was during these winter months, that he wrote his great EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. Some say, that he also wrote his EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS at the same time. But there is great diversity of opinion amongst the chronologists on this point. From the absence of names and salutations, such as we have in the epistle to the Romans, it is difficult to ascertain its date. But if it was not written at this particular time, we must place it earlier, not later. The apostle was surprised at their early departure from the truth. “I marvel,” he says, “that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” His great disappointment is manifest in the warmth and spirit in which he writes his epistle.

But we must return to the history of our apostle, the niceties of chronology we cannot enter upon in our “short papers.” But after comparing the latest authorities, we give what seems to us the most reliable dates.

PAUL LEAVES CORINTH.

The apostle’s work was now done at Corinth, and he prepares to leave it. His mind was bent upon going to Rome; but there was this mission of charity on his heart, and which he must attend to first. We are favored with his own words on these different points. “But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come unto you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” (Rom. 15.) The array of names in Acts 20:4; Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus, are supposed to be brethren with the collections which had been made at the different places named. Instead of sailing straight to Syria, he goes round by Macedonia, because of the Jews who were lying in wait for him. His companions tarried for him at Troas. There he spent a Lord’s day, and even a whole week, in order to see the brethren. We must notice briefly what took place at this stage of his

journey. Two things, all important to the Christian, are connected with it—the Lord’s day, and the Lord’s supper. The historian, who was with Paul at this time, enters with unusual minuteness on the details of that day.

It is evident from this incidental notice, that it was the established custom of the early Christians, to come together on “the first day of the week,” for the understood purpose of “breaking bread.” We have here the main object and the ordinary time of their coming together. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” (See also 1 Cor. 16:2; John 20:19; Rev. 1:10.) Even the apostle’s preaching, precious as it was, is spoken of as a secondary thing. The remembrance of the Lord’s love in dying for us, and all that into which He has brought us as risen again, was, and is, the first thing. If there be an opportunity for so ministering the word, as to gather up the thoughts and affections of the worshippers to Christ, it is well to embrace it; but the breaking of bread ought to be the first consideration, and the main object of the assembly. The celebration of the Lord’s supper on this occasion was after sunset. In early times, it was observed in some places before daylight; in others, after sunset. But here the disciples were not obliged to meet in secret. “There were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together, and Paul continued his speech until midnight, ready to depart on the morrow.” It was an extraordinary occasion, and Paul avails himself of the opportunity to speak to them all night. The time had not come, as someone has said, when the warm earnest utterances of the heart were measured by the minute—when the burning agony of the preacher over lost souls was timed by the icy coldness of the mere professor, or the careless indifference of the worldly Christian. Eutychus, a young man, overcome with sleep, “fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.” This has been viewed by some as a penalty for inattention; but a miracle was wrought by Paul, and the young man was raised from a state of death by the power and goodness of God in His servant, and the friends were not a little comforted.

PAUL AT MILETUS.

The most important stage of this journey is Miletus, though the different places they pass or call at, are carefully noted by the sacred historian. Paul, being filled with the Spirit, gives directions for the journey. His companions willingly obey him, not as a master, but as one who directs in the humility of love, and in the wisdom of God. He arranges not to go to Ephesus, though that was a central place, for he had purposed in his heart to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. But as the vessel was to be detained some time at Miletus, he sends for the elders of the church of Ephesus to meet him. The distance between the two places is said to be about thirty miles, so that two or three days would be required to go and come, but they had sufficient time for their meeting before the ship sailed. Thus the Lord thinks of His servants, and makes everything work together for their good and His own glory.

Paul’s farewell address to the elders of Ephesus is characteristic and representative. It demands our most careful study. It sets before us the deep and touching affection of the apostle, the position of the Church at that time, and the work of the gospel among the nations. He exhorts them with unusual earnestness and tenderness; he felt he was addressing them for the last time; he reminds them of his labors among them in “serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears.” He warns them against false teachers and heresies—the grievous wolves who would enter in among them, and the men of themselves that would arise, speaking perverse things, to

draw away disciples after them. “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”

As this testimony of Paul’s is of the highest importance, and marks a distinct epoch in the history of the Church, besides shedding divine light on all ecclesiastical systems, we give the thoughts of another on its wide and comprehensive bearing.

“The Church was consolidated over a pretty large extent of country, and the Church, in divers places at least, had taken the form of a regular institution. Elders were established and recognized. The apostle could send for them to come to him. His authority also was acknowledged on their part. He speaks of his ministry as a past thing—solemn thought!.....Thus, what the Holy Ghost here sets before us is, that now, when the detail of his work among the Gentiles to plant the gospel, is related as one entire scene among Jews and Gentiles, he bids adieu to the work; in order to leave those whom he had gathered together, in a new position, and, in a certain sense, to themselves. It is a discourse which marks the cessation of one phase of the Church—that of apostolic labors—and the entrance into another; its responsibility to stand fast now that these labors had ceased; the service of the elders, whom “the Holy Ghost had made overseers,” and, at the same time, the dangers and difficulties that would attend the cessation of apostolic labor, and complicate the work of the elders, on whom the responsibility would now more especially devolve.

“The first remark that flows from the consideration of this discourse is, that apostolic succession is entirely denied by it. Owing to the absence of the apostle, various difficulties would arise, and there would be no one in his place, to meet or to prevent these difficulties. Successor, therefore, he had none. In the second place, the fact appears that this energy, which bridled the spirit of evil, once away, devouring wolves from without, and teachers of perverse things from within, would lift up their heads and attack the simplicity and the happiness of the Church; which would be harassed by the efforts of Satan, without possessing apostolic energy to withstand them. In the third place, that which was principally to be done for the hindrance of evil, was to feed the flock; and to watch, whether over themselves or over the flock, for that purpose. He then commends them—neither to Timothy nor to a bishop, but in a way that sets aside all official resources—to God and to the word of His grace. This is where he left the Church. The free labors of the apostle of the Gentiles were ended. Solemn and affecting thought! He had been the instrument chosen of God to communicate to the world His counsels respecting the Church, and to establish in the mind of the world this precious object of His affections, united to Christ at His right hand. What would become of it down here?”

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Acts 21. With a fair wind, Paul and his companions sailed out from Miletus, while the sorrowing elders of Ephesus prepared for their journey homewards. With a straight course, they sailed to Coos, Rhodes, and thence to Patara and Tyre. From what took place there—so similar to the scene at Miletus—it is evident that Paul soon found his way to the hearts of the disciples. Though he had been only one week at Tyre, and previously unacquainted with the Christians there, he had gained their affections. “And they all brought us on our way,” says Luke, “with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed.” It seems too, as if a

spirit of prophecy had been poured out on these affectionate Tyreans, for they warned the apostle against going up to Jerusalem. After waiting there seven days, they came to Ptolemais, where they abode one day. At Caesarea, they lodged in the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven. He is already well known to us, but it is not a little interesting to meet him again, after an interval of more than twenty years. Now he has four daughters, virgins, which prophesy. Here, Agabus the prophet predicted Paul's imprisonment, and said, that "he should not go up to Jerusalem." All the disciples said the same thing and entreated him with tears not to go. But however much Paul's tender and sensitive heart must have been moved by the tears and the entreaties of his friends and of his own children in the faith, he suffered nothing to alter his resolution, or move him from his purpose. He felt bound in spirit to go, and ready to leave all consequences with the will of the Lord. We now come to Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem, A.D. 58.

The apostle and his companions were gladly welcomed on their arrival at Jerusalem. "When we were come to Jerusalem," Luke observes, "the brethren received us gladly." The day following, Paul and his company visited James, at whose house the elders were present. Paul, as chief speaker, declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. But though they were greatly interested, and praised the Lord for the good news, they evidently felt uneasy. They at once called Paul's attention to the fact, that a great number of Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, were zealous observers of the law of Moses, and were strongly prejudiced against himself.

How to satisfy the prejudices of these Jewish Christians was now the important question between Paul and the elders. Multitudes of Jews, both converted and unconverted, they knew would come together when they heard of Paul's arrival. They had long believed the most serious and weighty charges against him—"that he taught all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." What was now to be done? The elders proposed that Paul should publicly show himself obedient to the law. This was the painful and perplexing position of the apostle of the Gentiles. What can he now do? Will the messenger of the gospel of the glory—the minister of the heavenly calling—stoop to the rules of Nazarite vows? This is the solemn and serious question. If he refuses compliance with their wish, the lurking suspicion of the Jews will be confirmed; if he acts according to their desires, he must humble himself—forget for the moment his high calling, yield to the ignorance, prejudice, and pride of the Judaisers. But what else can he do?

He is in the very center of a bigoted Judaism; and if mistaken, he honestly desires to win over the Church at Jerusalem to a purer and loftier Christianity.

Many have been very free in their criticisms on the apostle's course at this time. But though it is our privilege, humbly to examine all that the sacred historian has written, some, we fear, have ventured too far in saying hard things of the apostle. We may reverently inquire, how far the will and the affections of Paul influenced him on this occasion, apart from the warnings of the Spirit through his brethren; but surely it becomes us to keep within the limits of what the Holy Spirit Himself has said. Let us now carefully view the outward facts which led the apostle to this eventful epoch in his life.

Rome had been long on his mind. He had a great desire to preach the gospel there. This was right—this was according to God—this was not of self—he was the apostle of the Gentiles. God had

been working there most blessedly without an apostle, for as yet no apostle had visited Borne. Paul had been privileged to write an epistle to the Romans, and in that letter he expresses the most earnest desire to see them, and to labor among them. "For I long to see you," he says, "that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." This was his state of mind and the object which he had before him; and which we must keep in view when studying this part of his history. Comp. Rom. 1:7-15; 15:15-33.

We have now come to the important question, and to the point on which Paul's future history turns. Will he go straight west to Rome, or will he go round by way of Jerusalem? All depends on this. Jerusalem was also on his heart. But if Christ had sent him far hence to the Gentiles, could the Spirit, on Christ's part, lead him to Jerusalem? It was just here, we believe, that the great apostle was permitted to follow the desires of his own heart; which desires were right and beautiful in themselves, but not according to the mind of God at the time. He loved his nation dearly, and especially the poor saints at Jerusalem; and having been greatly misrepresented there, he wished to prove his love for the poor of his people by bringing to them in person the offerings of the Gentiles. "When therefore," he says, "I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." Surely, some will say, this was loving and praiseworthy! Yes, but on one side only, and that side, alas, was the side of the flesh, not of the Spirit. "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days; who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." This seems plain enough; but Paul inclined for the moment to the side of his affections for "the poor of the flock" in Jerusalem. Could there have been, we ask, a more amiable mistake? Impossible! It was his love to the poor, and the pleasure of carrying to them the offerings of the Gentiles, that led him to go round by Jerusalem on his way to Rome. Nevertheless, it was a mistake, and a mistake that cost Paul his liberty. His free labors end here. He allowed the flesh its liberty, and God allowed the Gentiles to bind it with a chain. This was the Master's expression of truest love to His servant. Paul was too precious in His sight to be allowed to pass without His righteous dealings at such a time; and he was also made to prove, that neither Jerusalem nor Rome could be the metropolis of Christianity. Christ the Head of the Church was in heaven, and there only could the metropolis of Christianity be. Jerusalem persecuted the apostle; Rome imprisoned and martyred him. Nevertheless, the Lord was with His servant for his own good, the advancement of the truth, the blessing of the Church, and the glory of His own great name.

Here may we be permitted to offer one reflection? On how many histories, since Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem, has this solemn scene been engraved? How many saints have been bound with chains of different kinds, but who can say for what, or why? All of us would have said—unless enlightened by the Spirit—that the apostle could not have been actuated by a more worthy motive in going round by Jerusalem on his way to Rome. But the Lord had not told him to do so. All hinges on this. How needful then to see, at every stage of our journey, that we have the word of God for our faith, the service of Christ for our motive, and the Holy Spirit for our guide. We will now return to the history of events.

We left Paul sitting with the elders in the house of James. They had suggested to him a mode of conciliating the Jewish believers, and of refuting the accusations of his enemies. Disloyalty to his nation and to the religion of his fathers were the chief charges brought against him. But under the surface of outward events, and especially having the light of the epistles shed upon them, we discover the root of the whole matter, in the enmity of the human heart against the grace of God. In

order to understand this, we must notice that Paul's ministry was twofold. 1. His mission was to preach the gospel "to every creature which is under heaven"—it not only went far beyond the limits of Judaism, but it was in perfect contrast with the system. 2. He was also the minister of the Church of God, and preached its exalted position, and its blessed privileges, as united with Christ, the glorified Man in heaven. These blessed truths, it will be seen, lift the soul of the believer far above the religion of the flesh, be it ever so painstaking—ever so abounding in rites and ceremonies. Vows, fasts, feasts, offerings, purifications, traditions, and philosophy, are all shut out as nothing worth before God, and opposed to the very nature of Christianity. This exasperated the religious Jew with his traditions, and the uncircumcised Greek with his philosophy; and the two united to persecute the true witness-bearer of this two-fold testimony. And so it has been ever since. The religious man with his ordinances, and the merely natural man with his philosophy, by a natural process, readily unite in opposing the witness of a heavenly Christianity. See Col. 1:2.

If Paul had preached circumcision, the offense of the cross would have ceased; for this would have given them a place, and the opportunity of being something, and doing something, and even taking part with God in His religion. This was Judaism, and this gave the Jew his pre-eminence. But the gospel of the grace of God addresses man as already lost—as "dead in trespasses and sins"—and has no more respect to the Jew than to the Gentile. Like the sun in the firmament, it shines for all. No nation, kindred, tongue, or people, are excluded from its heavenly rays. Preach the gospel "to every creature which is under heaven," is the divine commission and the wide sphere of the evangelist; to teach those who believe this gospel, their completeness in Christ is the privilege and duty of every minister of the New Testament.

Having thus cleared the ground as to the motives, objects, and position of the great apostle, we will now briefly trace the remainder of his eventful life. The time has come when he is to be brought before kings and rulers, and even before Caesar himself, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

PAUL IN THE TEMPLE.

In accordance with the proposal of James and the elders, Paul now proceeds to the temple with "the four men which had a vow." Thus we read, "Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." On the completion of the Nazarite's vow, the law required that certain offerings should be presented in the temple. These offerings involved considerable expense, as we may see from Numb. 6, and it was considered an act of great merit and piety for a rich brother to provide these offerings for a poor brother, and thereby enable him to complete his vow. Paul was not rich, but he had a large and tender heart, and he generously undertook to pay the charges of the four poor Nazarites. Such readiness on Paul's part to please some and help others, ought to have pacified and conciliated the Jews, and probably it would had there only been present such as were associated with James, but it had the opposite effect with the inveterate zealots; they were only more incensed against him. The celebration of the feast had attracted multitudes to the holy city, so that the temple was thronged with worshippers from every land.

Among these foreign Jews were some from Asia, probably some of Paul's old antagonists from Ephesus, who were glad of an opportunity to be revenged on him who had formerly defeated them. Towards the end of the seven days wherein the sacrifices were to be offered, these Asiatic

Jews saw Paul in the temple, and immediately fell upon him, "crying out, Men of Israel, help! This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut." The whole city being now in an uproar, the crowd rushed furiously to the point of attack; the multitude were excited to madness, and but for their sacred care not to shed blood in the holy place, Paul would have been instantly torn to pieces. Their object now was to hurry him out of the temple, have the doors shut, and dispatch him outside the sacred enclosure. But before their murderous plans were executed, help from the Lord arrived, and they were unexpectedly interrupted.

The sentries at the gates no doubt communicated at once to the Roman garrison, situated over against the temple, that there was a tumult in the court. The chief captain, Claudius Lysias, immediately ran to the spot in person, taking soldiers and centurions with him. When the Jews saw the chief captain and the Roman soldiers approaching they left off beating Paul. The governor, perceiving that he was the occasion of all this excitement, promptly secured him, and bound him with two chains, or chained him by each hand to a soldier. See Acts 12:6.

This being done, Lysias proceeded to make inquiry as to the real cause of the disturbance, but, as no certain information could be obtained from the ignorant and excited crowd, he ordered Paul to be carried into the castle. The disappointed mob now made a tremendous rush after their victim. They saw him taken out of their hands, and so violently did they press upon the soldiers, that Paul was borne in their arms up the stairs of the castle, meanwhile, deafening shouts arose from the enraged multitude below, as they had done nearly thirty years before; "Away with him, away with him."

At this moment of overwhelming interest, the apostle preserved great presence of mind, and perfectly controlled the agitation of his feelings. He acts prudently, without any compromise of truth. Just as they had reached the entrance to the castle, Paul most courteously addressed himself to the chief captain, and said. "May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people." Marvelous to say, this request was granted. Paul had already gained the respect of the Roman governor, if not great influence over his mind. But the hand of the Lord was in it; He was watching over His servant. Paul had thrown himself into the hands of his enemies, by seeking to please the believing Jews; but God was with him, and knew how to deliver him out of their power, and use him for the glory of His own great name. Acts 21:26-40.

Paul's speech on the stairs of the castle.

To the chief captain he had spoken in Greek; to the Jews he speaks in Hebrew. These little attentions and considerations are the beautiful blendings of love and wisdom, and ought to serve as a lesson for us. He was always ready to win, by "becoming all things to all men, that he might gain the more." We see the marvelous effects of his influence over the infuriated mob, as well as over the commanding officer. The moment he spoke to them, the whole scene was changed. He calmed the tumultuous sea of human passion by the sound of their sacred language. It fell like oil

on the troubled waters; and there was immediately “a great silence.” We have his noble defense, addressed to his brethren and fathers, given at length in Acts 22:1-21.

It will be observed in reading the address, that his countrymen listened with great attention, while he spoke to them of his early life, his persecution of the Church, his mission to Damascus, his miraculous conversion, his vision in the temple, and his interview with Ananias; but the moment he mentioned his mission to the Gentiles, an outburst of unbounded indignation arose from the crowded area below, and silenced the speaker. They could not endure the thought of God’s grace to the Gentiles. That hated name stung them to fury. Their national pride rebelled against the thought of uncircumcised heathens being made equal to the children of Abraham. They cried down, with scornful contempt, every argument, human or divine, that could have influenced their minds. In vain did the apostle lay great stress on what had taken place between himself and the devout Ananias. Every appeal was in vain, so long as the Gentiles were to be thus owned. A scene of the wildest confusion now followed. They cast off their outer garments, they threw dust into the air, and “lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.”

The chief captain, seeing the frantic violence of the people, and not understanding what it meant, was thrown into new perplexity. He saw the results of a speech in the Hebrew tongue—which he probably did not understand—and, naturally concluding that his prisoner must be guilty of some enormous crime, he ordered him to be bound and scourged to make him confess his guilt. But this proceeding was instantly arrested by Paul making known the fact that he was a Roman citizen.

The soldiers who were engaged in binding him withdrew in alarm, and warned the governor as to what he was doing. Lysias came at once, “and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.” Lysias was now in a difficulty; he had violated a Roman law. To expose a citizen to such indignity was treason against the majesty of the Roman people. But the only way of saving Paul’s life was by keeping him in custody; and he happily thought of another and a milder way of ascertaining the nature of his prisoner’s offense.

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On the following day, he “commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.” The policy of Lysias here is interesting. He is active in suppressing the tumult; he protects a Roman citizen; he shows deference to the religion and customs of the Jews. This blending of policy and courtesy in the haughty Roman, under such circumstances, is worthy of a moment’s reflection; but we pass on.

Paul addresses the council with dignity and gravity; but with an evident expression of conscious integrity. “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” This unflinching sense of uprightness so enraged Ananias, the high priest, that he commanded those who stood near to strike him on the mouth. This arbitrary violation of the law on the part of the chief of the council so roused the apostle’s feelings, that he fearlessly exclaimed, “God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?” It is evident that the high priest was not so clothed as to be recognized; therefore Paul excuses himself by his

ignorance of the fact, and quotes the formal prohibition of the law: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

The apostle soon perceived, we are told, that the council was divided into two parties, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and therefore he cried out, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This declaration, whether so intended or not, had the effect of dividing the assembly, and setting the one party against the other. And so fierce did their dissensions become, that some of the Pharisees actually took Paul's side, saying, "We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." The judgment-hall immediately became the scene of the most violent contention, and the presence of Claudius Lysias was absolutely necessary. Paul is once more lodged in the castle.

So passed this eventful morning in the history of our apostle. In the evening, when alone, can we wonder if his heart was prone to sink within him? From what had taken place, and from the gloomy appearance of everything around him, the apostle never stood in greater need of the consolation and strength which the Master's presence always gives. But who knew this so well, or could feel so deeply for the lonely prisoner as the Master Himself? And so He appears in richest grace to comfort and cheer the heart of His servant. It was divinely timed comfort. The Lord stood by him, as He had done at Corinth, and as He afterward did on the voyage to Rome; "and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 18:9, 10; 23:11; 27:23, 24.) A conspiracy of more than forty men to assassinate Paul having been discovered, and all their wicked schemes confounded, Claudius Lysias immediately summoned his centurions and soldiers, and gave strict orders to have Paul conveyed safely to Caesarea. The details of this matter are related by Luke with singular fullness. Acts 23:12-25.

PAUL appears before Felix.

As some of our readers may have observed, the character of God's dealings with His servant somewhat changes here. It may be well to pause for a moment, and reverently inquire into the apparent causes of this change.

And, as many have freely given their opinions on this difficult point, we will here quote a few lines from one who seems to give the mind of the Spirit.

"I believe, then, that the hand of God was in Paul's journey to Jerusalem; that, in His sovereign wisdom, He willed that His servant should undertake it, and also have blessing in it; but that the means employed to lead him into it, according to that sovereign wisdom, was the apostle's human affections for the people who were his kindred after the flesh; and that he was not led into it by the Holy Ghost acting on the part of Christ in the Church. This attachment to his people, this human affection, met with that among the people which put it in its place. Humanly speaking, it was an amiable feeling; but it was not the power of the Holy Ghost founded on the death and resurrection of Christ. There, there was no longer Jew nor Gentile. Paul's affection was good in itself, but as a spring of action it did not come up to the height of the work of the Spirit, who, on Christ's part, had sent him afar from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, in order to reveal the Church as His body united to Him in heaven.

“He was the messenger of the heavenly glory, which brought out the doctrine of the Church composed of Jews and Gentiles, united without distinction in the one body of Christ, thus blotting out Judaism; but his love for his nation carried him, I repeat, into the very center of hostile Judaism, Judaism enraged against the spiritual equality.

“Nevertheless, the hand of God was doubtless in it: Paul, individually, found his level.

“That which Paul said before the council raises a tumult, and the chief captain takes him from among them. God has all things at His disposal—a nephew of Paul’s, never mentioned elsewhere, hears of an ambush laid for him and warns him of it. Paul sends him to the chief captain, who expedites the departure of Paul under a guard to Caesarea. God watched over him, but all is on the level of human and providential ways. There is not the angel as in Peter’s case, nor the earthquake as at Philippi. We are sensibly on different ground.”

The accusers of Paul were not long in finding their way to Caesarea. “And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.” Acts 24:1. In a short speech, full of flattery and insinuating art, Tertullus accuses Paul of sedition, heresy, and the profanation of the temple.

Felix then signified to Paul that he had an opportunity of answering for himself. And now, we may say, the apostle of the Gentiles is once more in his right place. However humiliating his circumstances, he is still God’s messenger to the Gentiles, and God is with His beloved servant. The Jews were silent; and Paul, in his usual straightforward manner, met the charges.

Felix, it appears, knew a good deal about these things, and it is evident that a strong impression was made on his mind. Many years before this, Christianity had found its way into the Roman army at Caesarea (Acts 10), so that he probably knew something about it, and was convinced of the truth of Paul’s statements; but he trifled with his convictions, and with his prisoner. He “deferred” further inquiry for the present, making some excuse about the coming of Lysias. Meanwhile, however, he gave orders that Paul should be treated with kindness and consideration, and that his friends should be allowed free access to him.

Not many days after this, Felix entered the audience chamber with his wife Drusilla, and sent for Paul. They were evidently curious to hear him discourse “concerning the faith of Christ.” But Paul was not the one to gratify the curiosity of a Roman libertine, and a profligate Jewish princess. The faithful apostle, in preaching Christ, spoke plainly and boldly to the conscience of his hearers. He had now an opportunity in his bonds which he could otherwise scarcely have obtained. “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.” And little wonder. If we are to believe the historians of his own day, Josephus and Tacitus, a more unprincipled or dissolute couple never sat before a preacher. But, though conscience-stricken, Felix remained impenitent. Fearful condition! “Go thy way, said he, for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” But that convenient season never came, though he frequently saw the apostle afterward, and, we doubt not, gave him to understand that a bribe would procure his release. Little did the Roman governor think that his venal justice was to be recorded in the book of God, and handed down to all succeeding generations. His character is represented as mean, cruel, and dissolute; that in the indulgence of all kinds of wickedness, he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave. “But after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room; and Felix, willing

to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.”

PAUL APPEARS BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA.

Immediately after the arrival of Festus in the province, he visited Jerusalem. There, the leading Jews seized the opportunity to demand Paul's return. Their plea, doubtless, was that he should be tried again before the Sanhedrim, but their real purpose was to kill him on the way. Festus refused their petition. He invited them, however, to go down with him to Caesarea and accuse him there. The trial took place and resembles that before Felix. It is quite evident that Festus saw clearly enough, that Paul's real offense was connected with the religious opinions of the Jews, and that he had committed no offense against the law; but at the same time, being desirous to ingratiate himself with the Jews, he asks Paul whether he would go to Jerusalem to be tried there. This was little better than a proposal to sacrifice him to Jewish hatred. Paul, being well aware of this, at once appealed unto Caesar—“I appeal unto Caesar.”

Festus was no doubt surprised at the dignity and independence of his prisoner. But it was his privilege as a Roman citizen, to have his cause transferred to the supreme tribunal of the Emperor at Rome. “Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.”

So far as the eye of man can see, this was Paul's only resource under the circumstances. But the hand and purpose of the Lord were in it. Paul must bear witness for Christ and the truth in Rome also. Jerusalem had rejected the testimony to the Gentiles; Rome too must have its share in rejecting the same testimony, and in becoming the prison of the witness. But in all this Paul is highly favored of the Lord. His position resembles that of his blessed Master, when He was given up to the Gentiles by the hatred of the Jews; only the Lord was perfect in it all, and He was in His true place before God. He came to the Jews—that was His mission: Paul was delivered from the Jews—that was the difference. Christ gave Himself up, as we read, “Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.” Part of Paul's commission runs thus:—“Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.” But Paul returned to “the people” in the energy of his human affections, after he had been placed outside of them in the energy of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 27:17.) Jesus had taken him out from both Jew and Gentile, to exercise a ministry that united the two in one body in Christ. As Paul himself says, “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after, the flesh.” In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek. We now resume the history of the great apostle.

PAUL APPEARS BEFORE AGRIPPA AND BERNICE.

It happened about this time that Agrippa, king of the Jews, and his sister Bernice, came to pay a complimentary visit to Festus. And as Festus knew not how to state Paul's case to the Emperor, he took the opportunity of consulting Agrippa, who was better informed than himself on the points in question. The Jewish prince, who must have known something of Christianity, and had no doubt heard of Paul himself, expressed a desire to hear Him speak. Festus readily acceded to the request. “Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.”

The apostle is now to have the privilege of bearing the name of Jesus before the most dignified assembly he has ever addressed. Jewish kings, Roman governors, military officers, and the chief men of Caesarea assembled “with great pomp” to hear the prisoner give an account of himself to

Agrippa. It was no mean audience, and it is perfectly clear that they regarded the prisoner as no mean person. Festus, having acknowledged the difficulty in which he found himself, referred the matter to the better knowledge of the Jewish king. Agrippa courteously signified to Paul that he was permitted to speak for himself. We have now come to one of the most interesting moments in the whole history of our apostle.

The dignity of his manner before his judges, though he stretched out a hand that was chained to a soldier, must have deeply impressed his audience. The depth of his humiliation only manifested more strikingly the moral elevation of his soul. He thought neither of his chain nor of his person. Perfectly happy in Christ, and burning with love to those around him, self and circumstances were completely forgotten. With a dignified deference to the position of those who surrounded him, he rose, in the honest declarations of a good conscience, infinitely above them all. He addresses himself to the conscience of his audience, with the boldness and uprightness of a man accustomed to walk with God, and to act for Him. The character and conduct of the governors are thrown into painful contrast with the character and conduct of the apostle, and shows us what the world is when unmasked by the Holy Ghost.

“I pass over in silence,” says one, “the worldly egotism which betrays itself in Lysias and Festus, by the assumption of all sorts of good qualities and good conduct—the mixture of awakened conscience and the absence of principle in the governors—the desire to please the Jews for their own importance, or to facilitate their government of a rebellious people. The position of Agrippa and ah the details of the history have a remarkable stamp of truth, and present the various characters in so living a style that we seem to be in the scene described; we see the persons moving in it. This, moreover, strikingly characterizes the writings of Luke.”

Chapter 26 Paul addresses king Agrippa as one well versed in the customs and questions prevailing amongst the Jews; and he so relates his miraculous conversion and his subsequent career, as to act on the conscience of the king. By the clear and straightforward narrative of the apostle, he was not far from being convinced; his conscience was awakened; but the world and his own passions stood in the way. Festus ridiculed. To him it was nothing more than wild enthusiasm—a rhapsody. He interrupted the apostle abruptly, and “said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.” The apostle’s reply was dignified and self-possessed, but intensely earnest; and, with great wisdom and quickness of discernment, he appeals to Agrippa.

“I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.”

Then turning to the Jewish king, who sat beside Festus, he made this direct and solemn appeal to him:

“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.”

“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian”

For the moment, the king was carried away by the power of Paul’s address, and by the sharpened sting of his appeals. Then Paul made his reply—a reply which stands alone. It is characterized by

godly zeal—christian courtesy—burning love for souls, and great personal joy in the Lord.

“And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

With the expression of this noble wish, the conference closed—the meeting was dissolved. Agrippa had no desire to hear more. The appeals had been too pointed, too personal; and so mingled with dignity, affection, and solicitude, that he was overcome. Then “the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them.” After a brief consultation, Festus, Agrippa, and their companions came to the conclusion that Paul was guilty of nothing worthy of death or even imprisonment. “This man,” said Agrippa, “might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.”

This was the Lord’s care of His beloved servant. He would have his innocence proved and acknowledged by his judges, and fully established before the world. This being accomplished, the king and his companions resume their places in the world and its gaieties, and Paul returns to his prison. But never was his heart more happy or more filled with the spirit of his Master than at that moment.

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Acts 27. The time was now come for Paul’s journey to Rome. No formal trial of the apostle had yet taken place. And, no doubt, wearied with the unrelenting opposition of the Jews—with two years’ imprisonment at Caesarea—with repeated examinations before the governors and Agrippa, he had claimed a trial before the imperial court. Luke, the historian of the Acts, and Aristarchus of Thessalonica, were favored to accompany him. Paul was committed to the charge of a centurion named Julius, of the imperial band; an officer, who, upon all occasions, treated the apostle with the greatest kindness and consideration.

It was then “determined” that Paul should be sent, along with “certain other prisoners,” by sea to Italy. “And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched,” says Luke, “meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.” Loosing from Sidon they were forced to sail under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary, and come to Myra, a city of Lycia. Here the centurion had his prisoners transferred to a ship of Alexandria on her voyage to Italy. In this vessel, after leaving Myra, they “sailed slowly many days,” the weather being unfavorable from the first. But running to the leeward of Crete, they safely reached “the Fair Havens.”

Winter was now near, and it became a serious question what course should be taken—whether they should remain at Fair Havens for the winter, or seek some better harbor.

Here we must pause for a moment and notice the wonderful position of our apostle in this serious consultation. As before Festus and Agrippa, he appears before the captain, the owner, the centurion, and the whole crew, as having the mind of God. He counsels, directs, and acts, as if he were really the master of the vessel, in place of being a prisoner in the custody of soldiers. He advised that they should remain where they were. He warned them that they would meet with violent weather if they ventured out to the open sea—that much injury would be done to the ship and cargo, and much risk to the lives of those on board. But the master and the owner of the ship,

who had the greatest interest in her, were guided by circumstances and not by faith; they were willing to run the risk of seeking a more commodious harbor to winter in, and the centurion naturally deferred to their judgment. All were against the judgment of the man of faith—the man of God—the man who was speaking and acting for God. Even the circumstances in the scene around them seemed to favor the opinion of the sailors rather than that of the apostle. But nothing can falsify the judgment of faith. It must be true in spite of every circumstance.

It was therefore resolved by the majority that they should leave Fair Havens, and sail to Port Phenice, as a more secure winter harbor. The wind changed just at this moment. Everything seemed to favor the sailors. “The south wind blew softly;” so sanguine were they, Luke tells us, that they supposed their purpose was already accomplished. (Ver. 13.) They accordingly weighed anchor and with a soft breeze from the south, the vessel, with her “two hundred threescore and sixteen souls” on board, left the port of Fair Havens. But scarcely had she rounded Cape Matala, a distance of only four or five miles, when a violent wind from the shore caught the vessel, and tossed her in such a manner that it was no longer possible for the helmsman to make her keep her course. And as Luke observes, “We let her drive,” that is, they were compelled to let her run before the wind.

But our chief concern here is with Paul as the man of faith. What must have been the thoughts and feelings now of his fellow-passengers? They had trusted to the wind, and they must now reap the whirlwind. The solemn counsels and warnings of faith had been rejected. Many, alas! heedless of the warning here recorded, and under the flattering wind of favorable circumstances, have launched on the great voyage of life, utterly regardless of the voice of faith. But like the fawning wind that betrayed the vessel from the harbor, all soon changed into a furious tempest on the troubled sea of life.

THE STORM IN THE SEA OF ADRTA.

The term “Euroclydon” given to this tempestuous wind, indicates, we are told, a storm of the utmost violence. It was accompanied by the agitation and whirling motion of the clouds, and by great commotion in the sea, raising it in columns of spray. The sacred historian now proceeds to give an accurate account of what was done with the vessel in these perilous circumstances. Having run to the leeward of Clauda, they may have escaped for a little the violence of the tempest. This would give them an opportunity to make every preparation for weathering the storm.

The day after she left Clauda—the violence of the storm continuing—they began to lighten the ship by throwing overboard whatever could be spared. All hands seem to have been at work. “And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.”

“His race performed, the sacred lamp of day

Now dips in western clouds his parting ray;

His languid fires, half lost in ambient haze,

Refract along the dusk a crimson blaze:

Till deep immersed the sinking orb descends,
And cheerless night o'er heaven her reign extends;
Sad evening's hour, how different from the past!
No flaming pomp, no blushing glories cast,
No ray of friendly light is seen around;
The moon and stars in hopeless shade are drown'd."

Nothing could be more dreadful to ancient mariners than the continued over-clouded sky, as they were accustomed to be graded by their observation of the heavenly bodies. It was at this moment of perplexity and despair that the apostle "stood forth" and raised his voice amidst the storm. And from his word of sympathy we learn, that all their other sufferings were aggravated by the difficulty of preparing food. "But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island." Verses 21-26.

THE SHIPWRECK.

The shipwreck was not far distant. "When the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms." Fourteen days and nights this heavy gale continued without abatement; during which time their sufferings must have been great beyond description.

At the close of the fourteenth day, "about midnight," the sailors heard a sound which indicated that they were nearing land. The sound, no doubt, was the roar of the breakers on the unknown shore. No time was to be lost; so they immediately cast four anchors out of the stern, and anxiously wished for day. Here a natural but ungenerous attempt was made by the sailors to save their own lives. They lowered the boat with the professed purpose of laying out anchors from the bow, but intending to desert the sinking ship. Paul seeing this, and knowing their real design, immediately "said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off." Thus the divine counsel of the apostle was the means of saving all on board. "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." It is no longer the ship's captain or the ship's crew that are looked to for wisdom and safety. Every eye is turned to Paul the prisoner—the man of faith—the man who believes and acts according to the revelation of God. Circumstances often mislead when looked to for direction, the word of God is our only sure guide, whether in fair or in foul weather.

During the anxious interval which remained till the dawn of day, Paul had an opportunity of lifting up his voice for God, and for the encouragement of the whole company. What a scene of intensified interest it must have been! The night dark and stormy—the shattered vessel in danger

of going down at her anchors, or of being dashed to pieces on the rocky shore. But there was one on board who was perfectly happy amidst it all. The state of the ship—the shallow water—the alarming sound of the breakers, had no terror for him. He was happy in the Lord, and in full communion with His very thoughts and purposes. Such is the Christian's place in the midst of every storm, though comparatively few rise to it; faith only can reach it. This was Paul's last exhortation to the ship's company.

“And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. Verses 33-36.

Their only hope now was to run the ship on shore and so escape to land. Though ignorant of the coast, “they discovered a certain creek with a shore,” or, a smooth beach; and determined to run the ship aground there. So they cast away the anchors, unloosed the rudder bands, hoisted the mainsail to the wind, and made for the shore. The ship thus driven, her bow stuck fast in the beach and remained unmoved, but the stern was broken to pieces by the violence of the waves.

Paul's ship has now reached the shore; and once more the man of faith is the means of saving the lives of all the prisoners. The centurion, greatly influenced by the words of Paul, and anxious at least for his safety, prevents the soldiers from killing the prisoners, and gave orders that those who could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land; and that the rest should follow on such boards or broken pieces of the ship as were available. “And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.” Their deliverance was as complete as Paul had predicted it would be.

PAUL AT MELITA—NOW MALTA.

Acts 28. The inhabitants of the island received the shipwrecked strangers with no small kindness, and immediately lighted a fire to warm them. The sacred historian gives us a living picture of the whole scene. We see the persons described moving in it. The apostle gathering sticks for the fire—the viper fastening on his hand—the barbarians first thinking him a murderer, and then a god from the sting being harmless. Publius, the chief man of the island, lodged them courteously three days; and his father, who lay sick of a fever, was healed by Paul laying his hands on him and praying for him. The apostle was enabled to work many miracles during his stay on the island; and the whole company, for his sake, were loaded with many honors. We see God is with His beloved servant, and he exercises his accustomed power among the barbarians. As the concluding part of Paul's journey to Rome is so prosperous, that scarcely any incident in it is recorded, we will only notice it briefly.

After a three months' stay in Malta, the soldiers and their prisoners left in a ship of Alexandria for Italy. They touched at Syracuse, where they tarried three days; and at Rhegium, from which place they had a fair wind to Puteoli. Here they “found brethren,” and while they were spending a few days with them, enjoying the ministry of brotherly love, the news of the apostle's arrival reached Rome. The Christians at once sent forth some of their number, who met Paul and his friends at

Philippi forum and the three taverns. A beautiful instance and illustration of the fellowship of saints. What must have been the feelings of our apostle on this first introduction to the Christians from the Church at Rome! His long cherished desire was at last accomplished; his heart was filled with praise; "He thanked God," as Luke says, "and took courage."

Paul's arrival at Rome.

Along the Appian Road, most probably, Paul and his company traveled to Rome. On their arrival, "the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." Though he was not released from the constant annoyance of being chained to a soldier, every indulgence compatible with his position was allowed him.

Paul was now privileged "to preach the gospel to them that were at Rome also;" and proceeded without delay to act upon his divine rule—"to the Jew first." He sends for the chief of the Jews and explains to them his true position. He assures them that he had committed no offense against his nation, or the customs of the fathers: but that he was brought to Rome to answer certain charges made against him by the Jews in Palestine: and so unfounded were the charges, that even the Roman governor was ready to set him free, but the Jews opposed his liberty. In fact it was, as he said, "for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." His only crime had been his firm faith in the promises of God to Israel through the Messiah.

