

THINGS NEW AND OLD VOLUME 15

by C.H. Mackintosh

A collection of articles and writings by C.H. Mackintosh from Things New and Old Volume 15, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

46 Chapters

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Things New and Old Volume 15

All With Jesus

I left it all with Jesus,
Long ago;
All my sin I brought Him
And my woe.
When by faith I saw Him
On the tree.
Heard His small still whisper,
“‘Tis for thee;”
From my heart the burden
Roll’d away—
Happy day.
I leave it all with Jesus,
For He knows
How to steal the bitter
From life’s woes;
How to gild the tear-drop
With His smile,
Make the desert garden
Bloom awhile:
When my weakness leaneth
On His might.
All seems light.
I leave it all with Jesus,
Day by day:
Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may.

Hope has cast her anchor
Found her rest
In the calm, sure haven
Of His breast:
Love esteems it heaven
To abide
At His side.
Oh leave it all with Jesus,
Drooping soul!
Tell not half thy story,
But the whole.
Worlds on worlds are hanging
On His hand,
Life and death are waiting
His command;
Yet His tender bosom
Makes thee room—
Oh come home!

The Believer's Privilege

To walk with God! O fellowship divine!
Man's highest state on earth—Lord, be it mine!
With thee may I a close communion hold,
To thee the deep recesses of my heart unfold:
Yes, tell thee all—each weary care and grief
Into thy bosom pour, till there I find relief.
Oh! let me walk with thee, thou mighty One!
Lean on thine arm, and trust thy love alone;
With thee hold converse sweet where'er I go;
Thy smile of love my highest bliss below:
With thee transact life's business, doing all
With single aim for thee, as thou dost call:
My every comfort at thy hand receive,
My every talent to thy glory give.
Thy counsel seek in every trying hour,
In all my weakness trust thy mighty power:
Oh! may this high companionship lie mine,
And all my life by its reflection shine,
My great, my wise, my never-failing Friend,
Whose love no change can know, no turn, no end!
My Savior-God! who gav'st thy life for me,
Let nothing come between my heart and thee!
From thee no thought, no secret would I keep,
But on thy breast my tears of anguish weep,
My every wound to thee I take to heal,
For thou art touched with every pang I feel.

In thee, and thee alone, I now confide,
And thee I'd follow, as my Lord and guide.
Earth's 'broken cisterns'—ah! they all have prov'd
Unsatisfying, vain, however lov'd;
The false will fail, the fondest they must go!
Oh! thus it is with all we love below.
From things of earth then let my heart be free,
And find its happiness, my Lord, in thee.
Thy Holy Spirit for my guide and guest,
Whate'er my lot, I must be safe and blest;
Wash'd in thy blood, from all my guilt made clean,
I in thy righteousness alone am seen:
Thy home, my home—thy God and Father mine!
Dead to the world—my life is hid with thine:
Its highest honors fade before my view —
Its pleasures, I can trample on them too.
With thee, by faith I walk, in crowds, alone,
Making to thee my wants and wishes known;
Drawing from thee my daily strength in prayer,
Finding thine arm sustain me everywhere:
While through the clouds of sin and woe, the light
Of coming glory shines more sweetly bright;
And this my daily boast, my aim, my end,
That my Redeemer is my God—my Friend!
C. H. I.

Believing in Christ Himself

The means of giving the new life is said to be the word of God applied by the Holy Ghost; and that, when figures are used, water is what is chosen. But the sum and substance of the entire teaching is, that the testimony of God is the divine means of communicating life to the soul when applied by the Holy Ghost—that is, by faith. And if we want still further to know what specially in the truth of God is used to quicken those who are dead in sins, it is always, more or less, the revelation of Christ. My believing that the creature was made by God will not quicken my soul. I might believe any facts in the Old Testament, and be assured of all the miracles, discourses, and ways of Jesus in the New, and yet my soul might still be unquicken. But believing in Christ Himself is a very different thing from not doubting things about Him. It supposes that I have, more or less, come to an end of myself; that I have bowed to the humiliating sentence of scripture upon my nature, and that I own myself to be lost in the sight of God.....So that, when a man receives Christ, he has still his old nature, not only body, soul, and spirit, but even “the flesh”—for this, too, he has still, and it may be, alas! the occasion of many a slip and sorrow, if he be unwatchful. Besides these, there is for the believer a new nature that he had not before.

We must take care that we put things in their proper places. It is the word brought home by the Holy Ghost that produces faith, and this not by mending the first, but by revealing the last, Adam. God has come down from heaven to accomplish this great purpose—to give me this new life—to deliver me from sin and self: and how is it done? It is the Holy Ghost who effects it by the word of God, which makes Christ known to the soul.

(an extract.)