The Roman Jews, in reply, assured Paul that no report to his prejudice had reached Rome, and that they desired to hear from himself a statement of his faith; adding, that the Christians were everywhere spoken against. A day was therefore fixed for a meeting at his own private lodgings. At the appointed time many came, "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening." But the Jews at Rome, as at Antioch and Jerusalem, were slow of heart to believe. "And some believed the things which were spoken and some believed not." But how earnestly and unweariedly he labored to win their hearts for Christ! From morning till evening he not only preached Christ, but sought to persuade them concerning Him. He sought, we may be sure, to persuade them concerning His Godhead and manhood—His perfect sacrifice—His resurrection, ascension, and glory. What a lesson and what a subject for the preacher in all ages! Persuading men concerning Jesus from morning till evening.

The condition of the Jews is now set before us for the last time. The judgment pronounced by Esaias was about to fall on them in all its withering power—a judgment under which they lie to this day—a judgment which shall continue until God interpose to give them repentance, and to deliver them by His grace to the glory of His own name. But, in the meantime, "the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it;" and, as we know, blessed be His name, they have heard it; we ourselves are witnesses of it.

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Acts 28:30, 31.

These are the last words of the Acts. The scene on which the curtain falls, is most suggestive—the opposition of Jewish unbelief to the things which concerned their souls' salvation: suggestive, alas! of what soon befell them. And here, too, ends the history of this precious servant of God, so far as

it has been directly revealed. The voice of the Spirit of truth on this subject becomes silent. Our further knowledge of Paul's subsequent history must be gathered almost exclusively from his later epistles: and from these we learn more than mere history; they give us a blessed insight into the feelings, conflicts, affections, and sympathies of the great apostle, and of the condition of the Church of God generally, down to the period of his martyrdom.

Short Papers on Church History

But here we must pause and contemplate for a moment our apostle as a prisoner in the imperial city. The gospel had now been preached from Jerusalem to Rome. Great changes had taken place in the dispensational ways of God. The book of the Acts is transitional in its character. The Jews, we see, are now set aside, or rather they have set themselves aside by their rejection of that which God was setting up. The counsels of His grace towards them, no doubt, abide forever sure; but in the meantime, they are cast off, and others come in and take the place of blessed relationship with God. Paul was a witness of God's grace to Israel; he was himself an Israelite; but also chosen of God to introduce something entirely new—the Church, the body of Christ, “Whereof I was made a minister...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 3:7-9.) This new thing set aside all distinction between Jew and Gentile, as sinners, and in the oneness of this body. The hostility of the Jews to these truths never abated, as we have fully seen; and the results of this enmity we have also seen. The Jews disappear from the scene entirely; and the Church becomes the vessel of God's testimony on the earth, and His habitation by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:22.) Individual Jews, of course, who believe in Jesus, are blessed in connection with a heavenly Christ and the “one body,” but Israel for a time is left without God, and without present communication with Him. The Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians fully set forth this doctrine; especially Romans, chapters 9, 10, 11. We now return to Paul's occupation during his imprisonment.

Though a prisoner, he was allowed the freest intercourse with his friends, and he was then surrounded by many of his oldest and most faithful companions. From the epistles we learn that Luke, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, Aristarchus, and others, were with the apostle at this time. Still, we must remember that he was, as a prisoner, chained to a soldier and exposed to the rude control of such. Owing to the long delay of his trial, he was in this condition for two years; during which time he preached the gospel and opened up the scriptures to the congregations which came to hear him; and wrote several epistles to churches in distant places.

Having fully and faithfully discharged the duty which he owed to the Jews, the favored people of God, he addressed himself to the Gentiles; though not, of course, to the exclusion of the Jews. His door was open from morning till night to all who would come and hear the great truths of Christianity. And in some respects, he never had a better opportunity; for being under the protection of the Romans, the Jews were not allowed to molest him.

The effects of Paul's preaching, through the Lord's blessing, were soon manifest. The Roman guards, the household of Caesar, and “all other places” were blessed through his means. “I would ye should understand, brethren,” he writes to the Philippians, “that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace [or, Caesar's court, see margin], and in all other places.” And again, the

apostle says, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." (Phil. 1:12-13; 4:22.) The blessing appears to have been first manifested in the Praetorium, or amongst the praetorian guards. "My bonds in Christ are manifest in all Omar's court"—the quarters of the guards and household troops. The glorious gospel which Paul preached was heard by the whole camp. Even the kind prefect Burrus, with his intimate friend Seneca, Nero's tutor, may have heard the gospel of the grace of God. Paul's courteous manners, and great abilities, both natural and acquired, were well fitted to attract both the statesman and the philosopher. And being there two whole years gave them many opportunities.

With nearly the whole of the troops, we may say, he must have been personally acquainted. With every change of guard, the door for the gospel opened wider and wider. Being constantly chained to one of the soldiers as his keeper, and the guard being duly relieved, he thus became acquainted with many; and with what love and earnestness, and burning eloquence, he must have spoken to them of Jesus and of their need of Him. But we must wait till the morning of the first resurrection to see the results of Paul's preaching there. The day will declare it, and God shall have all the glory.

The apostle gives us also to know that the gospel had penetrated into the palace itself. There were saints in Caesar's household—Christianity was planted within the imperial walls; "and in all other places." Yes, in "all other places," says the sacred historian. Not only was Paul thus laboring within the imperial precincts, but his companions, whom he styles his "fellow-laborers," were no doubt preaching the gospel in "all other places," in and around the imperial city; so that the success of the gospel must be ascribed to the efforts of others, as well as to the unwearied exertions of the great apostle in his captivity.

The Runaway Slave, Onesimus.

But of all the converts which the Lord gave to the apostle in his bonds, none of them seem to have so entirely won his heart, as the poor runaway slave, Onesimus. Beautiful picture of the strength, the humility, and the tenderness of divine love in the heart, which works by the Spirit, and sweetly shines in all the details of individual life! The apostle's success in the imperial palace weakens not his interest in a young disciple from the lowest condition of society. No portion of the community were more depraved than the slaves; but what must have been the associates of a fugitive slave in that profligate city? Yet from these lowest depths, Onesimus is drawn forth by the unseen hand of eternal love. He crosses the path of the apostle, hears him preach the gospel, is converted, devotes himself at once to the Lord and to His service, and finds in Paul a friend and brother, as well as a master and teacher. And now shine forth the virtues and the value of Christianity; and the sweetest applications of the grace of God to a poor, friendless, destitute, fugitive slave.

What is Christianity? we may inquire; and whence its origin, in the view of such a new thing in Rome—in the world? Was it at the feet of Gamaliel that Paul so learned to love? No, my reader, but at the feet of Jesus. Would to God that the eloquent historian of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," had entered into this scene, and learned to admire, in place of scornfully to ridicule, divine Christianity! If we think for a moment of the apostle's labors at this time—of his age—of his infirmities—of his circumstances: to say nothing of the lofty subjects, and the immense foundation truths, that were then occupying his mind; we may well admire the grace that could enter into every detail of the relationships of master and slave, and that with such delicate

consideration of every claim. The letter he sent with Onesimus to his injured master Philemon, is one of the most touching ever written. Looking at it simply as such, we are at a loss whether most to admire the warmth and earnestness of his affections, the delicacy and justness of his thoughts, or the sublime dignity which pervades the whole epistle.

We now refer for a moment to the epistles that were written during his imprisonment.

There can be no reasonable doubt, that the epistles to PHILEMON, to the COLOSSIANS, to the EPHESIANS, and to the PHILIPPIANS were written towards the latter part of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. He refers to his "bonds" in them all, and repeatedly to the expectation of his release. (Compare Philem. 1:22; Col. 4:18; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil. 1:7,25; 2:24; 4:22.) Besides he must have been long enough at Rome for the news of his imprisonment to have reached his affectionate Philippians, and for them to have sent him relief.

The first three are supposed to have been written some time before that to the Philippians. An immediate issue of his cause is more distinctly spoken of in his Epistle to them. "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly" (Phil. 2:23-24). The first three may have been written about the spring of A.D. 62, and sent by Tychicus and Onesimus; and the last in the autumn and sent by Epaphroditus.

The Epistle to the HEBREWS is also supposed by some to have been written about the same time, and every consideration leads to the conclusion that Paul was the writer. The expression at the close of the epistle, "they of Italy salute you," seems decisive as to where the writer was when he wrote it. And the following passages seem decisive as to the time: "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." Compare this with what Paul wrote to the Philippians— "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you...so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." We can scarcely doubt that these passages were written by the same pen about the same time, and that they refer to the same intended movements. But we do not press this point. One thing, however, is evident—that the epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as the temple was standing, and the temple worship going on undisturbed. Compare chap. 8:4; 10: 25; 10:11; 13:10-13.

Paul's Acquittal and Release.

After fully four years' imprisonment, partly in Judea and partly at Rome, the apostle is once more at liberty. But we have no particulars as to the character of his trial, or the ground of his acquittal. The sacred historian tells us that he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house; but he does not say what followed at the close of that period. Was it followed by the apostle's condemnation and death, or by his acquittal and liberation? This is the question, and the only certain answer to this question must be gathered chiefly from the Pastoral Epistles. The First to Timothy and that to Titus appear to have been written about the same time; and the Second to Timothy somewhat later.

It is now admitted, we believe, by nearly all who are competent to decide on such a question, that Paul was acquitted, and that he spent some years in traveling, at perfect liberty, before he was again imprisoned and condemned. And though it is difficult to trace the footsteps of the apostle during that period, still we may draw certain conclusions from his letters, without encroaching on

the domain of conjecture. Most likely he traveled rapidly and visited many places. During the lengthened period of his imprisonment, much mischief had been done by his enemies in the churches which he had been the means of planting. They required his presence, his counsel, and encouragement. And from what we know of his energy and zeal, we are well assured that no labor would be spared in visiting them.

Paul's departure from Italy.

When writing to the Romans, before his imprisonment, Paul expressed his intention of passing through Rome into Spain. "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain," he says, "I will come to you." Again, "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain." (Rom. 15:24, 28.) Some have thought that he did go to Spain immediately after his release. The principal evidence adduced in favor of this hypothesis is supplied by Clement, a fellow-laborer, mentioned in Phil. 4:3, who was afterward Bishop of Rome. This writer speaks of Paul as having preached the gospel in the east and in the west: —that he had instructed the whole world; meaning, no doubt, the Roman Empire: and that he had gone to the extremity of the west, meaning Spain. As Clement was Paul's own disciple and fellow-laborer, his testimony is worthy of our respect; still it is not scripture, and therefore not in itself conclusive.

2. From Paul's more recent letters, he seems to have altered his plans, and to have given up the idea of going to Spain, at least for the time. This we gather chiefly from the Epistles to Philemon and to the Philippians. To the former he writes, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." (Ver. 22.) He here gives Philemon to expect that he may soon be with him in person. To the Philippians he writes, and speaking of Timothy he adds, "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." Again, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state." (Chap. 2:23, 24, 19.) The intended movements of the apostle and his beloved Timothy seem quite clear from these passages. It was evidently the purpose of the apostle to dispatch Timothy to Philippi as soon as the trial was over, and to remain in Italy himself until Timothy returned with the report of their state.

3. It may reasonably be expected that Paul fulfilled the intention which he so lately expressed; and that he visited the Churches in Asia Minor, some of which, as yet, had not seen his face in the flesh. Having accomplished the objects of his mission to Asia Minor, some have thought that then he may have undertaken his long-meditated journey into Spain; but of this we have no reliable information, and mere conjecture is of no value.

4. Another theory is, that he went straight from Italy to Judea, and thence to Antioch, Asia Minor, and Greece. This scheme is founded chiefly on Heb. 13:23, 24. "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.....They of Italy salute you." It is also supposed that while waiting at Puteoli for embarkation, immediately on the return of Timothy, tidings reached the apostle that a great persecution had broken out against the Christians in Jerusalem. This sad intelligence so filled the heart of Paul with sorrow, that he wrote at once his famous letter to them—THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. Shortly after this, Timothy arrived, and Paul and his companions sailed for Judea.

THE PLACES VISITED BY PAUL DURING HIS LIBERTY.

Having stated these different theories for the reader's examination, we will now notice the places mentioned in the epistles as visited by Paul.

1. At some time after leaving Rome, Paul and his companions must have visited Asia Minor and Greece. "As I besought thee still to abide at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (1 Tim. 1:3.) Feeling, it may be, somewhat anxious about his son Timothy, and the weight of the responsibilities of his position at Ephesus, he sends him a letter of encouragement, comfort, and authority from Macedonia—THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

2. Sometime after this, Paul visited the island of Crete in company with Titus, and left him there. He also, very soon after, sent him a letter of instruction and authority, THE EPISTLE TO TITUS. Timothy and Titus may be considered as delegates or representatives of the apostle. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Titus 1:5.

3. Paul was intending to spend a winter at a place called Nicopolis. "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter." Titus 3:12.

4. He visited Troas, Corinth, and Miletum. "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.....Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." 2 Tim. 4:13, 20.

Short Papers on Church History

It is supposed by some that the apostle was arrested at Nicopolis, where he intended to spend the winter, and thence carried a prisoner to Rome. By others, it is supposed that after wintering at Nicopolis, and visiting the places above mentioned, he returned to Rome in a state of personal liberty, but was arrested during the Neronian persecution and thrown into prison.

The precise charge now made against the apostle, and for which he was arrested, we have no means of ascertaining. It may have been simply on the charge of being a Christian. The general persecution against the Christians was now raging with the utmost severity. It was no longer about certain questions of the law, and under the mild and humane prefect Burrus; but he was now treated as an evil-doer—as a common criminal. "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds." And very different to the bonds of his first imprisonment, when he dwelt hi his own hired house.

Alexander—of Ephesus we believe—had evidently something to do with his arrest. He was either one of his accusers, or, at least, a witness against him. "Alexander the coppersmith," he writes to Timothy, "did me much evil"—"exhibited much evil mindedness towards me." Ten years before this he had stood forward as the open antagonist of the apostle in Ephesus. (Acts 19) He may now have sought his revenge by laying information against the apostle before the prefect. That it was the same Alexander of Ephesus seems clear from the charge to Timothy; "of whom be thou ware also." 2 Tim. 4:14, 15.

During the apostle's first and lengthened imprisonment, he was surrounded by many of his oldest and most valued companions; whom he styles "fellow-laborers and fellow-prisoners." By means of these, his messengers, though chained to a single spot himself, he kept up a constant intercourse with his friends throughout the empire, and with Gentile churches who had not seen his face in the flesh. But his second imprisonment was a perfect contrast to all this. He had parted from all his ordinary companions. Erastus abode at Corinth; Trophimus had been left at Miletum sick; Titus had gone to Dalmatia; Crescens to Galatia; Tychicus had been dispatched to Ephesus; and the lukewarm Demas had forsaken him, "having loved this present world."

The apostle was now almost entirely alone. "Only Luke is with me," he says. But the Lord thought of his deserted and solitary servant. A bright beam, as from the fountain of love, shines amidst the darkness and dreariness of his prison. There was one faithful amidst the general defection, and one who was not ashamed of the apostle's chain. How peculiarly sweet and refreshing to the heart of the apostle must the ministry of Onesiphorus have been at this time! It can never be forgotten. Onesiphorus and his house—which Paul links with himself—shall be held in everlasting remembrance; and shall reap the fruit of his courage and devotedness to the apostle forever and forever. "I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Matt. 25:31-46.

Concerning the circumstances of Paul's trial we have no certain information. Most probably in the spring of A.D. 66 or 67, Nero took his seat on the tribunal, surrounded with his jurors, and the imperial guard; and Paul was brought into the court. We have reason to believe that the large space was filled with a promiscuous multitude of Jews and Gentiles. The apostle stood once more before the world. He had again the opportunity of proclaiming to all nations that for which he had been made a prisoner. "That all the Gentiles might hear." Emperors and senators, princes and nobles, and all the great ones of the earth, must hear the glorious gospel of the grace of God. All that the enemy has done becomes a testimony to the name of Jesus. Those who were otherwise inaccessible hear the gospel preached with power from on high.

Fain would we dwell on this wonderful scene for a few moments. Never before had there been such a witness, and such a testimony, in Nero's judgment-hall. The wisdom of God in turning all the efforts of the enemy into such a testimony is most profound; while His love and grace in the gospel shine ineffable and alike to all classes. The apostle himself commands our devout admiration. Though at this moment his heart was broken by the unfaithfulness of the Church, he stood forth, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Though he had been forsaken by men, the Lord stood by him and strengthened him. He boldly confronted his enemies; pleaded in his own cause, and the cause of the gospel. He had an opportunity to speak of Jesus, of His death and resurrection, so that the heathen multitude might hear the gospel. His age, his infirmities, his venerable form, his fettered hand, would all tend to deepen the impression of his manly and straightforward eloquence. But, happily, we have an account from his own pen of the first hearing of his defense. He writes thus to Timotheus immediately after: "At my first answer [when I was first heard in my defense] no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." 2 Tim. 4:16, 17.

"Look, now, and see Christ's chosen saint

In triumph wear his Christ-like chain;
No fear lest he should swerve or faint;
His life is Christ, his death is gain.”

THE MARTYRDOM OF PAUL.

Although we have no record of the second stage of Ids trial, we have reason to believe that it soon followed the first; and that it ended in his condemnation and death. But THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY is the divine record of what was passing in his deeply exercised mind at this solemn moment. His deep concern for the truth and Church of God; his pathetic tenderness for the saints, and especially for his beloved son Timothy; his triumphant hope in the immediate prospect of martyrdom, can only be told in his own words. “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” Chapter 4:6-8.

My race is run; my warfare’s o’er;
The blessed hour is nigh,
When, offered up to God, my soul
Shall wing its flight on high.
With heavenly weapons I have fought
The battles of the Lord:
Finish’d my course, and kept the faith,
Depending on His word.

The tribunal of Nero here fades from his sight. Death in its most violent form has no terror for him. Christ in glory is the object of his eye and of his heart—the source of his joy and of his strength. His work was finished; and the toils of his love were ended. Though a prisoner and poor—though aged and rejected—he was rich in God; he possessed Christ, and in Him all things. The Jesus whom he had seen in glory at the commencement of his course, and who had brought him into all the trials and labors of the gospel, was now his possession and his crown. The unrighteous tribunal of Nero, and the bloodstained sword of the executioner, were to Paul but as the messengers of peace, who had come to close his long and weary path, and to introduce Him into the presence of Jesus in glory. The time was now come for the Jesus that loved him, to take him to Himself. He had fought the good fight of the gospel to the end; he had finished his course; it only remained for him to be crowned, when the Lord, the righteous judge, appears in glory.

“In all things more than conquerors
Through Him that loved us—
We know that neither death nor life,

Nor angels, rulers, powers,
Nor present things, nor things to come,
Nor even height, nor depth,
Nor any other creature-thing,
Above, below, around,
Can part us from the love of God
In Jesus Christ our Lord.”

We have the concurrent testimony of antiquity that Paul suffered martyrdom during the Neronian persecution, and most probably in A.D. 67. As a Roman citizen, he is said to have been beheaded in place of being scourged and crucified, or exposed to the frightful tortures then invented for the Christians. Like his Master he suffered “without the gate.” There is a spot on the Ostian Road, about two miles beyond the city walls, where it is supposed his martyrdom took place. There the last act of human cruelty was executed, and the great apostle was “Absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” His fervent and happy spirit was released from his feeble and suffering body; and the long cherished desire of his heart was fulfilled—“To depart and to be WITH CHRIST; which is FAR BETTER.”

Short Papers on Church History

About A.D. 36 Conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9.

36-39—At Damascus—preaches in the synagogue—goes into Arabia—returns to Damascus—flight from Damascus.

His FIRST visit to Jerusalem; three years after his conversion. Thence to Tarsus. Acts 9:23-26. Gal. 1:18.

39, 40 —Rest of the Jewish Churches. Acts 9:31.

40-43—Paul preaches the gospel in Syria and Cilicia. Gal. 1:21.

A period of uncertain length. —During this time he probably undergoes the chief part of the perils and sufferings which he recounts to the Corinthians. 2 Cor. 11.

He is brought from Tarsus to Antioch by Barnabas; and stays there a year before the famine. Acts 11:26.

44—Paul’s SECOND visit to Jerusalem, with the collection. Acts 11:30.

45—Paul returns to Antioch. Acts 12:2-5.

46-49—Paul’s FIRST missionary journey with Barnabas—goes to Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and back through the same places to Antioch.

They remain a long time in Antioch.

Dissension and disputation about circumcision. Acts 13; 14; 15:1, 2.

50—Paul's THIRD visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas, fourteen years after his conversion. Galatians 2:1.

They attend the council at Jerusalem. Acts 15 Return of Paid and Barnabas to Antioch, with Judas and Silas. Acts 15:32-35.

51—"Paul's SECOND missionary journey with Silas and Timothy. He goes from Antioch to Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas. Luke joins the apostolic band. Acts 16:10.

52—Entrance of the Gospel into Europe. Acts 16:11-13. Paul visits Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth. Spends a year and six months at Corinth. Acts 18:11.

First Epistle to the Thessalonians written.

53—Second Epistle to the Thessalonians written. Paul leaves Corinth and sails to Ephesus. Acts 18:18, 19.

54—Paul's FOURTH visit to Jerusalem at the feast.

Returns to Antioch.

54-56—Paul's THIRD missionary journey.

He departs from Antioch—visits Galatia, Phrygia, and reaches Ephesus, where he stays two years and three months. Here Paul separates the disciples from the Jewish synagogue. Acts 19:8, 10.

Epistle to the Galatians written.

57—(Spring) First Epistle to the Corinthians written.

The tumult at Ephesus—Paul leaves for Macedonia. Acts 19:23-20:1.

(Autumn) Second Epistle to the Corinthians written. 2 Cor. 1:8; 2:13, 14; 7:5; 8:1; 9; Paul visits Illyricum—goes to Corinth—winters there. Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 16:6.

58—(Spring.) The Epistle to the Romans written. Rom. 15:25-28; 16:21-23. Acts 20:4.

Paul leaves Corinth—passes through Macedonia—sails from Philippi—preaches at Troas—addresses the elders at Miletus—visits Tyre and Caesarea. Acts 20, 21:1-14.

58-60—Paul's FIFTH visit to Jerusalem before Pentecost, He is arrested in the temple—brought before Ananias and the Sanhedrim—sent by Lysias to Caesarea, where he is kept in bonds two years.

60—Paul heard by Felix and Festus. He appeals unto Caesar—preaches before Agrippa, Bernice, and the men of Caesarea.

(Autumn.) Paul sails for Italy.

(Winter.) Shipwrecked at Malta. Acts 27

61—(Spring.) Arrives at Rome—dwells two years in his own hired house.

62—(Spring.) Epistles to Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians written.

(Autumn.) Epistle to the Philippians written.

63—(Spring.) Paul acquitted and released.

Epistle to the Hebrews written.

Paul takes another journey, intending to visit Asia Minor and Greece. Philem. 1:22 Phil. 2:24.

64—Visits Crete, and leaves Titus there—exhorts Timothy to abide at Ephesus.

First Epistle to Timothy written.

Epistle to Titus written.

64-67—Intends to winter at Nicopolis. Titus 3:12.

Visits Troas, Corinth, Miletum. 2 Tim. 4:20

Paul arrested and sent to Rome.

Deserted and solitary—having only Luke, of his old associates, with him.

Second Epistle to Timothy written, probably not long before his death. These journeys and events are generally supposed to cover a period of about three years.

67—Paul's martyrdom.

Short Papers on Church History

As our two great apostles PETER and PAUL suffered martyrdom during the FIRST imperial persecution, it may be interesting to many of our readers to know something of the particulars which led to this cruel edict.

But here, however reluctantly, we must turn from the sure word of God to the uncertain writings of men. We pass, just at this point, from the firm and solid ground of inspiration to the insecure footing of Roman historians and ecclesiastical history. Nevertheless, all historians, both ancient and modern, pagan and christian, are agreed as to the main facts of the burning of Rome, and the persecution of the Christians.

In the month of July A.D. 64, a great fire broke out in the Circus, which continued to spread until it laid in ruins all the ancient grandeur of the imperial city. The flames extended with great rapidity; and Rome being a city of long narrow streets, and of hills and valleys, the fire gathered force from the winds, and soon became a general conflagration. In a short time the whole city seemed wrapped in one sheet of burning flame.

TACITUS, a Roman historian of that day, and considered one of the most accurate of his time, tells us:— "Of the fourteen quarters into which Rome was divided four only were left entire, three were reduced to ashes, and the remaining seven presented nothing better than a heap of shattered houses half in ruins." The fire raged furiously for six days and seven nights. Palaces, temples, monuments, the mansions of the rich, and the dwellings of the poor, perished in this fatal fire. But these were nothing compared with the sufferings of the inhabitants. The infirmities of age,

the weakness of the young, the helplessness of the sick, the wild screams and lamentations of women, added to the miseries of this dreadful scene. Some endeavored to provide for themselves, others to save their friends, but no place of safety could be found. Which way to turn, or what way to go, no one could tell; the fire raged on every side, so that numbers fell prostrate in the street, embraced a voluntary death, and perished in the flames.

The important question, as to how the fire originated, was now discussed everywhere. That the city was set on fire by incendiaries, and by the orders of Nero himself, nearly all believed. It was certain that a number of men were seen extending instead of extinguishing the flames; and they boldly affirmed that they had authority for doing so. It was also generally reported that while Rome was in a blaze, the inhuman monster Nero stood on a tower where he could watch its progress, and amused himself by singing the fall of Troy to his favorite guitar.

Many of our readers will no doubt wonder what object he could have in burning down the greater part of Rome? His object we believe was that he might rebuild the city on a scale of greater magnificence, and call it by his own name. And this lie attempted immediately in the grandest way. But everything he did failed to restore him to popular favor, or remove the infamous charge of having set the city on fire. And when all hope was gone of propitiating either the people or the gods, he fell upon the plan of shifting the imputation from himself to others. He knew enough of the unpopularity of the Christians both with the Jews and the heathen, to fix on them as his sin-bearers. A rumor was soon spread that the incendiaries had been discovered, and that the Christians were the criminals. Numbers were immediately arrested, that they might be brought to condign punishment, and satisfy the popular indignation. And now we arrive at **THE FIRST PERSECUTION UNDER THE EMPERORS.**

But here we may pause for a moment, and contemplate the progress of Christianity, and the state of the Church in Home at this time. At a very early period, and without the aid of any apostle, Christianity had found its way to Home. It was, no doubt, first carried thither by some who had been converted under Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. Amongst his hearers we have expressly mentioned, "Strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes." And Paul, in his epistle to that Church, thanks God that their "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." And in his salutations he speaks of "Andronicus and Junia," his kinsmen and fellow-prisoners, who were chief men among the apostles, and whose conversion was of an earlier date than his own. But great wonders had been wrought by the gospel in the course of thirty years. Christians had become a marked, a separate, a peculiar people. They were now known as perfectly distinct from the Jews, and bitterly disclaimed by them.

The labors of Paul and his companions, during the two years of his imprisonment, were no doubt blessed of the Lord to the conversion of great numbers. So that the Christians were by this time no secret or inconsiderable community, but were known to embrace in their numbers both Jews and Gentiles of all ranks and conditions, from the imperial household to the runaway slave. But their present suffering, as we have seen, was not for their Christianity. They were really sacrificed by Nero to appease the popular fury of the people, and to reconcile their offended deities.

This was the first legal persecution of the Christians; and in some of its features it stands alone in the annals of human barbarity. Inventive cruelty sought out new ways of torture to satiate the blood-thirsty Nero—the most cruel Emperor that ever reigned. The gentle, peaceful, unoffending

followers of the Lord Jesus, were sewed in the skins of wild beasts, and torn by dogs; others were wrapped in a kind of dress smeared with wax, with pitch, and other combustible matter, with a stake under the chin to keep them upright, and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights in the public gardens of popular amusements. Nero lent his own gardens for these exhibitions, and gave entertainments for the people. He took an active part in the games himself; sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the awful spectacle from his chariot. But, accustomed as these people were to public executions and gladiatorial shows, they were moved to pity by the unexampled cruelties inflicted on the Christians. They began to see that they suffered, not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of one man. But fearful as their death was, it was soon over; and to them, no doubt, the happiest moment of their existence. Long, long before the lights were quenched in Nero's garden, the martyrs had found their home and rest above—in the blooming garden of God's eternal delights. This precious truth we learn from what the Savior said to the penitent thief on the cross—"Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke 23

Although historians are not agreed either as to the extent or the duration of this terrible persecution, there is too good reason to believe that it spread throughout the empire, and lasted till the end of the tyrant's life. He died by his own hand in utter wretchedness and despair, in A.D. 68, about four years after the burning of Rome, and one year after the martyrdom of PETER and PAUL. Towards the end of his reign, the Christians were required, under the heaviest penalties, even that of death, to offer sacrifices to the emperor and to the heathen gods. While such edicts were in force the persecution must have continued.

After the death of Nero the persecution ceased, and the followers of Jesus enjoyed comparative peace until the reign of Domitian, an emperor little behind Nero in wickedness. But meanwhile we must turn aside for a moment, and notice the accomplishment of the Lord's most solemn warnings, in the downfall of Jerusalem. A.D. 70.

The dispersion of the Jews, and the total destruction of their city and temple, are the next events of consideration in the remainder of the first century, though, strictly speaking, that fearful catastrophe is no part of church history; it belongs to the history of the Jews. But as it was a literal fulfillment of the Savior's prophecy, and immediately affected those who were Christians, it deserves a place in our history.

The disciples, before the death and resurrection of Christ, were strongly Jewish in all their thoughts and associations. They connected the Messiah and the temple together. Their thought was that He should deliver them from the power of the Romans, and that all the prophecies about the tribes, the city and temple would be accomplished. But Israel rejected the Messiah Himself, and, consequently, all their own hopes and promises in Him. Most significant and weighty are the opening words of Matt. 24 "And Jesus went out and departed from the temple." It was now empty indeed, in the sight of God. All that gave it value to Him was gone. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." It was now ripe for destruction.

"And his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple." They were still occupied with the outward greatness and glory of these things. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." These words were literally accomplished by the Romans about forty

years after they were spoken, and in the very way that the Lord predicted. "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:43, 44.

After the Romans had experienced many disappointments and defeats in attempting to make a breach in the walls, through the desperate resistance of the insurgent Jews, even until little hope was left of taking the city; Titus summoned a council of war. Three plans were discussed; to storm the city immediately; to repair the works and rebuild the engines; or to blockade and starve the city to surrender. The last was preferred, and the whole army was set to work "to cast a trench" around the city. But the siege was long and difficult. It lasted from the spring till September. And during all that time, the most unexampled miseries of every kind were experienced by the besieged. But at last the end came when both the city and the temple were in the hands of the Romans. Titus was anxious to save the magnificent temple and its treasures. But, contrary to his orders, a soldier threw a blazing brand into a small gilded door of the chambers. The flames sprang up at once. Titus, observing this, rushed to the spot with the utmost speed; he shouted, he made signs to his soldiers to quench the fire; but his voice was drowned, and his signs unnoticed in the fearful confusion. The splendor of the interior filled him with wonder. And as the flames had not yet reached the most holy place, he made a last effort to save it, and exhorted the soldiers to stay the conflagration; but it was too late. Blazing brands were flying in all directions, and the fierce excitement of battle, with the insatiable hope of plunder, had reached its highest pitch. Titus little knew that a greater than he had said, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The word of the Lord, not the commands of Titus, must be obeyed. The whole was thoroughly leveled, and razed to the foundations, according to the word of the Lord.

For nearly every particular of this terrible siege, we are indebted to Josephus, who was in the Roman camp, and near the person of Titus at the time. He acted as interrupter when terms were talked of between Titus and the insurgents. The walls and bulwarks of Zion seemed impregnable to the Roman, and he felt most anxious to come to terms of peace; but the Jews rejected every proposal, and the Romans at length triumphed. On entering the city, Josephus tells us, Titus was struck with wonder at its strength; indeed when he contemplated the solid altitude of the towers, the magnitude of the several stones, and the accuracy of their joinings, and saw how great was their breadth, how vast their height, "Surely," he exclaimed, "we fought with God on our side; and God it was who brought the Jews down from these bulwarks; for what could human hands or engines avail against these towers?" Such were the confessions of the heathen general. It certainly was the most terrible siege that the whole history of the world records.

The accounts given by Josephus of the sufferings of the Jews during the siege are too awful to be transferred to our pages. The numbers that perished under Vespasian in the country, and under Titus in the city, from A.D. 67-70; by famine, internal factions, and the Roman sword, were one million three hundred and fifty thousand four hundred and sixty, besides one hundred thousand sold into slavery. Such, alas! alas! were the awful consequences of disbelieving and disregarding the solemn, earnest, and affectionate entreaties of their own Messiah. Need we wonder at the Redeemer's tears, shed over the infatuated city? And need we wonder at the preacher's tears now, as he appeals to infatuated sinners, in view of coming and eternal judgments? Surely the

wonder is that so few tears are shed over thoughtless, careless, perishing sinners. Oh, for hearts to feel as the Savior felt, and eyes to weep like His!

The Christians, with whom we have more especially to do, remembering the Lord's warning, left Jerusalem in a body before the siege was formed. They journeyed to Pella, a village beyond the Jordan, where they remained till Hadrian permitted them to return to the ruins of their ancient city. And this brings us to THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

During the milder reigns of Vespasian and his son Titus, the number of Christians must have increased exceedingly. This we learn, not from any direct account that we have of their prosperity, but from incidental circumstances that prove it, and which we shall meet with immediately.

Short Papers on Church History

Domitian, the younger brother of Titus, ascended the throne in A.D. 81. But he was of a totally different temper to his father and brother. They tolerated the Christians, he persecuted them. His character was cowardly, suspicious, and cruel. He raised a persecution against the Christians, because of some vague and superstitious fear that he entertained, of the appearance of a person born in Judea of the family of David, who was to obtain the empire of the world. But neither did he spare Romans of the most illustrious birth and station who had embraced Christianity. Some were martyred on the spot, others were banished to be martyred in their exile. His own niece, Domitilla, who had been given in marriage to Flavius Clemens, his cousin, were the victims of his cruelty for having embraced the gospel of Christ. Thus we see, that Christianity, by the power of God, in spite of armies and emperors—fire and sword, was spreading, not only amongst the middle and lower, but also amongst the higher classes.

“Domitian,” says Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, “having exercised his cruelty against many, and unjustly slain no small number of noble and illustrious men at Rome, and having, without cause, punished vast numbers of honorable men with exile and the confiscation of their property, at length established himself as the successor of Nero, in his hatred and hostility to God.” He also followed Nero in deifying himself. He commanded his own statue to be worshipped as a god, revived the law of treason, and put in fearful force its terrible provisions; under these circumstances, surrounded as he was with spies and informers, what must this second persecution of the Christians have been!

But the end of this weak, vain, and despicable tyrant drew near. He was in the habit of writing on a roll the names of those persons whom he designed to put to death, and kept it carefully in his own possession. And in order to throw such off their guard, he treated them with the most flattering attention. But this fatal roll was one day taken from under a cushion on which he was reclining asleep, by a child who was playing in the apartment, and who carried it to the Empress. She was struck with astonishment and alarm at finding her own name on the dark list, together with the names of others apparently high in his favor. To such the Empress communicated the knowledge of their danger, and notwithstanding all the precaution that cowardice and cunning could suggest, he was dispatched by two officers of his own household the short but peaceful reign of Nerva.

On the very day of Domitian's death, Nerva was chosen by the senate to be Emperor, September 18th, A.D. 96. He was a man of blameless reputation. The character of his reign was most favorable to the peace and prosperity of the Church of God. The Christians who had been

banished by Domitian were recalled, and recovered their confiscated property. The apostle John returned from his banishment in the isle of Patmos, and resumed his place of service among the churches in Asia. He survived till the reign of Trajan, when at the advanced age of about 100 years, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Nerva commenced his reign by redressing grievances, repealing iniquitous statutes, enacting good laws, and dispensing favors with great liberality. But feeling unequal to the duties of his position, he adopted Trajan as his colleague and successor to the empire. He died in 98.

THE CONDITION OF CHRISTIANS DURING THE REIGN OF TRAJAN. FROM A.D. 98-117.

As the outward history of the Church was then affected by the will of one man, it will therefore be necessary to notice, however briefly, the disposition, or ruling passion of the reigning prince. Thus it was that the condition of the Christians everywhere depended entirely on him who was master of the Roman world, and in a certain sense of the whole world.

Trajan was an emperor of great renown. Perhaps none more so ever sat on the throne of the Caesars. The Roman earth or world, it is said, reached its widest limits by his victories. He caused the terror of the Roman arms and the Roman discipline to be felt on the frontiers as none before him had done. He was thus a great general and a military sovereign; and being possessed of a large and vigorous mind, he was an able ruler, and Rome flourished under his sway. But in the history of the Church his character appears in a less favorable light. He had a confirmed prejudice against Christianity, and sanctioned the persecution of Christians. Some say he meditated the extinction of the name. This is the deepest stain which rests on the memory of Trajan.

But Christianity, in spite of Roman emperors, Roman prisons, and Roman executions, pursued its silent, steady course. In little more than seventy years after the death of Christ, it had made such rapid progress in some places as to threaten the downfall of paganism. The heathen temples were deserted, the worship of the gods was neglected, and victims for sacrifices were rarely purchased. This naturally raised a popular cry against Christianity, such as we had at Ephesus. "This our craft is in danger to be set at naught, and the temple of the great goddess Diana to be despised." Those whose livelihood depended on the worship of the heathen deities, laid many and grievous complaints against the Christians before the governors. This was especially so in the Asiatic provinces where Christianity was most prevalent.

About the year 110, many Christians were thus brought before the tribunal of Pliny the younger, the governor of Bithynia and Pontus. But Pliny being naturally a wise, candid, and humane man, he took pains to inform himself of the principles and practices of the Christians. And when he found that many of them were put to death who could not be convicted of any public crime, he was greatly embarrassed. He had not taken any part in such matters before, and there was then no settled law on the subject. The edicts of Nero had been repealed by the Senate, and those of Domitian by his successor, Nerva. Under these circumstances, Pliny applied for advice to his master, the Emperor Trajan. The letters which then passed between them, being justly considered as the most valuable record of the history of the Church during that period, they deserve a place in our "Short Papers." But we can only transcribe a portion of Pliny's celebrated epistle, and chiefly those parts which refer to the character of Christians, and the extension of Christianity.

C. PLINY TO TRAJAN EMPEROR.

Health. —It is my usual custom, Sir, to refer all things, of which I harbor any doubt, to you. For who can better direct my judgment in its hesitation, or instruct my understanding in its ignorance? I never had the fortune to be present at any examination of Christians before I came into this province. I am therefore at a loss to determine what is the usual object either of inquiry or of punishment, and to what length either of them is to be carried.....In the meantime this has been my method with respect to those who were brought before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians: if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them—a second and a third time—with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed.....An anonymous ‘Libel’ was published, containing the names of many who denied that they were, or had been, Christians, and invoked the gods, as I prescribed, and prayed to your image, with incense and wine, and moreover reviled Christ—none of which things I am told a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. So I thought proper to dismiss them.....The whole of the crime or error of the Christians lay in this—they were accustomed on a certain day to meet before daylight, and to sing among themselves a hymn to Christ, as a god; and to bind themselves by an oath, not to commit any wickedness; not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a harmless meal, of which they partook in common without any disorder; but this last practice they have ceased to attend to, since the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I prohibited assemblies.

“After this account, I judged it the more necessary to examine, and that by torture, two females, who were said to be deaconesses, but I have discovered nothing except a bad and excessive superstition. Suspending, therefore, all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice. The number of the accused is so great as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against, of every age and rank, and of both sexes; and many more will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country: nevertheless, it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims likewise are everywhere bought up, whereas for a time there were few purchasers. Whence it is easy to imagine what numbers of them might be reclaimed if pardon were granted to those who repent.”

TEAJAN TO PLINY.

“You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry which you have made concerning Christians. For truly no one general rule can be laid down which will apply itself to all cases. These people must not be sought after: if they are brought before you and convicted, let them be capitally punished; yet with this restriction, that if any one renounce Christianity, and evidence his sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected he may be for the past, let him on his repentance obtain pardon. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be attended to: for it is a very dangerous precedent, and perfectly incongruous to the maxims of our age.”

The clear and unsuspected testimony of these two letters awakens thoughts and feelings of the deepest interest in the Christian’s mind of today. The First Epistle of St. Peter was addressed to the fathers of these holy sufferers, and possibly to some of themselves then alive; and it is not

unlikely that Peter labored amongst them personally. Thus were they taught and encouraged beforehand, to give to the Roman governor “a reason for the hope that was in them with meekness and fear.” Indeed, the whole of the first epistle seems divinely fitted to strengthen these unoffending Christians against the unjust and unreasonable course of Pliny. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.” Peter contemplates in his epistle the family of faith as on a journey through the wilderness, and God as the supreme Governor ruling over all—believers and unbelievers. “For 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.” With such a scene before us, and such witnesses, making allowance for the position of Trajan and Pliny as heathen statesmen, it may be well to inquire at this early stage of our history, What was and is

THE REAL CAUSE OF PERSECUTION?

Although different reasons may be given by different persons and governments for persecuting Christians, yet we believe that the real cause is the heart’s enmity against Christ and His truth, as seen in the godly lives of His people. Besides, their light makes manifest the darkness around, and exposes and reproves the inconsistencies of false professors, and the godless lives of the wicked. The enemy, taking occasion by these things, stirs up the cruel passions of those in power to quench the light by persecuting the light-bearer. “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light.” Such has been the experience of all Christians, in all ages, both in times of peace and in times of trouble. There is no exemption from persecution, secretly or openly, if we live according to the Spirit and truth of Christ. Amongst the last words that the great apostle wrote, were these; “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Tim. 3:12.

These divine truths, given for the instruction and guidance of the Church in all ages, were strikingly illustrated in the cases of Pliny and the Christians of Bithynia. He is spoken of by all historians as one of the most enlightened, virtuous, and accomplished men of antiquity. He was also possessed of great wealth, and he had the reputation of being most liberal and benevolent in private life. Why then, it may be asked, as a Roman statesman and governor, did he become such a persecutor of the Christians? This question he answers in his own letter. It was simply for their faith in Christ; nothing else. It had been proved to him both by friends and foes, that the Christians were guilty of no crime either morally, socially, or politically. Having thrice asked the question, “Are you Christians? if they steadfastly affirmed that they were, he condemned them to death. The only pretext which he gave to cover the injustice of his conduct as a governor, was the fact that the Christians were obstinate professors of a religion not established by the laws of the empire.

Many, from private malice and other reasons, were at this time anonymously accused of being Christians, who were not really so. These were tested by being called upon to deny the faith, offer incense to the gods, worship the image of the emperor, and revile Christ. All who complied with these terms were dismissed. But none of which things, Pliny is made to witness, those who are true Christians can ever be compelled to do. He next had recourse to the brutal custom of examining innocent persons by torture. Two females, noted servants of the Church, were thus examined. But, instead of the expected disclosures as to the rumored seditious and licentious character of their meetings, nothing unfavorable to the christian community could be tortured out of them. The governor could detect nothing by every means he tried, except what he sails “a

perverse and extravagant superstition.”

It must also be borne in mind, both to the credit and also to the deeper guilt of Pliny, that he did not proceed against the Christians from mere popular prejudice. Unlike his friend Tacitus, who allowed himself to be carried away by prevailing rumors, and without further inquiry, to write against Christianity in the most unreasonable and disgraceful manner. But Pliny considered it his duty to enter into a careful investigation of the whole matter before giving his judgment. How then can we account for such a man, apparently desirous of acting impartially, persecuting to death a blameless people? To answer this question, we must inquire into the outward, or ostensible causes of persecution.

Come and See

“Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see.”

Master, where abidest thou?

Lamb of God, 'tis thee we seek;

For the wants which press us now

Other's aid is all too weak.

Thou canst take our sins away.

We may find repose in thee;

And the gracious lips today,

As of old, say, “Come and see.”

Master, where abidest thou?

We would leave the past behind;

We would scale the mountain's brow,

Learning more thy heavenly mind.

Till a look is all our lore!

The transforming look to thee.

From the living Truth once more

Breathes the answer, “Come and see.”

Master, where abidest thou?

How shall we thine image best

Bear, in light upon our brow,

Stamp in love upon our breast?

Still a look is all our might;

Looking draws the heart to thee,

Sends us from th' absorbing sight

With the message “Come and see.”

Master, where abidest thou?

All the springs of life are low;
Sin and grief our spirits bow,
And we wait thy call to go.
From the depths of happy rest,
Where the just abide with thee;
From the voice which makes them blest,
Breathes the summons "Come and see."
Christian! tell it to thy brother,
From life's dawning to its end;
Every hand may clasp another,
And the lowliest bring a friend;
Till the veil is drawn aside,
And from where her home shall be,
Bursts upon the enfranchised bride
The triumphant "Come and see."
E. C.

Correspondence

1. "G. G.," Wincanton. Accept our best thanks for the lines.
2. "A Sinner Saved," Chelsea. If you could procure a little pamphlet entitled, "A Scriptural Inquiry into the true nature of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry," it might help you. It is to be had of our Publisher, or Broom, Paternoster Bow.
3. "Lillie." 1 John 5:18 refers to the divine nature in the believer which Satan cannot touch. See also chap, 3:9. Your second question is entirely out of our line. You had better speak lovingly to the persons who act so inconsistently. We do not quite like the idea of having our little serial turned into a long whip to chastise all sorts of wrong doers.
4. "J. M. O.," Bath. We trust that no "hurry of editorship" shall ever lead us to pen a single sentence which we have not weighed in the presence of God. We are aware that many of our friends differ from our view of Matt. 28:19: but, notwithstanding that, we are convinced that we have in that passage the proper formulary to be used in christian baptism.
5. "J. M.," Taunton. Accept our thanks for the sweet lines you have so kindly sent us. They breathe a spirit which we long to cultivate.
6. "B. A. M.," London. We most assuredly judge spirit-rapping to be a positive work of the devil. As to people receiving replies from departed friends, we believe it to be the direct agency of wicked spirits, who are allowed of God, in His judicial dealings, to deceive those whose hearts are turned away from the teaching and authority of His word, and the ministry of His Holy Spirit. Luke 16:26 teaches us that none of those who die in their sins can come back; and as to those who sleep in Jesus, the teaching of the entire New Testament goes to prove that they would not come back to this earth to communicate with those who, not content with God's word and Spirit, turn to devils in order to hear things which God never intended them to know. In short, we believe the whole thing to be an awful delusion and deceit of the devil; and we would most solemnly warn our readers to have nothing whatever to do with it. We cannot believe that any one, having the fear of God in his heart, could have aught to do with such downright wickedness. It stands on the same platform with witchcraft, traffic with familiar spirits, and the heathen oracles. Let Christians beware how they tamper with the works of Satan!
7. "B. K.," Gort. You surely do not suppose that we would insert in our pages aught which we did not deem genuine. The narrative of "The Infidel and his Board" was sent to us in print; and, regarding it as a most striking illustration of the over-ruling grace of God, we gave it a place in our pages. What reason could we have to doubt the genuineness of a document bearing on its title page the name of a respectable publisher?
8. "C. Y." We have always viewed the scene to which you refer, in John 20, as illustrating the calm victory of the Prince of Life over the power of death.

9. "J. G.," Omagh. Most assuredly a believer can sin. That which is born of God, the new nature, cannot sin; but the flesh in a believer, the old nature, is as bad as ever, and if not judged and subdued by the power of the Spirit, may show itself in various ways, and cut out very sorrowful and humbling work for us. "If we [believers] say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And again, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John.) If we were not liable to fail, what need would there be of a priest or advocate?

10. "D. H. C.," London. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" We would most solemnly warn you and the "other Young Person" to beware of taking a step involving dishonor to your Lord, and much sorrow and trial to yourselves. May God keep you!

11. "Alpha," O. Thanks for your letter and lines. The latter contain very precious truths; but it would be impossible for us to find space for the hundredth part of the poetry sent to us. We do not say this to discourage you, dear friend, but simply to account for the non-appearance of your lines.

12. "Rebecca." We deeply sympathize with you in the matter which you have laid before us. We would encourage you to give yourself to earnest and persevering prayer for this precious soul. Do not be discouraged. Wait on the living God. He will hear and answer. May He bless and sustain you!

13. "W. C. E.," Chelsea. You are suffering from intense self-occupation. Look off unto Jesus. Take God at His word. You must believe before you can feel. God's word is the basis of faith, and faith is the basis of feeling. You are reversing this order. Hence your misery. May God visit you with the blessed sunlight of His salvation! To Him we commend you, in much real interest and christian affection.

14. "Inquirer," Cork. In 1 Pet. 5:2, and, indeed, in the entire epistle, the Christian is viewed as passing through this world, under the government of God, and subject to the same trials and afflictions as his fellow men. It is important to seize this feature of the two epistles of Peter.

15. "E. J. M.," Belfast. The expression to which you call our attention in the tract entitled "Inside the Veil," &c, refers, of course, only to Christians after the descent of the Holy Ghost, consequent upon accomplished redemption.

16. "D. W.," Derry. Your answer to your friend is perfectly correct. May God bless it to her soul! Give yourself, more and more, to prayer and the diligent study of the holy scriptures. Thus you will grow in grace and knowledge. The Lord Himself be with you!

17. "Devonshire." The terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are not always synonymous, though sometimes they are. Take, for example, Rom. 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now, we can easily see that "kingdom of heaven" would not do here. This latter is a great dispensational term, applying to the time during which the King is rejected, and the kingdom, in consequence, in mystery instead of in manifestation. The term "kingdom of God" is sometimes applied in the same way. (See Mark 4:30; Luke 8:10.) But, beside this, it has a moral and personal application which distinguishes it from the phrase, "kingdom of heaven," which latter, we may add, is peculiar to Matthew. Accept our warmest thanks for your most kind and interesting letter. Its tone and spirit

are grateful and refreshing—peculiarly so in a day like the present. May God bless you very abundantly!

18. “G. A.,” London. We must beg of you to excuse our not entering upon your question; it is entirely out of our line. If you could procure a little pamphlet entitled, “A Scriptural Inquiry into the true nature of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry,” it may help you. It can be had of our Publisher.

Correspondence

19. “W. J. B.,” Islington. The word “Dives” is Latin adjective signifying “rich,” and is a brief way of expressing, “the rich man.”

20. “F. E. D.,” Lurgan. There is a difference between the parables of Matt. 25:14-30, and Luke 19:12-27—a difference appearing upon the very surface of the scripture. In Matthew, the master gives “to every man according to his several ability.” In Luke, all receive alike. The former illustrates divine sovereignty; the latter, human responsibility.

21. “E. R.,” Near Epsom. You will find the information you desire in a small pamphlet entitled, “A Scriptural Inquiry into the true nature of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry.” You can get it by sending three postage stamps to our Publisher, Mr. Morrish, Warwick Lane; or to Mr. Broom, Paternoster Bow, e.c. We feel assured the Lord will guide you into His own truth. He has said, “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” Precious promise! And again, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.” Give yourself to the prayerful study of the holy scriptures; and, as light breaks in upon your soul, act upon it at once, with firm decision. Hesitate not. Look not at consequences. “I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.” There is nothing more dangerous than to play fast and loose with the truth of God; it is almost sure to be followed by judicial blindness and hardness of heart. And remember, dear friend, God never gives light for two steps at a time. Say not, “What shall I do next? or whither shall I go?” The word is, “Cease to do evil,” and then you will “learn to do well.” But so long as we are mixed up with evil and error, we are surrounded by a moral haze which hinders our seeing what is good and right and true. May God guide you and bless you! This is our earnest prayer for you.

22. “B. T. S.,” Barbados. Accept our best thanks for your interesting letter. May the Lord greatly bless your work!

23. “S. E. L. O.” Thanks for your precious lines. They breathe just such a spirit as we greatly covet. God bless you!

Correspondence

24. “S. A.,” Camberwell. We have no doubt whatever but that the Lord will, ere long, lead you into the full joy of His salvation. You have simply to believe in a finished redemption—to take God at His word—believe His record—accept His salvation—rest in His love—He has declared Himself satisfied in the perfect work of His only beloved Son; and the question is, Are you? Do you want something more than Christ to satisfy you? Are you looking for something in yourself to give you confidence—some feeling or evidence? If so, you will not find peace. You must find your all in a crucified and risen Savior. You must look to the Man who was nailed to the tree and is now

crowned on the throne. This is the only way. of peace. Thousands are writhing in agony of soul, simply because they will not accept a full Christ. They are tossed about by the conflicting dogmas of theological schools, instead of drinking of the streams of life and salvation that flow from the very heart of God, though the pierced side of a crucified Savior. May the eternal Spirit chase away all your clouds and mists—answer your questions—solve your difficulties, and remove your every weight!

25. "Iota," Brixton. The Holy Ghost is Himself the seal which God puts upon all those who believe in His Son Jesus Christ. There is a manifest distinction between quickening and sealing. God quickens dead sinners; He seals living saints. It is, to use a simple illustration, like a man building a house and then coming to live in it.

26. "M. J. W.," Cheltenham. Thanks for your lines. They are sweetly experimental. We fear that many of our friends feel hurt at the non-appearance of their communications; but the fact is, it would be utterly impossible to insert all the poetry which is sent to us from time to time. It frequently happens that we receive as much in one month as would more than fill a whole number of the magazine. We therefore request our dear friends will not feel aggrieved by our not inserting their communications.

27. "W. H. B.," North Shields. We greatly like the idea of a Lending Library. It is a most excellent way of helping those who cannot afford to purchase our more expensive works. We should be truly glad to see such an agency established everywhere in connection with the Tract Depot.

28. "J. A. S.," London. We agree, in the main, with your view of the saints in the tribulation. As to the heavenly Jerusalem, you will see, by referring to the passage, that it is not said that "the nations walk therein;" but that "they walk in the light of it." The glory of God, shining through the jasper walls of the city, shall enlighten the nations below. There should be something of this, in principle, even now. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Christian ought so to reflect the glory of Christ, that all who come in contact with him might see the light.

29. "K.A." Bristol. Thanks for your kind note and the accompanying lines.

30. "M.," Clifton. The rendering of 1 Tim. 2:4, in our excellent authorized version, is perfectly correct. Your difficulty arises from your not seeing the immense difference between theology and the heart of God. Theology consists of the conclusions of men's minds drawn from the facts of scripture; and you may constantly find souls harassed and perplexed by the dogmas of conflicting schools of theology, instead of resting, in child-like simplicity, upon the plain statements of the word of God. In point of fact, what is called the high school of doctrine is right in what it holds, and wrong in what it rejects; and, on the other hand, the low school of doctrine is right in what it holds, and wrong in what it rejects. The former holds predestination, election, divine sovereignty, and the eternal security of all true believers; and herein it is right. But it denies the full offer of salvation to all men, and human responsibility; and herein it is wrong. The low school of doctrine holds the freeness and fullness of salvation, and the moral responsibility of the sinner; and herein it is right. But it denies the sovereignty of divine grace and the security of the believer; and herein it is wrong. You will bear in mind, dear friend, that when we use the terms "high school," and "law school," we do not at all mean to give offense; far from it; we merely speak of things as they are. For ourselves

we desire to be taught exclusively by scripture, and not by any school of divinity. We are quite sure that God never meant to puzzle, to repulse, or to discourage poor souls—no never. God is love, His grace has brought salvation unto all. “He willeth not the death of a sinner.” “He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” “He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Such is His gracious aspect toward all; and hence if any perish, it is not in pursuance of the will of God. But there is another side to this great question. Man is responsible. What mean those touching words of the weeping Savior, “How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, but ye would not.” And again, “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” Do you not see, dear friend, that scripture as distinctly teaches divine sovereignty as it teaches human responsibility—and the permanency of salvation as distinctly as its freeness? Are we called upon to reconcile these things? Nay; they are reconciled by God Himself inasmuch as they are taught in His holy word; we have only to bow our heads in believing and adoring reverence. It is a great matter to make one’s escape from the labyrinths of systematic divinity, and yield ourselves to the formative power of the whole truth of God. We shall merely add, ere we close this reply, that scripture clearly teaches the doctrine of election, but sedulously excludes the repulsive doctrine of reprobation. It teaches that all who reach heaven will have to thank God for it; and all who find their place in hell will have to thank themselves.

31. “J. V.,” Melbourne. We were truly glad to get your loving letter, and much interested in hearing of you from our beloved friend Dr. Mackern. We quite hope to be able to write to you, ere long; but just now we are unusually pressed for time. We trust our dear friend Henry S—, from Bristol, has reached you in safety. May the Lord make him a great blessing in your midst!

32. “C. Y.,” Hungerford. You are fully warranted by the word of God to entreat any sinner to come to Jesus at once. It is very evident that your mind is perplexed by the misapplication of scripture. If you will only submit to the authority of the word, and not labor to reconcile things according to your own thoughts, or the creeds of men, you will find that human responsibility is as distinctly taught in scripture as human impotency. We must bow down, with unquestioning submission, to the teachings of divine inspiration.

Correspondence

33. “S. W.,” London. You are perfectly right, because most thoroughly sustained by the word of God, in saying to any soul, “Only believe God’s testimony about His Son, and you are eternally saved.” This is a perfectly scriptural statement. The passages of scripture in which you find difficulty (Rom. 14:15, and 1 Cor. 8:11) do not refer to the question of salvation or eternal life at all. It is not in the power of any one to destroy eternal life; but if I interfere with the action of a brother’s conscience—if I cause him to do what he feels to be wrong, then, so far as in me lies, I destroy him, and cause him to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. In short, in both the above passages, it is a question of personal responsibility and the integrity of conscience before God. This is most solemn. No man can touch the foundation on which a saved soul is built, but it is a most serious tiling to wound any weak conscience. Let us therefore beware.

34. “Mary,” London. We know of no way in which to get purity of heart but by faith in Christ. See Acts 15:9, Heb. 10:22. This is the basis of all purity, and then the more we walk in the maintenance of this purity, the more we shall know and enjoy God.

35. "J. A.," Spalding. In 2 Thess. 2:1, 2, the apostle is correcting a mistake into which the Thessalonian saints had fallen. They had been led, by some means or other, to think that "the day of the Lord" had actually set in. Now, in the first epistle, he had taught them to look for the Lord's coming and their gathering unto Him in the air, to be forever with Him; and further he had taught them that "the day" was not to overtake them as a thief. Then, in the second epistle, the apostle exhorts them "by" or on the ground of Christ's coming, not to be agitated as to "the day." The former was their proper hope; the latter could not take place until after the manifestation of "the man of sin" which was then, and is still future. Your difficulty arises from not distinguishing between "the coming" of Christ for His saints, and "the day" of His manifestation in judgment upon the world. We are exhorted by the former not to be troubled about the latter. The two things are as distinct as possible. The one is the bright and blissful consummation of the Church's hope; the other, the death knell of all this world's glory. The distinction is of real moment.

36. "X. V. X." Your lines do not quite suit us.

37. "C. Y.," Alton. Pro. 1:24-32 is one of the most solemn passages in the Bible. There is a time coming when He who once wept over impenitent sinners, will laugh at them. Tremendous fact! As to Pro. 8:17, it holds good now, and shall hold good until that solemn moment in which the Master rises up and shuts the door. Oh! to be more in earnest with our fellow men!

38. "H. D." Thanks for your lines.

39. "W. B.," H.M. Ship "Forte." We have referred to the subject of your letter in a former volume (see "Nine Years' Answers to Correspondence"), and we do not feel led to enter upon it again. If the heart be right with Christ, such things will find their true place.

40. "A. A. D.," Penzance. We have repeatedly gone into the question of your note. We would here inform our dear friends that we cannot possibly reply to queries which have been noticed before. We trust they will kindly excuse us.

41. "B. J. M.," Ross. "The everlasting gospel" is quite distinct from the gospel of the grace of God now preached. The former will go forth prior to the opening of the kingdom. No doubt the precious gospel now published is everlasting as to its source and subject; but it is not intelligent to apply Rev. 14:6 to it.

42. "R. C. H.," Barnstaple. Thanks for your truly kind and encouraging letter. We do not think that Matt. 16:27 and 1 Thess. 4:16 refer to the same thing. That refers to the public manifestation, this to the coming of Christ for His saints, according to John 14:3. The proper hope of the Church is her Lord's coming to receive her to Himself. She is called to wait for Himself, not for rewards. No doubt there will be rewards, but these belong to the manifestation of the kingdom, and are neither our proper hope nor the true motive for service. The love of Christ is our true motive spring—Himself our hope. As to the expression, "These my brethren," it refers to the messengers who shall go forth to the nations previous to the setting up of the kingdom. No doubt they will be from among the Jews. The entire scene refers to the judgment of the living nations. There is no such thing in scripture as a general simultaneous judgment. There will be the judgment of "the quick" before the millennium; and the judgment of "the dead" after the millennium; and the warrior judgment executed upon "the beast," &c, &c.

Correspondence

48. "D. E. K.," Colchester. Procure a copy of a pamphlet entitled, "The Righteousness of God," by W. Kelly. To be had of Mr. Morrish.

44. "E. R.," Epsom. We heartily thank you for your kind letter, and with a full heart we commend you to the faithful care of Him who alone is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

45. "E. B.," Manchester. We know of one most solemn and mysterious case in which a child of God was suffered to lose his reason, and, in that state, to commit the act you name. May the Lord keep us under the shadow of His wings!

46. "T. H.," Broad Hinton. God hid His face from the sin-bearer; but never was the Son more precious to the Father than in that terrible hour. It is not according to the integrity of scripture to speak of the Father as hiding His face from the Son.

47. "A Weary One," Sligo. You are entirely too much occupied with your own state and feelings. Seek to be more simple, to rest like a child in your Father's love, and stay your soul upon His faithful word. It is of no possible use to "try" to be this or that. The more you dwell, in calm sweet confidence, on the love of Christ—the more you think of Him and feed upon His word, the more you will grow into His likeness. "We all beholding....are changed." May the Lord keep you, beloved, and make you very sound in His own precious truth! To His own loving pastoral hand we commend you.

48. "J. H.," London. Thanks for the lines and accompanying note.

49. "H.," Torquay. (1.) All the Old Testament saints had divine life—a new nature, imparted by the power of the Holy Ghost. (2.) "Ye are not in the flesh," refers to the actual position of believers now. They are on an entirely new footing—in the new creation—united to a risen Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. (3.) The Holy Ghost dwells in the body of the believer. See 1 Cor. 6:19.

50. "R. C.," Stephen saw Jesus "standing." But Heb. 1 and 10 present Him as sitting on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. We should not think of raising any objection to those words in our beautiful hymn. We greatly dread being hypercritical. We bless God for what you say as to the little volume. Continue to wait on God for His gracious blessing.

51. "J. W.," "J. P.," "T. M.," "Mrs. P.," Bermuda. Accept our warmest thanks for your kind, interesting, and encouraging letter. The Lord be praised for all you are able to tell us of His goodness to you! May He bless you very abundantly, and lead you on, still further, in His most blessed ways. May He stablish, strengthen, and settle you on those eternal foundations which He has laid for us in Christ. To Him we do most affectionately commend you all, in spirit, soul, and body. We take it as a great kindness your writing to us.

52. "B. A.," Ireland. It is, alas! possible that a Christian may find himself not in the spirit of prayer. When such is the case, he ought to judge himself, and cry to God to lead him into a right state of soul. Most surely, there is no value in form without power; but God is the abiding source of all power and freshness; and, blessed be His name, "He hath given us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Hence, therefore, when you find yourself not in a spirit of prayer, do

not have recourse to a form, but to the living God.

53. "C. C. P. A.," London. If you will kindly forward those back numbers to our address, we can make good use of them. Address, "C. H. M.," 25, Portland Square, Bristol.

54. "L. D. T.," Tipperary. No passage could more distinctly teach the two resurrections than the very one which your friend has quoted in opposition, namely, John 5:25-29. There is "the resurrection of life," and "the resurrection of judgment." It may be that your friend bases his objection on the fact that the word "hour" is used; but this has no force whatever, inasmuch as, in verse 25, the same word is applied to that period during which the Son of God is quickening dead souls—a period which has already extended to 1870 years. Now if the word "hour" be applied to a period of nearly 2000 years, what difficulty can there be in applying it to a period half that length? We consider that Revelation 7:1-8 refers to the saved remnant of Israel—the nucleus of the restored nation.

55. "C. L. C." Your lines are safely to hand.

56. "E. J. P." Scripture is very plain as to the place of the woman. (See 1 Cor. 11:1-16.) We do not believe it to be according to nature, or according to revelation, for a woman to be prominent either in the Church or in the world. It is our deeply cherished conviction that there is no sphere in which the woman can move with such grace and dignity, as in the shade and retirement of the domestic circle. There she can prove herself the helper of the man, in all good works. Home is pre-eminently the woman's place. The Holy Ghost has assigned her work, most distinctly, when He declares that she is to "guide the house." There may be here and there, exceptional cases in which the Christian female, having no special home duties, may devote herself to outside work with real advantage to many; but such cases are few and far between. The general rule is as plain as possible. (See 1 Tim. 5:14.) As to the question of "woman's rights," "female franchise," &c, we have nothing whatever to do with politics. It is our desire to be taught exclusively by scripture; and, most certainly, we cannot find aught in the New Testament about women having a place in the legislature. In the history of Israel, it was always a proof of the nation's low condition when the female was thrown into prominence. It was Barak's backwardness that threw Deborah forward. According to the normal, the divine idea, the man is the head. This is seen, in perfection, in Christ and the Church. Here is the true model on which our thoughts are to be formed. So far as this poor world is concerned, it is all in confusion. The foundations are out of course. God has said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." (Eze. 21:27.) There can be nothing right until "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Till then, the Christian must be content to be a pilgrim and a stranger on this earth, having his citizenship, his home, his portion, in heaven. May it be thus with all who belong to Christ! We do not, of course, expect that persons who are bent on carrying out their own thoughts; whose will has never been broken; who reason instead of submitting to the authority of scripture; who say, "I think," instead of seeing what God thinks—we do not expect that any such will approve or appreciate what we have advanced in reply to your question; but we must bow down to the authority of God in this as in all beside.

Correspondence

57. "T. D." Procure a copy of "Lectures on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," by W. Kelly (Broom, Paternoster Bow). A careful perusal of this volume will, with God's blessing, greatly help you.

58. "C. H. C. W.," Torquay. Acts 19:1-6 proves beyond all question the distinction between being quickened and sealed. So also in Eph. 1:13 we read, "In whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." It does not say how long "after;" it may be moments, months, or years; but clearly the two things are distinct.

59. "L. N." We give you one sentence of Holy Scripture as an answer to your letter, namely, Heb. 12:2, "Looking off unto Jesus." If you could only lose sight of that troublesome, good-for-nothing, guilty, hell-deserving "I," and rest in Christ and His full salvation, you would be able to write a very different sort of letter. Your letter reminds us of Romans 7., by the predominance of "I." You must look simply to Christ. He has settled the entire question. You will never get aught but misery by looking at yourself, and reasoning upon what you find there. People are always sure to be full of doubts when they are occupied with "I." It must be so, for how could "I" ever furnish a ground of peace? You may rest assured, dear friend, that until you learn to look out of yourself, and rest simply upon Christ, you will never know what solid peace really is.

60. "W. S. G.," Bermondsey. The Church forms no part of the ways of God with man on the earth. We belong to an unnoticed interval. As to the four empires of Dan. 2 and 7, we know that the Roman empire is the last. It was under the fourth beast that our Lord was put to death. But, as every reader of history knows, the Roman empire was dismembered, broken up, and succeeded by those great constitutional governments of modern times; under one of which we now live. There will, however, be a revival of the Roman empire, with its ten kingdoms. But, this is too vast a subject to enter upon here. We would beg of you to give yourself to the prayerful study of Daniel and the Revelation. May God's Spirit lead us all into a deeper knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.'

61. We cannot refrain from giving our readers an extract from a letter received from a Correspondent in Surrey. "As one feeling much indebted to the good influence of books lent, allow me to say that believers might find 'a more excellent way,' if, in a wise and loving manner, they lent their own books to those who are weak and uninstructed. I can but think of a dear christian family at whose home my sister and I have often been taught the value and meaning of God's blessed word; and of the exceeding kindness with which, on leaving, we have often been loaded with reading, which, at home, deepened the impression of what we had heard. Books we have wished to read, and were unable to purchase, or those we had never known of till introduced to them by those dear friends, who acted in this as though they counted not the things they possessed their own. In this way, we became acquainted with 'Things New and Old,' by the many bound volumes of it lent us. Indeed, God has so blessed such reading to us that it has taken away the taste for much that we used to find great pleasure in. And even, if a believer have but little means, and yet wishes to help on others in this way, it is wonderful how the Lord opens ways of doing so; for if everything is brought to the Lord, 'There is much food in the tillage of the poor for others as well as for themselves; and 'if the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light.' Perhaps the Lord may guide you to make some suggestion on the subject to your christian readers, for it is a way of serving the Master open to many. It pains my heart to see believers with well stored bookshelves unused for the Lord. I fancy this is one way in which He is wounded in the house of His friends. We

heartily commend the foregoing weighty words to the attention of our readers. May we all seek grace to act on them! It will, perhaps, be said that there is another side of the question to be considered. No doubt there is. Books, when lent, are very often not returned at all, or returned so soiled and mutilated as to be unfit to be seen. Hence, there is a word for the borrower as well as for the lender. Surely if grace should rule the conduct of the latter, righteousness at least should rule the conduct of the former. Still, fully admitting, as we do, the carelessness of many who get the loan of books, we should be very sorry indeed if this admission were suffered to blunt the edge of the most excellent suggestion of our Surrey Correspondent.

Correspondence

62. "Pater." We can assure you of our hearty sympathy and interest in the subject of your letter. Your path is very simple. You have only to train your dear children for God, and count on God for your children. The Spirit of God alone can make a child understand divine things; and it is not for us to fix a limit as to the precise age at which a child can take in the truth of God. It is the Spirit's work, and He can make babes as well as sages understand. A little child is the very model on which everyone must be formed who will enter the kingdom of God.

63. "Emma," Bow. It would seem from John 13:30, and Acts 20:7, 8, that the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the evening. But we cannot see that there is any principle involved, whether it be morning, noon, or eventide. We should feel happy in breaking bread at any time. It seems to us that the Holy Ghost has left the question open; and our ordinary habit of breaking bread in the forenoon has the advantage of being most convenient to the generality of Christians.

64. "D. S. J.," York. We do not consider that John 9:31 has anything to do with the matter to which you refer. The Holy Ghost records what the blind man said to the Pharisees; but we believe that God is ever ready to hear the cry of any poor needy soul that looks to Him through Jesus. We are, each day, more and more convinced of the vast differences between the cold dogmas of theology and the loving heart of a Savior-God. There is a rigid, repulsive manner of using the letter of certain texts of scripture, with which we have no sort of sympathy; we believe it to be contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and the mind of Christ. "God is love." Precious words! True, He has His counsels and purposes; but the activity of His nature is love, and therefore all are welcome to come. He is a Savior-God; and "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Go on, therefore, beloved, to press upon your fellow-sinners, with all possible earnestness, their solemn responsibility to flee, now, from the wrath to come, and lay hold upon eternal life.

65. "G. D. S.," Ipswich. We do not, at present, know any book to recommend you on the subject.

66. "B. H.," Cavan. Study, prayerfully, Rom. 3:21-26 and 2 Cor. 5:21. Wait on God for teaching. He will make all plain to you if only you seek His guidance in humility and earnestness.

67. "J. V.," Cardiff. Your letter has come to hand. Wait on the Lord. He will guide you, most assuredly. To Him we commend you.

68. "W. K.," Kent. Rom. 3:30 presents the difference between the Jew and the Gentile in this way; the Jew had been tried on the principle of works of law: the Gentile had never been on this ground at all; hence it was necessary to bring out this distinction, which the apostle does by the two words

“by” and “through.” The passage may be rendered as follows, “Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision on the principle of faith” (ἐκ πίστεως)—in contrast with the principle of works— “and the uncircumcision through faith” (βία πίστεως). The latter clause simply sets forth faith as the instrument without any reference to the contrast between the two principles. It would be a great mistake to suppose that there is no difference between the words “by” and “through”—τις and δια. The former expresses the ground or principle; the latter merely the instrument.

69. “M. M.” We heartily thank you for your kind and interesting note and the accompanying lines.

70. “L.” Study 1 Cor. 1:18-31. It contains a divine reply to your query.

71. “C. C. F. A.” Thanks for the books, which came safely to hand.

72. “J. D.,” Stowmarket. The reading in our Authorized Version of Rom. 8:33, 34, seems quite correct.

73. “E. T.” Your letter has affected us deeply. The testimony of the dear departed one was truly precious. The Lord be praised for its clearness, fullness, and simplicity! May He comfort you, beloved, by His own direct ministry! May He pour the rich consolations of His love into your stricken heart! We do most heartily commend you to Him. He alone can heal the wound which has been made in your heart. He turns the valley of Baca into a well.

Correspondence

73. “E. J.,” Folkestone. If you can lay your hand on the twelfth volume of “Things New and Old,” you will find a series of papers entitled, “The Work of God in the Soul,” which may help you. There are three ways in which the Spirit of God works in the soul; in some cases He produces a deep sense of guilt; in others, a dread of wrath; in others, a sense of the utter vanity and instability of all human things. It is impossible to lay down any rule. The Holy Spirit works variously according to His own sovereign will. But we deem it of the very last importance that there be a deep work of God’s Spirit in the heart, not only in breaking up the fallow ground, but also in giving a true sense of the love of God and the preciousness of Christ. There is a vast amount of mere evangelical profession abroad; and souls are in great danger of mistaking the mere assent of the mind to certain gospel truths, for that living faith of the heart which, being divine, connects the soul with God, and exerts a purifying influence over the whole life and character. We must say, we long to see a deep work of God’s Spirit in the conscience. We invariably find that those who go through the deepest ploughings at the first, make the most solid Christians afterward. We dread a mere lip profession—an intellectual faith—a mere surface work. We desire to see the kingdom of God established on a broad and solid basis in the hearts of all those who profess faith in Christ.

74. “B. C.” We agree in the main with your remarks; but we do not deem them exactly suited for insertion in our pages. It seems to us they would come better through the medium of the living voice than through the press. Your query, too, is out of our line.

75. “Smethwick.” Accept our thanks for your letter. We should be most happy to aid you in your truly laudable object; but we never purchase this either in prose or verse. The conductors of this magazine, and all who contribute to its pages, are only too thankful to lay their services as a free will offering at the feet of their Lord. We have not the interest of a farthing in any of our

publications; we never have had; and, by the grace of God, we never shall.

76. "M. C. W." Your letter has drawn forth our fervent praise to the God of all grace. Accept our best thanks. Go on, dear friend, in your blessed work. Count largely on God. Wait on Him. Trust Him fully, and He will grant thee the desire of thine heart. Be instant in season and out of season; and may you have many precious souls for your crown of joy in the day of Christ's appearing. We do most heartily commend you to God and the word of His grace.

77. "C. H. M. N." It would be impossible for us to reply to your letter in our pages. May God help you!

78. "E. S. K," Brixton. We look upon the hardening of Pharaoh's heart as the judicial consequence of his having persisted in acting against the light. (Compare Jer. 13:16; 2 Thess. 2:10-12.) It is a terrible thing to sin against light.

79. "E. W.," Folkestone. We believe the midnight cry has gone forth. We cannot but recognize the result of that cry in the large measure of attention which has been given during the last forty years to the glorious truth of the Lord's coming. For centuries, not a sound was heard about the Bridegroom's return. "My lord delayeth his coming," was the plain language of the professing church. Christendom was asleep. But, through the mercy of God, the cry has gone forth—that soul-stirring cry—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Are we ready? Have we got the oil in our vessels—the true grace of God's Spirit in our hearts? Solemn inquiry! They that are "ready" shall go in with the Bridegroom. The rest shall be shut out into outer darkness—the awful region of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth—that place where hope can never come—where not one single ray of light can ever shine in upon the gloom of eternity. Oh! may God's Spirit stir up all our hearts, and make us thoroughly in earnest! May we be seen with girded loins and burning lights, as men who are really waiting for their Lord! May we seek to sound a warning note in the ears of our fellow men, as we pass along, from day to day. Lord, make us serious!

80. "A.," London. 1 John 5:16, 17 refers to the case of a brother suffering under the chastening hand of God in government. Compare Jas. 5:15. It might be for sin which was not unto death—the death of the body. In such a case one may be led to pray for the sufferer, and receive an answer from God in his restoration to health. But the sin may be of such a nature as that one could not possibly take it up in intercession at all, in which case the discipline must take its course and run on to the death of the body. Compare also 1 Cor. 11:30.

Correspondence

81. "J. F.," London. 1 John 2:7, 8. In one sense, it was not a new commandment, but that which was from the beginning. In another sense, it was a new commandment, inasmuch as Christ is revealed in a new way, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, consequent upon Christ's glorification at God's right hand. Eternal life was always in Him; but now it is true in Him and in His people, because they are united to Him by the Holy Ghost. It could not have been said, "In him and in you" until redemption was accomplished, and the Holy Ghost had come down to baptize believers into one body and unite them to the Head; but this latter is unfolded in the writings of Paul. John gives us the subject of eternal life. Paul develops the doctrine of the Church.

82. "W. W. S.," Selby. The question of Judas' presence at the Lord's Supper, has been handled in a former number. See "Nine Years' Answers to Correspondents." To be had of the publisher, or through any bookseller.

83. "F. E. B." Your question has been repeatedly gone into. Our friends will, we trust, kindly excuse our refusal to handle subjects a second time.

84. "T. S.," Lander. 2 Cor. 12:9 refers to the thorn in the flesh. It, most certainly, was not sin, but something which rendered the apostle contemptible in his preaching. (See Gal. 4:13, 14.) He had been up in the third heaven, and the poor heart might be led to boast of this, and be puffed up about it. Even paradise itself with all its seraphic visions and revelations could not remedy the evil of the flesh. Hence, the need of the thorn to keep nature down. How could any one suppose that Paul would "gladly glory" in sin? The idea is perfectly monstrous.

85. "W. H. G.," Hampshire. We can most fully enter into your feelings. We entirely agree with your thoughts in reference to the Lord's day. The Lord has, most unquestionably, marked it off and stamped it with His own Name. It is the resurrection day—the Church's day—the Christian's day. There is no law about it, no legal yoke, no bondage; but, none the less but much more on that very account, should we love and prize it, and devote it wholly to the things of Christ. We could have no sympathy whatever with a professing Christian engaging in his worldly calling on the Lord's day. We have repeatedly referred to this subject. It is quite true that we should live to the Lord every day in the week; but, at the same time, we are convinced from scripture that the Lord's day, the first day of the week, is distinctly marked off from all other days, and that it should be held sacred by all true Christians. As to your own present position and future path, beloved, the Lord will guide you. Wait on Him. Do not be in haste. He will open your way before you. We certainly should not deliberately settle down in any place where we could not enjoy the communion of saints at the Lord's table. If God places us in circumstances in which we must forego that immense privilege, He will sustain us therein; but if we, for personal ends of any kind, place ourselves in such a position, our souls must assuredly suffer loss. The spiritual life is sure to droop and wither when we, for worldly gain, or any selfish motive, settle down at a distance from our brethren and from the table of our Lord. May God Himself undertake for you, in all things! Only cling to Him.