The Bright Side Is Always Where Jesus Is

The Christian should always be calm and bright, even in nature's darkest hours.

A servant of God was overtaken by sickness when far from home, and thus writes: — “Just at the gray of the dawn in the morning, the fold of my tent parted, and a black face peered through. It was Old Nanny, a colored woman. Looking tenderly at me, she said, ‘Massa, does ye see de bright side dis mornin’?’ ‘No, Nanny,’ said I; ‘it isn’t so bright as I wish it was.’ ‘Well, massa, I alius sees de bright side.’ ‘You do,’ said I, ‘ maybe you haven’t had much trouble?’ ‘May be not,’ she said; and then went on to tell me, in her simple broken way, of her life in Virginia, of the selling of her children one by one, of the auction sale of her husband, and then of herself. She was alone now in the camp, without having heard from one of her kindred for years. ‘Maybe I ain’t seen no trouble, massa.’ ‘But Nanny,’ said I, ‘have you seen the bright side all the time?’ ‘Allus, massa! allus.’ ‘Well, how did you do it?’ ‘Dis is de way, massa. When I see de great black cloud comin’ over’ (and she waved her dark hand inside the tent, as though one might be settling down there),,an’ ‘peers like comin’ crushin’ down on me, den I jist whips aroun’ on de oder side, an’ I find de Lord Jesus dar; an’ den it’s all bright an’ cl’ar. De bright side’s alius whare Jesus is, massa.’ ‘Well, Nanny,’ said I, ‘if you can do that, I think I ought to.’ ‘Peers like ye ought to, massa, an’ you’s a preacher of de Word of Jesus.’ She went away. I turned myself on my blanket, and said in my heart, ‘The Lord is my shepherd. It is all right and well. Now, come fever or health, come death or life, come burial on the Yasoo Bluff or in the churchyard at home, the Lord is my shepherd.’ With this sweet peace of rest, God’s care and love became very precious to me. I fell asleep. When I awoke, I was in a perspiration, my fever was broken. Old Nanny’s faith had made me whole.”

But Will He Not Despise Me Now?

So said one a few hours before she died; still unconverted; but evidently beginning to turn round to the Lord. It was a moment of unspeakable interest. The eternal happiness or misery of an immortal soul quivered in the balances of truth.

She was a clever, reasoning, woman; and having been thrown at a certain period of her life amongst those who speak of Christ as nothing more than a mere man, she embraced, and with the natural activity of her mind, sought to spread the soul-ruining opinions of her new friends. The orthodox faith which affirms that the Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man in one person, she assumed to believe was false. Therefore, according to this fatal heresy, He could not be the Savior of her soul. She was now taught to trust in herself—in her good works, especially in works of charity—and in the general mercy of God for salvation. Strong feelings of opposition used to arise in her mind when she was told that nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ could cleanse away her sins, and fit her for heaven. The very thought of such a thing was rejected with scorn. “Never, no never, could I believe such a thing—I can’t; it’s impossible;” is the style of answer we have heard from such lips, even when apparently anxious about the future.

In conversing with such minds, we are made to feel that there is much more to contend with than the mere darkness or indifference of nature. There is the power of Satan who has blinded the mind, hardened the heart, and seared the conscience. He is in full possession of such souls. As in the case of Joshua the high priest, he stands at their right hand—the symbol of power—ready to resist every attempt to show them the truth, and every desire on their part to receive it. Painfully solemn things will sometimes he said by such; but we know where the blasphemy comes from, and can have patience with the ensnared soul and also deep compassion for its fearful state; faith sees it in the foul grasp of the fiend of hell, and knows that Jesus only can take the prey from the mighty.

But the time came while yet in the prime of life, that the one immediately before us must lie down and die. To human pride and an unbroken will this was disappointing and humiliating; but it could not be put off; it could not be avoided; disease was there and doing its work. No love, no kindness, no power on earth could stay its course; she must die, and die soon. The most terrible feelings came over her mind as to what might be after death. She could not persuade herself that she was prepared. Doubts filled and harassed her mind; all that she had been taught to trust in vanished as utterly worthless. Reasoning was now useless; it failed to satisfy her anxiety; she was as it were left alone in the dark; nothing to rest on; nothing to hold by; all refuge failed her; yet she could not receive the testimony of God to the all-sufficiency of the blood of Jesus—she could not bear to give the undivided glory of her salvation to one who was in her estimation nothing more than a Moses or an Elias. Yet she was convinced of sin, and that with her sins she could never enter into heaven; how to be pardoned and cleansed was the great question now.

“Only by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son,” was the faithful reply, from a friend who stood at her bedside. “No, never will I bow to Him as God,” was the rebellious feeling of her heart. She

refused; she was distressed; she was restless; death was near; what was to become of her? Again, she was told by the same friend, to look to Jesus as a lost, ruined, and hell-deserving sinner, and she would be saved at once—that God was ready beforehand with everything for her; but she must honor His Son as co-equal with Himself, in being, power, and glory. This was the one difficulty with her. To surrender her heart to Jesus as Savior and Lord, would be doing violence to every feeling of her nature; and would be giving the lie to her past profession. No, she could not do it; and yet she sighed and groaned for something she needed but could nowhere find.

Day after day passed, and the mighty struggle increased. The friend referred to sent a written request to the meeting for prayer. It was so worded as to impress the importance of the case on all hearts. Earnest prayer was made night after night. And there, most probably, as in most cases—in the prayer-meeting—the answer came—the work was done. Still, the report was, “No hearty yielding yet to the name of Jesus; but increasingly anxious.” Satan was unwilling to let go his hold. Having beguiled the soul to the brink of hell, was he there to lose his prey? But faith too held a firm grasp; “Look to Jesus; confess Him as Savior and Lord; His blood cleanseth from all sin; and trust in Him alone, and all will be well;” were the encouraging words spoken to her. But we need not attempt to trace the different aspects of the terrible struggle during the last nine days of her life; it is with the closing scene we have now to do.

The Lord in mercy heard prayer; this was evident from her anxiety continuing. As the end drew near, her heart began to yield, the power of old associations became feebler, all outward things were passing away, she was more by herself before God. But can it be true that He is really God as well as man? she was now disposed to inquire. “Yes, O yes,” was the immediate answer given. “Look unto me,” He says Himself, “and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.” He is a just God and a Savior. The Just died for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. What love! Mrs.—, O think of it! believe it! What love in God’s Son to come down from heaven to be a man and die—to die that we might live! All that is required for our salvation is done; we have only to look to Jesus—to look in the spirit of faith and dependence, and we are saved.

While she was being thus spoken to, the grace of God was at work in her soul. We believe the Lord had rebuked Satan; she was free, and ready now to receive the truth; still she was in darkness and doubt; but then came the never-to-be-forgotten dawning of an eternal day “But will He not despise me now?” This was, we doubt not, the cry of a breaking heart. The friend who stood by her bedside wisely answered: “If He despises you, you will be the first He has ever despised in this world.” This word of wondrous love broke the last link with her former self, and men and things. The work was done; she confessed the Lord Jesus. The thought of a love that could bear with so much disdainful pride and opposition—and so long—brought her to His feet in faith and love.

The friend who had been so interested in her now put the following plain questions: “Do you now really believe that Jesus is God?” “Yes, I do.” “And do you now really believe that His blood has cleansed all your sins away?” “Yes, I do.” She had great difficulty in speaking; the end was near; the Lord spared her about twenty-four hours; thus giving her a brief opportunity to confess her faith in the precious blood of Jesus, God’s Son, as the only way of salvation; and to own Jesus as Savior and Lord—her Lord and her God.

Yes! my dear reader, so did one live; so did one repent, believe, and die. Let men of all creeds and of all opinions hear it; and let men of no creed—of no religious opinion— if there be such, hear it; let the learned and the unlearned—the savage and the sage—hear it; nay, let the hell-inspired debaser of the Son of the ever blessed, hear it. Hear what? Hear this, “that if he despises thee, thou wilt be the first He has ever despised in this world.” But remember, that if thou shouldst despise, lightly esteem, or even neglect the Lord Jesus—the only Savior of sinners, thou must be lost—lost forever—lost in the fiery depths of hell. But how awful the reflection would be in that place of unmitigated woe, and how deep its agony—I am here for despising Him who never despised the chief of sinners even in the eleventh hour, or ever once spurned from His feet a penitent soul of Adam’s race. Now, just now, without delay, my dear reader, turn to the Lord, believe His word, and trust in Himself. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,” stands in the records of His ways with mankind. Hear, then, my dear reader, and believe it true; “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Psalm 51:17; Matt. 11:28; John 6:37.

Christ Is All

The Lord Jesus Christ, God's blessed Son, is all our salvation. There is no salvation, no perfect peace, no real joy, no power over sin and Satan, no good works, no effectual service till Jesus be received into the heart. In Jesus and Jesus alone we find eternal life, present happiness, and future glory. "Christ is all" (Col. 3:11). Jesus is the chief good, —the center of rest and the source of grace and truth. God gives not His good things apart from Jesus; Jesus must be received first, and abiding in Jesus we receive every blessing.

Communion with Jesus in the spirit by faith and prayer should be the habit of our life on earth; so precious is He that we should never forget Him, but always realize Him present in all places. "To me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1:21.) Any other object than Jesus is below the Christian's dignity. Pursuit after riches, or honors, or worldly pleasures, is folly and sin.