86. "L. B. D." We should feel no difficulty whatever in the case you name. There is a vast difference between a few Christians meeting casually in a place, and there, for once in a way, partaking of the Lord's Supper together, and the formal setting up of a table. No doubt, it is always well to act in full fellowship; but then we must beware of tying each other down to certain conventionalities of our own in matters as to which scripture is totally silent. There is a beautiful freedom and largeness in the way of the Spirit of God which we may well seek to cultivate. A rule is often a very needful and a very good thing; but a rule may very often prove a stumbling-block in the way of God's people, and a positive hindrance to the flow of the Spirit's energy. God alone can guide us and keep us straight at all times, and under all circumstances. We are ever prone to run into extremes. Sometimes in our zeal against rules we traverse the principles of divine truth. At other times, in our jealousy for rules, we rudely brush away the lovely bloom and verdure of divine grace. The only remedy, the only safeguard, is to walk with God.

87. "M. A. F." We see no difficulty in Psalm 31:19. We understand the word "before" to mean, "in the presence of." As to your second question, we should not adopt such a mode of seeking the

Lord's mind. God guides us by His word—by His Spirit—by His eye. Do we want more than this? God forbid.

Correspondence

88. "J. D. A.," Bromley. It so happens that 1 John 5:16, 17 is referred to in our August number.

89. "H. W." Christ is the believer's righteousness, as we read in 1 Cor. 1:30, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." And again, in 2 Cor. 5:21, "For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." When we had no righteousness for God, He provided a righteousness for us, and that righteousness is Christ—a crucified, risen, and glorified Christ. In the law, God was demanding righteousness from man. In the gospel, God is providing righteousness for man. This makes a vast and marvelous difference to any one who is honestly struggling and toiling to work out righteousness for himself before God. There was a great difference between Adam's apron and God's coat. God never set a stitch in the former; and man never set a stitch in the latter. There was nothing of God in that; there was nothing of man in this. Hence we find that Adam's apron proved useless in the hour of need. The very moment he heard the voice of the Lord God, he was afraid and fled to hide, because, as he said, "I was naked." He actually ignored the apron himself. It was of no use whatever to him. It could not even satisfy his own conscience. Not so, however, when he got on God's coat. He could then say "I am clothed" because God had clothed him. The coat he wore was of God's own making, and, moreover, it was founded on the shedding of blood—an all-important cardinal truth. Divine righteousness rests on the basis of accomplished redemption. The cross is the grand foundation—the great central truth of Christianity.

90. "G. F. T." You must remember that there are two sides to every question; and hence, while it is blessedly true that salvation is free to all, and the righteousness of God is to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly (see Rom. 4:5 and Titus 2:11), yet is the sinner most solemnly responsible to flee from the wrath to come, and strive to enter by the strait gate—the open door. To make use of the freeness of God's grace, and of the gift of righteousness, in order to set aside man's responsibility, and the need of intense earnestness in the matter of the soul's salvation, is, in our judgment, a fatal mistake. Hence the exceeding value of the passage to which you call our attention. (Luke 13:24.) In it we have the Lord's reply to a curious enquirer whom He would fain make anxious. He, as was His wont, answers the man, not his question.

91. "Clara," Teignmouth. Your case is a very serious one indeed. We quite hope the Spirit of God is working with you; but we would solemnly warn you against such vacillating ways. Be in earnest—decided—whole-hearted. Remember that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. You must break with the world and give your heart wholly to Christ. Linger not, waver not, halt not between two opinions. We entreat thee, dear friend, to take no rest until the momentous question of thy soul's salvation is definitively settled.

92. "W. A.," Blackheath. 2 Thess. 1:8, 9 contains an answer, distinct and clear, to your query, "What will become of those who reject the gospel?" We most assuredly believe there will be no further offer of mercy to those who deliberately reject the gospel now preached—no mercy for baptized Christendom, the vine of the earth. "The everlasting gospel" shall go forth, previous to the

opening of the millennial kingdom; and a testimony shall be given to those nations who have not heard the gospel; but all this leaves untouched the solemn fact that unmitigated warrior judgment shall overtake that terrible thing called Christendom—that dark and awful mass of baptized profession—the most dreadful moral blot in the universe of God. There is nothing for the false professing church save the deep and dark delusion which God, in His judicial dealing, shall send upon all who obey not the truth, and after that the deeper and darker doom of the lake of fire. Dear friend, should not the thought of this make us more solemn, more earnest, more real in our dealing with our fellow men? Ought we not to be more alive to the awful condition and destiny of those who die in their sins? Are we doing all we might to rescue our fellows from impending danger? Is it right to fold our arms and say, with chilling indifference, “God will save the elect, we can do nothing?” We believe it to be simply absolute cruelty—heartless cruelty—cruelty to souls—cruelty sanctified by being tacked on to the dogmas of a one-sided theology.

Correspondence

93. “G. T. H.,” Blackheath. We understand 2 Pet. 3:12 to refer to the attitude of the believer’s heart in reference to the coming of the day of God. He should not only be looking for it, but longing that it may be hastened. Would that the language of our hearts and of our daily life were, “Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?” “Come Lord Jesus; come quickly!”

94. “A. G.” We most thoroughly agree with every line you have penned on the interesting subject of Sunday School teaching. We have seen the truth of your remarks illustrated in numberless instances. The want of order in many of our schools is truly deplorable, and ought to exercise the hearts and consciences of superintendents and teachers, very deeply, before the Lord. We feel persuaded that very much more might be done to correct this flagrant evil. The plan you suggest is admirable, namely, to insist on each child entering the room quietly and taking his seat; and, further, that each teacher should insist on silence ere he begins to teach. The habit of loud speaking on the part of the teachers is most reprehensible. Were each to speak in a low soft tone, he could be distinctly heard by the members of his class without disturbing his fellow-teachers; but it has often seemed to us as though it were the aim and object of each teacher to be heard by the whole school. It may, perhaps, be said, in reply, that one is almost obliged to shout in order to be heard above the universal din and uproar in the school; but this could be corrected by all the teachers agreeing together to speak softly and gently, which, in our judgment, would add immensely to the solemnity and effectiveness of their teaching. Nothing can be more offensive to good taste than to hear sacred themes handled in a loud and boisterous style more befitting criers in a market than teachers in a Sunday School. Your remarks upon the inefficiency of teachers are most pertinent. We greatly fear that many of those who take the place of teachers ought themselves to become pupils. It is the bounden duty of superintendents to look well to the qualification of all who offer themselves for the work. We consider it an essential qualification that the teacher should be well acquainted with the letter of holy scripture. But besides this, there is great need of tact in dealing with the young, as also of moral power to win their confidence and gain their attention. The converted members of our Bible Classes ought to furnish some efficient teachers for the Sunday School. It is our firm persuasion that all these matters imperatively demand the prayerful attention of all who are engaged in the precious and blessed work of Sunday School teaching. There ought to be more conference together, more united prayer, more joint study of the word with specific reference to the work of teaching. We are deeply thankful for your

valuable letter, and we trust that our brief reference to its leading points may be used to stir up many to a solemn review of the whole subject, that thus an effort may be made to correct the abuses which you have pointed out. May the Lord pour out His blessing on all Sunday Schools throughout the world!

95. "J. T.," Northampton. Thanks for the lines. They are marked by great freshness and fervor.

96. "X. Y.," Bristol. There is no word for "man" in the original of Heb. 2:9. The expression is *οτις παντος*.

97. "H. S.," Southgate. The grand cure for doubts is to take God at His word.

98. "T. S. W.," Leamington. We cannot quite go with you in your punctuation of Heb. 10:12. If you will kindly turn to Bagster's "Large print Greek Testament," which gives all the improved readings, you will find that the comma is placed after "sins," and not after "ever." Our Lord Christ has taken His seat forever, so far as His atoning work is concerned. He will never again have to rise to address Himself to that work. His eternal session is put in contrast with the Levitical priest's daily standing. It would be superfluous to speak of "a sacrifice for sins forever," inasmuch as Christ's sacrifice must of necessity be eternal in its efficacy. As to the fact that Stephen saw our Lord "standing," it would seem to show that He had not definitively taken His seat, but was still lingering over His people Israel if haply they would repent. But seeing they resisted the Holy Ghost, and actually sent Stephen as a messenger after the King, to say, "We will not have this man to reign over us," we see Him presented in Hebrews as "sitting" until His enemies be made His footstool.

99. "T. A. L.," Bolton. We believe that the secret of Jacob's "power over the angel" was the knowledge of his weakness. In Gen. 32 it is not said that Jacob wrestled with the man, but that the man wrestled with him—a very different thing. God's object was to break Jacob down that He might know his utter weakness; and when Jacob was led to this point, he was constrained to say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." That great principle must ever hold good, "out of weakness were made strong." See also 2 Cor. 12:9, 10.

100. "A. B.," Dublin. The unclothed state was not the apostle's object, but the resurrection state.

101. "F. B.," Bournemouth. You must be fully persuaded in your own mind. Your question does not fall in with our special line of things. This must also be our reply to "A Constant Header" at Exmouth.

102. "G. W. B.," Pentonville. We must beg of you to excuse our reluctance to take up the subject to which you call our attention.

103. "M. H. G.," Kent. Accept our warmest thanks for your interesting letter and the accompanying lines.

104. "An Anxious Mother." You have only one question to ask yourself, namely, "Is the profession of arms one which a disciple of Christ can properly follow?" If not, your path is plain. You, surely, cannot think of placing your son in a position which he must abandon in order to follow a rejected Christ. No doubt, there are many of the Lord's beloved people in the army; but the question is not, Can I be saved and yet be in the army? Thousands have gone to heaven who had lived and died in that profession. But the real question for every loyal heart is, Can I follow the footsteps of my

Lord while I remain in a position in which, at any moment, I may be called to take the life of my fellow and send a soul into eternity unprepared? This, dear friend, must be your one question. I cannot place my son, be he converted or unconverted, where I could not be myself. As for the discipline of the army being good for the purpose of bracing up the character, we must confess we have not much faith in it. The mess-room is not just the place to which we should like to send a youth for discipline or training of any sort.

David at the Threshing Floor of Ornan

(1 Chron. 21-22:1.)

Very important it is for a fallen creature to acquaint itself with God, whilst the door of mercy is standing open, and the day of grace still lasts. God's works declare His power and godhead, but God's word alone reveals to us His nature. The Deist, from a study of His works in nature, may draw conclusions as to His power, the minuteness and perfection of microscopic objects should acquaint man that nothing is too small for God to notice; but the simple soul that hearkens to His word will know in reality more about God than the wisest philosopher, or the most pains-taking observer. The latter can talk of what He has made, the former of what He is. With these few preliminary remarks we would invite the reader's attention to the history of David's sacrifice at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

Twice have we it related, and each time with a different object. In 2 Samuel it is brought in at the close of the book; in 1 Chronicles it is placed in the middle of it. From Samuel we learn that God cannot pass over sin; in Chronicles we discover more what He is, and what follows the acceptance of the sacrifice. David's history in Samuel acquaints us with the man; his history in Chronicles brings out the glory of his kingdom. In keeping with this, we read in Samuel of his rise, trials, and victories till his kingdom stretches from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt. After which we have his fall, and the governmental dealings of God, first with him and his family, then with the house of Saul, and last of all with the nation of Israel. In 1 Chronicles all connected with David's sin and the punishment of Saul's house is passed over; and in the middle of the recital of David's might and David's wealth, we read of the numbering of Israel, and of all the consequences which flow from it. The story of David's sin could find no place in the book which has for its object the glory of the kingdom; but the numbering of Israel, and God's consequent dealing in government with them, has therein a place, because it led to the determining of that important point—the exact locality for the future temple.

Israel had sinned, so chastisement must be administered, and David's pride of heart readily afforded an occasion. "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." Through their king the nation is reached, for David, a man like themselves, yields to the enemy's suggestion, and issues an order to number the people. Remonstrated with to no purpose, his order is obeyed, and the work of numeration commenced, which was destined never to be completed; for before Levi and Benjamin had been counted "there fell wrath for it against Israel." (1 Chron. 27:24.) God's purpose thus far carried out, we read no more of Satan in this matter. As a creature, he had been an instrument to carry out God's design, and the same historian has now to tell us about the Lord Himself. Governmental dealing, not final wrath, was God's purpose. He must visit sin, yet He would not cast off His people; so He deals with David's heart, so lately captivated by the wiles of the enemy. He would convince of sin, that He might righteously act in mercy. The wrath fell on Israel before the numbering was completed, that David should be exercised and the plague be stayed. He would reach David's heart through the people's trouble, as He had reached

the people in government through the act of their king. Thus graciously did He deal with them, as He ever does with His own, that the rod should be removed, which they deserved should rest on them forever.

David's conscience aroused, and confession having taken place (and that must always be done ere the smiting can cease), Gad, at the command of God, gives him a choice. Observe, it was the Lord who sent Gad, not Gad who solicited for the people mercy from the Lord. The plague should now be limited in duration; and the manner of its termination was left to the king's decision. As one who knew God, he chose wisely three days' pestilence rather than the invasion of a victorious host. "Very great are his mercies," David said of God, and the event showed he was right. For He who dealt with David's conscience, and brought him to acknowledge his sin, restrained the destroying angel in his work, as he stood with his drawn sword over Jerusalem. "Who prompted the Lord to this act of mercy? Whose entreaty moved Him to interfere? The scripture answers the question, for it tells us that as the angel "was destroying, the Lord beheld and repented him of the evil." We mount up here to the fountain, we can trace the stream of mercy to its source, and we find it came forth from the holy Lord God. "The Lord beheld and repented." God acted of Himself without the intervention of a creature. Does this seem strange to any reader of these lines? Does this militate against their notion of what God is? A thousand years later God gave a more astounding proof that He can act in this way, when His Son came to earth and announced to Nicodemus 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." All those connected with that scene at Araunah's threshing floor have long since passed away from earth. By and by the very earth on which this event took place will pass away likewise; but the history of the cross of Christ, attested by the marks of His passion, will forever and ever bear witness that God acts in grace of His own sovereign will, without the intervention or entreaty of a single creature.

But to restrain the destroying angel, and to make him sheathe his sword are two very different things. The one was affected by a word, for the other more was needed. At the sight of the angel with the drawn sword, David and the elders of Israel, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces, and the king interceded for the people. But his intercession could not avail to secure immunity from the stroke of the angel's arm. It needed something very different from prayer however earnest, or humiliation however deep. Here David and the elders of Israel were powerless, nay, more, they knew not what should be done for the people at this juncture. All human suggestions were out of place, all human resources worthless. But God, who is rich in mercy, and this history beautifully illustrates it, acquaints Gad the seer by the destroying angel with the requirements of His holiness. The Lord had convinced David of his sin, He had arrested the uplifted arm of the angel, and now He reveals what David should do. All is of God. The prophet can originate nothing, and the king has only to obey. An altar must be reared on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and sacrifices be there offered up. But what should they bring? Surely man would have suggested sin offerings; the Lord enjoined burnt offerings and peace offerings. The former would speak of man's sin, and the ground on which he could be forgiven; the latter present the aspect of the sacrifice God-wards, and the offerer's portion with Him in the victim brought to the altar. It was the value of the sacrifice as a whole surrender to God which the burnt offering shadowed out, and it was the common joy of God and the offerer in the one sacrifice which the peace offering depicted; for of its part was consumed on the altar, part went to the priest, and part was eaten by the offerer. Such

were the sacrifices to be brought; for, what the sacrifice was to God, and His acting in goodness because of it, not what man required, is what this history brings out.

The altar reared, the victims killed, God attested His acceptance of the sacrifices and of those connected with them, by the descent of fire from heaven to consume His portion of the offerings; and then, but not till then, did He command the angel to put his sword into the sheath thereof. Did God then need to be propitiated? His attitude and actions throughout this history attest the contrary; but for Him to be justified before all in His actions, and to vindicate His holiness and justice, the sacrifices must be offered up, and then all could see the ground on which He could act in mercy. This the sacrifices effected, and then David and all Israel could know they were safe. The sword returned to its scabbard would never again be laid bare for the punishment of that sin. Such was the outline of things on that day, such too is the order in connection with the cross. Because the sacrifice has been accepted, peace can now be proclaimed.

But David did not stop here. Those who have received mercy should learn what it is to worship. David finds this out; for, where God had turned away His anger, and accepted the offerings, there he sacrificed. And further, he learned that on that spot the religious service of Israel was henceforth to be carried on. The tabernacle was at Gibeon, but the place in future for the altar was Araunah's threshing floor, for on the ground of the accepted sacrifice worship must ever be based.

Is this really understood? Do the children of God as a rule worship; i.e., approach Him with full hearts to pour them out in praise before Him for what He has done in the sacrifice of His Son? David did not sacrifice afresh to avert God's wrath, but because he saw that the Lord had answered him in the threshing floor of Oman the Jebusite. Immunity from their deserved chastisement having been secured by the burnt offerings and peace offerings, there first offered up, he did not think there was nothing more to be done. Sheltered by sacrifice, his sacrifices of praise should in future attest his thankfulness to God for His mercy and goodness. This is what all God's children should do. The sacrifice mentioned in Heb. 13 should be brought, because the value of Christ's work has been known and believed. Worship should ever follow the knowledge of acceptance. Henceforth in Israel it was to be known, that the spot where God had thus acted in mercy was the center of the worship (chap. 22:1); and Solomon's temple was the silent yet impressive witness that the worship of God's people is connected with, and based upon, His acceptance of the sacrifice.

On the Lamb my soul is resting,
What His love, no words can say;
All my sins, so great and many,
In His blood are washed away.
Now my heart no more condemns me,
For His own most precious blood
Once for all has washed and cleansed me,
Cleansed me in the eyes of God.

Sweetest rest and peace have filled me;

Sweeter peace than tongue can tell;

God is satisfied with Jesus,

I am satisfied as well.

Filled with this sweet peace forever.

On I go through strife and care;

Till I find that peace around me,

In the Lamb's high glory there.

Eternal Life: What Is It, and Have I Got It?

It is worthy of observation that we find only one mention of everlasting or eternal life in the Old Testament—Dan. 12:2, where it refers to those who “sleep in the dust of the earth.” We are indebted for the revelation of it to a later dispensation. It is a New Testament doctrine, and, blessed be God, a present fact.

Passing over Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who rarely mention it, and always connect it with the future, it is only in the writings of John—the Gospel and First Epistle bearing his name—that we find it revealed and unfolded fully. Paul speaks of it, as recorded in the Acts and in Romans, &c, but the Holy Ghost has evidently made John to be specially the exponent of this personal, heavenly, divine doctrine of our eternal life in Christ, while Paul gives us some additional revelation in Timothy and Titus, as to its being the subject of promise before the world.

Turning to John’s Gospel, we find the Lord, for the first time, presenting the doctrine to Nicodemus, and in the most striking way—the lifting up of the brazen serpent by Moses had been the typical rehearsal of this gift of eternal life, the determinate purpose of God’s heart, with a view to which, and for its fulfillment, He had given His Son in fullness of time to the world, the incontestable demonstration of a love which finds its only adequate expression in the bestowal of eternal life upon the dead, and its only just measure in what it cost His heart to entrust that blessed One to those who would hate Him without a cause!

At the close of that third chapter, John the Baptist, who had doubtless gathered the doctrine from Christ, is seen communicating it in the most definite way in connection with faith, to his own disciples and certain of the Jews. In chapter 4, to the woman at the well, the Lord presents it in connection with the Holy Ghost—the living water. And to His own disciples in relation to the ingathering of the fruit by those who toil for Him in the ripe fields that wait for harvesting. In chapter 5:24, the Lord emphatically and solemnly, as indicated by the words “Verily, verily,” presents it as the immediate, present, and necessary result of faith in Him. The following chapter, which gives us the feeding of the five thousand, and the teaching of Christ as to the truth of His own person being the true manna, the true bread, bread of God, and bread of heaven, shows the connection between feeding upon Him and everlasting life which He was giving—who was the sealed one of God the Father—for that object. The 40th verse goes on to the personal act of Christ in raising up at the last day those who have the everlasting life—which here He pledges Himself to supplement with resurrection.

But this same chapter deepens the subject to our souls in the 53rd and 54th verses, in its manifest connection with the redemption work of Christ—the alone basis for God’s wondrous purpose of grace, so blessedly laid in the death of His Son; the lesson taught us evidently being that the possession of eternal life synchronizes with our personal association with Christ in the knowledge of Him in redemption who is the Son of the living God, who has the words of eternal life, and other than whom we have none to go to, as Peter confesses in verses 68 and 69.

In a remarkable scripture in chapter 12, the Lord teaches us that in sending Him, His Father had given Him “a commandment” (v. 49) adding “and I know that his commandment is life everlasting.” What a blessed picture of grace is this, the Father gives His behest to the Son whom He is sending into the world; and what is it? Not the exaction of His rights from ruined debtors. Not the execution of His sentence on rebels against His authority. Not reproach, and reproof, and denunciation, and threatenings of judgment and wrath. No! but one word, but one commandment, and that alike for all. God’s be-best to Christ concerning a lost world, God’s commandment concerning those who are dead in trespasses and sins, is summed up in this one blessed word—“Life everlasting.” “Whatsoever,” Christ adds, “I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

So in communion with His Father in chapter 27, He speaks of the power given Him over all flesh, “That he should give eternal life” to as many as had been given Him, more fully spoken of in the next verse —“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent”—together showing out the connection between the eternal life as the plenitude of divine power and as the revelation of the Father and the Son.

Full of the same thought, in 1 John 1:2, he says, “For the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” But a marked advance is seen here, the eternal life being identified with Himself, who in the gospel is seen as the revealer of it only. In chapter 2:24, 25, continuance in the Son and in the Father is predicated of the eternal life according to promise. In the last chapter (v. 10, 11) he sums up the record that God gave of His Son—“That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;” affirming too, that he had written these things to believers in the name of the Son of God, that they might know that they had it—the eternal life, closing the epistle as he began it by identifying that life with the Son Himself: thus, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

We have thus traced the subject through these writings of the apostle John. Let us in conclusion ask the reader if, through faith in Him around whom every aspect of it clusters, who is its center and its bounds, he has possessed himself of that eternal life concerning which God has spoken in His own word, and about which, in character with its deep significance, He speaks to us in so blessed and varied a way. Its nucleus is the person of the Son of God, and its circumference the infinite value and eternal efficacy of the work of Him who was also Son of man! He who has by the Holy Ghost presented it as an evangelist in the Gospel that we should understand it, takes pains, as an apostle, in the Epistle that our hearts may be fully assured that we have got it. We see it connected with the will and purpose of God before the world; alike with His promise and His commandment; and in the gift of His Son in grace this was the avowed object He had in view, manifested alike in the person and in the work of Christ—even life everlasting! Have I got it?

The Father and Prodigal

(Luke 15)

We have three parables presented to us in this chapter. The source of that which is taught in them all is love.

1. The Shepherd who sought the sheep that was lost.
2. The Woman who sought the piece of money that was lost.
3. The Father that received back again the prodigal son.

In the last it is not a question of seeking, but of the manner of receiving the son when he had come back. There is many a heart that longs to go back, but does not know how it will be received. The Lord Jesus says, the grace and love of God are shown out, first in seeking, and then in the reception. In the first two parables, we have the seeking; in the third, the reception by the Father. One great principle runs through them all: it is the joy of God to seek and to receive the sinner. He is acting upon His own character. No doubt it is joy to the sinner to be received, but it is the joy of God to receive him; "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad," not merely meet that the child should be glad to be in the house.

This is a blessed truth! It is the tone that God has raised, and that every heart in heaven responds to. The chord that God strikes Himself; heaven echoes it; and so must every heart down here that is tuned by grace. What discord, then, must self-righteousness produce! Jesus tells forth the joy and grace of God in thus acting, and puts this in contrast with the feelings of the elder brother—any self-righteous person—though the description be of the Jews.

It is this note that is sounded from heaven in love, that we read in the heart of Christ down here; and, oh, how sweet! In one sense, it is more sweet to have it here than up there. It is down here that this love of God is astonishing; it is natural in heaven. It is here on earth, among us, that God has manifested what He is; that He has delight in saving lost sinners: and angels desire to look into it.

The shepherd puts the sheep upon his shoulders, and he brings it home rejoicing; "Am I not right to seek lost sinners?" Is it not a right thing for God to come among publicans and sinners? This may not suit a moral man, but it suits God; it is His privilege to come amidst sin—to come near to ruined sinners—because He can deliver out of it. The shepherd has the sheep upon his shoulders and rejoices; he charges himself with it; he takes the whole toil of it. It was his own interest to do it, because he valued the sheep; it was his, and he brings it home. Thus He presents the shepherd to us. And thus it is with "the Great Shepherd of the sheep." He presents it as His interest "to seek and to save that which is lost." He even makes it His interest in the sense of love; and He does bring the sheep home rejoicing.

Well, then, there is another thing in this second parable—the painstaking of this love, in seeking that which has been lost. It is not a sheep, but money in a house. Everything is done to get the money. She lights the candle, she sweeps the house; she could not stop in the task of love—diligent, active love—until the piece was found. It was her affair and interest again. And then we have the joy when her possession is recovered; she gives the tone to those around her; others are called in to have communion with it—“Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.” And that is the way of the Lord. Thus, then, we have the same great principle in this parable as in the former. There is the patient activity of love until the result is produced. It was the joy of the woman, as of the shepherd. The first great thing was the energetic power and activity of this grace, as well as the good will. There was entire inactivity in the sheep and in the money. The shepherd and the woman alike did all. It is true at the same time that there is a most important work—an effect produced in the heart of the one who has gone astray and is brought back again; and therefore the third parable, which shows the feelings of the wanderer and the manner of his reception. In a word, we have not only the manner of the workings within, but also the manifestation of the father’s heart. It is not the estimate of love in the one brought back, that gives the answer to all his thoughts, but the manifestation of the father’s own heart. There is this one simple fact—the father is on his neck kissing him! and that tells him what that heart is.

But man makes a distinction between sinners. So the Lord puts a case, where the sinner is gone, even in man’s judgment, to the fullest degree of evil, and shows it does not outreach the grace of God—a case which wonderfully exhibits the truth, that “if sin abounds, grace does much more abound.”

“And there wasted his substance in riotous living.” Any person who lives beyond his means looks rich; so does the sinner, wasting his soul, seem happy.

“And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.” There is no giving in the “far country.” Satan sells all, and dear—our souls are the price. If you sell yourself to the devil, you will get husks, he will never give you anything. Would you find a giver, you must come to God. Hearts are not easy in the world. Leave a man for a few hours to himself, and he will soon be in want.

“When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father.” He had not yet understood how he would be received, yet he did understand that there was love in that house; the very hired servants had bread enough and to spare; and he did understand, too, not only that he was hungry, but perishing with hunger.

Every soul that returns to God is thus brought to the thought of goodness in God.

Well, the prodigal goes back and says, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” He did not understand what his father was—what a father’s heart was. He was glad to be in the father’s house; but still “make me as one of thy hired servants” was his thought. He measured the father’s love in some little degree by the sense of what he had been, and the evil in which he had been—he thought to get into the place of a

servant. Now there are a multitude of hearts in this state, lowering down the standard of what the Father must do to some sort of adaptedness to their fitness. I am not speaking of positive self-righteousness. They have still the remains of legalism, and would take the place of a servant in the house. "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But that will not do for the father, if it would do for the son. It would be constant misery to the father's heart to have a son in the house as a servant; neither would it be testimony to the servants in the house as to the father's love. The father cannot have sons in the house as servants; and if his boundless grace brings them, he must show the manner of the reception to be worthy of a father's love.

The father does not even give him time to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." He lets him say, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;" but no more, for he is on his neck kissing him. How can he say, "Make me a hired servant," when the father is on his neck, producing the consciousness that he was a son?

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry." He brings us into the house where the servants are, with nothing less than all the honor He can put upon us. His love welcomes us while in our rags, but here the same love acts in another way. He introduces us into the house as He would have us be there, with His mind expressed about the value of a son. "We read here the description of the fatted calf, the best robe, the ring, and the feast. There are, perhaps, some who would think it humility to be a servant in the house. Now it is not; it is only ignorance of the Father's mind. I read, "that he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Now if you begin at that end—the Father's mind and grace—would it have been worthy of Him to have put us in the house with a constant memorial of our sin and shame, of our former dishonor and degradation? If there was any sense of shame—the merest trace of the far country —would it have been worthy of the Father? No! "The worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sins." The condition that finds its place in God's house must be worthy of God. It would be an evil thing to doubt this love, as it would have been an evil thing in the prodigal, when the father was kissing him, to say, I have the rags of the far country upon me. Did he then think of his rags as a reason why there should not be that expression of the love which was in the heart of his father? Then when I see the character Christ gives me of what God is towards me as a sinner, the doubts of my heart are silenced before such grace.

Forgiveness of Sins

Present full assurance of soul is the spring of the purest affection and of the freest service. Indeed it is necessary to each of them. The present forgiveness of sins is to be asserted with all confidence.

I ask, What has been the business of the blessed God in this world of ours, if not for the very end of putting us into such a condition? Our sin brought Him here—and then, the putting away of our sin gave Him His history here, after He had come among us. He died and rose from the dead. For what do I see in that history, the death and resurrection of the Son of God, if I see not the putting away of sin?

As soon as ever sin entered, He was revealed in this connection with us. Not as a Lawgiver or a Judge, but as a Savior. He is seen in the very first promise. It was as a Savior, as the purger of sins, He was revealed then, in the mystery of the bruised heel and the bruised head—and that was His death and resurrection as the Son of God and the Lamb of God. And what, again I ask, do I see in those great facts, if I see not the putting away of sin? How can I, with any reason, with any simplicity of mind, stand before the cross of Christ, and not apprehend the purging of sins there? If I did not apprehend that, everything would and must rebuke the darkness of my soul. Did not the rent veil, accompanied by the rent rocks of the earth and the riven graves of the saints, tell out that the death of the Son of God then accomplished had restored man to God, casting up a highway from the prison-house of him who had the power of death up to the bright heavens, and the throne of the majesty there? Did not the empty sepulcher follow in its appointed day, to bear like witness, and to tell that God was satisfied with the death of Christ, and that it had atoned for sin and made reconciliation? And then did not the gift and presence of the Holy Ghost come, in its due pentecostal hour, to seal the same great fact? And I further ask, What was the preaching, the gospel, the testimony of the apostles immediately afterward, as we have it in the book of the Acts? Surely it is, remission, forgiveness of sins, upon the virtue of the blood or death of Jesus, to all who will receive Him.

All this is truly and indeed so. And now, our souls are to keep this blessed fact, that sin is put away, as in the foreground. It is not to be treated as something which we might be able to descry in the hazy, misty distance, after some anxious scrutiny. It is to be set in the foreground, where the rent veil, the resurrection, the pentecost, apostolic preaching and apostolic teaching have already set it, that we may apprehend it as in the very light of noonday, and possess ourselves of it with all assurance.

Scripture, as one once observed, makes a much simpler thing of the putting away of sin, than our religion makes of it. Scripture puts it at the outset, human religion makes it the great attainment. Scripture puts sin in company with the blood of Christ and it disappears.

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” Acts 13:38.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” Eph. 1:7.

Forsake Not the Assembling of Yourselves Together

No doubt the spiritual instincts of the children of God would lead them always to desire to be together. For my own part I cannot understand a child of God who on principle could abstain from any occasion that summoned round the name of the Lord the members of the household of faith. It appears to me that, far from being a waste of time or from any other object being of the same moment, it is simply a question whether we value Christ, whether we truly are walking in the Spirit, if we live in the Spirit, whether the objects of the constant active love of God are also in measure the objects of our love in Christ's name.

I think therefore that it is according to the Lord that the children of God should if practicable be together every day. To this the power of the Spirit would lead: only the circumstances in which we are placed in this world necessarily hinder it. Therefore, the true principle according to the word of God is a coming together whenever it is practicable; and we do well to cherish a real exercise of heart and conscience in judging what the practicability is, or rather whether the impracticability be real or imaginary. Very often it will turn out to be in our will, an excuse for spiritual idleness, a want of affection to the children of God, and a want of sense of our own need. Accordingly, obstacles are allowed in our minds, such as the claims of business, or the family, or even the work of the Lord. Now all these have their place. Surely God would have all His children to seek to glorify Him, whatever may be their duty. They have natural duties in this world; and the wonderful power of Christianity is seen in filling with what is divine that which without Christ would be merely of nature; and this should ramify the whole course of a man's life after he belongs to Christ. And so again the claims of children for instance, or parents, or the like, cannot be disputed: but then if they are really taken up for Christ, I do not think it will be found that it is to the loss of either parents or children, or that the little time is missed in the long run that is spent in seeking the strength of the Lord, and in communion according to our measure. We ought to be open for both; and we shall ourselves never have any power to help, unless we have the sense of the need of help from others; but both will be found together.

A Full Confession of Faith in Christ

“Tell me,” I said, “what is it that makes you so happy now? You say you are quite happy, and have been so since last night.” “Yes,” she replied, “I am quite happy”—and evidently with much feeling. “But do you think you could tell me distinctly what it is that gives you such new joy?” After a moment’s pause the following reply was given: but such a reply for fullness and simplicity! “I see the love of Jesus to me a sinner.” “Bless the Lord,” I said, “that is something to see; may you never lose sight of it! But in what way, my dear child, do you see His love to yourself now?” “I now see that He died for me on the cross, and put all my sins away there!” Amen, my heart replied; surely thou art taught of God! “And now, once more, tell me, how do you feel towards Jesus Himself, after seeing and believing all this?” Her reply was natural and beautiful; she said, “I feel it easy now to give my heart to Him.” I had nothing more to ask of the young believer, and turned away quickly, but with a praising heart, and with these three answers so engraven on my memory, as never to be forgotten. “I see the love of Jesus to me a sinner—I now see that He died for me on the cross, and put all my sins away there—I feel it easy now to give my heart to Him.”

I have heard many confessions from many lips, but I have never beard one more simple, more concise, more complete, or more satisfactory. May it be a divine help and a divine test to thousands of the readers of “Things New and Old;” this is the deep, earnest, and fervent prayer of him to whom the answers were given.

God My Father Knows

My God, whose gracious pity I may claim,
Calling Thee "Father," sweet endearing name!
The sufferings of each weak and weary frame
Are known to Thee.
From human eyes 'tis better to conceal
Much that we suffer, much we hourly feel;
But oh! the thought does tranquillize and heal—
That all is known to Thee.
That all by Thee is ordered, chosen, planned,
Each drop that fills my daily cup Thy hand
Prescribes for ills, none else can understand.
All, all is known to Thee.
Nor will its bitter draft distasteful prove,
While I recall the Son of Thy dear love;
The cup thou wouldst not for our sakes remove—
That cup He drank for me.
He drank it to the dregs, no drop remained
Of wrath for those whose cup of woe He drained—
Man ne'er can know what that sad cup contained,
But all is known to Thee.

Headship and Lordship

It is deeply interesting, and most profitable, to mark the varied lines of truth laid down in the word of God, and to note how all these lines stand inseparably linked with the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the divine center of all truth; and it is as we keep the eye of faith steadily fixed on Him, that each truth will find its right place in our souls, and exert its due influence and formative power over our course and character. There is in all of us, alas! a tendency to be one-sided—to take up some one particular truth and press it to such a degree as to interfere with the healthy action of some other truth. This is a serious mistake, and it tends to damage the cause of truth, and hinder the growth of our souls. It is by the truth, not some truth we grow; by the truth we are sanctified. But if we don't take a part of the truth—if our character is molded, and our way shaped by some particular truth, there can be no real growth—no true sanctification. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:2.) "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) It is by the whole truth of God, as contained in the scriptures, that the Holy Ghost forms, and fashions, and leads on the Church collectively, and each individual believer; and we may rest assured that where some special truth is unduly pressed, or some other truth practically ignored, there must be, as a result, a defective character, and an inadequate testimony.

Take, for example, the two great subjects named at the head of this article—"Headship and Lordship." Is it not important to give each of these truths its due place? Is not Christ Head of His body the Church, as well as Lord of the individual members? And, if so, should not our conduct be ruled, and our character formed, by the spiritual application of the former as well as the latter? Unquestionably. Well, then, if we think of Christ as Head, it leads us into a very distinct and a very practical range of truth. It will not interfere with the truth of His Lordship; but it will tend to keep the soul well balanced, which is so needful in days like the present. If we think only of Christ as Lord of His servants, individually, we shall entirely lose the sense of our relationship one to another, as members of that one body of which He is the Head, and thus we shall be drawn away into mere independency, acting without the slightest reference to our fellow members. We shall, to use a figure, become like the hairs of an electrified broom, each standing out in his own intense individuality, and practically disowning all vital connection with our brethren.

But, on the other hand, when the truth of Christ's Headship gets its proper place in our souls—when we know and believe that "there is one body," and that we are members one of another; then—while we most fully own that each one of us, in our individual path and service, is responsible to the "one Lord"—it will follow as a grand practical result that our walk and ways are affecting every member of the body of Christ on earth. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." We can no longer view ourselves as independent isolated atoms, seeing we are incorporated as members of "one body" by "one Spirit," and thus linked with the "one Head," in heaven.

This great doctrine is clearly and fully unfolded in Rom. 12:3-8, and 1 Cor. 12 to which we beg the reader's serious attention. And, be it remembered, that this truth of Christ's Headship and our membership, is not a thing of the past merely; it is a present reality—a grand formative truth, to be tenaciously held, and practically carried out from day to day. "There is one body." This holds good today, just as thoroughly as when the inspired apostle penned the epistle to the Ephesians; and hence it follows that each individual believer is exerting a good or a bad influence upon believers at the very antipodes.

Does this seem incredible? If so, it is only to carnal reason and blind unbelief. Surely we cannot reduce the Church of God—the body of Christ, to a matter of geographical position. That Church, that body, is united by—what? Life? No. Faith? No. By what, then? By God the Holy Ghost. Old Testament saints had life and faith; but what could they have known about a Head in heaven or a body on earth? Nothing whatever. If anyone had spoken to Abraham about being a member of a body, he would not have understood it. How could he? There was nothing of the kind existing. There was no Head in heaven, and hence there could be no body on earth. True, the eternal Son was in heaven, as a divine Person in the eternal Trinity; but He was not there as a glorified Man, or Head of a body. Nay more; even in the days of His flesh, we hear Him saying, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" No union—no Headship—no membership—no vital connection, until after His death upon the cross. It was not until redemption became an accomplished fact that heaven beheld that wonder of wonders, namely, glorified humanity on the throne of God; and the counterpart of that was God the Holy Ghost dwelling in men upon earth. Old Testament saints would have understood Lordship; but not Headship. This latter had no existence, save in the eternal purpose of God. It did not exist in fact, until Christ took His seat on high, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hence, then, this truth of Headship is most glorious and precious. It claims the earnest attention of the christian reader. We would solemnly and earnestly entreat him not to regard it as a mere speculation—a matter of no importance. Let him be assured it is a great fundamental truth, having its source in a risen Christ in glory—its foundation in accomplished redemption—its present sphere of display, this earth—its power of development, the Holy Ghost; its authority in the New Testament.

The Heart at Rest

“The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.” Lam. 3:24.

My heart is resting, O my God!

I will give thanks and sing;

My heart has found the secret source

Of every precious thing.

Yes! the frail vessel thou hast made

No hand but thine can fill—

For the waters of the earth have failed,

And I am thirsty still.

I thirst for springs of heavenly life,

And from thyself they rise;

I seek the treasure of thy love,

And close at hand it lies.

Thus a new song is in my mouth,

To long loved music set:

Glory to thee for all the grace

I have but tasted yet.

Glory to thee for strength withheld,

For want and weakness known—

For fear that sends me to thy breast

For what is most my own.

I have a heritage of joy

That yet I cannot see;

But He who bled to make it mine

Is keeping it for me.

There is a certainty of love

That sets my heart at rest;
A calm assurance for today,
That to be weak is best;
My soul reposes on thy truth,
Who hath made all things mine,
Who gently bends my froward will,
And makes it one with thine.
I will give thanks for suffering now,
For want, and toil, and loss;
For the death that sin makes hard and slow
Upon my Savior's cross.
Sometimes I long for promised bliss,
But 'twill not come too late—
And songs of patient faith may rise
From the place wherein I wait.
Mine be the reverent, listening love,
That waits all day on thee,
With the service of a watchful heart
Which no one else can see:
The faith that in a hidden way
No other eye may know,
Finds all its daily work prepared,
And loves to have it so.
My heart is resting, O my God!
My heart is in thy care,
And while it finds its joy in thee,
Can trust thee everywhere;
The heart that ministers for thee
In thy own work will rest;

And the subject spirit of a child

Can serve thy children best.

Jesus Had Not Where to Lay His Head

Birds have their quiet nest,
Foxes their holes, and man his peaceful bed;
All creatures have their rest:
But Jesus had not where to lay His head.
Winds have their hours of calm,
And waves—to slumber on the voiceless deep;
Eve hath its breath of balm,
To hush all senses and all sounds to sleep.
The wild deer hath his lair,
The homeward flocks the shelter of their shed;
All have their rest from care:
But Jesus had not where to lay His head.
And yet He came to give
The weary and the heavy laden rest,
To bid the sinner live,
And soothe our griefs to slumber on His breast.
What then am I, my God,
Permitted thus the path of peace to tread—
Peace, purchased by the blood
Of Him who had not where to lay His head?
I—who once made Him grieve,
I—who once bid His gentle spirit mourn,
Whose hand essayed to weave
For His meek brow the cruel crown of thorn!
Oh, why should I have peace?
Why? but for that unchanged, undying love

Which would not, could not cease
Until it made me heir of joys above.
Yes; but for pardoning grace
I feel I never should in glory see
The brightness of that face
That once was pale and agonized for me,
Let the birds seek their rest,
Foxes their holes, and man his peaceful bed.
Come, Savior! on my breast
Deign to repose thine oft-rejected head.
Come, give me rest, and take
The only rest on earth thou lov'st, within
A heart that, for thy sake,
Lies bleeding, broken, penitent for sin.
J. S. B. M.

Job and His Friends: Part 1

The book of Job occupies a very peculiar place in the volume of God. It possesses a character entirely its own, and teaches lessons which are not to be learned in any other section of inspiration. It is not by any means our purpose to enter upon a line of argument to prove the genuineness, or establish the fact of the divine inspiration of this precious book. We take these things for granted, being fully persuaded of them as established facts, we leave the proofs to abler hands. We receive the book of Job as part of the holy scriptures given of God for the profit and blessing of His people. We need no proofs of this for ourselves, nor do we attempt to offer any to our reader.

And we may further add, that we have no thought of entering upon the field of inquiry as to the authorship of this book. This, how interesting soever it may be in itself, is to us entirely secondary. We receive the book from God. This is enough for us. We heartily own it to be an inspired document, and we do not feel it to be our province to discuss the question as to where, when, or by whom it was penned. In short, we purpose, with the Lord's help, to offer to the readers of "Things New and Old" a few plain and practical remarks on a book which we consider needs to be more closely studied, that it may be more fully understood. May the Eternal Spirit, who indicted the book, expound and apply it to our souls!

The opening page of this remarkable book furnishes us with a view of the patriarch Job, surrounded by everything that could make the world agreeable to him, and make him of importance in the world. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Thus much as to what he was. Let us now see what he had.

"And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses everyone his day; and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them." Then, to complete the picture, we have the record of what he did.

"And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."

Here, then, we have a very rare specimen of a man He was perfect, upright, God-fearing, and eschewed evil. Moreover, the hand of God had hedged him round about on every side, and strewed his path with richest mercies. He had all that heart could wish—children and wealth in abundance—honor and distinction from all around. In short, we may almost say, his cup of earthly bliss was full.

But Job needed to be tested. There was a deep moral root in his heart which had to be laid bare. There was self-righteousness which had to be brought to the surface and judged. Indeed, we may discern this root in the very words which we have just quoted. He says, "It may be that my sons have sinned." He does not seem to contemplate the possibility of his sinning himself. A soul really self-judged, thoroughly broken before God, truly sensible of its own state, tendencies, and capabilities, would think of his own sins and his own need of a burnt-offering.

Now, let the reader distinctly understand that Job was a real saint of God—a divinely quickened soul—a possessor of divine and eternal life. We cannot too strongly insist upon this. He was just as truly a man of God in the first chapter, as he was in the forty second. If we do not see this, we shall miss one of the grand lessons of the book. The eighth verse of chapter 1 establishes this point beyond all question. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?"

But, with all this, Job had never sounded the depths of his own heart. He did not know himself. He had never really grasped the truth of his own utter ruin and total depravity. He had never learned to say, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." This point must be seized, or the book of Job will not be understood. We shall not see the specific object of all those deep and painful exercises through which Job was called to pass, unless we lay hold of the solemn fact that his conscience had never been really in the divine presence—that he had never seen himself in the light—never measured himself by a divine standard—never weighed himself in the balances of the sanctuary.

If the reader will turn, for a moment, to chapter 29, he will find a striking proof of what we here assert. He will there see distinctly what a strong and deep root of self-complacency there was in the heart of this dear and valued servant of God; and how this root was nourished by the very tokens of divine favor with which he was surrounded. This chapter is a pathetic lament over the faded light of other days; and the very tone and character of the lament prove how necessary it was that Job should be stripped of everything, in order that he might learn himself in the searching light of the divine presence.

Let us hearken to his words.

"Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I, was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; when I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the

spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain. If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners. But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.”

This, truly, is a most remarkable utterance. We look in vain for any breathings of a broken and a contrite spirit here. There are no evidences of self-loathing or even of self-distrust. We cannot find so much as a single expression of conscious weakness and nothingness. In the course of this single chapter, Job refers to himself more than forty times, while the references to God are but five. It reminds us of the seventh of Romans, by the predominance of “I” but there is this immense difference, that, in the seventh of Romans, “I” is a poor, weak, good-for-nothing, wretched creature in the presence of the holy law of God; whereas, in Job 29 “I” is a most important, influential personage, admired and almost worshipped by his fellows.

Now Job had to be stripped of all this; and when we compare chapter 29 with chapter 30 we can form some idea of how painful the process of stripping must have been. There is peculiar emphasis in the words, “But now.” Job draws a most striking contrast between his past and his present. In chapter 30 he is still occupied with himself. It is still “I;” but ah! how changed. The very men who flattered him in the day of his prosperity, treat him with contempt in the day of his adversity. Thus it is ever, in this poor, false, deceitful world, and it is well to be made to prove it. All must, sooner or later, find out the hollowness of the world—the fickleness of those who are ready to cry out “Hosanna,” today, and “crucify him,” tomorrow. Man is not to be trusted. It is all very well while the sun shines; but wait till the nipping blasts of winter come, and then you will see how far nature’s fair promises and professions can be trusted. When the prodigal had plenty to spend, he found plenty to share his portion; but when he began to be in want, “no man gave unto him.”

Thus it was with Job in chapter 30. But, be it well remembered, that there is very much more needed than the stripping of self, and the discovery of the hollowness and deceitfulness of the world. One may go through all these, and the result be merely chagrin and disappointment. Indeed it can be nothing more if God be not reached. If the heart be not brought to find its all-satisfying portion in God, then a reverse of fortune leaves it desolate, and the discovery of the fickleness and hollowness of men fills it with bitterness. This will account for Job’s language in chapter 30, “But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.” Was this the spirit of Christ? Would Job have spoken thus at the close of the book? He would not. Ah! no, reader; when once Job got into God’s presence, there was an end to the egotism of chapter 29 and the bitterness of chapter 30.

But hear Job’s further outpourings. “They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; they were viler than the earth. And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me. Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push

away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper. They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.”

Now all this, we may truly say, is very far short of the mark. Lamentations over departed greatness, and bitter invectives against our fellow-men, will not do the heart much good; neither do they display aught of the spirit and mind of Christ, nor bring glory to His holy name. When we turn our eyes toward the blessed Lord Jesus we see something wholly different. That meek and lowly One met all the rebuffs of this world—all the disappointments in the midst of His people Israel—all the unbelief and folly of His disciples, with an “Even so, Father.” He was able to retire from the rebuffs of men into His resources in God, and then to come forth with those balmy words, “Come unto me.....and I will give you rest.”

No chagrin, no bitterness, no harsh invectives, nothing rough or unkind, from that gracious Savior who came down into this cold and heartless world to manifest the perfect love of God, and who pursued His path of service spite of all man’s perfect hatred.

But the fairest and best of men must retire into the shade when tested by the perfect standard of the life of Christ. The light of His moral glory makes manifest the defects and blemishes of even the most perfect of the sons of men. “In all things he must have the pre-eminence.” He stands out in vivid contrast with even a Job or a Jeremiah, in the matter of patient submission to all that He was called upon to endure. Job completely breaks down under his heavy trials. He not only pours forth a torrent of bitter invective upon his fellows, but actually curses the day of his birth. “After this opened Job his mouth and cursed his day. And Job spake and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived.” Chap. 3:1-3.

We notice the selfsame thing in Jeremiah—that blessed man of God. He, too, gave way beneath the heavy pressure of his varied and accumulated sorrows, and gave vent to his feelings in the following bitter accents, “Cursed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not; and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide. Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?” Jer. 20:14-18.

What language is here! Only think of cursing the man that brought tidings of his birth! cursing him because he had not slain him! All this, both in the prophet and the patriarch, contrasts strongly with the meek and lowly Jesus of Nazareth. That spotless One passed through deeper sorrows and more in number than all His servants put together; but not one murmuring word ever escaped His lips. He patiently submitted to all; and met the darkest hour with such words as these, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Blessed Lord Jesus, Son of the Father, we adore Thee! We bow down at thy feet, lost in wonder, love, and praise, and own thee Lord of all! —the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Job and His Friends: Part 2

There is no more fruitful field of study than that which is opened before us in the history of God's dealings with souls. It is full of interest, and abounds in instruction and profit. One grand object in those dealings is to produce real brokenness and humility—to strip us of all false righteousness, empty us of all self-confidence, and teach us to lean wholly upon Christ. All have to pass through what may be called the process of stripping and emptying. With some this process precedes, with others it follows, conversion or the new birth. Many are brought to Christ through deep ploughings and painful exercises of heart and conscience—exercises extending over years, often over the whole lifetime. Others, on the contrary, are brought with, comparatively, little exercise of soul. They lay hold, speedily, of the glad tidings of forgiveness of sins, through the atoning death of Christ, and are made happy at once. But the stripping and emptying come afterward, and, in many cases, cause the soul to totter on its foundation, and almost to doubt its conversion.

This is very painful, but very needful. The fact is, self must be learned and judged, sooner or later. If it be not learned in communion with God, it must be learned by bitter experience in failures and falls. "No flesh shall glory in God's presence," and we must all learn our utter powerlessness, in every respect, in order that we may taste the sweetness and comfort of the truth that Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. God will have broken material. Let us remember this. It is a solemn and necessary truth. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." And again, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. 57:15; 66:1, 2.

These are seasonable words for all of us. One special want of the present moment, is brokenness of spirit. Nine-tenths of our trouble and difficulty may be traced to this want. It is marvelous how we get on, from day to day, in the family, in the assembly, in the world, in our entire practical life, when self is subdued and mortified. A thousand things which else would prove more than a match for our hearts are esteemed as nothing, when our souls are in a truly contrite state. We are enabled to bear reproach and insult—to overlook slights and affronts—to trample upon our crotchets, predilections, and prejudices—to yield to others where weighty principle is not involved—to be ready to every good work—to exhibit a genial large-heartedness in all our dealings, and an elasticity in all our moral movements which so greatly tend to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. How often, alas! it is otherwise with us. We exhibit a stiff, unyielding temper; we stand up for our rights; we maintain our interests; we look after our own things; we contend for our own notions. All this proves, very clearly, that self is not habitually measured and judged in the presence of God.

But, we repeat —and with emphasis—God will have broken material. He loves us too well to leave us in hardness and unsubduedness; and hence it is that He sees fit to pass us through all sorts of exercises in order to bring us into a condition of soul in which He can use us for His own glory. The will must be broken; self-confidence, self-complacency, and self-importance must be cut up by the roots. God will make use of the scenes and circumstances through which we have to pass, the people with whom we are associated in daily life, to discipline the heart and subdue the will. And, further, He will deal with us directly Himself in order to bring about these great practical results.

All this comes out, with great distinctness, in the book of Job, and gives a wonderful interest and charm to its pages. It is very evident that Job needed a severe sifting. Had he not needed it, We may rest assured the gracious loving Lord would not have passed him through it. It was not for nothing that He let Satan loose upon His dear servant. We may say with fullest confidence, that nothing but the most stern necessity would have led Him to adopt such a line of action. God loved Job with a perfect love; but it was a wise and faithful love; a love that could take account of everything, and, looking below the surface, could see the deep moral roots in the heart of His servant—roots which Job had never seen, and, therefore, never judged. What a mercy to have to do with such a God! to be in the hands of One who will spare no pains in order to subdue everything in us which is contrary to Himself, and to bring out in us His own blessed image!

But, beloved reader, is there not something profoundly interesting in the fact that God can even make use of Satan as an instrument in the discipline of His people? We see this in the case of the apostle Peter, as well as in that of the patriarch Job. Peter had to be sifted, and Satan was used to do the work. “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” Here, too, there was a stern necessity. There was a deep root to be reached in Peter’s heart—the root of self-confidence; and his faithful Lord saw it absolutely needful to pass him through a most severe and painful process in order that this root should be exposed and judged, and therefore Satan was permitted to sift him thoroughly, so that he might never again trust his own heart, but walk softly all his days. God will have broken material, whether it be in a patriarch or an apostle. All must be mellowed and subdued in order that the divine glory may shine forth with an ever brightening luster.

Had Job understood this great principle—had he apprehended the divine object, how differently he would have carried himself! But, like ourselves, he had to learn his lesson; and the Holy Ghost has furnished us with the record of the mode in which the lesson was learned, so that we may profit by it also.

Let us pursue the narrative.

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased—in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” What a view we have here of Satan’s malignity!

What a striking proof of the way in which he watches and considers the ways and works of God's people! What insight into human character! What an intimate knowledge of man's mental and moral constitution! What a terrible thing to fall into his hands! He is ever on the watch; ever ready, if permitted of God, to put forth all his malignant energy against the Christian.

The thought of this is most solemn, and should lead us to walk humbly and watchfully through a scene where Satan rules. He has no power whatever over a soul who abides in the place of dependence and obedience; and, blessed be God, he cannot, in any case, go one hair's breadth beyond the limit prescribed by divine command. Thus, in Job's case, "The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

Here Satan was permitted to lay his hand on Job's possessions—to bereave him of his children, and despoil him of all his wealth. And truly he lost no time in dispatching his business. "With marvelous rapidity he executed his commission. Blow after blow fell, in quick succession, on the devoted head of the patriarch. Hardly had one messenger told his melancholy tale, ere another arrived with still heavier tidings, until, at length, the afflicted servant of God " arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Chapter 1:20-22.

All this is deeply touching. To speak after the manner of men, it was enough to make reason totter to be thus, in a moment, bereft of his ten children, and reduced from princely wealth to absolute penury. What a striking contrast between the opening and the closing lines of our first chapter! In the former we see Job surrounded by a numerous family, and in the enjoyment of vast possessions; in the latter, we see him left alone, in poverty and nakedness. And to think of Satan's being allowed—yea, commissioned of God, to bring about all this! And for what? For the deep and permanent profit of Job's precious soul. God saw that His servant needed to be taught a lesson; and, moreover, that, in no other way, by no other means, could this lesson be taught, than by passing him through an ordeal the bare record of which fills the mind with solemn awe. God will teach His children, even though it be by stripping them of all that the heart clings to in this world.

But we must follow our patriarch into still deeper waters.

"Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.

What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." Chapter 2:1-10.

This is a very remarkable passage. It instructs us as to the place which Satan occupies in respect to God's government. He is a mere instrument, and, though ever ready to accuse the Lord's people, can do nothing save as he is allowed of God. So far as Job was concerned, the efforts of Satan proved abortive, and having done his utmost he goes away, and we hear nothing more of his actings, whatever may have been his inward temptations. Job was enabled to hold fast his integrity; and, had matters ended here, his patient endurance would only have strengthened the platform of his righteousness, and ministered to his self-complacency. "Ye have heard," says James, "of the patience of Job." And what then? "Ye have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Had it been simply a question of Job's patience, it would have proved an additional ground of self-confidence, and thus "the end of the Lord" would not have been reached. For, be it ever remembered, the Lord's pity and tender mercy can only be tasted by those who are truly penitent and broken hearted. Now Job was not this, even when he lay amid the ashes. He was not yet thoroughly broken down before God. He was still the great man—great in his misfortunes as he had been in his prosperity—great beneath the keen and withering blasts of adversity, as he had been in the sunshine of brighter and better days. Job's heart was still unreached. He was not yet prepared to cry out, "Behold, I am vile." He had not yet learned to "Abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes."

We are anxious that the reader should distinctly seize this point. It is, to a very great extent, the key to the entire book of Job. The divine object was to expose to Job's view the depths of his own heart, in order that he might learn to delight in the grace and mercy of God, and not in his own goodness, which was as a morning cloud and the early dew that passeth away. Job was a true saint of God; and all Satan's accusations were flung back in his face; but, all the while, Job was unbroken material, and therefore unprepared for "the end of the Lord"—that blessed end for every contrite heart—that end which is marked by "pity and tender mercy." God, blessed and praised be His name, will not suffer Satan to accuse us; but He will expose us to ourselves, so that we may judge ourselves, and thus learn to mistrust our own hearts, and rest in the eternal stability of His grace.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Job and His Friends: Part 3

Thus far, then, we see Job “holding fast his integrity.” He meets with calmness all the heavy afflictions which Satan is allowed to bring upon him; and, moreover, he refuses the foolish counsel of his wife. In a word, he accepts all as from the hand of God, and bows his head in the presence of His mysterious dispensations.

All this is well. But the arrival of Job’s three friends produces a marked change. Their very presence—the bare fact of their being eye-witnesses of his trouble—affects him in a very remarkable manner. “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon Him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.” Chapter 2:11-13.

Now, we can fully believe that those three men were governed, in the main, by kindly feelings toward Job; and it was no small sacrifice on their part, to leave their homes and come to condole with their bereaved and afflicted friend. All this we can easily believe. But it is very evident that their presence had the effect of stirring up feelings and thoughts in his heart and mind which had hitherto lain dormant. He had borne submissively the loss of children, of property, and of bodily health. Satan had been dismissed, and the wife’s counsel rejected; but the presence of his friends caused Job to break down completely. “After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day.”

This is very remarkable. It does not appear that the friends had spoken a single sentence. They sat in total silence, with rent garments and covered with dust, gazing upon a grief too profound for them to reach. It was Job himself who first broke silence: and the whole of the third chapter is an outpouring of the most bitter lamentation, affording melancholy evidence of an unsubdued spirit. It is, we may confidently assert, impossible that anyone who had learned, in any little measure, to say, “Thy will be done,” could ever curse his day, or use the language contained in the third chapter of Job. It may, doubtless, be said, “It is easy for those to speak who have never been called to endure Job’s heavy trials.” This is quite true; and it may further be added, that no other man would have done one whit better under the circumstances. All this we can fully understand; but it in nowise touches the great moral of the book of Job—a moral which it is our privilege to seize. Job was a true saint of God; but he needed to learn himself, as we all do. He needed to have the deep roots of his moral being laid bare in his own sight, so that he might really abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes. And, furthermore, he needed a truer and deeper sense of what God was, so that he might trust Him and justify Him under all circumstances.

But we look in vain for aught of this in Job’s opening address. “Job spake and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.....Why died I not from the womb?” These are not the accents of a broken and contrite

spirit, or of one who had learned to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It is a grand point in the soul's history when one is enabled to bow with meekness to all the dispensations of our Father's hand. A broken will is a rich and rare endowment. It is a high attainment in the school of Christ to be able to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content." (Phil. 4:11.) Paul had to learn this. It was not natural to him; and, most surely, he never learned it at the feet of Gamaliel. Saul of Tarsus would never have been content with the very highest attainments in this world. He had to be thoroughly broken down, at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth, ere he could say from his heart, "I am content." He had to ponder the meaning of those words, "My grace is sufficient for thee" ere he could "take pleasure in infirmities." The man who could use such language was standing at the very antipodes of the man who could curse his day, and say, "Why died I not from the womb?" Only think of a saint of God, an heir of glory, saying, "Why died I not from the womb?" Ah! if Job had been in the presence of God he never could have uttered such words. He would have known full well why he had not died. He would have had a soul-satisfying sense of what God had in store for Him. He would have justified God in all things. But Job was not in the presence of God, but in the presence of his friends; who proved, very distinctly, that they understood little or nothing of the character of God or the real object of His dealings with His dear servant Job.

It is not, by any means, our purpose to enter minutely into the lengthened discussion between Job and his friends—a discussion extending over twenty-nine chapters. We shall merely quote a few sentences from the opening address of each of the friends which will enable the reader to form an idea of the real ground occupied by these mistaken men.

Eliphaz was the first speaker. "Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking? Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways? Remember, I pray thee, whoever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." (Chap. 4:1-8.) And again, "I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation." (Chap. 5:8, see also chap. 15:17.)

From these sentences it seems very evident that Eliphaz belonged to that class of people who argue very much from their own experience. His motto was, "As I have seen." Now, what we have seen may be all true enough, so far as we are concerned. But it is a total mistake to found a general rule upon individual experience; and yet it is a mistake to which thousands are prone. What, for instance, had the experience of Eliphaz to do with Job? It may be he had never met a case exactly similar; and if there should happen to be a single feature of dissimilarity between the two cases, then the whole argument based on experience must go for nothing. And that it went for nothing in Job's case is evident, for no sooner had Eliphaz ceased speaking than, without the slightest attention to his words, Job proceeds with the tale of his own sorrows, intermingled with much self-vindication and bitter complaints against the divine dealings. Chapters 6, 7.

Bildad is the next speaker. He takes quite different ground from that occupied by Eliphaz. He never once refers to his own experience, or to what had come under his own observation. He

appeals to antiquity. "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?" Chapter 8:8-10.

Now, it must be admitted that Bildad conducts us into a much wider field than that of Eliphaz. The authority of a number of "fathers" has much more weight and respectability than the experience of a single individual. Moreover, it would argue much more modesty to be guided by the voice of a number of wise and learned men than by the light of one's own experience. But the fact is that neither experience nor tradition will do. The former may be true, so far as it goes, but you can hardly get two men whose experience will exactly correspond; and as to the latter, it is a mass of confusion, for one father differs from another, and nothing can be more slippery or uncertain than the voice of tradition—the authority of the fathers.

Hence, as might be expected, Bildad's words had no more weight with Job than those of Eliphaz. The one was as far from the truth as the other. Had they appealed to divine revelation, it would have been a different matter altogether. The truth of God is the only standard—the one grand authority. By that all must be measured; to that all must, sooner or later, bow down. No man has any right to lay down his own experience as a rule for his fellows; and if no one man has a right, neither have any number of men. In other words, it is not the voice of man but the voice of God which must govern us all. It is not experience or tradition which shall judge at the last day, but the word of God. Solemn and weighty fact! May we consider it! Had Bildad and Eliphaz understood it, their words would have had much more weight with their afflicted friend.

Let us now very briefly refer to the opening address of Zophar the Naamathite.

He says, "Oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; and that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." And again, "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot: yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear." Chapter 11:5, 6, 13, 14, 15.

These words savor strongly of legality. They prove, very distinctly, that Zophar had no right sense of the divine character. He did not know God. No one possessing the true knowledge of God could speak of Him as opening His lips against a poor afflicted sinner, or as exacting aught from a needy helpless creature. God is not against us, but for us, blessed forever be His Name. He is not a legal exactor, but a liberal giver. Then again, Zophar says, "If thou prepare thine heart." But if not, what then? No doubt a man ought to prepare his heart, and if he were right he would. But then he is not right, and hence when he sets about preparing his heart, he finds nothing there but evil. He finds himself perfectly powerless. "What is he to do? Zophar cannot tell. No, nor can any of his school. How can they? They only know God as a stern exactor—as one who, if He opens His lips, can only speak against the sinner.

Need we marvel, therefore, that Zophar was as far from convincing Job as either of his two companions? They were all wrong. Legality, tradition, experience were alike defective, one-sided, false. Not any one of them, or all of them put together, could meet Job's case. They only darkened

counsel by words without knowledge. Not one of the three friends understood Job: and what is more they did not know God's character or His object in dealing with His dear servant. They were wholly mistaken. They knew not how to present God to Job; and, as a consequence, they knew not how to lead Job's conscience into the presence of God. In place of leading him to self-judgment, they only ministered to a spirit of self-vindication. They did not introduce God into the scene. They said some true things; but they had not the truth. They brought in experience, tradition, legality, but not the truth.

Hence the three friends failed to convince Job. Their ministry was one-sided, and instead of silencing Job, they only led him forth into a field of discussion which seemed almost boundless. He gives them word for word, and far more. "No doubt," he says, "but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you, I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?" "What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you"— "ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom"— "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answereth? I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you"— "How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me"—"Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."

All these utterances prove how far Job was from that true brokenness of spirit and humility of mind which ever flow from being in the divine presence. No doubt, the friends were wrong—quite wrong—wrong in their notions about God—wrong in their method of dealing with Job. But their being wrong did not make him right. Had Job's conscience been in the presence of God, he would have made no reply to his friends, even though they had been a thousand times more mistaken and severe in their treatment. He would have meekly bowed his head and allowed the tide of reproof and accusation to roll over him. He would have turned the very severity of his friends to profitable account, by viewing it as a wholesome moral discipline for his heart. But no; Job had not yet reached the end of himself. He was full of self-vindication—full of invective against his fellows—full of mistaken thoughts about God. It needed another ministry to bring him into a right attitude of soul.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Job and His Friends: Part 4

The more closely we study the lengthened discussion between Job and his three friends, the more clearly we must see the utter impossibility of their ever coming to an understanding. He was bent upon vindicating himself; and they were bent upon the very reverse. He was unbroken and unsubdued, and their mistaken course of treatment only tended to render him more so. Had they changed sides, they would have reached a different issue altogether. If Job had condemned himself; had he taken a low place; had he owned himself nothing and nobody, he would have left his friends nothing to say. And, on the other hand, had they spoken softly, tenderly, and soothingly to him, they would have been far more likely to melt him down. As it was, the case was hopeless. He could see nothing wrong in himself; and they could see nothing right. He was determined to maintain his integrity; and they were quite as determined to pick holes and find out flaws. There was no point of contact whatever—no common ground of understanding. He had no penitential breathings for them, and they had no tender compassions for him. They were traveling in entirely opposite directions, and never could meet. In a word, there was a demand for another kind of ministry altogether, and that ministry is introduced in the person of Elihu.

“So these three men ceased to answer Job [high time they should], because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.” Chapter 32:1-3.

Here Elihu, with remarkable force and clearness, seizes upon the very root of the matter on each side. He condenses, in two brief sentences, the whole of the elaborate discussion contained in twenty-nine chapters. Job justified himself instead of justifying God: and they condemned Job, instead of leading him to condemn himself.

It is of the very last moral importance to see that whenever we justify ourselves, we condemn God; and on the other hand, when we condemn ourselves, we justify God. “Wisdom is justified of all her children.” This is a grand point. The truly broken and contrite heart will vindicate God at all cost. “Let God be true but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” (Rom. 3:4.) God must have the upper hand in the end; and it is the path of true wisdom to give Him the upper hand now. The very moment the soul is broken down in true self-judgment, God rises before it, in all the majesty of His grace as a Justifier. But so long as we are ruled by a spirit of self-vindication or self-complacency, we must be total strangers to the deep blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. The greatest folly that anyone can be guilty of is to justify himself, inasmuch as God must then impute sin. But the truest wisdom is to condemn oneself utterly, for in that case God becomes the Justifier.

But Job had not yet learned to tread this marvelously blessed path. He was still built up in his own goodness, still clothed in his own righteousness, still full of self-complacency. Hence the wrath of

Elihu was kindled against him. Wrath must assuredly fall upon self-righteousness. It cannot be otherwise. The only true ground for a sinner to occupy is the ground of genuine repentance. Here there is naught but that pure and precious grace that reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus it stands ever. There is nothing but wrath for the self-righteous—nothing but grace for the self-judged.

Reader, remember this. Pause, for a moment, and consider it. On what ground dost thou, at this moment, stand? Hast thou bowed before God in true repentance? Hast thou ever really measured thyself in His holy presence? Or, art thou on the ground of self-righteousness, self-vindication, and self-complacency? Do, we entreat you, weigh these solemn questions. Do not put them aside. We are most anxious to deal with the heart and conscience of the reader. We do not write merely for the understanding, for the mind, for the intelligence. No doubt, it is well to seek to enlighten the understanding, by the word of God; but we should exceedingly regret if our work were to end here. There is far more than this. God wants to deal with the heart, with the moral being, with the inward man. He will have us real before Him. It is of no possible use to build ourselves up in self-opinionativeness; for nothing is surer than that everything of that kind must be broken up. The day of the Lord will be against everything high and lifted up; and, hence it is our wisdom now to be low and broken down; for it is from the low place that we get the very best view of God and His salvation. May the reader be led by God's Spirit into the reality of all this! May we all remember that God delights in a broken and contrite spirit—that He ever finds His abode with such; but the proud He knoweth afar off.

Thus, then, we may understand why Elihu's wrath was kindled against Job. He was entirely on God's side. Job was not. We hear of nothing of Elihu until chapter 32 though it is very evident that he had been an attentive listener to the whole discussion. He had given a patient hearing to both sides, and he found that both were wrong. Job was wrong in seeking to defend himself; and the friends were wrong in seeking to condemn him.

How often is this the case in our discussions and controversies! And oh! what sorrowful work it is! In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred in the which persons are at issue, it will be found to be very much as it was with Job and his friends. A little brokenness on one side, or a little softness on the other, would go a great way toward settling the question. We speak not, of course, of cases in which the truth of God is concerned. There, one must be bold, decided, and unyielding. To yield where the truth of God or the glory of Christ is concerned, would be disloyalty to the One to whom we owe everything. Plain decision and unflinching firmness alone become us in all cases in which it is a question of the claims of that blessed One who, when our interests were concerned, surrendered everything, even life itself, in order to secure them. God forbid we should drop a sentence, or pen a line which might have the effect of relaxing our grasp of truth, or abating our ardor in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Ah! no, reader, this is not the moment for ungirding the loins, laying aside the harness, or lowering the standard. Quite the reverse. Never was there more urgent need of having the loins girt about with truth, of having firm footing, and of maintaining the standard of divine principle in all its integrity. We say this advisedly. We say it in view of all the efforts of the enemy to drive off the platform of pure truth by referring us to those who have failed in the maintenance of pure morals. Alas! alas! there is failure—sad, humiliating failure. We do not deny it. Who could? It is too

patent—too flagrant—too gross. The heart bleeds as we think of it. Man fails always and everywhere. His history, from Eden to the present hour, is stamped with failure.

All this is undeniable. But, blessed be God, His foundation standeth sure, nor can human failure ever touch it. God is faithful. He knoweth them that are His, and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. We have yet to learn that the way to improve our morals is to lower God's standard. We do not and cannot believe it. Let us humble ourselves in view of our failure; but never surrender the precious truth of God.

But all this is a digression into which we have allowed ourselves to be drawn in order to guard against the thought that in urging upon the reader the importance of cultivating a broken, yielding spirit, we would have him to yield a single jot or tittle of divine revelation. We must now return to our subject.

There is something peculiarly marked and striking in the ministry of Elihu. He stands in vivid contrast with the three friends. His name signifies "God is he;" and, no doubt, we may view him as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. He brings God into the scene, and puts a complete stop to the weary strife and contention between Job and his friends. Elihu argues not on the ground of experience; he appeals not to tradition; he breathes not the accents of legality; he brings in God. This is the only way of putting a stop to controversy, of hushing strife, of ending a war of words. Let us hearken to the words of this remarkable personage.

"Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled." Note this, "There was no answer." In all their reasonings, in all their arguments, in all their references to experience, tradition, and legality, there was "no answer." This is very instructive. Job's friends had travailed over a very wide range, had said many true things, had attempted many replies; but, be it carefully noted, they found "no answer." It is not in the range of earth or of nature to find an answer for a self-righteous heart. God alone can answer it, as we shall see in the sequel. To all else but God, the unbroken heart can find a ready reply. This is most strikingly proved in the history now before us.

Job's three friends found no answer. "And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you my opinion. I said, days should speak [but, alas! they either do not speak at all, or they speak a quantity of error and folly], and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." Here divine light, the light of inspiration, begins to stream in upon the scene and to roll away the thick clouds of dust raised by the strife of tongues. We are conscious of moral power and weight the very moment this blessed servant opens his lips. We feel we are listening to a man who speaks as the oracles of God—a man who is sensibly standing in the divine presence. It is not a man drawing from the meager store of his own narrow and one-sided experience; nor yet a man appealing to a hoary antiquity, or to a bewildering tradition, or the ever conflicting voices of the fathers. No; we have before us now a man who introduces us at once into the very presence of "the inspiration of the Almighty."

This is the only sure authority—the only unerring standard. "Great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show my

opinion. Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words: lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man. Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches. They were amazed; they answered no more; they left off speaking.” Experience, tradition, and legality are all swept off the platform to leave room for “the inspiration of the Almighty”—for the direct and powerful ministry of the Spirit of God.

Job and His Friends: Part 5

The ministry of Elihu breaks upon the soul with peculiar power and fullness. It stands in vivid contrast with the one-sided and most defective ministry of the three friends. Indeed it is quite a relief to reach the close of a controversy which seemed likely to prove interminable—a controversy between intense egotism on the one hand, and experience, tradition, and legality on the other—a controversy barren of any good, so far as Job was concerned, and leaving all parties at the close very much where they were at the beginning.

Still, however, the controversy is not without its value and interest to us. It teaches us, very distinctly, that when two parties join issue they never can reach an understanding unless there be a little brokenness and subduedness on one side or the other. This is a valuable lesson, and one to which we all need to give attention. There is a vast amount of headiness and high-mindedness abroad, not only in the world but in the Church. There is a great deal of self-occupation—a quantity of “I, I, I”—and that too even where we least suspect it, and where it is, most of all, unsightly, namely, in connection with the holy service of Christ. Never, we may safely assert, is egotism more truly detestable than when it shows itself in the service of that blessed One who made Himself of no reputation—whose whole course was one of perfect self-surrender, from first to last—who never sought His own glory, in anything—never maintained His own interest—never pleased Himself.

And yet, for all that, reader, is there not a most deplorable amount of hateful unsubdued self-displayed on the platform of christian profession and christian service? Alas! we cannot deny it. We are disposed to marvel as the eye scans the record of the remarkable discussion between Job and his friends; we are amazed to find close upon a hundred references to himself in Job 29-31 alone. In short, it is all “I” from beginning to end.

But, let us look to ourselves. Let us judge our own hearts, in their deeper workings. Let us review our ways in the light of the divine presence. Let us bring all our work and service and have it weighed in the holy balances of the sanctuary of God. Then shall we discover how much of hateful self is insinuated, like a dark and defiling tissue, into the whole web of our christian life and service. How, for example, comes it to pass that we are so ready to mount the high horse when self is touched, even in the most remote degree? Why are we so impatient of reproof, be it clothed in language ever so refined and gentle? Why so ready to take offense at the slightest disparagement of self? And further, why is it that we find our sympathies and our regards and our predilections going out, with special energy, after those who think well of us—who value our ministry—agree with our opinions, and adopt our cue?

Do not all these things tell a tale? Do they not prove to us that, ere we condemn the egotism of our ancient patriarch, we should seek to get rid of a vast amount of our own? It is not, surely, that he was right; but we are far more wrong. It is far less to be wondered at that a man, amid the dim twilight of the far back patriarchal age, was entangled in the snare of self-occupation, than that we, in the full blaze of Christianity, should fall there into. Christ had not come. No prophetic voice had

fallen on the ear. Even the law had not been given, when Job lived, and spoke, and thought. We can form a very poor conception indeed of the tiny ray of light by which men had to walk in the days of Job. But to us pertain the high privilege and holy responsibility of walking in the very meridian light of a full-orbed Christianity. Christ has come. He has lived, died, risen, and gone back to heaven. He has sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in our hearts, as the witness of His glory, the seal of accomplished redemption, and the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. The canon of scripture is closed. The circle of revelation is complete. The word of God is filled up. We have before us the divine record of the self-emptied One who went about doing good—the marvelous story of what He did, and how He did it—of what He said, and how He said it—of who He was, and what He was. We know that He died for our sins according to the scriptures; that He condemned sin and put it away; that our old nature, that odious thing called self, sin, the flesh, has been crucified and buried out of God's sight—made an end of forever, so far as its power over us is concerned. Moreover, we are made partakers of the divine nature; we have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; we are members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones; we are called to walk even as He walked; we are heirs of glory—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

What did Job know of all this? Nothing. How could he know what was not revealed till fifteen centuries after his time? The full extent of Job's knowledge is poured upon us in those few glowing and impassioned words at the close of chapter 19. "Oh that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

This was Job's knowledge—this was his creed. There was a great deal in it, in one sense; but very little indeed, when compared with the mighty circle of truths in the midst of which we are privileged to move. Job looked forward, through the dim twilight, to something that was to be done in the far off future. We look back, from amid the full flood-tide of divine revelation, to something that has been done. Job could say of his Redeemer that "He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth." We know that our Redeemer sitteth on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, after having lived and labored and died on the earth.

In short, the measure of Job's light and privilege admits of no comparison with that which we enjoy; and for this reason it is the less excusable in us to indulge in the varied forms of egotism and self-occupation. Our self-abnegation should be in proportion to the measure of our spiritual privilege. But alas! it is not so. We profess the very highest truths; but our character is not formed, nor is our conduct governed, by them. We speak of the heavenly calling; but our ways are earthly, sometimes sensual or worse. We profess to enjoy the very highest standing; but our state does not comport therewith. Our real condition does not answer to our assumed position. We are high-minded, touchy, tenacious, and easily provoked. We are quite as ready to embark in the business of self-vindication as was our patriarch Job.

And then, on the other hand, when we feel called upon to approach another in the attitude and tone of reproof, with what rudeness, coarseness, and harshness we discharge the necessary work! How little softness of tone or delicacy of touch! How little of the tender and the soothing!

How little of the “excellent oil!” How little of the broken heart and weeping eye! What slender ability to bring our erring brother down into the dust! Why is this? Simply because we are not habitually in the dust ourselves. If, on the one hand, we fail quite as much as Job in the matter of egotism and self-vindication; so, on the other, we prove ourselves fully as incompetent as Job’s friends to produce self-judgment in our brother. For example, how often do we parade our own experience, like Eliphaz; or indulge in a legal spirit, like Zophar; or introduce human authority, like Bildad! How little of the spirit and mind of Christ! How little of the power of the Holy Ghost, or the authority of the word of God!