A late godly and beloved minister sent the following from his death-bed to his people: —"I have preached to you for thirty-two years the complete atonement of Christ, His perfect righteousness, and salvation through His blood. These truths are now my hope, my comfort, my stay. I believe that God's righteousness is mine, and that Christ's atonement is my perfect satisfaction for sin; and God's Holy indwelling Spirit is my support and my life now. In this faith I have lived, and in this faith I die. I have nothing else, and I want no more. My faith is firm as a rock."

On another occasion he said to one by his side, "We ministers of the gospel ought to set before our people more fully the joys of communion with Christ as a living and present friend. We are apt to preach about Christ, rather than to preach Christ; about salvation, rather than to set forth the Savior. I have learned to think more about the Person of my living Savior than about the doctrines that concern Him; and if I were raised up again from this bed of sickness—while I should preach the doctrines that I have ever preached—I would set before my people the joy of present personal communion with Jesus; for He hath said. 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.'

WATCHING DAILY.

Pro. 8:35.

O child of God, so weary with earth's toil

And ceaseless strife,

Thy Master chooseth thee for high behest

And fruitful life.

O, gladly wait

Beside the portal of the Masters gate,

To do His bidding for the day grows late.

Take thou His message, and then hasten back
To His dear feet;
And He will greet thee with His tender love
And comfort sweet.
Then gladly wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
For the next message, as the day grows late
And mourn not sorely, if thine errand seem
All fruitless now,
The message was thy Master's, and His mark
Is on thy brow.
And thou didst wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
As the shades gathered, and the day was late.
Not now the time of reckoning, it will come
To thee at last,
And thou wilt smile to think of weary hours
That shall be past,
When thou didst wait,
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
To do His bidding, ere it was too late.

Christ's Answer to God's Charge Against Man

Romans 3:23, John 17:4.

A Ritualist! my friend, art thou? Well, but I need not be surprised; there are many such now-a-days; and they are rapidly increasing; and not infrequently, the most fascinating piety is found underneath the most slavish formality. This makes ritualism most deceiving, dangerous ground; though, alas, popular. Rites and ceremonies are a virtual denial that the work of redemption is finished. It will matter little whether thou art Roman, Greek, Anglican, or Dissenter, nothing short of the finished work of Christ can save from the flames of hell thy precious soul. That work is finished now—finished for thee to rest upon—but not for thee to supplement by either thy doings or thy feelings. Yes, glorious news! finished, perfect. Lean thy whole weight upon it, it is a sure foundation; and be thou of the priesthood or the laity, thou art safe forever. But seek not, as thou wouldest not cast contempt on that finished work, to add, by rites or ceremonies, a feather's weight to its value. God is jealous for the glory of His Son. But let me explain—Man's lost condition is briefly summed up in these few words: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23.) To meet this sad condition, Jesus came; and ere He left the scene of His humiliation and suffering, He could, and did say, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4.) Infinitely precious! Transcendently blessed words! The mighty work is done! God is glorified! man's condition fully met! and all who believe it are complete in Christ—perfect in Him, and eternally saved. Could anything be simpler or plainer to the meanest capacity?

Well, it does not appear plain to me; it is quite different to what I believe and teach. It sounds to me like boasting. Do you mean to say you are perfect—that you never sin? Hear me —

1. In Col. 2, where the apostle is warning the Church against mere forms; he says, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." We are in no way complete in ourselves; but we know that we are complete—lacking nothing—in Him, as risen, exalted, and glorified. The word of God says so.

2. Every believer is perfect in Christ, though far from perfect in himself. "For by one offering he [Christ] hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Not only "perfected," observe, but "perfected forever." Neither need there be any difficulty as to the word "sanctified" here. It simply means, in this connection, a vital work of the Holy Spirit, by which the sinner is separated from the world to God; which Peter calls "sanctification of the Spirit." Heb. 10:14 Pet. 1:2.

3. We are told that Christ obtained eternal redemption, by the blood of His cross. Heb. 9:12. Thus, you see, the words complete, perfect, eternal, are God's own words; blessed be His name. But to return—God charges man, thou wilt see, with two things; having sinned, and having come short of His glory. And these are just the two things that man cannot remedy. He cannot put away sin; he cannot glorify God. But Christ comes in grace and love and does both. And now, what is the plain duty and glorious privilege of man? Why, surely, to believe it; to thank the Lord for it; to praise Him;

to delight our souls in His love, to glory in the cross where God was glorified and sin put away. Believest thou this, my dear friend? If thou art free to say in faith, Yes, I know I am lost; I know I have sinned and robbed God of His glory, then listen to the life-giving words of Jesus; "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." But for whom? thou mayest ask. For those who have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Art thou one of these? then thy title is clear, thy plea is heard, the salvation of God is thine.