It is not pleasant to write thus. Quite the contrary. But it is pressed upon us, and we must write. We feel, most solemnly, the growing laxity and indifference of the day in which we live. There is something perfectly appalling in the disproportion between our profession and our practice. The highest truths are professed in immediate connection with gross worldliness and self-indulgence. Indeed, it would appear as though, in some cases, the higher the doctrines professed, the lower the walk. There is a wide diffusion of truth in our midst; but where is its formative power? Floods of light are poured upon the intelligence; but where are the profound exercises of heart and conscience in the presence of God? The rigid rule of precise and accurate statement is attended to; but where is the true practical result? Sound doctrine is unfolded in the letter; but where is the spirit? There is the form of words; but where is the living exponent?

Is it that we do not prize sound doctrine and accurate statement? Is it that we undervalue the wide diffusion of precious truth, in its very highest forms? Far, far away be the thought! Human language would utterly fail to set forth our estimate of these things. God forbid we should pen a line which might tend, in anywise, to lower in the mind of the reader the sense of the unspeakable value and importance of a lofty—yea, the very loftiest—standard of truth and sound doctrine. We are most thoroughly convinced that we shall never improve our morals by lowering, the breadth of a hair, the standard of principle.

But, christian reader, we would lovingly and solemnly ask you, Does it not strike you that there is, in our very midst, a most melancholy lack of the tender conscience and the exercised heart? Does our practical piety keep pace with our profession of principle? Is the standard of morals at all up to the standard of doctrine?

Ah! we anticipate the reply of the grave and thoughtful reader. We know too well the terms in which that reply must be couched. It is but too plain that the truth does not act on the conscience—that the doctrine does not shine in the life—that the practice does not correspond with the profession.

We speak for ourselves. As God is our witness, we pen these lines, in His presence, in a spirit of self-judgment. It is our hearty desire that the knife should enter into our own soul, and reach the deep roots of things there. The Lord knows how much we should prefer laying the ax to the root of self and there leave it to do its work. But we feel we have a sacred duty to discharge to the individual reader and to the Church of God; and, moreover, we feel that that duty would not be discharged were we merely to set forth the precious, and the beautiful, and the true. We are convinced that God would have us not only to be exercised in heart and conscience ourselves, but also to seek to exercise the hearts and consciences of all with whom we have to do.

True it is—a truth often stated and proved—that worldliness, and carnality, and self-indulgence in all its phases, in the wardrobe, the library, the equipage, and the table—that fashion and style—folly and vanity—pride of caste, of intellect, and of purse—none of these things can be talked down, written, lectured, or scolded down. This we fully believe. But must not conscience be addressed? Must not the voice of holy exhortation fall on the ear? Shall we suffer laxity, indifferentism, and Laodicean lukewarmness to pave the way for a universal skepticism, infidelity, and practical atheism, and not be roused in conscience ourselves, and seek to rouse others? God forbid! No doubt, the higher and the better way is to have the evil expelled by the good; to have the flesh subdued by the Spirit; to have self-displaced by Christ; to have the love of the world supplanted by the love of the Father. All this we fully feel and freely admit; but, while feeling and admitting all this, we must still press upon our own conscience and that of the reader the urgent demand for solemn and searching review—for deep searchings of heart in the secret of the presence of God—for profound self-judgment, in reference to our whole career. Blessed be God, we can carry on these exercises before the throne of grace, the precious mercy seat. “Grace reigns.” Precious, consoling sentence! Should it prevent exercise of soul? Nay, it should only impart the right tone and character thereto. We have to do with victorious grace, not that we may indulge self, but mortify it all the more thoroughly.

May the Lord make us really humble, earnest, and devoted! May the deep utterance of the heart both of the writer and the reader be, “Lord, I am thine—thine only—thine altogether—thine forever!”

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Job and His Friends: Part 6

Our paper for October may have seemed to some a digression from the main line of this series of articles. But we trust the digression may not have been in vain; and although there was not much about Job and his friends, there was, we fondly hope, something for the heart and conscience of both the writer and the reader. If such was the case, we shall be better prepared to understand and appreciate the powerful ministry of Elihu, to which we shall now turn our attention, in dependence upon divine guidance.

The reader cannot fail to notice the double bearing of this remarkable ministry—its bearing upon our patriarch, and its bearing upon his friends. This is only what we might expect. Elihu, as we have already remarked, had patiently listened to the arguments on both sides. He had, as we say, heard both parties out. He had allowed them to exhaust themselves—to say all they had to say, “Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.” This was in lovely moral order. It was, most surely, the way of the Spirit of God. Modesty, in a young man, is most graceful. Would there were more of it in our midst! Nothing is more attractive, in the young, than a quiet, retiring spirit. When real worth lies concealed beneath a modest and humble exterior, it is sure to draw the heart with irresistible power. But, on the other hand, nothing is more repulsive than the bold self-confidence—the pushing forwardness, and self-conceit of many of the young men of the present day. All such persons would do well to study the opening words of Elihu, and to imitate his example.

“And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old: wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.” This is the natural order. We expect hoary heads to contain wisdom; and hence, it is but right and comely for young men to be swift to hear, slow to speak, in the presence of their elders. We may set it down as an almost fixed principle that a forward young man is not led by the Spirit of God—that he has never measured himself in the divine presence—that he has never been thoroughly broken down before God.

No doubt, it may often happen, as in the case of Job and his friends, that old men give utterance to very foolish things. Gray hairs and wisdom do not always go together; and it not infrequently happens that aged men, relying upon the mere fact of their years, assume a place for which they have no sort of power, either moral, intellectual, or spiritual. All this is perfectly true, and it has to be considered by those whom it may concern. But it leaves wholly untouched the fine moral sentiment contained in Elihu’s opening address, “I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore, I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion.” This is always right. It is always comely for a young man to be afraid to show his opinion. We may rest assured that a man who possesses inward moral power—who, as we say, has it in him—is never in haste to push himself forward; but yet when he does come forward, he is sure to be heard with respect and attention. The union of modesty and moral power imparts an irresistible charm to the character; but the most splendid abilities are marred by a self-confident style.

“But,” continues Elihu, “ there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.” This introduces another element altogether. The moment the Spirit of God enters the scene, it ceases to be a question of youth or old age, inasmuch as He can speak by old or young. “Not by might or by power; but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” This holds good always. It was true for the patriarchs; true for the prophets; true for apostles; true for us; true for all. It is not by human might or power, but by the eternal Spirit.

Here lay the deep secret of Elihu’s quiet power. He was filled with the Spirit, and hence we forget his youth, while hearkening to the words of spiritual weight and heavenly wisdom that proceed out of his mouth; and we are reminded of Him who spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes. There is a striking difference between a man who speaks as an oracle of God, and one who speaks in mere official routine—between one who speaks from the heart, by the Spirit’s holy unction, and one who speaks from the intellect, by human authority. Who can duly estimate the difference between these two? None but those who possess and exercise the mind of Christ.

But let us proceed with Elihu’s address. “Great men,” he tells us, “are not always wise”—how true! “Neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion. Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words.”

Let us specially note this. “There was none of you that convinced Job.” This was clear enough. Job was just as far from being convinced at the close of the discussion as he was at the commencement. Indeed, we may say that each fresh argument drawn from the treasury of experience, tradition, and legality, only served to stir some fresh and deeper depth of Job’s unjudged, unsubdued, unmortified, nature. This is a grand moral truth illustrated on every page of the book which lies open before us.

But how instructive the reason for all this! “Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom; God thrusteth him down, not man.” No flesh shall glory in the presence of God. It may boast itself outside. It may put forth its pretensions, and glory in its resources, and be proud of its undertakings, so long as God is not thought of. But only introduce Him, and all the vauntings, the boastings, the vain gloryings, the lofty pretensions, the self-complacency, and the self-conceit will be withered up in a moment.

Reader, let us remember this. “Boasting is excluded.” Yes; all boasting—the boasting of Job, the boasting of his friends. If Job had succeeded in establishing his cause, he would have boasted. If, on the other hand, his friends had succeeded in silencing him, they might have boasted. But no; “God thrusteth him down, not man.” Thus it was. Thus it is; and thus it must ever be. God knows how to humble the proud heart, and subdue the stubborn will. It is utterly vain for anyone to set himself up; for we may rest assured, that everyone who is set up must, sooner or later, be upset. The moral government of God has so ordered and enacted that all that is high and lifted up must come down. This is a salutary truth for us all; but especially for the young, the ardent, and the aspiring. It is well to keep in the shade, for there it is we most enjoy the sunshine. This may seem a paradox; but, to faith, it is plain. The humble, retired, shady path is, unquestionably, the safest, the happiest, and the best. May we ever be found treading it until we reach that bright and blessed scene where pride and ambition are unknown!

The effect of Elihu's opening words upon Job's three friends was most striking. "They were amazed; they answered no more; they left off speaking. When I had waited—for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more—I said, I will answer also my part; I also will show mine opinion." And then, lest any should suppose that he was speaking his own words, he adds, "For I am full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me." This is the true spring and power of all ministry, in all ages. It must be "the inspiration of the Almighty" or it is worth absolutely nothing.

We repeat, this is the only true source of ministry, at all times and in all places. And, in saying this, we do not forget that a mighty change took place when our Lord Christ ascended to heaven and took His seat at the right hand of God, in virtue of accomplished redemption. To this glorious truth we have, over and over again, referred the readers of "Things New and Old;" and, hence, we shall not now permit ourselves to dwell upon it. We merely touch upon it in this place, lest the reader might imagine that, when we speak of the true source of ministry in all ages, we were forgetting what is marked and distinctive in the Church of God now in consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, the presence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the individual believer, and in the Church which is the body of Christ, on earth. Far from it. Thanks and praise be to God, we have too deep a sense of the value, importance, and practical weight of that grand and glorious truth ever to lose sight of it for a moment. Indeed it is just this deep sense, together with the remembrance of Satan's ceaseless effort to ignore the truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, that leads us to pen this cautionary paragraph.

Still, Elihu's principle must ever hold good. If any man is to speak with power and practical effect, he must be able, in some measure, to say, "I am full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer." Thus it must ever be, in measure at least, with all who will speak, with real power and effect, to the hearts and consciences of their fellows. We are forcibly reminded, by Elihu's glowing words, of that memorable passage in the seventh of John, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." True it is that Elihu knew not the glorious truth set forth in these words of our Lord, inasmuch as they were not made good till fifteen centuries after his time. But then he knew the principle—he possessed the germ of what was afterward to come out in full blow and rich mellow fruit. He knew that a man, if he is to speak with point, pungency, and power, must speak by the inspiration of the Almighty. He had listened till he was tired, to men talking a quantity of powerless matter-saying some truisms—drawing from their own experience, or from the musty stores of human tradition. He was well-nigh wearied out with all this, and he rises, in the mighty energy of the Spirit, to address his hearers as one fitted to speak like an oracle of God.

Here lies the deep and blessed secret of ministerial power and success. "If any man speak," says Peter, "let him speak as the oracles of God." It is not, be it carefully observed, merely speaking according to scripture—an all-important and essential matter, most surely. It is more. A man may rise and address his fellows for an hour, and, from beginning to end of his discourse, he may not utter so much as a single unscriptural sentence; and all the while, he may not have been God's oracle at the time; he may not have been God's mouthpiece or the present exponent of His mind to the souls before him.

This is peculiarly solemn, and demands the grave consideration of all who are called to open their lips in the midst of God's people. It is one thing to utter a certain amount of true sentiment, and quite another to be the living channel of communication between the very heart of God and the souls of God's people. It is this latter, and this alone, that constitutes true ministry. A man who speaks according to this most excellent principle will so affect the hearts and consciences of his hearers that each one will feel tempted to think that someone has been telling tales to the speaker, and revealing to him the very feelings of his own heart. In short, a man who speaks as an oracle of God will bring the conscience of the hearer so into the very light of the divine presence, that every chamber of the heart is laid open, and every moral spring touched. This is true ministry. All else is powerless, valueless, fruitless. Nothing is more deplorable and humiliating than to listen to a man who is evidently drawing from his own poor and scanty resources, or trafficking in second-hand truth, in borrowed thoughts. Better far for such to be silent—better for their hearers—better for themselves. Nor this only. We may often hear a man giving forth to his fellows that on which his own mind has been dwelling in private with much interest and profit. He may utter truth, and important truth; but it is not the truth for the souls of the people—the truth for the moment. He has spoken according to scripture, so far as his matter is concerned; but he has not spoken as an oracle of God.

Thus, then, may all learn a valuable lesson from Elihu; and, most surely, it is a needed lesson. Some may feel disposed to say it is a difficult lesson—a hard saying. But no; if we only live in the Lord's presence, in the abiding sense of our own nothingness, and of His all-sufficiency, we shall know the precious secret of all effective ministry; we shall know how to lean upon God alone, and thus be independent of men, in the right sense; we shall be able to enter into the meaning and force of Elihu's further words, "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away." Job 32:21, 22.

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

Job and His Friends: Part 7

In studying the ministry of Elihu, we find in it two grand elements, namely, “grace and truth.” Both these were essential in dealing with Job; and, consequently, we find both coming out with extraordinary power. He tells Job and his friends, very distinctly, that he knows not how to give flattering titles unto man. Here the voice of “truth” falls, with great clearness, on the ear. Truth puts everyone in his right place, and, just because it does so, it cannot bestow titles of flattery upon a poor guilty mortal, however much that mortal might be gratified by them. Man must be brought to know himself—to see his true condition—to confess what he really is. This was precisely what Job needed. He did not know himself, and his friends could not give him that knowledge. He needed to be led down into the depths; but his friends could not conduct him thither. He needed self-judgment; but his friends were wholly unable to produce it.

But Elihu begins by telling Job the truth. He introduces God into the scene in His true character. This was just what the three friends had failed to do. No doubt, they had referred to God; but their references were cloudy, distorted, and false. This is plain from chapter 42:7, 8, where we are told that, “The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering: and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.” They had utterly failed to bring God before the soul of their friend, and, therefore, they failed in producing the needed self-judgment.

Not so Elihu. He pursues a totally different line of things. He brings the light of “truth” to bear upon Job’s conscience; and, at the same time, he administers the precious balm of “grace” to his heart. Let us quote his further sayings: “Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth. My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart, and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead; I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.”

In these accents, the ministry of “grace” unfolds itself, sweetly and powerfully, to the heart of Job. Of this most excellent ingredient there was a total absence in the ministry of the three friends. They showed themselves only too ready to bear down upon Job with “a heavy hand.” They were stern judges—severe censors—false interpreters. They could fix their cold gray eye upon the wounds of their poor afflicted friend and wonder how they came there. They looked on the crumbling ruins of his house, and drew the harsh inference that the ruin was but the result of his bad behavior. They beheld his fallen fortunes, and, with unmitigated severity, concluded that those fortunes had fallen because of his faults. They had proved themselves to be entirely one-sided

judges. They had wholly misunderstood the dealings of God. They had never seized the full moral force of that one weighty sentence, "God trieth the righteous" In a word, they were utterly astray. Their standpoint was false, and hence their whole range of vision was defective. There was neither "grace" nor "truth" in their ministry, and therefore they failed to convince Job. They condemned him without convincing him, whereas they ought to have convinced him and made him condemn himself.

Here it is that Elihu stands out in vivid contrast. He tells Job the truth; but he lays no heavy hand upon him. Elihu had learned the mighty mysterious power of "the still small voice"—the soul-subduing, heart-melting virtue of grace. Job had given utterance to a quantity of false notions about himself, and those notions had sprouted from a root to which the sharp ax of "truth" had to be applied. "Surely," says Elihu, "thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me."

What words for any poor sinful mortal to utter! Surely, though "the true light" in which we may walk had not shone on the soul of this patriarch, we may well marvel at such language. And yet, mark what follows. Although he was so clean, so innocent, so free from iniquity, he nevertheless says of God that, "He findeth occasions, he counteth me for his enemy. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths." Here is a palpable discrepancy. How could a holy, just, and righteous Being count a pure and innocent man His enemy? Impossible. Either Job was self-deceived, or God was unrighteous; and Elihu, as the minister of truth, is not long in pronouncing a judgment and telling us which is which. "Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man." What a simple truth! And yet how little understood! If God is greater than man, then, obviously. He, and not man, must be the Judge of what is right. This the infidel heart refuses; and hence the constant tendency to sit in judgment upon the works and ways and word of God—upon God himself. Man, in his impious and infidel folly, undertakes to pronounce judgment upon what is and what is not worthy of God—to decide upon what God ought and what He ought not to say and to do. He proves himself utterly ignorant of that most simple, obvious, necessary truth that "God is greater than man."

Now, it is when the heart bows under the weight of this great moral truth, that we are in a fit attitude to understand the object of God's dealings with us. Assuredly, He must have the upper hand. "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth hack his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."

The real secret of all Job's false reasoning is to be found in the fact that he did not understand the character of God, or the object of all His dealings. He did not see that God was trying him—that He was behind the scenes and using various agents for the accomplishment of His wise and gracious ends. Even Satan himself was a mere instrument in the hand of God; nor could he move the breadth of a hair beyond the divinely prescribed limit; and moreover, when he had executed his appointed business, he was dismissed, and we hear no more about him. God was dealing with Job. He was trying him in order that He might instruct him, withdraw him from his purpose, and hide pride from him. Had Job seized this grand point, it would have saved him a world of strife and

contention. Instead of getting angry with people and things—with individuals and influences, he would have judged himself and bowed low before the Lord in meekness and brokenness and true contrition.

This is immensely important for us all. We are all of us prone to forget the weighty fact that “God trieth the righteous.” “He withdraweth not his eyes from them.” We are in His hands, and under His eye continually. We are the objects of His deep, tender, and unchanging love; but we are also the subjects of His wise moral government. His dealings with us are varied. They are sometimes preventive; sometimes corrective; always instructive. We may be bent on some course of our own, the end of which would be moral ruin. He intervenes and withdraws us from our purpose. He dashes into fragments our air-built castles, dissipates our golden dreams, and interrupts many a darling scheme on which our hearts were bent and which would have proved to be certain destruction. “Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.”

If the reader will turn for a moment to Heb. 12:3-12, he will find much precious instruction on the subject of God’s dealings with His people. We do not attempt to dwell upon it, but would merely remark that it presents three distinct ways in which we may meet the chastening of our Father’s hand. We may “despise” it, as though His hand and His voice were not in it; we may “faint” under it, as though it were intolerable, and not the precious fruit of His love; or, lastly, we may be “exercised by it,” and thus reap, in due time, “the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

Now, if our patriarch had only seized the great fact that God was dealing with him, that He was trying him for his ultimate good—that He was using circumstances, people, the Sabeans, Satan himself, as His instruments—that all his trials, his losses, his bereavements, his sufferings, were but God’s marvelous agency in bringing about His wise and gracious end—that He would assuredly perfect that which concerned His dear and much loved servant, because His mercy endureth forever—in a word, had Job only lost sight of all second causes, and fixed his thoughts upon the living God alone, and accepted all from His loving hand, he would have more speedily reached the divine solution of all his difficulties.

But it is precisely here that we are all apt to break down. We get occupied with men and things—we view them in reference to ourselves. We do not walk with God through, or rather above the circumstances, but, on the contrary, we allow the circumstances to get power over us. In place of keeping God between us and our circumstances, we permit these latter to get between us and God. Thus we lose the sense of His presence—the light of His countenance—the holy calmness of being in His loving hand, and under His fatherly eye. We become fretful, impatient, irritable, faultfinding. We get far away from God, out of communion, thoroughly astray, judging everyone except ourselves, until, at length, God takes us in hand, and by His own direct and powerful ministry, brings us back to Himself, in true brokenness of heart and humbleness of mind. This is “the end of the Lord.”

We must, however, draw this paper to a close, and, with it, this entire series. Gladly would we expatiate further on Elihu’s remarkable ministry; with pleasure and profit could we quote his further appeals to Job’s heart and conscience—his pungent arguments—his pointed questions. But we must forbear, and leave the reader to go through the remaining chapters for himself. In so doing, he will find that when Elihu closes his ministry, God Himself begins to deal directly with the soul of

His servant, (chap, 38.-41.) He appeals to His works in creation as the display of a power and wisdom which ought assuredly to make Job feel his own littleness. We do not attempt to cull passages from one of the most magnificent and sublime sections of the inspired canon. It must be read as a whole. It needs no comment. The human finger could but tarnish its luster. Its plainness is only equaled by its moral grandeur. All we shall attempt to do is to call attention to the powerful effect produced upon the heart of Job by this the most marvelous ministry surely under which mortal man was ever called to sit—the immediate ministry of the living God Himself.

This effect was threefold. It had reference to God; to himself; and to his friends—the very points on which he was so entirely astray. As to God, Elihu had declared Job's mistake, in the following words, "Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end, because of his answers for wicked men. For he addeth rebellion unto his sin: he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.....Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst: My righteousness is more than God's?" But mark the change. Harken to the breathings of a truly repentant spirit—the brief yet comprehensive statement of a corrected judgment. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me. which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." (Chap. 42:1-9.)

Here, then, was the turning point. All his previous statements, as to God and His ways, are now pronounced to be "words without knowledge." What a confession! What a moment in a man's history when he discovers that lie has been all wrong! What a thorough breakdown! What profound humiliation! It reminds us of Jacob getting the hollow of his thigh touched, and thus learning his utter weakness and nothingness. These are weighty moments in the history of souls—great epochs which leave an indelible impress on the whole moral being and character. To get right thoughts about God is to begin to get right about everything. If I am wrong about God, I am wrong about myself, wrong about my fellows, wrong about all.

Thus it was with Job. His new thoughts as to God were immediately connected with new thoughts of himself; and hence we find that the elaborate self-vindication—the impassioned egotism—the vehement self-gratulation—the lengthened arguments in self-defense—all is laid aside—all displaced by one short sentence of three words, "I am vile." And what is to be done with this vile self? Talk about it? Set it up? Be occupied with it? Take counsel for it? Make provision for it? Nay, "I abhor it."

This is the true moral ground for every one of us. Job took a long time to reach it; and so do we. Many of us imagine that we have reached the end of self when we have given a nominal assent to the doctrine of human depravity, or judged some of those sprouts which have appeared above the surface of our practical life. But alas! it is to be feared that very few of us indeed really know the full truth about ourselves. It is one thing to say "We are all vile," and quite another to feel, deep down in the heart, that "I am vile." This latter can only be known and habitually realized in the immediate presence of God. The two things must ever go together, "Mine eye seeth thee"— "Wherefore I abhor myself." It is as the light of what God is shines in upon what I am, that I abhor myself. And then my self-abhorrence is a real thing. It is not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

It will be seen in a life of self-abnegation—an humble spirit, a lowly mind, a gracious carriage in the midst of the scene through which I am called to pass. It is of little use to profess very low thoughts of self, while, at the same time, we are quick to resent any injury done to us, any fancied in-suit, slight, or disparagement. The true secret of a broken and contrite heart is to abide ever in the divine presence, and then we are able to carry ourselves right toward those with whom we have to do.

Thus we find that when Job got right as to God and himself, he soon got right as to his friends, for he learned to pray for them. Yes, he could pray for the “miserable comforters”—the “physicians of no value”—the very men with whom he had so long, so stoutly, and so vehemently contended. “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.”

This is morally beautiful. It is perfect. It is the rare and exquisite fruit of divine workmanship. Nothing can be more touching than to see Job's three friends exchanging their experience, their tradition, and their legality for the precious “burnt-offering;” and to see our dear patriarch exchanging his bitter invectives for the sweet prayer of charity. In short, it is a most soul-subduing scene altogether. The combatants are in the dust before God and in each other's arms. The strife is ended; the war of words is closed; and instead thereof, we have the tears of repentance, the sweet odor of the burnt offering, the embrace of love.

Happy scene! Precious fruit of divine ministry! What remains? What more is needed? What but that the hand of God should lay on the top stone on the beautiful structure? Nor is this lacking, for we read, “The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.” But how? By what agency? Was it by his own independent industry and clever management? No: all is changed. Job is on new moral ground. He has new thoughts of God; new thoughts of himself; new thoughts of his friends; new thoughts of his circumstances; all things are become new. “Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house; and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and everyone an earring of gold. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.....After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.”

Lines on an Aged, Intensely-Suffering, and Much-Loved Fellow Pilgrim

Aged pilgrim! worn and weary,
Groaning 'neath thy heavy load;
Soon will end the desert dreary,
In the Father's blest abode.
Joys eternal there await thee,
Thou shalt see thy Savior there;
Who with open arms shall greet thee,
To those mansions, bright and fair
He who bore thy sins' full judgment,
On the cross of Calvary,
Keeps the gold in its refinement,
Till He there His image see.
His own hand, and not another,
Guards the object of His love—
Oh! my suffering aged brother,
What a Friend have we above!
Thine has been no common training,
Years of deep affliction thine—
Sufferings past, and still remaining,
Make but grace more brightly shine.
We have all to learn a lesson
From these dealings of our God—
Whom He loves He needs must chasten,
May we kiss the chastening rod.
Bright's the prospect that's before thee;

Strong's the hand that bears thee up;
Thou shalt never faint—though weary—
Jesus drank the bitter cup.
Thine's the cup of full salvation,
Thou shalt soon His glory see,
Heaven is thy destination,
Jesus thy reward shall be.
Bristol. T. S.

Living God and a Living Faith: Part 1

There is one grand substantial fact standing prominently forth on every page of the Volume of God, and illustrated in every stage of the history of God's people—a fact of immense weight and moral power at all times, but specially in seasons of darkness, difficulty, and discouragement occasioned by the low condition of things among those who profess to be on the Lord's side. The fact is this, That faith can always count on God, and God will always answer faith.

Such is our fact, such our thesis; and if the reader will turn with us, for a few moments, to 2 Chron. 20 he will find a very beautiful and a very striking illustration.

This chapter shows us the good king Jehoshaphat under very heavy pressure indeed—it records a dark moment in his history. “It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.” Then—for people are ever quick to run with evil tidings—“there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea, on this side Syria.” Here was a difficulty of no ordinary nature. This invading host was made up of the descendants of Lot and of Esau; and this fact might give rise to a thousand conflicting thoughts and distracting questions in the mind of Jehoshaphat. They were not Egyptians or Assyrians, concerning whom there could be no question whatever; but both Esau and Lot stood in certain relations to Israel, and a question might suggest itself as to how far such relations were to be recognized.

Nor this only. The practical state of the entire nation of Israel—the actual condition of God's people, was such as to give rise to the most serious misgivings. Israel no longer presented an unbroken front to an invading foe their visible unity was gone. A grievous breach had made in their battlements. The ten tribes and the two were rent asunder, the one from the other. The condition of the former was terrible; and that of the latter, shaky enough.

Thus the circumstances of king Jehoshaphat were dark and discouraging in the extreme; and, even as regards himself and his practical course, he was but just emerging from the consequences of a very humiliating fall, so that his reminiscences would be quite as cheerless as his surroundings.

But it is just here that our grand substantial fact presents itself to the vision of faith, and flings a mantle of light over the whole scene. Things looked gloomy, no doubt; but God was to be counted upon by faith, and faith could count upon Him. God is a never failing resource—a great reality, at all times, and under all circumstances. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms

were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Psalm 46:1-7.

Here, then, was Jehoshaphat's resource, in the day of his trouble; and to it he, at once, betook himself, in that earnest faith which never fails to draw down power and blessing, from the living and true God, to meet every exigency of the way. "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever?"

These are the fine breathings of a lively faith—a faith that always enables the soul to take the very highest possible ground. It mattered not in the smallest degree, what unsettled questions there might be between Esau and Jacob; there were none between Abraham and the Almighty God. Now, God had given the land to Abraham His friend. For how long? Forever. This was enough. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God will never cancel His call, or take back a gift. This is a fixed foundation principle; and on this faith always takes its stand with firm decision. The enemy might throw in a thousand suggestions; and the poor heart might throw up a thousand reasonings. It might seem like presumption and empty conceit, on the part of Jehoshaphat, to plant his foot on such lofty ground. It was all well enough in the days of David, or of Solomon, or of Joshua, when the unity of the nation was unbroken, and the banner of Jehovah floated in triumph over the twelve tribes of Israel. But things were sadly changed; and it ill became one in Jehoshaphat's circumstances to use such lofty language or assume to occupy such a high position.

What is faith's reply to all this? A very simple, but a very powerful one—God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Had He not made Abraham a present of the land of Canaan? Had He not bestowed it upon his seed forever? Had He not ratified the gift by His word and His oath—those two immutable things in which it was impossible for Him to be? Unquestionably. But then what of the law? Did not that make some difference? None whatever, as regards God's gift and promise. Four centuries previous to the giving of the law, was the great transaction settled and stablished between the Almighty God and Abraham His friend—and settled and stablished forever. Hence nothing could possibly touch this. There were no legal conditions proposed to Abraham. All was pure and absolute grace. God gave the land to Abraham by promise, and not by law, in any shape or form.

Now, it was on this original ground that Jehoshaphat took his stand; and he was right. It was the only thing for him to do. He had not one hair's breadth of solid standing ground, short of these golden words, "Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever." It was either this or nothing. A living faith always lays hold on the living God. It cannot stop short of Him. It looks not at men or their circumstances. It takes no account of the changes and chances of this mortal life. It lives and moves and has its being in the immediate presence of the living God; it rejoices in the cloudless sunlight of His blessed countenance. It carries on all its artless reasonings in the

sanctuary, and draws all its happy conclusions from facts discovered there. It does not lower the standard according to the condition of things around, but boldly and decidedly takes up its position on the very highest ground.

Now, these actings of faith are always most grateful to the heart of God. The living God delights in a living faith. We may be quite sure that the bolder the grasp of faith, the more welcome it is to God. We need never suppose that the blessed One is either gratified or glorified by the workings of a legal mind. No, no; He delights to be trusted without a shadow of reserve or misgiving. He delights to be fully counted upon and largely used; and the deeper the need, and the darker the surrounding gloom, the more is He glorified by the faith that draws upon Him.

Hence, we may assert with perfect confidence, that; the attitude and the utterances of Jehoshaphat, in the scene before us, were in full accordance with the mind of God. There is something perfectly beautiful to see him, as it were, opening the original lease, and laying his finger on that clause in virtue of which Israel held as tenants forever under God. Nothing could cancel that clause or break that lease. No flaw there. All was ordered and sure. "Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend, forever."

This was solid ground—the ground of God—the ground of faith, which no power of the enemy can ever shake. True, the enemy might remind Jehoshaphat of sin and folly, failure and unfaithfulness. Nay, he might suggest to him that the very fact of the threatened invasion proved that Israel had fallen, for had they not done so, there would be neither enemy nor evil.

But for this, too, grace had provided an answer—an answer which faith know well how to appropriate. Jehoshaphat reminds Jehovah of the house which Solomon had built to His Name. "They have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not. Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee!" Verse 8-12.

Here, truly, is a living faith dealing with the living God. It is no mere empty profession—no lifeless creed—no cold uninfluential theory. It is not a man "saying he has faith." Such things will never stand in the day of battle. They may do well enough when all is calm, smooth, and bright; but when difficulties have to be grappled with—when the enemy has to be met face to face, all merely nominal faith, all mere lip profession, will prove like autumn leaves before the blast. Nothing will stand the test of actual conflict but a living personal faith in a living personal Savior-God. This is what is needed. It is this which alone can sustain the heart, come what may. Faith brings God into the scene, and all is strength, victory, and perfect peace.

Thus it was with the king of Judah, in the days of 2 Chron. 20. "We have no might; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." This is the way to occupy God's ground, even with the eyes fixed on God Himself. This is the true secret of stability and peace. The devil will leave no

stone unturned to drive us off the true ground which, as Christians, we ought to occupy in these last days; and we, in ourselves, have no might whatever against him. Our only resource is in the living God. If our eyes are upon Him, nothing can harm us. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Reader, art thou on God's ground? Canst thou give a "Thus saith the Lord" for the position which thou occupiest, at this moment? Art thou consciously standing on the solid ground of holy scripture? Is there anything questionable in thy surroundings and associations? We beseech thee to weigh these questions solemnly as in the divine presence. Be assured they are of moment just now. We are passing through critical moments. Men are taking sides; principles are working and coming to a head. Never was it more needful to be thoroughly and unmistakably on the Lord's side. Jehoshaphat never could have met the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, had he not been persuaded that his feet were on the very ground which God had given to Abraham. If the enemy could have shaken his confidence as to this, he would have had an easy victory. But Jehoshaphat knew where he was; He knew his ground. He understood his bearings; and therefore he could fix his eyes with confidence upon the living God. He had no misgivings as to his position. He did not say, as so many do, now-a-days, "I am not quite sure. I hope I am; but sometimes clouds come over my soul, and make me hesitate as to whether I am really on divine ground." Ah! no, reader, the king of Judah would not have understood such language at all. All was clear to him. His eye rested on the original grant. He felt sure he was on the true ground of the Israel of God; and albeit all Israel were not there with him, yet God was with him, and that was enough. His was a living faith in the living God—the only thing that will stand in the day of trial.

But more of this in our next.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Living God and a Living Faith: Part 2

At the close of our last paper, we were occupied with the position of the king of Judah, in 2 Chron. 20 There is something in his attitude and utterance, on that memorable occasion, well worthy of the reader's profound attention. His feet were firmly fixed on God's ground, and his eyes as firmly fixed on God Himself; and, in addition to this, there was the deep sense of his own thorough nothingness. He had not so much as a shadow of a doubt as to the fact of his being in possession of the very inheritance which God had given him. He knew that he was in his right place. He did not hope it; still less did he doubt it; no, he knew it. He could say, "I believe and am sure."

This is all-important. It is impossible to stand against the enemy, if there is anything equivocal in our position. If there be any secret misgiving as to our being in our right place—if we cannot give a "Thus saith the Lord" for the position which we occupy, the path we tread, the associations in which we stand, the work in which we are engaged, there will, most assuredly, be weakness in the hour of conflict. Satan is sure to avail himself of the smallest misgiving in the soul. All must be settled as to our positive standing, if we would make any headway against the enemy. There must be an unclouded confidence as to our real position before God, else the foe will have an easy victory.

Now, it is precisely here that there is so much weakness apparent among the children of God. Very few, comparatively, are clear, sound, and settled as to their foundation—very few are able, without any reserve, to take the blessed ground of being washed in the blood of Jesus, and sealed with the Holy Spirit. At times they hope it. When things go well with them; when they have had a good time in the closet; when they have enjoyed nearness to God in prayer, or over the word; while they are sitting under a clear, fervent, forcible ministry—at such moments, perhaps, they can venture to speak hopefully about themselves. But, very soon, dark clouds gather; they feel the workings of indwelling sin; they are afflicted with wandering thoughts; or it may be, they have been betrayed into some levity of spirit, or irritability of temper; then they begin to reason about themselves, and to question whether they are, in reality, the children of God. And from reasonings and questionings, they very speedily slip into positive unbelief, and then plunge into the thick gloom of a despondency bordering on despair.

All this is most sad. It is, at once, dishonoring to God, and destructive of the soul's peace; and as to progress, in such a condition, it is wholly out of the question. How can any one run a race, if he has not cleared the starting post? How can he erect a building, if he has not laid the foundation? And, on the same principle, how can a soul grow in the divine life, if he is always liable to doubt whether he has that life or not?

But it may be that some of our readers are disposed to put such a question as the following, "How can I be sure that I am on God's ground? —that I am washed in the blood of Jesus and sealed with the Holy Spirit?" We reply, How do you know that you are a lost sinner? Is it because you feel it? Is mere feeling the ground of your faith. If so, it is not a divine faith at all. True faith rests only on the testimony of holy scripture. No doubt, it is by the gracious energy of the Holy Ghost that

anyone can exercise this living faith; but we are speaking now of the true ground of faith—the authority—the basis on which it rests, and that is simply the holy scriptures which, as the inspired apostle tells us, are able to make us wise unto salvation, and which even a child could know, without the aid of the church, the clergy, the fathers, the doctors, the councils, the colleges, or any other human intervention whatsoever.

“Abraham believed God.” Here was divine faith. It was not a question of feeling. Indeed, if Abraham had been influenced by his feelings, he would have been a doubter instead of a believer. For what had he to build upon in himself? “His own body now dead.” A poor ground surely on which to build his faith in the promise of an innumerable seed. But, we are told, “He considered not his own body now dead.” (Rom. 4) What, then, did he consider? He considered the word of the living God, and on that he rested. Now this is faith. And mark what the apostle says: “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief”—for unbelief is always a staggerer—“but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

“Ah! but,” the anxious reader may say, “what has all this to say to my case? I am not an Abraham—I cannot expect a special revelation from God. How am I to know that God has spoken to me? How can I possess this precious faith?” Well, dear friend, mark the apostle’s further statement, “Now,” he adds, “it was not written for his [Abraham’s] sake alone, that it was imputed to Him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if” —if what?—if we feel, realize, or experience aught in ourselves? Nay, but “if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”

All this is full of solid comfort and richest consolation. It assures the anxious enquirer that he has the selfsame ground and authority to rest upon that Abraham had, with an immensely higher measure of light thrown on that ground, inasmuch as Abraham was called to believe in a promise whereas we are privileged to believe in an accomplished fact. He was called to look forward to something which was to be done; we look back at something that is done, even an accomplished redemption, attested by the fact of a risen and glorified Savior, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

But as to the ground or authority on which we are called to rest our souls, it is the same in our case as in Abraham’s and all true believers in all ages—it is the word of God—the holy scriptures. There is no other foundation of faith but this; and the faith that rests on any other is not true faith at all. A faith resting on human tradition—on the authority of the church—on the authority of so-called general councils—on the clergy—or on learned men, is not divine faith, but mere superstition: it is a faith which “stands in the wisdom of men,” and not “in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:5.)

Now, it is utterly impossible for any human pen or mortal tongue to overstate the value or importance of this grand principle—this principle of a living faith. Its value at the present moment is positively unspeakable. We believe it to be the divine antidote against most, if not all, the leading errors, evils, and hostile influences of the day in which our lot is cast. There is a tremendous shaking going on around us. Minds are agitated. Disturbing forces are abroad. There is a loosening of the foundations. Old institutions, to which the human mind clings, as the ivy to the oak, are tottering on every side; and many are actually fallen: and thousands of souls that have been finding shelter in them are dislodged and scared, and know not whither to turn. Some are

saying, "The bricks are thrown down, but we will build with hewn stone." Many are at their wits' end, and most are ill at ease.

Nor is this all; there is a numerous class which we may say we have constantly before us in preparing our papers for "Things New and Old"—a class made up, for the most part, of those who are not so much concerned about the condition and destiny of religious institutions and ecclesiastical systems, as about the condition and destiny of their own precious immortal souls—of those who are not so much agitated by questions about "Broad Church," "High Church," "Low Church," "State Church," or "Free Church," as about this one great question, "What must I do to be saved?" What have we to say to these latter? What is the real want of their souls? Simply this, "A living faith in the living God." This is what is needed for all who are disturbed by what they see without, or feel within. Our unfailing resource is in the living God and in His Son Jesus Christ, as revealed by the Eternal Spirit in the holy scriptures.

Here is the true resting place of faith, and to this we do, most earnestly, most urgently and solemnly, invite the anxious reader. In one word, we entreat him to stay his whole soul on the word of God—the holy scriptures. Here we have authority for all that we need to know, to believe, and to do.

Is it a question of anxiety about my eternal salvation? Hear the following words, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." (Isa. 28:16.) These precious words, so pregnant with tranquillizing power, are quoted by the inspired apostle, in the New Testament scripture; "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." 1 Pet. 2:6.

What solid comfort—what deep and settled repose for the anxious soul is here! God has laid the foundation, and that foundation is nothing less than His own eternal and co-equal Son, the Son who had dwelt from all eternity in His bosom. This foundation is, in every respect, adequate to sustain the whole weight of the counsels and purposes of the eternal Three in One—to meet all the claims of the nature, the character, and the throne of God.