But, oh! remember, I pray thee, that it must either be glorying in the finished work of Christ, or tormented in the depths of hell forever. Trifle not, I beseech thee; delay not; thou knowest not how near thy end may be. Why then put thy trust in mere observances, in place of, or in addition to, the finished, all-sufficient, glorious work of Christ? why abandon a reality for a form, a substance for a shadow, a priestly absolution for the eternal efficacy of the blood of Christ? Oh. then, give thy heart to Him who gave Himself for thee; who put away sin and glorified God for thee, who waits in patient grace to reveal all His love to thee, and who longs for thee to share His throne, His crown. His glory forever.

Short Papers on Church History

The reign of Constantine the Great forms a most important epoch in the history of the Church. Both his father Constantius, and his mother Helena, were religiously inclined, and always favorable to the Christians. Some years of Constantine's youth were spent at the court of Dioclesian and Galerius in the character of a hostage. He witnessed the publication of the persecuting edict at Nicomedia in 303, and the horrors which followed. Having effected his escape, he joined his father in Britain. In 306 Constantius died at York. He had nominated as successor, his son Constantine, who was accordingly saluted Augustus by the army. He continued and extended the toleration which his father had bestowed on the Christians.

There were now six pretenders to the sovereignty of the empire. Galerius, Licinius, Maximian, Maxentius, Maximin, and Constantine. A scene of contention followed, scarcely paralleled in the annals of Rome. Among these rivals, Constantine possessed a decided superiority in prudence and abilities, both military and political. In the year 312 Constantine entered Rome victorious. In 313 a new edict was issued, by which the persecuting edicts of Dioclesian were repealed, the Christians encouraged, their teachers honored, and the professors of Christianity advanced to places of trust and influence in the state. This great change in the history of the Church introduces us to

THE PERGAMOS PERIOD.

A.D. 313 TILL ABOUT 606.

The epistle to the church in Pergamos exactly describes, we believe, the state of things in Constantine's time. But we will quote the address entire for the convenience of our readers, and then compare it. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that over-cometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:12-17.

In Ephesus, we see the first point of departure, leaving their "first love"—the heart slipping away from Christ, and from the enjoyment of His love. In Smyrna, the Lord allowed the saints to be cast into the furnace, that the progress of declension might be stayed. They were persecuted by the heathen. By means of these trials Christianity revived; the gold was purified; the saints held fast

the name and the faith of Christ. Thus was Satan defeated; and the Lord so ruled that the emperors, one after the other, in the most humiliating and mortifying circumstances, publicly confessed their defeat. But in Pergamos, the enemy changes his tactics. In place of persecution from without, there is seduction from within. Under Dioclesian he was the roaring lion; under Constantine he is the deceiving serpent. Pergamos is the scene of Satan's flattering power; he is within the Church. Nicolaitanism is the corruption of grace—the flesh acting in the Church of God. In Smyrna he is outside as an adversary, in Pergamos he is inside as a seducer. This was exactly what took place under Constantine.

Historically, it was when the violence of persecution had spent itself; when men had grown weary of their own rage; when they saw that all their efforts were to no purpose; that the sufferers ceased to care for the things of the world, and became more devoted to Christianity; that even the numbers of the Christians seemed to increase; Satan tries another, and an old artifice, once so successful against Israel. (Num. 25) When he could not obtain the Lord's permission to curse His people Israel, he allured them to their ruin, by unlawful alliances with the daughters of Moab. As a false prophet he was now in the church at Pergamos, seducing the saints into unlawful alliance with the world—the place of his throne and authority. The world ceases to persecute; great advantages are held out to Christians, by the civil establishment of Christianity; Constantine professes to be converted, and ascribes his triumphs to the virtues of the cross. The snare, alas, is successful; the Church is flattered by his patronage; shakes hands with the world, and sinks into its position—"even where Satan's seat is." All was now lost as to her corporate and proper testimony, and the way to popery laid open. Every worldly advantage was no doubt gained; but alas, alas, it was at the cost of the honor and glory of her heavenly Lord and Savior.

The Church, we must remember, is an out calling (Acts 15:14)—called out from Jew and Gentile to witness that she was not of this world, but of heaven—that she is united to a glorified Christ, and not of this world, even as He is not of this world. So He says Himself, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." John 17.

The Christian's mission is on the same principle and of the same character as was Christ's. "As my Father hath sent me," He says, "even so send I you." They were sent, as it were, from heaven to the world, by the blessed Lord, to do His will, care for His glory, and to return home when their work was done. Thus the Christian should be the heavenly witness of the truth of God, especially of such truths as man's total ruin, and God's love in Christ to a perishing world; and thereby seek to gather souls out of the world, that they may be saved from the wrath to come. But when we lose sight of our high calling, and associate with the world as if we belonged to it, we become false witnesses. We do the world a great injury, and Christ a great dishonor. This, we shall see by and by, was what the Church did as to her corporate position and action. Doubtless there were many cases of individual faithfulness in the midst of the general declension. The Lord Himself speaks of His faithful Antipas who was martyred. Heaven takes special notice of individual faithfulness, and remembers the faithful by name.

But the eye and the heart of the Lord had followed His poor faithless Church to where she had fallen. "I know thy works," He says, "and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." What solemn words are these, and from the lips of her dishonored Lord! Nothing was hidden from His

eye. I know, He says; I have seen what has happened. But what, alas, had now taken place? Why, the Church as a body had accepted the emperor's terms, was now united to the state, and dwelling in the world. This was Babylon spiritually—committing fornication with the kings of the earth. But He who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks judges her action and her condition. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." He takes the place of one who was armed with the divine sword—with the all-searching, piercing power of the word of God. The sword is the symbol of that by which questions are settled; whether it be the carnal sword of the nations, or "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

It has been often said, that there is always a marked and instructive connection between the way in which Christ presents Himself, and the state of the Church which He is addressing. This is most true in the present address. The word of God, evidently, had lost its right place in the assembly of His saints; it was no longer the supreme authority in divine things. But the Lord Jesus takes care to show that it had not lost its power, or place, or authority in His hands. "Repent," He says, "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." He does not say, observe, I will fight against thee, but against them. In exercising discipline in the Church, the Lord acts with discrimination and with mercy. The public position of the Church was now a false one. There was open association with the prince of this world, in place of faithfulness to Christ, the Prince of heaven. But he that had an ear to hear what the Spirit said unto the churches, had secret fellowship with Him who sustains the faithful soul with the hidden manna. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give Him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The general defection would no doubt isolate the faithful few—a remnant. To them the promise is given.

The manna, as we learn from John 6, represents Christ Himself as He came down from heaven to give life to our souls. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever." As the lowly one who took the place of humiliation in this world, He is our provision for the daily walk through the wilderness. The manna was to be gathered daily, fresh from the dew drops every morning. The "hidden manna" refers to the golden pot of manna that was laid up in the ark as a memorial before the Lord. It is the blessed remembrance of Christ, who was the humbled suffering man in this world, and who is the eternal delight of God, and of the faithful in heaven. Not only has the true-hearted saint communion with Christ as exalted on high, but with Him as the once humbled Jesus here below. But this cannot be if we are listening to the flatteries and accepting the favors of the world. Our only strength against the spirit of the world is walking with a rejected Christ, and feeding on Him as our portion even now. Our high privilege is to eat, not of the manna only, but of the "hidden manna." But who can speak of the blessedness of such communion, or of the loss of those who slip away in heart from Christ, and settle down in worldliness?

The "white stone" is a secret mark of the Lord's special favor. As the promise is given in the address to Pergamos, it may mean the expression of Christ's approval of the way the "overcomers" witnessed and suffered for Him, when so many were led away by the seductions of Satan. It gives the general idea of a secret pledge of entire approbation. But it is difficult to explain. The heart may enter into its blessedness, and yet feel unable to describe it. Happy they who so know it for themselves. There are joys which are common to all; but there is a joy, a special joy,

which will be our own peculiar joy in Christ, and that forever. This will be true of all. "And in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." What an unknown source of calm repose, sweet peace, true contentment, and divine strength, we find in the "white stone," and in the "new name," written by His own hand. Others may misunderstand us, many may think us wrong; but He knows all, and the heart can afford to be quiet, whatever may be passing around. At the same time, we must judge everything by the word of God—the sharp sword with two edges—even as we ourselves are judged.

"There on the hidden bread
Of Christ—once humbled here —
God's treasured store—forever fed,
His love my soul shall cheer.
Called by that secret name
Of undisclosed delight —
Blest answer to reproach and shame —
Graved on the stone of white."

Having thus briefly glanced at the epistle to Pergamos, we shall be better able to understand the mind of the Lord as to the conduct of Christians under the reign of Constantine. The professing church and the world had joined hands and were now enjoying themselves together. As the world could not rise to the high level of the Church, she must fall to the low level of the world. This was exactly what took place. Nevertheless, the fair form of Christianity was maintained, and there were doubtless many who held fast the faith and the name of Jesus. We now return to the conversion and history of Constantine the Great the conversion of Constantine. A.D. 312.

The great event in the religious history of Constantine took place in 312. He was marching from France to Italy against Maxentius. The approaching contest was one of immense moment. It was likely either to be his ruin or to raise him to the highest pinnacle of power. He was in deep thought. It was known that Maxentius was making great preparations for the struggle, by enlarging his army, and by scrupulously attending to all the customary ceremonies of paganism. He consulted with great pains the heathen oracles, and relied for success on the agency of supernatural powers.