Being all this, it must needs be fully adequate to meet all the need of the anxious soul, of what kind soever that need may be. If Christ is enough for God, He must, of necessity, be enough for man—for any man—for the reader; and that He is enough is proved by the very passage just quoted. He is God's own foundation, laid by His own hand, the foundation and center of that glorious system of royal and victorious grace set forth in the word "Zion." (See Heb. 12:22-24.) He is God's own precious, tried, chief corner stone—that blessed One who went down into death's dark waters—bore the heavy judgment and wrath of God against sin—robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory—destroyed him that had the power of death—wrested from the enemy's grasp that terrible weapon with which sin had armed him, and made it the very instrument of his eternal defeat and confusion. Having done all this, He was received up into glory, and seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Such is God's foundation, to which He graciously calls the attention of every one who really feels the need of something divinely solid on which to build, in view of the hollow and shadowy scenes of this world, and in prospect of the stern realities of eternity. Dear reader, you are now invited to

build upon this foundation. Be assured it is for you as positively and distinctively as though you heard a voice from heaven speaking to your own very self. The word of the living God is addressed “to every creature under heaven”—“Whosoever will” is invited to come. The inspired volume has been placed in your hand and laid open before your eyes; and for what, think you? Is it to mock or to tantalize you by presenting before you what was never intended for you? Ah! no, reader; such is not God’s way. Does He send His sunlight and His showers to mock and to tantalize, or to gladden and refresh? Do you ever think of calling in question your own very personal welcome to study the book of Creation? Never; and yet there might be some show of foundation for such a question, inasmuch as, since that wondrous volume was thrown open, sin has entered and flung its dark blots over the pages thereof. But, spite of sin in all its forms and all its consequences, spite of Satan’s power and malice, God has spoken. He has caused His voice to be heard in this dark and sinful world. And what has He said? “Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation.” This is something entirely new. It is as though our blessed, loving, and ever gracious God had said to us, “Here, I have begun on the new. I have laid a foundation, on the ground of redemption, which nothing can ever touch, neither sin, nor Satan, nor aught else. I lay the foundation, and pledge my word that whosoever believes—whosoever commits himself, in childlike, unquestioning confidence, to my foundation—whosoever rests in my Christ—whosoever is satisfied with my precious, tried, chief corner stone, shall never—no never—no never be confounded—never be put to shame—never be disappointed—shall never perish, world without end.”

Beloved reader, dost thou still hesitate? We solemnly avow we cannot see even the shadow of a foundation of a reason why thou shouldst. If there were any question raised, or any condition proposed, or any barrier erected, reason would that thou mightest hesitate. If there were so much as a single preliminary to be settled by thee—if it were made a question of feeling or of experience, or of aught else that thou couldst do, or feel, or be, then verily thou mightest justly pause. But there is absolutely nothing of the sort. There is the Christ of God and the word of God, and—what then? “He that believeth shall not be confounded.” In short it is simply “A living faith in the living God.” It is taking God at His word. It is believing what He says because He says it. It is committing your soul to the word of Him who cannot lie. It is doing what Abraham did when he believed God and was counted righteous. It is doing what Jehoshaphat did when he planted his foot firmly on those immortal words, “Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever.” It is doing what the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints in all ages have done, when they rested their souls for time and eternity upon that word which “is settled forever in heaven,” and thus lived in peace and died in hope of a glorious resurrection. It is resting calmly and sweetly on the immovable rock of holy scripture, and thus proving the divine and sustaining virtue of that which has never failed any who trusted it, and never will, and never can.

Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of having such a foundation, in a world like this, where death, decay, and change are stamped upon all; where friendship’s fondest links are snapped in the twinkling of an eye by death’s rude hand; where all that seems, to nature’s view, most stable, is liable to be swept away in a moment by the rushing tide of popular revolution; where there is absolutely nothing on which the heart can lean, and say, “I have now found permanent repose.” What a mercy, in such a scene, to have “A living faith in the living God!”

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Living God and a Living Faith: Part 3

“They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.” Such is the veritable record of the living God—a record made good in the experience of all those who have been enabled, through grace, to exercise a living faith. But then we must remember how much is involved in those three words, “wait for me.” The waiting must be a real thing. It will not do to say we are waiting on God, when, in reality, our eye is askance upon some human prop or creature confidence. We must be absolutely “shut up” to God. We must be brought to the end of self, and to the bottom of circumstances, in order fully to prove what the life of faith is, and what God’s resources are. God and the creature can never occupy the same platform. It must be God alone. “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation.” Psalm 67:5, 6.

Thus it was with Jehoshaphat, in that scene recorded in 2 Chron. 20 He was wholly cast upon God. It was either God or nothing. “We have no might.” But what then? “Our eyes are upon thee.” This was enough. It was well for Jehoshaphat not to have so much as a single atom of might—a single ray of knowledge. He was in the very best possible attitude and condition to prove what God was. It would have been an incalculable loss to him to have been possessed of the very smallest particle of creature strength or creature wisdom, inasmuch as it could only have proved a hindrance to him in leaning exclusively upon the arm and the counsel of the Almighty God. If the eye of faith rests upon the living God—if He fills the entire range of the soul’s vision, then what do we want with might or knowledge of our own? Who would think of resting in that which is human when he can have that which is divine? Who would lean on an arm of flesh, when he can lean on the arm of the living God?

Reader, art thou, at this moment, in any pressure, in any trial, need, or difficulty? If so, let us entreat thee to look simply and solely to the living God. Turn away thine eyes completely from the creature, “Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils.” Let thy faith take hold now on the strength of God Himself. Put thy whole case into His omnipotent hand. Cast thy burden, whatever it is, upon Him. Let there be no reserve. He is as willing as He is able, and as able as He is willing, to bear all. Only trust Him fully. He loves to be trusted—loves to be used. It is His joy, blessed be His name, to yield a ready and a full response to the appeal of faith. It is worth having a burden, to know the blessedness of rolling it over upon Him. So the king of Judah found it in the day of his trial, and so shall the reader find it now. God never fails a trusting heart. “They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.” Precious words! Let us mark how they are illustrated in the narrative before us.

No sooner had Jehoshaphat cast himself completely upon the Lord, than the divine response fell, with clearness and power, upon his ear. “Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.....ye shall not need to fight in this battle.

Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them; for the Lord will be with you.”

What an answer! “The battle is not yours, but God’s.” Only think of God’s having a battle with people! Assuredly, there could be little question as to the issue of such a battle. Jehoshaphat had put the whole matter into God’s hands, and God took it up and made it entirely His own.

It is always thus. Faith puts the difficulty, the trial, and the burden into God’s hands, and leaves Him to act. This is enough. God never refuses to respond to the appeal of faith; nay, it is His delight to answer it. Jehoshaphat had made it a question between God and the enemy. He had said, “They have come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.” Nothing could be simpler. God had given Israel the land, and He could keep them in it, spite of ten thousand foes. Thus faith would reason. The selfsame hand that had placed them in the land could keep them there. It was simply a question of divine power. “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee.”

It is a wonderful point in the history of any soul, to be brought to say, “I have no might.” It is the sure precursor of divine deliverance. The moment a man is brought to the discovery of his utter powerlessness, the divine word is, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” One does not want “might” to “stand still.” It needs no effort to “see the salvation of God.” This holds good in reference to the sinner in coming to Christ, at the first; and it holds equally good in reference to the Christian in his whole career from first to last. The great difficulty is to get to the end of our own strength. Once there, the whole thing is settled. There may be a vast amount of struggle and exercise ere we are brought to say —“without strength!” But, the moment we take that ground, the word is, “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” Human effort, in every shape and form, can but raise a barrier between our souls and God’s salvation. If God has undertaken for us, we may well be still. And has He not? Yes, blessed be His holy Name, He has charged Himself with all that concerns us, for time and eternity; and hence we have only to let Him act for us, in all things. It is our happy privilege to let Him go before us, while we follow on “in wonder, love, and praise.”

Thus it was in that interesting and instructive scene on which we have been dwelling. “Jehoshaphat bowed his head, with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.”

Here we have the true attitude and the proper occupation of the believer. Jehoshaphat withdrew his eyes from “that great company that had come against him,” and fixed them upon the living God. Jehovah had come right in and placed Himself between His people and the enemy, just as He had done in the day of the exodus, at the Red Sea, so that instead of looking at the difficulties, they might look at Him.

This, beloved reader, is the secret of victory, at all times, and under all circumstances. This it is which fills the heart with praise and thanksgiving, and bows the head in wondering worship. There is something perfectly beautiful in the entire bearing of Jehoshaphat and the congregation, on the occasion before us. They were evidently impressed with the thought that they had nothing to do but to praise God. And they were right. Had He not said to them, “Ye shall not need to fight?” What then had they to do? What remained for them? Nothing but praise. Jehovah was going out before them to fight; and they had but to follow after Him in adoring worship.

“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chron. 20:20.

It is of the very last importance that God's word should ever have its own supreme place in the heart of the Christian. God has spoken. He has given us His word; and it is for us to lean unshaken thereon. We want nothing more. The divine word is amply sufficient to give confidence, peace, and stability to the soul. We do not need evidences from man to prove the truth of God's word. That word carries its own powerful evidences with it. To suppose that we require human testimony to prove that God's word is true, is to imply that man's word is more valid, more trust-worthy, more authoritative, than the word of God. If we need a human voice to interpret, to ratify, to make God's revelation available, then are we virtually deprived of that revelation altogether.

We call the special attention of the reader to this point. It concerns the integrity of holy scripture. The grand question is this, Is God's word sufficient or not? Do we really want man's authority to make us sure that God has spoken? Far be the thought! This would be placing man's word above God's word, and thus depriving us of the only solid ground on which our souls can lean. This is precisely what the devil has been aiming at from the very beginning, and it is what he is aiming at now. He wants to remove from beneath our feet the solid rock of divine revelation, and to give us instead the sandy foundation of human authority. Hence it is that we do so earnestly press upon our readers the urgent need of keeping close to God's word, in simple unquestioning faith. It is really the true secret of stability and peace. If God's word be not enough for us, without man's interference, we are positively left without any sure basis for our soul's confidence; yea, we are cast adrift on the wild watery waste of skepticism, we are plunged in doubt and dark uncertainty: we are most miserable.

But, thanks and praise be to God, it is not so. “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” Here is the resting place of faith in all ages. God's eternal word, which is settled forever in heaven, which He has magnified above all His name; and which stands forth in its own divine dignity, fullness, and sufficiency before the eye of faith. We must utterly reject the idea that aught in the way of human authority, human evidences, or human feelings, is needful to make the testimony of God full weight in the balances of the soul. Grant us but this, that God has spoken, and we argue with bold decision that nothing more is needed as a foundation for genuine faith. In a word, if we want to be established and to prosper, we have simply to “Believe in the Lord our God.” It was this that enabled Jehoshaphat to bow his head in holy worship. It was this that enabled him to praise God for victory ere a single blow was struck. It was this that conducted him into “the valley of Berachah” and surrounded him with spoil more than he could carry away.

We shall close with the soul-stirring record.

“And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord: for his mercy endureth forever.” What a strange advance guard for an army! A company of singers! Such is faith's way of ordering the battle.

“And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten.” Only think of the Lord setting ambushments! Think of His engaging in the business of military tactics! How wonderful! God will do anything that His people need, if only His people will confide in Him, and leave themselves and their affairs absolutely in His hand.

“And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.” Such was the end of “that great company”—that formidable host—that terrible foe. All vanished away before the presence of the God of Israel. Yes, and had they been a million times more numerous, and more formidable, the issue would have been the same, for circumstances are nothing to the living God, and nothing to a living faith. When God fills the vision of the soul, difficulties fade away, and songs of praise break forth from joyful lips.

“And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them”—for that was all they had to do—“they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped, off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And on the fourth day, they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah [or “blessing”]; for there they blessed the Lord.”

Such, beloved reader, must ever be the result of a living faith in the living God. More than two thousand live hundred years have rolled away since the occurrence of the event on which we have been dwelling; but the record is as fresh as ever. No change has come over the living God, or over that living faith which ever takes hold of His strength, and counts on His faithfulness. It is as true to-day as it was in the day of Jehoshaphat that those who believe in the Lord our God shall be established, and shall prosper. They shall be endowed with strength, crowned with victory, clothed with spoils, and filled with songs of praise. May we then, through the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit, ever be enabled to exercise “a living faith IN THE LIVING GOD!”

My Resting Place

The following lines were written by M. J., who at an early age died of consumption, at Linlithgow Bridge, in humble life. They were found under her pillow after her death.

Shed not a tear for me,

O weep not that I die;

I am alone, where I would be,

In perfect peace I lie.

A refuge have I found through grace,

And Jesus is my resting-place.

The storms of life are o'er,

The conflict soon shall cease;

Doubts interpose no more—

Now I have perfect peace.

This refuge I have found through grace,

And Jesus is my resting-place.

His precious blood was shed,

Sin's deadly wound to heal;

To the full fountain led,

This perfect peace I feel.

This refuge I have found through grace,

And Jesus is my resting-place.

Naught else have I to plead,

No other claim to show;

In Christ is all I need,

His perfect peace I know.

That refuge I have found through grace,

And Jesus is my resting-place.

No painful thoughts annoy,
Jesus is ever nigh;
No fears disturb my joy,
In perfect peace I die.
This refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my resting-place.
Shed not a tear for me,
Weep not that I am gone;
I am where I would be—
Before my Father's throne.
This refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my resting-place.

Now I Am Free

At the close of the preaching I stated that if any were anxious about their souls, I should be happy to speak with them in the adjoining room, while those who could remain, in the large room, would continue in prayer for the Lord's blessing.

Scarcely had I entered the side room, when a young and well known friend came up to me in great earnestness of spirit, exclaiming, "Now I am free! Now I am free!" As I grasped her hand and looked at her, questions were unnecessary. The brightness, the decision of her countenance, and the fervency of her words, were enough to satisfy the most anxious or questioning mind. I could only look at her and say, "Is it you? Is it you? Bless the Lord—His name have all the glory!"

I had often talked with her about spiritual things; but her natural tendency was to reason and speculate. She was what would be called a reader, and I had been dreading the hurtful influence of the books she read. So that, putting all things together in my own mind, I was astonished as well as delighted.

After recovering from our happy surprise, and having indulged ourselves in a few exclamations of thankfulness, we began to realize our new position and relationship.

"And now, tell me," I said, "has all this blessed work been done tonight?" "Yes, tonight, and I may say, in a moment. As you were repeating those words, 'Christ gave Himself a ransom for all'—He put into God's hands the ransom price of our redemption, and God having accepted that price, He now proclaims the good news; Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom—I have it in my hand. Then I said to myself, I must be free. —If Christ has paid the ransom, and if God has accepted the ransom, I am free; and from that moment I was perfectly happy, and could only praise the Lord.— I know I am saved!" And she looked and she said. And much more she said, and much more I inquired; but I can only give in substance what will answer the end of publication. The reader will be satisfied to know that all proved a blessed reality. I have seldom seen the truth take a more thorough hold of a heart at the moment of conversion, or at any moment; and time has proved that it was not the shallow joy of the stony ground hearer, but the deep and permanent joy of God's grace in the heart. Her joy soon became the joy of many; just as the joy of each in heaven will become the common joy of all throughout eternity.

Oh! that the same blessed truth, in God's hands, may become the means of the happy deliverance of every soul that reads this brief record! And why not? we ask. Is it not as true now as then? —is it not as true to thee, dear reader, as to her?—is it not as true to all as to one? Most assuredly! Christ gave Himself a ransom for all—that is, He paid a price adequate to the redemption of all; and God accepted the price. Surely then, believing this, thou art free, and righteously free on God's own ground. This is God's grace to all who believe in Jesus. Hence we read, "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." God, foreseeing the work of Christ from the beginning, ever acted towards the believer according to its completeness. Job 33:24; Romans 3:25.

Could better news ever be made known to thee, my fellow sinner? —for sinner thou art, and the bond slave of thy sins. Chains stronger far than brass and iron bind thee to thy cunning but cruel master. Twenty millions of British gold struck from many a fettered limb the galling chain of slavery, about 30 years ago, and tided the British dominions with the song of Jubilee. But twenty thousand millions could not break the chains of unbelief that now bind thee to the love of sin, the pleasures of the world—the drudgery of Satan. The power of God alone can do this, and that without money and without price from thee. The price was paid on Calvary—the atonement was offered unto God—reconciliation is ours through faith in the atoning work. Heavy indeed was the ransom-price that Jesus paid, but redemption to us is as free as the air we breathe. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” Isa. 55:1.

Whether, then, wilt thou have thy freedom, or hug thy chain? This is the question. The perfect liberty of the children of God is set before them in the gospel. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;” are the assuring words of Jesus Himself. But if He be rejected in unbelief, the chains of sin and slavery remain. Satan may succeed in concealing the chain from thy sight now; and he may allow thee to think, and even to boast, that none are so free or so independent as thou art; that outward profession is nothing, seeing thou art light in heart. Thus he deceives, and thus he strengthens the chains of thy slavery.

“Deliver him from going down to the pit,” is the cry of love, of divine, eternal love. Oh! that fearful word, “the pit”—“going down to the pit.” The very thought of a pit, of being cast forsaken into a pit, is too awful to think of. The very thought of it makes the whole frame shudder, and the flesh creep on the bones: or, as the prophet says, “When I heard, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones.” (Hab. 3:16.) I know it may be said that the word “pit” in Job, means the grave. Be it so; but of what, I ask, is a Christless grave the emblem? Surely of a pit deeper far than the grave, and out of which no soul ever escaped. No chain can ever be broken there. O then, dear reader, in the name of all that is fearful to contemplate, and of all that is blessed to anticipate, look at once to Jesus, He only is the deliverer from the thralldom of Satan. He died to ransom thee from the power of the grave; He died to set thee free; He has in righteousness paid the adequate price of thy redemption; God has accepted the ransom and is satisfied; He asks no more; He asks no ransom from thee; He says, “I have found it.” Why then, O why, shouldest thou despise liberty—the glorious liberty of the children of God? Awake, awake, AWAKE, from the awful sleep of sin—the lullaby of hell! Arise, O arise, and shake from thy long-enslaved soul the captive’s chains! Another day and it may be too late; another hour and thy chain may be riveted in the depths of hell forever. The danger is great; it is imminent; it is irreparable; it is thy soul—thy immortal soul; no appeal can be too loud; too long; too earnest; eternal liberty or eternal slavery is the mighty issue.

But what can I say more? Christ has paid the ransom in His own precious blood. God has accepted the ransom; wilt thou be free? Free through faith in the great Redeemer; righteously, honorably, gloriously, happily, eternally free! The faith that looks in simplicity of heart to Jesus, can honestly say, “Now I am free! Now I am free!” “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Eph. 1:7.

“Drawn by such cords we’ll onward move,

Till round the throne we meet,
And, captives in the chains of love,
Embrace our Savior's feet."

Now Is the Day of Salvation

Dear Reader, —Have you yet received the knowledge of salvation by the remission of your sins? This is a deeply personal and an all-important question. But if not, what then? Be still careless? God forbid! Come to Jesus now! You may never have another opportunity. Time is short. Life is uncertain. Eternity is at hand. The Judge is at the door. Think of your soul—how great its value! How awful its danger! Think of your sins—how numerous! How great! How aggravated! But all may yet be forgiven. God is love. Christ has died. Christ has risen. His blood cleanseth from all sin. There is no limit to the power of the blood of Christ. The Spirit of God is working mightily. God's people are praying for you, and God answers prayer. Thousands of souls are being saved—still there is room. Come, then, to Jesus. Come at once. Come just as you are. Come just now. Everlasting perdition may be the awful alternative of delay. Come in the firm faith of His own word—“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Only Waiting

A very aged man in an almshouse was asked what he was doing now.

He replied, "Only waiting."

Only waiting till the shadows

Are a little longer grown;

Only waiting till the glimmer

Of the day's last beams are flown;

Till the night of earth is faded

From the heart once full of day;

Till the stars of heaven are breaking

Through the twilight soft and gray.

Only waiting till the reapers

Have the last sheaf gathered home,

For the summer time is faded,

And the autumn winds have come;

Quickly, reapers! gather, quickly,

The last ripe hours of my heart,

For the bloom of life is withered,

And I hasten to depart.

Only waiting till the angels

Open wide the mystic gate,

By whose side I long have lingered,

Weary, poor, and desolate.

Even now I hear their footsteps

And their voices far away;

If they call me, I am waiting,

Only waiting to obey.

Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown;
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam is flown;
Then from out the gathering darkness,
Holy, deathless stars shall rise,
By whose light my soul shall gladly
Tread the pathway to the skies.

The Path of Life

“Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” Psalm 16:11.

Thy pathway lay through suffering, shame, and human woe,
‘Mid sorrows deep that none beside could ever know;
Gethsemane’s anticipative earnest prayers,
The bloody sweat, the agony, the cries, and tears,
That deeper indignation, and that fiercest wrath,
And all the terrors that God’s judgment hath,
The draining of that bitter cup which none could share,
Which God alone could give, and Thou alone couldst bear;
All these were thine. And Thou, beneath the awful weight
Of this world’s load of sin, on darkened Calvary’s height,
Hung on the cross; where mocking men could satiate,
In league with hell, their cruel scorn and fiendish hate;
Thou there didst bend beneath the overflowing surge
Of human enmity, with Satan there to urge
In hellish haste—malignant prompter of the world,
Of all the scorn that at thy sacred head was hurled.
Such, Lord, thy wondrous path to life. Forsaken, lone,
Uncheered through death’s dark path where light had never shone,
Bereft of all. Whose eye but thine could surely see
Right through the grave to resurrection—victory?
Whose power but thine could then have borne sin’s heavy load
And not be crushed, but, conquering find thy way to God?
Who else but Thou could now a mighty Victor stand,
With glory, honor crowned, Thou man of God’s right hand?

Thy path of life to pleasures led divinely given,
To joys which form and tune the highest joys of heaven.
For angels sing thy mighty deeds on earth below,
And all the ranks of heaven with heightened rapture glow.
The spacious plains of earth shall soon take up the song,
And answering shouts the joyful chorus shall prolong.
From hill and dale shall rise throughout the wide domain,
Thy thrice repeated worthy, worthy, worthy name.
And Thou for me the darksome power of death hast quelled—
The grave is light, its pitchy darkness all dispelled.
I follow on, if Thou shouldst call, triumphant sing,
Where now thy victory, O grave? O death, thy sting?
R. B.

Peace at Last

(Extracts from notes of a visit to a military hospital.)

A noble-looking soldier lay in the same ward. "I want to speak to you about religion," he said, as I stood by his bedside. "I have made up my mind," he continued, "with an earnest resolution, to serve God and do my duty—not with the feeble resolution of a boy, but with man's determined purpose, that henceforward I will do right." At some length he told me what he was going to do; he spoke about his vows, his purposes, his plans. All was about himself, not one word about Christ the Savior.

Having listened to him quietly, I said at last, "Then you are at peace, my friend."

"Oh no," he said, "my agony of mind only increases."

"Why so? Have you not kept your vows?"

"No, I cannot," he answered despairingly.

"Had you not better then try again? or can you think of no way of making up the account?"

He shook his head hopelessly and said, "I know not what to do."

"My friend," I replied, "stop your vowing. Satan has enticed you on to one of his quicksands, where you are fast sinking down to hell. Your house is on the sand. You cannot be your own Savior. Listen to God's way of saving sinners. Jesus Christ—God manifest in the flesh—came into the world to save sinners, not to help them to save themselves. His work was finished on the cross eighteen hundred years ago, and He has left you nothing to do but to receive by faith the benefit of what He has done. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." John 3:36; Acts 16:31.

"But must I not do something?" he asked. "Can I believe on Christ and become a child of God, and tomorrow go back to the world and live like the other soldiers?"

"God forbid," I cried. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" When you become a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, God gives you the nature, the heart of a child, and the Holy Spirit to dwell in you, so that you no longer love the sins you once delighted in; and you have the power of the Spirit to resist the flesh, your old nature.

After some other questions and answers, the Lord gave him to see, not only that he was a lost sinner, but that Christ had borne the judgment of sin on the cross, and that all who believed in Him were saved. Still his mind was not clear, for, though he had lost confidence in vows and resolutions, the enemy had thrown him on his feelings.

"Must I not have happy feelings," he said—as thousands say—"before I know that I am happy?"

“No,” said I. “On the contrary, you must believe before you can possibly feel happy. Peace comes from believing, and not believing from peace. You are to believe simply because God says so, and not because you feel happy. Were happy frames and feelings the foundation of your faith, you would drift about at their mercy. But God’s word is a rock that cannot be moved. It is when we are dwelling, neither on our feelings, nor our faith, but on the object of faith, Christ Jesus, that we are brought into peace and joy.”

It was now evident that the Holy Spirit had led him to the Savior, though he still inclined to look into his own heart for happy feelings. This led to the close of our conversation.

“Do you believe the testimony of God concerning Christ?” This is the question, and not the evidence of happy feelings. These are changeable as the wind. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that God gave Him to be the Savior of the world—the great propitiation for our sins? Take your thoughts completely off yourself, and look to Jesus. Do you believe in Him?

Now he answered earnestly, “With all my heart I do.”

The Lord’s name be praised—to Him alone be all the glory. And now, “Can you believe what God says concerning them that have this faith?”

“What is it?” he asked eagerly.

“He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “He that believeth hath everlasting life.” And observe, my friend, it is not can have, may have, or shall have, but hath everlasting life. When we believe in Jesus, and surrender the heart to Him, we have perfect peace, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. What a salvation! Full pardon, everlasting life, peace with God, and only waiting for glory. In parting, I said to him, “May I not leave you now with the happy assurance that you know, on God’s testimony, that you have eternal life as a present possession?”

After a pause, he raised his eyes and said, with deep feeling, “Yes, you may. I have eternal life through faith in Jesus.”

May these scraps of such an important conversation, and with such important results, be made a great blessing to all our readers.

Reconciled and Saved: Part 1

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Rom. 5:10.

If ever there was a moment in the which it was important to set forth the great foundation truths of Christianity, it is just now. The enemy is seeking, by every means in His power, to loosen the foundations of our faith—to weaken the authority of holy scripture over the heart and conscience—to introduce, in the most specious and fascinating forms, deadly error, in order to draw away the soul from Christ and His word.

It may, perhaps, be said, “This is an old story.” No doubt; it is as old as the second epistle to Timothy: second epistle of Peter, and Jude. But it is a new story also; and while we do not feel it to be our work, as the conductors of “Things New and Old,” to grapple, in a controversial way, with popular errors and evils, we do believe it to be our sacred duty to set forth and maintain constantly those grand, solid, fundamental truths which are our only safeguard against every form of doctrinal error and moral pravity.

Hence it is that we feel called upon, at the opening of our Volume for 1870, to draw the attention of our readers to that very weighty passage which stands at the head of this paper. It is one of the fullest and most comprehensive statements of foundation doctrine to be found within the compass of the Volume of God. Let us meditate for a little upon it.

In examining the context in which this passage stands, we find four distinct terms by which the inspired writer sets forth the condition of man, in his unconverted state. He speaks of him as “without strength.” This is what we may call a negative term. Man is utterly powerless, wholly incapable of doing aught toward his own deliverance. He had been tried in every possible way. God had tested him and proved him, and found him absolutely good for nothing. When placed in Eden, in the midst of the ten thousand delights which a beneficent Creator had poured around him, he believed the devil’s lie rather than the truth of God. (Genesis 1.) When driven out of Eden, we see him pursuing a career of evil—“evil only”—evil continually—until the judgment of God falls upon the whole race, with one solitary exception—Noah and his family. (Gen. 6-8.) Further, when in the restored earth man is entrusted with the sword of government, he gets drunk and exposes himself to contempt in the very presence of his sons. When entrusted with the holy office of the priesthood, he offers strange fire. (Lev. 5) When entrusted with the high office of king, and enriched with untold wealth, he marries strange wives and worships the idols of the heathen. 2 Chron. 11.

Thus, wherever we trace man—the human race, we see nothing but the most humiliating failure. Man is proved to be good for nothing—“without strength.”

But there is more than this. Man is “ungodly.” He is not only powerless as to all that is holy and good, but also without one single moral or spiritual link with the living and true God. Examine the unrenewed heart, from its center to its circumference, and you will not find so much as one true

thought about God, or one right affection toward God. There may be a great deal that is amiable and attractive in the way of nature—much that is morally lovely in the eyes of men—many social virtues, and excellent qualities. Human nature, even in its ruins, may exhibit much of all these; just as the visible creation—this earth on which we live—displays, spite of its ruined and groaning condition, many splendid traces of the master hand that formed it.

All this is perfectly true, and perfectly obvious; and moreover, it must ever be taken into account, in dealing with the great question of man's standing and condition. There is an ultra way of speaking of the sinner's state which is much more likely to stumble and perplex the mind than to convict the conscience or break the heart. This should be carefully avoided. We should ever take account of all that is really good in human nature. If we look at the case of the rich young ruler, in Mark 10, we must see that the Lord recognized something lovable in him, for we read that "Jesus beholding him, loved him," though we have no warrant whatever to suppose that there was aught of divine work in his soul, seeing that he turned his back upon Christ, and preferred the world to Him. But there was evidently something most attractive in this young man—something very different indeed from those gross, coarse, and degraded forms in which human nature oftentimes clothes itself.

Now, we cannot but judge that the man who, in writing or discoursing upon the sinner's moral and spiritual state, would ignore or lose sight of those moral and social distinctions, docs positive damage to the cause of truth, and neutralizes the very object which we must believe he has in view. If, for example, we approach an amiable, upright, frank, and honorable person, and, in a sweeping manner, reduce him to a dead level, or place him in the same category with a crooked, cross-grained, scheming, dishonest, contemptible character, we only drive him away in irritation and disgust. Whereas, on the other hand, if we recognize whatever is really good; if we allow—as scripture most surely does—a sufficient margin in which to set down all that is morally and socially excellent even in fallen humanity, we are, to speak after the manner of men, much more likely to gain our end, than by injudiciously ignoring those distinctions, which, inasmuch as they clearly exist, it is the height of folly to deny. Still, it holds good—and let the reader solemnly consider the weighty fact—that man—the very best, the very fairest specimen—is "without strength," and "ungodly." Nor is this all. The apostle does not rest in mere negatives. He not only tells us what man is not, but he goes on to tell us what he is. He gives us both sides of this great question. He not only declares that, "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" but he adds that, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Here, then, we have the positive activity of evil—the actual energy of self-will. For, be it remembered, sin is doing our own will, in whatever line that will may travel, whatever form it may assume. It may present itself to our view in the shape of the grossest moral pravity, or it may array itself in the garb of a cultivated and refined taste; but it is self-will all the while, and self-will is sin. It may be only like the acorn—the mere seed; but the acorn contains the wide spreading oak. Thus the heart of the newly born infant is a little seed-plot in which may be found the germ of every sin that ever was committed in this world. True, each seed may not germinate or bring forth fruit; but the seed is there, and only needs circumstances or influences to unfold it. If anyone be kept from gross outward sins, it is not owing to a better nature, but simply to the fact of his surroundings. All men are sinners. All by nature do their own will. This stamps their character. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." From the days of fallen Adam to this moment—well-nigh six

thousand years, there has been but one solitary exception to this solemn and terrible rule—only One who never sinned—never did His own will, and that is the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who, though God over all blessed forever, yet, having become a man, He surrendered His own will completely, and did ever and only the things that pleased His Father. From the manger to the cross, He was ruled, in all things, by the will and the glory of God. He was the only perfect spotless man that ever trod this sin-stained earth—the only fair untainted sheaf that ever appeared in the field of this world— “the man Christ Jesus,” who died for us “sinners”—“suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

What marvelous grace! what soul-subduing love! what amazing mercy! Oh! how it should melt these hearts of ours! Think, dear reader—think deeply of this love, this grace, this mercy. Dwell upon it until thy whole soul is absorbed in the contemplation of it. We are painfully insensible and indifferent. Indeed, there is nothing more humbling than our culpable, our shameful indifference to a Savior’s love. We seem content to take salvation as the result of His cross and passion—His agony and grief—His ineffable sorrow, while, at the same time, our hearts are cold and indifferent to Him. He left the bright heavens, and came down into this dark and sinful world for us. He went down into the gloomy depths of death and the grave. He endured the hiding of God’s countenance, which involved more intense anguish to His precious soul than all that men and devils, earth and hell could do—He sank in deep waters, and went down into the horrible pit and into the miry clay—all this He did for us “sinners,” when we were “ungodly,” and “without strength;” and yet how little we think of it! How little we dwell upon it! How little we are moved by the record of it!

The remembrance of this should humble us in the dust, before our precious Savior-God. The hardness of our hearts in the presence of the profound mystery of the cross and passion of our Lord Christ is, if possible, a more signal and striking proof of our depravity than the sins for which He died.

But we have rather anticipated what may yet come before us in the further unfolding of our subject; and we shall close this paper with a brief reference to the fourth term by which the apostle sets forth our condition in nature. This is contained in the verse which forms our present thesis: “We were enemies.” What a thought! We were not merely powerless, godless, sinful; but actually hostile—in a state of positive enmity against God.

Nothing can possibly exceed this. To be the enemy of God gives the most appalling idea we can possibly have of a sinner’s state. And yet such is the actual condition of the unconverted reader of these lines. He is an enemy of God. He may be amiable, polite, attractive, refined, cultivated, educated, moral, and even outwardly religious. He may occupy the very highest platform of religious profession—be a church member—a regular communicant—a worker in the vineyard—a Sunday school teacher—a preacher—a minister, and all the while an enemy of God.

How awful the thought! Oh! beloved reader, do pause and consider, we beseech thee. Give this solemn question your undivided attention, just now. Do not put it aside. We appeal to thee, with all earnestness, as in the presence of Almighty God, of His Son Jesus Christ, and of the Eternal Spirit. We adjure thee, by the value of thy immortal soul, by the dread reality of the judgment seat of Christ, by all the horrors of that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, by the worm that never dies, by the awful fact of eternity—an eternity in the gloomy shades of hell—by the

unutterable agony of being separated forever from God, from Christ, and from all that is pure and lovely—by the combined force of all these arguments, we do earnestly and affectionately beseech thee to flee, this moment, to the Savior who stands with open arms and loving heart to receive thee. Come to Jesus! Come, now! Come, just as thou art! Only trust Him, and thou art safe—safe forever—safe as He.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Reconciled and Saved: Part 2

We have, in a former volume of "Things New and Old," called the attention of our readers to the important distinction between atonement and reconciliation. They are often confounded through lack of attention to the precise terms of holy scripture. The fact is, they are perfectly distinct, though intimately connected—distinct, as the foundation is from the building—connected, as the building is with the foundation. Atonement is the base on which reconciliation rests. Without atonement, there could not possibly be any reconciliation; but reconciliation is not atonement. The reader will do well to weigh this matter thoroughly, in the light of inspiration. It is most needful for all Christians to be clear and sound in their thoughts on divine subjects, and accurate in their way of stating them. It will invariably be found that the more spiritual any one is, the closer he will keep to the veritable language of scripture in putting forth foundation truth. Unfortunately, our most excellent Authorized Version does not help the English reader on the score of accuracy in this matter, inasmuch as we find in Rom. 5:11 the word "atonement" where it ought to be "reconciliation;" and, on the other hand, we have, in Heb. 2:17, the word "reconciliation" where it ought to be "atonement," or "propitiation." However, the two things are perfectly distinct, and it is of real moment that the distinction should be understood and maintained.

Furthermore, we would remind the reader, that there is no foundation whatsoever in the word of God, for the idea that God needed to be reconciled to us. There is positively no such thought to be found within the covers of the Bible. It was man that needed to be reconciled to God, not God to man. Man was the enemy of God. He was not only, as we have seen, "without strength," "ungodly," and "a sinner," but actually "an enemy."

Now it is the enemy—the alienated, the estranged one—that needs to be brought back—to be reconciled. This is plain. But God, blessed be His name! was not man's enemy, but his friend—the Friend of sinners. Such was the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, when on earth. "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him." (Acts 10) It was His delight to do good unto all. He spent His life in doing good to those who, after all, preferred a robber and a murderer to Him, and nailed Him to a cross between two thieves. Thus, whether we look at the life or at the death of Christ, we see, in the clearest and most forcible manner, the enmity of man; the friendship, the kindness, the love of God.

But how is man to be reconciled to God? Momentous question! Let us look well to the answer. The passage of scripture which forms the theme of this article declares, in the most distinct manner, that "We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son." (Rom. 5:10.) Nothing else could do it. The death of the cross—the atoning death—the vicarious sacrifice—the precious priceless blood of Jesus—is the necessary, the absolutely essential basis of our reconciliation to a sin-hating God. We must state this great truth in the most emphatic and unequivocal manner. Scripture is as clear and definite as possible. In order to our being reconciled to God, sin must be put away, and "without shedding of blood, there is no remission." Heb. 9:22.

Thus the matter stands, if we are to be taught simply by scripture. No blood-shedding, no remission—no remission, no reconciliation. Such is the divine order, and let men beware how they tamper with it. It is a very serious thing to touch the truth of God; we may rest assured that all who do so will meddle to their own hurt.

We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. It is not by His incarnation—that is, His taking human nature upon Him. Incarnation could not reconcile us to God, inasmuch as it could not blot out our sins. Incarnation is not atonement. It is well to note this. There is a subtle way of playing upon the word atonement, which consists of a false division of the syllables—as though the word were “atonement;” and this atonement is referred to the incarnation, as though, in that mysterious act, our Lord took our fallen human nature into union with Himself. Against this we solemnly warn the reader. It is fatally false doctrine. It is an effort of the enemy to displace or set aside altogether the atoning death of Christ, with all those grand foundation truths which cluster round that most precious mystery.

Is it that we do not hold, as a cardinal truth, the incarnation of the eternal Son? Nay, it forms the foundation of that great mystery of godliness of which the top stone is a glorified Man on the throne of God. “And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Tim. 3:16.) We hold incarnation to be an integral part of the faith of a true Christian, nor could we own as a Christian anyone who denied it. But it is one thing to hold a truth, and another thing altogether to displace it. It is a constant effort of Satan, if he cannot get men to reject a truth, to displace it, and in this way he gains some of his greatest apparent triumphs. Thus it is with the essential doctrine of incarnation. Assuredly, the Son of God had to become a man to die; but, then, becoming a man is one thing, and dying upon the cross is another. He might have become a man; He might have lived and labored for three and thirty years on this earth; He might have been baptized in Jordan, and tempted in the wilderness; He might have ascended from the mount of transfiguration to that glory from which He had come, and which He had with the Father from before all worlds. At any moment, during His blessed life, He might, so far as He was personally concerned, have returned to that heaven whence He had descended. What was there to hinder Him? There was no necessity laid on Him to die, save the necessity of infinite and everlasting love. Death had no claim on Him, inasmuch as He was the sinless, spotless, holy One of God. He had not come under the federal headship of the first man. Had He done so, He would have been under the curse and wrath of God all His days, and that not vicariously, but in virtue of His connection with the first Adam. This were an open and positive blasphemy against His Person. He was the Second Man the Lord from heaven, the only fair untainted grain of human wheat on which the eye of God could rest, and, as such, we repeat, He could, at any point between the manger and the cross, have returned to the bosom of the Father—that dwelling-place of ineffable love.