Constantine, though a wise and virtuous heathen, was a heathen still. He knew what he had to give battle to; and while considering to what god he should betake himself for protection and success, he thought on the ways of his father, the emperor of the west. He remembered that he prayed to the God of the Christians and had always been prosperous, while the emperors who persecuted the Christians had been visited with divine justice. He resolved therefore to forsake the service of idols and to ask the aid of the one true God in heaven. He prayed that God would make Himself known to him, and that He would make him victorious over Maxentius, notwithstanding all his magical arts and superstitious rites.

While engaged in such thoughts, Constantine imagined that he saw, soon after mid-day, some extraordinary appearance in the heavens. It assumed the sign of a glittering cross, and above it

the inscription, "BY THIS CONQUER." The emperor and the whole army who were witnesses of this wonderful sight stood awestruck. But while the emperor was gravely meditating on what the vision could signify, night came on, and he fell asleep. He dreamed that the Savior appeared to him, bearing in his hand the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and directed him to cause a banner to be made after the same pattern and use it as his standard in war, assuring him that while he did so he would be victorious. Constantine, on awaking, described what had been shown to him while asleep, and resolved to adopt the sign of the cross as his imperial standard, without delay.

The Banner of the Cross.

According to Eusebius, the workers in gold and precious stones were immediately sent for, and received their orders from the lips of Constantine. Eusebius had seen the standard and gives a long account of it. As the greatest interest has been thrown around this relic of antiquity by all ecclesiastical writers, we will give our readers a brief but minute sketch of it.

The shaft, or perpendicular beam, was long and overlaid with gold. On its top was a crown composed of gold and precious stones, with the engraving of the sacred symbol of the cross and the first letters of the Savior's name, or the Greek letter X, intersected with the letter P. Just under this crown was a likeness of the emperor in gold, and below that a cross-piece of wood, from which hung a square flag of purple cloth, embroidered and covered with precious stones. It was called the Labarum. This resplendent standard was borne at the head of the imperial armies and guarded by fifty chosen men, who were supposed to be invulnerable from its virtues.

Constantine now sent for christian teachers, of whom he inquired concerning the God that appeared to him, and the import of the symbol of the cross. This gave them an opportunity of directing his mind to the word of God, and of instructing him in the knowledge of Jesus and of His death on the cross. From that time the emperor declared himself a convert to Christianity. The superstitious hopes and confidence of Constantine and his army were now raised to the highest pitch. The decisive battle was fought at the Milvian bridge. Constantine gained a signal victory over his enemy, though his troops did not number one fourth of the troops of Maxentius.

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The victorious emperor paid a short visit to Rome. Amongst other things which he did, he caused to be erected in the forum a statue of himself, holding in his right hand a standard in the shape of a cross, with the following inscription: "By this salutary sign, the true symbol of valor, I freed your city from the yoke of the tyrant." Maxentius was found in the Tiber, the morning after the battle. The emperor evidently felt that he was indebted to the God of the Christians and to the sacred symbol of the cross for his victories. And this, we dare say, was the extent of his Christianity at that time. As a man he had not felt his need of it, if ever he did; as a warrior he embraced it earnestly. Afterward, as a statesman, he owned and valued Christianity; but God only knows whether as a lost sinner he ever embraced the Savior. It is difficult for princes to be Christians.

Constantine now proceeded towards Illyricum to meet Licinius, with whom he had formed a secret alliance before going to meet Maxentius. The two emperors met at Milan, where their alliance was ratified by the marriage of Licinius to Constantine's daughter. It was during this quiet moment that Constantine prevailed upon Licinius to consent to the repeal of the persecuting edicts of

Dioclesian, and the issuing of a new edict of complete toleration. This being agreed upon, a public edict, in the joint names of Constantine and Licinius, was issued at Milan, A.D. 313, in favor of the Christians, and may be considered as the great charter of their liberties. Full and unlimited toleration was granted to them; their churches and property were restored without compensation, and, outwardly Christianity flourished.