Let the reader seize, with clearness and power, this great truth. Let him dwell upon it. It is a truth of the very last possible importance. Jesus stood alone in this world. He was alone in the manger; alone in the Jordan; alone in the wilderness; alone on the mount; alone in the garden. All this is in perfect keeping with his own memorable words in John 12: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Here is the grand point—“If it die.” Unless He was to return to glory alone, He must die. If He was to have us with Him, He

must die. If sins were to be remitted, He must die. If sinners were to be saved, He must die. If a new and living way was to be opened for us into the presence of God, He must die. If the veil was to be rent, He must die. That mysterious curtain remained intact when the blessed One lay in the manger of Bethlehem—and when He was baptized—and when He was anointed—and when He was tempted—and when He was transfigured—and when He was bowed in Gethsemane, sweating great drops of blood—and when He was scourged before Pontius Pilate—through all these stages of His marvelous life, the veil was unrent. There and thus it stood to bar the sinner's approach to God. Man was shut out from God, and God shut in from man; nor could all the living labors of the eternal Son—His miracles—His precious ministry—His tears, His sighs, His groans, and His prayers—His sore temptations and His untold living sorrows—not any nor all of these could have rent the veil. But the very moment that death was accomplished—we read, “The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”

Such is the distinct teaching of scripture on this vital question. The death of Christ is the foundation of everything. Is it a question of life? He has given His flesh for the life of the world. Is it a question of pardon? “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Is it a question of peace? “He made peace by the blood of his cross.” Is it a question of reconciliation? “We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” In short, it is through death we get everything—without it, nothing. It is on the ground of death, even the atoning death of Christ, that we are reconciled to God, and united, by the Holy Ghost, to the risen and glorified Head in heaven. All rests on the solid groundwork of accomplished redemption. Sin is put away; the enmity is slain; all barriers are removed; God is glorified; the law magnified; and all this by the death of Christ. “He passed through death's dark raging flood” to settle everything for us, and lay the imperishable foundation of all, the counsels and purposes of the Holy Trinity.

And, now, a very few words as to the effect of the life of Christ in heaven for us. “If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Be it carefully noted that this refers to His life after death—His life in resurrection—His life in heaven. Some would teach us that it is His life on earth—His fulfillment of the law in our room and stead. This is flatly contradicted by the very structure of the passage, and by the entire teaching of the New Testament. It is not life before death, but life after death that the apostle speaks of. In short, it is the priestly life of our blessed and adorable Lord, whoever liveth to make intercession for us. It is by this we are saved through all the difficulties and dangers, the snares and temptations of this wilderness world. We, though reconciled to God by the death of Christ, are, nevertheless, in ourselves, poor, feeble, helpless, erring creatures, prone to wander, ever liable to failure and sin, totally unable to get on for a single moment, if not kept by our great High Priest—our blessed Advocate—our Comforter. He keeps us day and night. He never slumbers nor sleeps. He maintains us continually before God in all the integrity of the position in which His death has placed us. It is impossible that our cause can ever fail in such hands. His intercession is all prevailing. “We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The One who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, now bears our sorrows on His heart upon the throne; and He will come again to bear the government upon His shoulders.

What a Savior! What a Victim! What a Priest! How blessed to have all our affairs in His hand! To be sustained by such a ministry! How precious to know that the One who has reconciled us to God by His death is now alive for us on the throne; and because He lives we shall live also! All praise to

His peerless name!

Safe Anchorage

We want the reader to take his Bible and devote a few minutes to a passage in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ver. 7-15). We would ask him to read it carefully and earnestly; for we are persuaded that, if he is really anxious about his soul's salvation, he will find in this scripture the true ground of peace—divinely safe anchorage. We are not going to offer any lengthened exposition of the passage, but merely a very brief statement of its contents. We believe the reader will find three great subjects or branches of truth presented; namely, 1. The will of God; 2. The work of Christ; 3. The witness of the Holy Ghost. In other words, we have the source, the channel, and the authority of the soul's full and everlasting salvation. We have the eternal Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—engaged in the great work of laying the foundation of our peace. This, surely, is something worthy of serious thought.

1. And first, then, as to the source of salvation. It is of all-importance to the anxious soul to lay hold, with clearness and power, of the fact that the glorious plan of redemption had its origin in the will of God. Redemption was no after-thought with God. He, blessed be His name! was not taken by surprise when man fell. He had not then to sit down and devise what He would do. The plan had been drawn long before. Far back in the eternal counsels of His infinite mind, the whole matter was weighed and settled. Such is the evident force of Heb. 10:7: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." From before all worlds—before the entrance of sin, it was ordained that Christ should come and do the will of God, and that will had respect to man's salvation.

This is an immense fact for the heart to seize. It proves so blessedly the love of God to the sinner. He might have left us to perish, as we justly deserved because of our sins; but instead of that, no sooner had sin entered than forth came the glorious plan of redemption through the bruised seed of the woman—a plan laid in the mind of God from all eternity, and written down in the volume of the book.

2. To carry out this marvelous plan, the eternal Son came forth from the bosom of the Father—the dwelling-place of ineffable love. He came to do the will of God, cost what it might. It was His meat and His drink to do it. He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of His Father; and—all praise to His name!—He has done it. He has perfectly accomplished the will of God. He has finished the work, and thus laid the solid foundation of our peace. What all the sacrifices under the law could not do, Jesus, by His one offering, did. "Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offering and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified [set apart], through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are

sanctified.” Verses 8-14.

Here we have the channel through which redemption flows to us, namely, “The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” It is not through the Church—not through the sacraments—not through rites and ceremonies—not through the ordinances and offices of religion—not through works of righteousness of any sort whatever, prayers, fastings, alms, or aught else of man’s doing or devising, but “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” Mark the force and import of the word “once.” There can be no repetition of the sacrifice. To think of a continual sacrifice for sins is to deny the plain statement of the Holy Ghost in Heb. 10. If we are to be guided by God’s word, then is it most plain that sin has been put away by the one perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The proof of this is seen in the fact that Jesus is seated on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The daily standing of the Jewish priests has been displaced by the eternal session of the Son of God—the many sacrifices of the Levitical ceremonial, by the one offering of Jesus Christ. The priests under the law could never sit down, because their work was never done. Jesus, having finished His work, has sat down forever. Here lies the true secret of rest for the conscience. Christ is seated. He will never again rise to address Himself to the work of sin-bearing. When He rises, it will be to receive His people to Himself, and then to execute judgment upon His foes.

3. And now one word as to the authority on which we receive this perfect redemption—this full salvation. It is the witness of the Holy Ghost, which, be it carefully noted, is the word of God, the holy scripture. “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

Hence, then, if it be asked, “How do you know that your sins and iniquities are all put away?” We reply, “By the witness of the Holy Ghost—the testimony of holy scripture.” This is a point of cardinal importance. The authority on which I rest for the salvation of my soul is as truly and as absolutely divine as the channel through which that salvation flows, or the source from whence emanates. It is not the voice of the Church—the decrees of general councils—the dogmas of the schools—the opinions of the Fathers—the commandments, the doctrines, or the traditions of men; neither is it the frames, feelings, or imaginations of our own minds. It is not any of these things nor all of them put together which constitutes the ground of our belief in the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation; it is the testimony of holy scripture. True, it is by the grace of the Holy Spirit we receive and rest in that testimony; but it is God’s word we believe, else it would not be divine and saving faith at all. A faith that does not rest simply on the word of God, is a spurious, worthless, delusive faith. True faith is that which believes God, and rests in what He says because He says it. If I want something of man to accredit God’s word—to assure me that God has spoken—then I am not a believer at all. Saving faith—the faith of a christian man—is built upon God’s word and nothing else.

Beloved reader, we beseech thee to weigh the foregoing remarks. There is nothing novel or striking in them; but there is that which is able to save thy precious soul, and to give thee a peace which not all the craft of Satan, or all the sophistry of men can ever disturb. May God bless His own word!

Satisfied

O Jesus! Friend unailing!
How dear art thou to me!
Are cares or fears assailing!
I find my strength in thee!
Why should my feet grow weary
Of this my pilgrim way?
Rough though the path and dreary,
It ends in perfect day!
Naught, naught I court as pleasure,
Compared, O Christ, with Thee!
Thy sorrow without measure
Earn'd peace and joy for me!
I love to own, Lord Jesus,
Thy claims o'er me divine,
Bought with Thy blood most precious,
Whose can I be but Thine?
Why should I droop in sorrow?
Thou'rt ever by my side!
Why, trembling, dread the morrow?
What ill can e'er betide? If I my cross have taken,
'Tis but to follow Thee; If scorn'd, despised, forsaken,
Naught severs Thee from me!
O worldly pomp and glory!
Your charms are spread in vain!
I've heard a sweeter story!
I've found a truer gain!

Where Christ a place prepareth,
There is my loved abode!
There shall I gaze on Jesus!
There shall I dwell with God!
For every tribulation.
For every sore distress,
In Christ I've full salvation,
Sure help and quiet rest.
No fear of foes prevailing!
I triumph, Lord, in Thee!
O Jesus! Friend unfailing!
How dear thou art to me!
H. K B. E.
Berlin Gerunbuch.

Saved at the Gates of Death

As I stepped on the platform in a town hall one evening to preach the gospel, the following request was put into my hands: "Prayer is requested for a young man in the last stage of consumption—unconverted." The effect of this appeal on the meeting, as on myself, was great; and much feeling was manifested, while prayer was offered up for his salvation.

At the close of the meeting I learned where he was to be seen, and called on him the following morning. His mother, who opened the door, was in a state of great agitation when she saw me—exclaiming, "Oh, I am glad to see you! But, oh, my son—my poor son—I am afraid it's too late—he's dying!" "But do you know who I am and what I am come for?" "Oh yes," she replied, "this time last year I was at the town hall, and was brought to know Jesus, and that makes me feel so anxious about him; he has always been careless about these things."

"But we must not despair," I said, "we must have faith in God, and speak plainly to your son." "Yes," she replied, "that's true, but I don't think he will be able to speak to you, for he has had such a drumming in his head all the morning that he can't bear us to speak to him; but I will run upstairs and see if he is any better." All this was said as with one breath, and many tears were flowing.

When left alone in the parlor, I could only cry to God to magnify His own grace in such an extreme case. The young man was evidently at the gates of death, and this drumming in the head, humanly speaking, took away all hope.

Shortly, his mother came rushing in, saying, "the drumming has ceased and he will be glad to see you—I have told him about you." I was shown into his room and left alone with him—a wise thing to do in such a case. He was the picture of death. His lips black, his cheeks yellow, his eyes sunk far down in their sockets; and so low that he scarcely noticed me. What is to be done? I thought. What can I do? He is all but dead. It seemed cruel to disturb him. But his mother's anxiety—his hopeless state—the freeness of the gospel—the power and grace of God, rushed through my mind. The following, as nearly as I can recollect, are the words that passed between us.

Bending over his bed, I said, "You are very ill, my dear young man." "Yes," he replied in a low whisper.

"You know that you will soon be done with this world." He did little more than signify yes. "And have you a hope for the next world?" He shook his head as if he did not know, but looked concerned. I then felt it was time to be plain, at the risk of paining him, and distinctly said— "You know you must either be in a place of perfect happiness or awful misery in a very short time, perhaps in a few hours." This evidently disturbed him. He looked anxiously at me; but not knowing whether he was angry with me, or anxious about his soul, I again said, looking and speaking very earnestly— "You know there are only two places in the next world—heaven and hell." These words greatly disturbed him, and making an effort to raise his head from his pillow. I saw he wanted to say something; and he did say something that I can never forget. With deep emotion, he managed to say, "O, sir, I don't want to go—to an everlasting hell." This was heart-breaking. His

pitiful looks, his pitiful voice, and these thrilling words, “an everlasting hell,” were almost more than I could stand. I had never heard the expression before, and it struck me forcibly. At the same time, the thought passed through my mind, that God was at work in his soul; I then said— “I don’t wonder at that, my dear young man, and I hope you will not go; but unless you are washed in the blood of Jesus, what is to become of you? You know there is no sin in heaven.” He was now greatly alarmed about his state, and in a kind of desperation cried out —“I will be washed in the blood of Jesus, but tell me how I am to be washed.”

My heart leaped for joy when I heard these words. I felt sure that the Lord had begun the good work, and was encouraged to speak plainly to him about his state and the way of salvation. I explained to him the meaning of the expression, “washed in the blood of Jesus,” and also, God’s ways in grace with penitent sinners. The Lord evidently strengthened his poor feeble body for the moment. The conversion of the thief on the cross occurred to me as a suitable subject to bring before him, so I endeavored to explain the fact and the character of his conversion. He was greatly interested; and when he saw that it was only through believing in Jesus that the thief was saved, he made an effort to cry out—“I will believe in Jesus—I will believe in Jesus.” I considered the battle now fought and the victory won. He had been made willing in the day of God’s power: not so much from the words he spoke, as from the deep emotion of that poor, emaciated body. Of course I cannot write all he said, or give any idea of his anxious, beseeching looks.

Before leaving him, I asked him a few questions as to his past life; and as what he said of himself describes many others, I give it here. He told me that he had been a shoemaker by trade, that he never had been wild, but generally spent his Sundays in idleness, or reading the newspaper; he did not work at his trade on Sunday, and occasionally went to some place of worship, if a friend called to go with him. This, alas, is the way that thousands spend their Sundays; not openly wicked, but utterly careless about their souls.

I left him, as I believed, in the Lord’s hands, after spending about an hour with him. But I must be allowed to notice a little incident which will be full of interest to every christian mother’s heart. As I opened his bedroom door to leave, there was his mother listening with her ear against the door, fondly hoping she might hear some word that would give her hope. The moment I closed the door behind me, all her anxieties were expressed in these words, “Have you any hope?” And when I said, “Yes, I have; thank the Lord, he will land in heaven, I believe;” she gave expression to her feelings in thanking the Lord for His goodness with many tears.

I called next morning, and found him alive, but very low. His expression was calmer. He gave me to understand that he was thinking about Jesus on the cross, and the thief that was saved by His side. After a short conversation and prayer, I wished him farewell; believing that he was now looking to the Lord. The following week I received two letters from christian friends who visited him after I left. Both assured me that there was good reason to believe that he had fallen asleep in Jesus. Twelve months after, when visiting the same place, I called on his mother and heard from her the particulars of his end. He lived two days after I last saw him, and when departing he told them he was going to Jesus—not, as we may say, to an “everlasting hell,” but to an everlasting heaven.

And now, dear reader, but for the solemn warning, and also for the encouraging circumstances of this extreme case, there would be no reason for giving it publicity. Years have passed away since

it happened, and I never intended to publish it; but I now yield to the desire of others. But, oh, that word—that awful word—“Everlasting hell”—made a deep, deep impression on my mind. It can never be erased. I had never heard the expression before; and then, the circumstances! The death-like object—the hoarse, sepulchral tone of voice in which it was uttered—the pitiful, beseeching look accompanying these fearful words—“O, sir, I don’t want to go to an everlasting hell”—graved in deep lines those words of agony on my soul.

Reader—dear reader—what impression have they made on thine? If thou art a Christian, let them move thee to increased devotedness; and to increased faith in God, however desperate the case may be. His mother told me a year after, that she considered him like dead when I came, for he had given up taking food, and his feet and ankles were cold. But if thou art unconverted—what shall I say? What a voice that death-bed has for thee! What a solemn warning voice for every unconverted soul! Imagine thyself for a moment there—look on—listen—the days of this life ended—the pleasures of sin all gone—the sting remains—misspent Sundays only remembered to condemn—the boisterous voice of folly heard no more—earth, with all the heart holds dear, receding from the view, and falling from the trembling hand—the gates of death are opening slowly but surely, and there is nothing before the guilty soul but “an everlasting hell.” No, dear reader, no, nothing but “an everlasting hell,” unless grace prevent as in the case of the young shoemaker. But, the Lord be praised, the grace that saved his soul, is as free to thee—to all—as it was to him. Only, thou must repent of thy sins, and look in faith to Jesus. The great work of redemption is finished, God is glorified, the enemy vanquished, sin has been put away, God has been brought into the scene of death, and is mighty to save. There is no hindrance now, if thou wilt only bow at the feet of Jesus. Honor my Son—is the one and the fair demand of God. He has vindicated God’s character, He has met man’s need, He has put out sin, He has brought in grace. He has done all, and the soul that refuses to own and honor Him must perish, but the penitent soul that humbly bows at His blessed feet, and owns Him as the Savior, is saved there, then, fully, and forever, to the glory of God, the honor of the Lord Jesus, and the joy of all heaven.

Superstition and Infidelity

It is a very common saying that “extremes meet,” and certainly its truth is forcibly illustrated in the two things named at the head of this article, superstition and infidelity—things which, though so unlike, do, nevertheless, meet in one point, namely, positive opposition to the plain word of God. They both alike rob the soul of the authority, preciousness, and power of divine revelation. True, they do this in different ways; but they do it—they reach this point by different routes; but they reach it. Hence it is that we link them together, and lift a warning voice against both. The two elements are working around us, in very subtle and dangerous forms, and the human mind is tossed like a ball from one to the other.

Now, it is not, by any means, our purpose, in this brief paper, to analyze these two evil influences. We merely call the attention of our readers to the startling fact that wherever they operate they are found in direct hostility to the truth of God. Superstition admits that there is a divine revelation; but it denies that anyone can understand it, save by the interpretation of the clergy or the church. In other words, the word of God is not sufficient without man’s aid. God has spoken, but I cannot hear His voice, or understand His word without human intervention.

This is superstition. Infidelity, on the other hand, boldly denies a divine revelation—does not believe in such a thing, at all—maintains that God could not give as a book-revelation of His mind and will. Infidels can write books and can tell us their mind and will; but God cannot.

So says infidelity, and so saying it finds a point of contact in common with superstition. For, may we not lawfully inquire, wherein lies the difference between denying that God has spoken, and maintaining that He cannot make us understand what He says? Would there be any appreciable difference between the man who could deny that the sun shines, and the man who could maintain that, though he shines, you need a rush-light to enable you to enjoy his beams? We confess they both seem to us to stand on precisely the same moral ground. The infidelity that boldly and impiously denies that God can speak His mind to man, is little, if at all, worse than the superstition which denies that He can make man understand what He says. Both are alike dishonoring to God; and by both alike is man deprived of the priceless treasure of the volume of divine inspiration.

We are extremely anxious that the reader should seize this fact. Indeed our one object in penning these lines is to put him in full possession of it. We consider that we shall have done him good service if he rises from the perusal of this paper with the clear and firm conviction wrought in his soul that infidelity and superstition are the two great agencies by which the devil is seeking to remove from beneath our feet the solid rock of holy scripture—that, in short, it is, to use a law phrase, infidelity and superstition versus divine revelation.

And let the reader further note what is of interest and importance, namely, that both infidelity and superstition are alike impious and absurd. It is as impious and absurd to affirm that God could not write a book, as to say that He could not make us understand the book that He has written. In point of fact, in either case, it is reducing God below the level of the creature, which is simply

blasphemy. Is it not strange that a man who undertakes to give us a written revelation of his mind, should deny that God could do the same? And is it not equally strange that man should undertake to expound and interpret the scriptures to his fellow, and yet deny that God could do the same? Well, the former is infidelity; the latter, superstition; and both alike exalt the creature and blaspheme the Creator—both alike shut out God, and rob the soul of the unspeakable privilege of direct intercourse and communion with God, by means of His word.

Thus it has been, from the beginning, and thus it is now. “There is nothing new under the sun.” It has ever been the grand object of the enemy to quench the lamp of inspiration, and plunge the soul into the thick darkness of infidelity and atheism. We believe there is an amount of rationalism in the professing Church perfectly appalling to contemplate. Divine revelation is being gradually lowered from its lofty position, and human reason exalted; and this is the very germ of infidelity. True, it clothes itself in very attractive robes. It adopts very high-sounding and imposing language. It talks of “freedom of thought”—“liberty of opinion”—“breadth of mind”—“progress”—“cultivated taste”—“dispassionate investigation.”

It adopts a most withering style and assumes an attitude of sovereign contempt when speaking of “old prejudices”—“old school notions”—“narrow-mindedness”—“men of one idea,” and such like.

But, we may depend upon it, the one aim of the enemy is to set aside the authority of the word of God, and he cares not by what agency he gains his end. This is very serious; and we greatly fear that Christians are not fully alive to its seriousness. Whether we look at the religion or the education of the country, we observe a fixed purpose to set aside the Bible—a settled determination, not only to cast it down from its excellency, but to fling it completely into the shade.

Nor is it merely a question of the hostility of open and avowed infidels; that we can understand and account for. But we must confess our inability to understand the half-heartedness and indifference of many who occupy a high position in evangelical circles. The discussion of the great question of National Education has made manifest a most deplorable amount of weakness in quarters where we should least have looked for it. It is being made sadly apparent that the word of God has a very slender hold of the minds of professing Christians. Only think of a suggestion recently offered, that the Bible might at least get, in our National Schools, the place of a Hebrew classic!

Reader, what say you to this? Are you prepared to see the divine Volume—God’s inspired Book—degraded into a mere classic, and placed alongside of Homer, Horace, and Virgil? We fondly trust not. We would fain believe that every reader of our little serial would shrink with horror from such a proposal. Nevertheless, we feel called upon to sound a note of alarm in the ears of our dear fellow Christians everywhere, and we entreat them not to disregard it. We want to see them thoroughly roused to a sense of the true state of the case—so roused that they may be led to cry earnestly to the great Head of the Church that He would be graciously pleased to raise up and send forth men full of the Holy Ghost and of power—full of faith and holy zeal—men permeated by solid belief in the plenary inspiration of holy scripture. These, we are persuaded, are the men for the present crisis. May God supply them!

There Is One Body and One Spirit.”

(Eph. 4:4.)

I love thy saints, Lord Jesus!

For they are one with thee; Rom. 12:5

They bear thy holy likeness,

Faint though the impress be: 2 Cor. 3:18

“One body and one Spirit,”

Truth to my soul, how dear! 1 Cor. 12:12, 13

No union so enduring,

No earthly tie so near! Rev. 21:2, 9-11

But were the bond united

To all the world displayed— John 17:21.

The light in beauty shining

O'er all this death-dark shade— Matt. 5:14.

Witness that Christ, the sent One,

Amongst us came to dwell, John 1:14, 18

To do the Father's bidding,

The love of God to tell. 1 John 4:10, 14.

Mark how the foe confederate

Their banners raise on high, Titus 1:14.

The word of God unheeded,

Or spurned with mockery. 2 Pet. 3:3.

While we are seen half-hearted,

A feeble scattered band, 1 Cor. 3:3, 4.

Who, one in mind and spirit,

For all the truth should stand. Phil. 1:27.

O faithless Church! Hath any

An ear to hear the word? Matt. 13:43
Then let him now acknowledge
Commandments of the Lord." 1 Cor. 14:37
The Spirit's voice is sounding,
Then fear not to obey; Rev. 3:22
From all of man's devising,
He bids us turn away. 2 Tim. 3:5
Be Christ our one true center,
The Holy Ghost our guide; Matt. 28:20
"Love in the truth" be flowing
To saints on every side; 1 John 5:2.
One hope our hearts possessing—
Our coming Lord to see; Titus 2:13.
Thus should we dwell, as brethren,
In holy unity! 1 Thess. 3:12, 13.

Time Enough

We have just received the following communication from “A Constant Reader.” “I am going to ask if you will kindly give an explanation, in ‘Things New and Old,’ of Matt. 20:1-17: the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. A young lady lately came to me anxious about her soul. Her family, being all worldly and anxious to put her off thinking of religion, told her that, in this similitude, the laborer who came in at the eleventh hour received as much as those who worked from the beginning; from whence they argued that it was time enough for her when she became old, or was taken ill, to think of her soul.”

Now, we can have little difficulty in tracing to its proper source this miserably false interpretation and application of our Lord’s solemn and beautiful parable. The fact is, there is nothing whatever about the soul’s salvation in the entire passage. It is simply a question of service. Our Lord is speaking to His disciples, who were saved already; and He is showing them that the most excellent work is that which is done without any reference to wages or reward, as a motive, but in the sweet assurance that the Master will give what is right.

Hence, therefore, it is a fatal mistake to apply this parable to the matter of the soul’s salvation; and the idea of using it for the purpose of hushing the anxieties of an exercised conscience, is something perfectly shocking. There is a very wide difference indeed between a laborer in the Lord’s vineyard, and a sinner in his guilt and misery. The former shall receive his reward according to his Master’s sovereign goodness. For the latter, there is nothing before him but the eternal flames of hell—appalling thought!

But oh! how dreadful to whisper in the ear of such an one, “Time enough!” There is certainly no such word in the Bible, from beginning to end. It is Satan’s opiate to lull souls into a slumber, which may be interrupted, in a moment, by the arrow of death. It is a poor thing to talk of old age or a lingering illness, for who can count on either the one or the other? How little did those persons who, a few weeks since, stepped on board the “Normandy” at Southampton, think that, in three hours, their bodies would be at the bottom of the ocean, and their souls in eternity! We know not the moment when the hand of death may snap the thread which connects us with this present scene of things. We may be called away without so much as a moment’s notice. Who has got a lease of this present life? “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Alas! alas! it is to be feared that multitudes around us will have to exchange their slothful “Time enough” for a heart-rending “Too late!”

Reader, art thou one of those who say, or think if they do not say, “Time enough?” If so, let us entreat thee, most earnestly and solemnly, to hearken to a warning voice. Pause, for a moment, and consider. God says, “Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.” No foundation, here, for “Time enough;” no, nor anywhere in the inspired volume. To imagine that the call of laborers into the vineyard at the eleventh hour has aught to do with the soul’s salvation, is, we repeat, fatally false.

Nor this only. It is at once dangerous and basely selfish to calculate upon old age or a death-bed repentance. There is not the slightest warrant for any such thing. And, even though there were, is it not truly contemptible to think of giving the best of our days and the prime of our energies to the service of sin and Satan, and then, when death approaches, and we can no longer enjoy the world and gratify our desires, to think of turning to Jesus? Is He not worthy of the best of our days, and all our powers? Shall we live for self and the world as long as we possibly can, and, when the king of terrors approaches, think of looking to Christ?

What sayest thou, beloved reader? Dost thou see the baseness and the folly, the fallacy and the danger, of all this? If so, then we call upon thee, most urgently and solemnly, to come now, just as thou art, to Jesus. Fling far away from thee Satan's "Time enough," and act on God's "Now." Be assured there is no time to be lost. Every step you take, in your present course, is a step in the direction of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Oh! do come, this moment, to that gracious Savior who stands, with open arms, ready to receive all who come to Him, and who has said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out."

The Two Thrones

We want the reader to turn aside with us, for a few moments, and look at two thrones which are presented on the page of inspiration; one in the sixth of Isaiah; and the other, in the twentieth of Revelation. We shall do little more than introduce them to his notice, in the very words of the inspired penman, and then leave him to muse upon those solemn realities, in the immediate presence of God.

1. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Here, then, we have something peculiarly solemn. We have the throne of God, and the effect produced by that throne upon the heart of a man of like passions with ourselves. It is a serious thing to find oneself in the presence of God—to see ourselves in the light of His throne—to hearken to the sound of a voice that could move the very posts of the door. This, truly, is real work. All is laid bare here. Man sees himself in his true condition. He sees the deep moral roots of his being. He sees not only his acts, but his nature; not only what he has done, but what he is. He sees not only the negative but the positive; not only what he is not, but what he actually is.

Thus it was with Isaiah, when he got a view of himself in the light of the holiness of God. He discovered himself. He found out what he was, and the tale was easily told—the confession was brief, pointed, and profound. "Woe is me! I am undone." This was the sum of the matter. It took in everything. It was no mere lip profession—no formal statement of an unfelt truth that, "We are all sinners." Ah! no; it was deep and thorough work. The depths were reached. The arrow had entered the soul. Isaiah saw himself, in the presence of the throne of God, an utterly undone man.

Now, reader, this is precisely the discovery which you must, sooner or later, make with respect to yourself. It is only a question of time. It may be days, months, or years, but the moment must come when you shall find out the truth as to your condition—when you shall discover that you, too, are "undone." How dreadful to make this discovery when it is too late! —to find out that you are not only undone, but lost forever!—to be obliged to give utterance to those accents of deep and horrible despair, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!"

But, mark, this need not be. The throne at which we are now gazing has a special feature attached to it—a peculiar fact connected with it. There is an altar near at hand. Thanks be to God for this precious, this consolatory fact! There is grace and salvation for the guilty and undone. The guilt which the light of the throne reveals, the grace of the altar removes. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the

altar; and he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

What grace shines in all this! What mercy in the fact that we can now have to do with a throne which has an altar attached to it—a throne of grace! The Lord be praised! Ob! reader, we beseech thee come now to this throne. Come just as thou art, all guilty and undone.

Remember that grace is enthroned. This is a most weighty, telling, powerful fact. Grace is triumphant. “It reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 5:21.

2. But we must turn to another throne of which we read in Rev. 20 “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found Written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Verses 11-15.

This is a throne of judgment. No grace, no mercy here. We look in vain for an altar in the vicinity of this throne. There is no such thing to be found. It is a scene of un-mingled judgment. We have the claims of the throne—alas! alas! unanswered claims—without any of the provisions of the altar. “The books were opened”—those solemn records of the life and conduct of each. Yes, of each one in particular. There will be no such thing as escaping in the crowd—no getting off with mere generalities. The judgment will be intensely individual—awfully personal—“every man according to his works.”

Reader, mark the character of the judgment: “According to his works.” It is a fatal mistake to think that people will only be judged for rejecting the gospel. No doubt, the rejection of the gospel, wherever it has been heard, leaves people on the ground of judgment; but the judgment will be, in every case, according to a man’s, works. The inspired apostle, most distinctly, teaches us, in Eph. 5:3-6, and Col. 3:5, 6, that the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, on account of certain sins which he specifies. In short, it is perfectly plain, from scripture, that each one, “small and great,” will be judged according to his works. Solemn truth! Everyone who dies in his sins—dies unrepentant, unconverted, unbelieving, will have to give an account of all his deeds. All will stand out, in terrific array, on the tablets of memory and conscience—all seen in the light of that throne from which nothing is hidden, and from which none can escape.

How dreadful to stand before the throne of judgment! How many a “Woe is me!” will break forth from the countless myriads who shall stand before that throne! But there will be no altar there! No flying seraph! No live coal! No mercy! No provision of grace! What then? “The lake of fire!” It cannot be otherwise, if the judgment is to be “according to every man’s works.” Fire unquenchable, and the never dying worm, must be the consequence with all who stand before the great white throne of Rev. 20. Men may deny this. They may try to put it from them. They may reason about it. But all their reasoning, and all their philosophy, and all their learning, and all their criticism, can

never shake the clear and solemn testimony of holy scripture. That testimony proves beyond all question, first, that those whose names are in the book of life, shall not come into judgment at all, because Christ was judged in their stead. And, secondly, that those whose names are not written in the book of life, shall be judged according to their works, and—appalling thought! —“cast into the lake of fire.”

Oh! beloved reader, flee, we beseech thee, from the wrath to come, and accept, now, God's full salvation!

Verily, Verily

“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 condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

“Verily, verily,” Jesus, Lord,
Were thine own words when here;
The soul that hearkens to thy word
Need never doubt nor fear.
All who believe, in simple faith,
From God that thou wert sent,
“Life everlasting” surely “hath,”
For which thine own was spent—
To condemnation ne'er shall come,
For thou hast borne it all;
The perfect work that thou hast done
Can never change or fall.
Passed they are from death to life,
Before the throne of God;
And all that can against them rise,
Atoned for by thy blood.
Then make each seeking anxious heart
Bow low before thy word:
And, by thy Holy Spirit taught,
Own thee as Savior, Lord!

The Well Is Deep

“The well is deep.”

Look back into the purposes of God,
And scan Eternity. Trace to their source
His wisdom and His power. Fathom, if thou canst,
His everlasting mercy. Should thy brain
Grow dizzy, and refuse to sound such depths,
Confess thy feebleness, and meekly say—

“The well is deep.”

“The well is deep.” Take for thy longest line
The cords of vanity—the rope of sins
Unnumbered. Choose then the heaviest weight;
Take thee thine own poor hardened heart of stone:
Now plumb the depths of God’s unbounded love.
Thy lead seems light—thy lengthened line run out—
E’en with such instruments thou hast but plunged
Beneath the surface of the tide. Below,
Far, far below, in depths unfathomable,
Springs undisturbed, the ceaseless flow of love,
Embosomed in eternity. Here rest,
And humbly bend the knee, and own again,
“The well is deep.”

“The well is deep.” Mark now the wounded side
Of Him who hung upon the tree. Haste thee
To hide within that cleft; and, as the springs
Of living waters from the riven rock
Gush freely forth, ponder the depths of woe

From whence they rise. Behold that broken heart!
Drink! stranger, drink! and quench thy thirsty soul,
From out of depths which ceaselessly abound.
The more thy need, the fuller still the fount;
The more thy thirst, the deeper still the spring;
No sealed fountain this; no spring shut up;
But, flowing forth to every child of want,
It cries, Come unto me and drink—invites
The heavy-laden to repose—cleanses
Whilst giving life, and gladdens whilst it heals.
The thoughtless sinner, who, at Jacob's well,
Tasted the living waters fresh from God,
Has yet to learn, through all eternity,
The truth of words she ignorantly speaks
Touching Samaria's failing earthly spring:
"The well is deep."

Work of Evangelization: Seventh Letter to a Friend

December, 1869.

Dearest A—,

Through want of space, I was obliged to close my last letter without even touching upon the subject of the Sunday School; and, although it involves my extending this series of letters into another year, I must devote a page or two to a branch of work which has occupied a very large place in my heart for thirty years. I should deem my series incomplete were this subject left untouched.

Some may question how far the Sunday School can be viewed as an integral part of the work of evangelization. I can only say it is mainly in this light I regard it. I look upon it as one great and most interesting branch of gospel work. The superintendent of the Sunday School, and the teacher of the Sunday School class are workers in the wide gospel field, just as distinctly as the evangelist or preacher of the gospel.

I am fully aware that a Sunday School differs materially from an ordinary gospel preaching. It is not convened in the same way, or conducted in the same manner. There is, if I may so express myself, a union of the parent, the teacher, and the evangelist in the person of the Sunday School worker. For the time being, he takes the place of the parent—he seeks to do the duty of a teacher; but he aims at the object of the evangelist—that priceless object, the salvation of the souls of the precious little ones committed to his charge. As to the mode in which he gains his and—as to the details of his work—as to the varied agencies which he may bring to bear, he alone is responsible.

I am aware that exception is taken to the Sunday School on the ground that its tendency is to interfere with parental or domestic training. Now, I must confess, dearest A—, that I cannot see any force whatever in this objection. The true object of the Sunday School is not to supersede parental training, but to help it where it exists, or to supply its lack where it does not exist. There are, as you and I well know, hundreds of thousands of dear children who have no parental training at all. Thousands have no parents, and thousands more have parents who are far worse than none. Look at the multitudes that throng the lanes, alleys, and courtyards of our large cities and towns, who seem hardly a degree above mere animal existence—yea, many of them like little incarnate demons. Look at the myriads who pour forth from our mills and factories, sent thither before they know their alphabet, that they may earn money for their parents, who, alas! too often spend their children's earnings as well as their own in the gin shop.

“Who can think upon all these precious souls without wishing a hearty God speed to all true Sunday School workers, and earnestly longing for more thorough earnestness and energy in that most blessed work?

I say, “true Sunday School workers,” because I fear that many engage in the work who are not true, not real, not fit. Many, I fear, take it up as a little bit of fashionable religious work suited to the

younger members of religious communities. Many, too, view it as a kind of set off to a week of self-indulgence, folly, and worldliness. All such persons are an actual hindrance rather than a help to the sacred service.

Then again, there are many who sincerely love Christ, and long to serve Him in the Sunday School, but who are not really fitted for the work. They are deficient in, tact, energy, order, and rule. They lack that power to adapt themselves to the children, and to engage their young hearts, which is so essential to the Sunday School worker. It is a great mistake to suppose that everyone who stands idle in the market place is fit to turn into this particular branch of christian labor. On the contrary, it needs a person thoroughly fitted of God for it; and if it be asked, "How are we ever to be supplied with suited agents for this branch of evangelistic service?" I reply, Just in the same way as you are to be supplied in any other department—by earnest, persevering, believing prayer. I am most thoroughly persuaded that if Christians were more stirred up by God's Spirit, to feel the importance of the Sunday School—if they could only seize the idea that it is, like the tract depot and the preaching, part and parcel of that most glorious work to which we are called, in these closing days of Christendom's history—if they were more permeated by the idea of the evangelistic nature and object of Sunday School work, they would be more instant and earnest in prayer, both in the closet and in the public assembly, that the Lord would raise up in our midst a band of earnest, devoted, whole-hearted, Sunday School workers.

This is the lack, dearest A—, and may God, in His abounding mercy, supply it! He is able, and surely He is willing. But then He will be waited on, and inquired of; and "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." I think we have much cause for thankfulness and praise for what has been done in the way of Sunday Schools, during the last few years. I well remember the time when many of our friends seemed to overlook this' branch of work altogether. Even now, many treat it with indifference, thus weakening the hands and discouraging the hearts of those engaged in it.

But I shall not dwell upon this, inasmuch as my theme is the Sunday School, and not those who neglect or oppose it. I bless God for what I see in the way of encouragement. I have often been exceedingly refreshed and delighted by seeing some of our very oldest friends rising from the table of their Lord, and proceeding to arrange the benches on which the dear little ones were soon to be ranged to hear the sweet story of a Savior's love. And what could be more lovely, more touching, or more morally suited, than for those who had just been remembering the Savior's dying love to seek, even by the arrangement of the benches, to carry out His living words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me?"

There is very much I should like to add as to the mode of working the Sunday School; but perhaps it is just as well that each worker should be wholly cast upon the living God for counsel and help as to details. We must ever remember that the Sunday School, like the tract depot, and the preaching, is entirely a work of individual responsibility. This is a grand point, and where it is fully understood, and where there is real earnestness of heart, and singleness of eye, I believe there will be no great difficulty as to the particular mode of working. A large heart, and a fixed purpose to carry on the great work, and fulfill the glorious mission committed to us, will effectually deliver us from the withering influence of crotchets and prejudices—those miserable obstructions to all that is lovely and of good report.

May God pour out His blessing on all Sunday Schools, upon the pupils, the teachers, and the superintendents! May He also bless all who are engaged, in any way, in the instruction of the young! May He cheer and refresh their spirits by giving them to reap many golden sheaves in their own special corner of the one great and glorious gospel field!

Ever believe me, dearest A—,

Your deeply affectionate

You Think of the Water You Threw Away

The following lines were suggested by a description of the effects of thirst told to the writer by the venerable African Missionary, Robert Moffat.

The African desert or wilderness roaming,
Pursuing his journey, the traveler goes;
He sees not a torrent all gushing and foaming,
But crosses a region where no river flows.
Himself and companions, all weary and thirsty,
No shelter protects from the sun's scorching ray—
The fountain still distant and calabash empty,
He thinks of the water he once threw away.
The African village surprised and surrounded,
The terrified people endeavor to flee;
Their every intention is crossed and confounded,
The slave-hunter takes them his captives to be.
The rope round his neck, and his hands tied behind him,
The slave 'neath the whip, as he goes on his way,
In vain sighs for succor which cannot now find him,
And thinks of the water he once threw away.
Outstretched on the field where the foeman has laid him,
With saber or bullet or splinter of shell;
The soldier, a victim which one moment made him,
In torture and anguish now lies where he fell.
The faintness and stupor the bleeding brought o'er him,
The smart of his wounds quickly chaseth away,
And thirsting intensely, no succor before him,
He thinks of the water he once threw away.

A river is flowing of pure living water,
It comes from the temple of God and the Lamb;
The invite is issued to every quarter,
For all who are thirsty; who hears should proclaim:
Who drinketh shall live and be saved forever,
Who hears and neglects it draws near to the day,
When careless and scorers, where hope cometh never,
Shall think of the water they once threw away.

T. J.

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