But peace between the emperors, which seemed to be established on a firm foundation, was soon interrupted. Jealousy, love of power, and ambition for absolute sovereignty in the Roman empire, would not allow them to remain long in peace. A war broke out in the year 314, but Licinius was defeated with heavy losses, both in men and territory. A peace was again concluded, which lasted about nine years. Another war became unavoidable, and once more it assumed the form of a religious strife between the rival emperors. Licinius attached the pagan priesthood to his cause, and persecuted the Christians. Many of the bishops he put to death, knowing they were special favorites at the court of his rival. Both parties now made preparations for a contest, the issue of which should be final. Licinius, before proceeding to war, sacrificed to the gods, and extolled them in a public oration. Constantine, on the other hand, relied upon the God whose symbol accompanied his army. The two hostile armies met. The battle was fierce, obstinate, and sanguinary. Licinius was no mean rival; but the commanding genius, activity, and courage of Constantine prevailed, The victory was complete. Licinius survived his defeat only about a year. He died, or rather was privately killed, in 326. Constantine had now reached the height of his ambition. He was sole master—absolute sovereign of the Roman empire, and continued so until his death in 337. For a description of the political and military career of this great prince we must refer the reader to civil history; we will briefly glance at his religious course.

The religious history of Constantine.

All that we know of the religion of Constantine up to the period of his conversion, so-called, would imply that he was outwardly, if not zealously, a pagan. Eusebius himself admits that he was at this time in doubt which religion he would embrace. Policy, superstition, hypocrisy, divine inspiration, have been in turn assigned as the sole or the predominant influence, which decided his future religious history. But it would surely be unjust to suppose that his profession of Christianity, and his public declarations in its favor, amounted to nothing more than deliberate and intentional hypocrisy. Both his religious and ecclesiastical course admit of a far higher and more natural explanation. Neither could we believe that there was anything approaching to divine inspiration, either in his midday vision or in his midnight dream. There may have been some unusual appearance about the sun or in the clouds, which imagination converted into a miraculous sign of the cross; and the other appearance may have been the exaggeration of a dream from his highly excited state: but the whole story may now be considered as a fable, full of flattery to the great emperor, and very gratifying to his great admirer and panegyrist, Eusebius. Few will now be found to give it a place among the authentic records of history.

Policy and superstition, we have no doubt, had a great deal to do with the change that was wrought in the mind of Constantine. From his youth he had witnessed the persecution of the Christians, and must have observed a vitality in their religion which rose above the power of their persecutors, and survived the downfall of all other systems. He had seen one emperor after another, who had been the open enemies of Christianity, die the most fearful death. His father

only—the protector of Christianity—of all the emperors, during the long persecution, had gone down to an honored and peaceful grave. Facts in striking could not fail to influence the superstitious mind of Constantine. Besides, he might appreciate with political sagacity the moral influence of Christianity; its tendency to enforce peaceful obedience to civil government; and the immense hold which it obviously had on the mind of something like the one half of his empire.

The emperor's motives, however, are no part of our history, and need not occupy us longer. But in order to have this most important period, or great turning-point in Church history clearly before our minds, it may be well to look at the state of the Church as he found it in 313, and as he left it in 337.

THE CHURCH AS CONSTANTINE FOUND IT.

Up till this time the Church had been perfectly free and independent of the state. It had a divine constitution—direct from heaven—and outside the world. It made its way, not by state patronage, but by divine power, against every hostile influence. In place of receiving support from the civil government, it had been persecuted from the first as a foreign foe; as an obstinate and pestilent superstition. Ten times the devil had been permitted to stir up the whole Roman world against her, and ten times it had to confess weakness and defeat. Had she kept in mind the day of her espousals, and the love of Him who says, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church," she never would have accepted the protection of Constantine at the cost of her fidelity to Christ. But the Church as a whole was now much mixed up with the world, and far away from her first love.

We have already seen, that since the days of the apostles there had been a growing love of the world, and of outward display. This tendency, so natural to us all, the Lord in love checked, by allowing Satan to persecute. But in place of the Church accepting the trial as chastening from the hand of the Lord, and owning her worldliness, she grew weary of the place and path of rejection, and thought she might still please and serve the Lord, and walk in the sunshine of the world. This satanic delusion was accomplished by Constantine, though he knew not what he was doing. "Whatever the motives of his conversion," says Milman, "Constantine, no doubt, adopted a wise and judicious policy, in securing the alliance, rather than continuing the strife, with an adversary which divided the wealth, the intellect, if not the property, and the population of the empire."

The union of the church and state.

In the month of March 313, the bands of the unholy alliance between the Church and the State were published at Milan. The celebrated edict of that date conferred on the Christians the fullest toleration, and led the way to the legal establishment of Christianity, and to its ascendancy over all other religions. This was publicly displayed on the new imperial standard—the Labarum. Besides the initials of Christ, and the symbol of His cross, there was also an image of the emperor in gold. These signs, or mottoes, were intended as objects of worship for both heathen and Christian soldiers, and to animate them to enthusiasm in the day of battle. Thus he, who is called the great christian emperor, publicly united Christianity to idolatry.

But if we have read the mind of Constantine aright, we should have no hesitation in saying, that at this time he was a heathen in heart, and a Christian only from military motives. It was only as a superstitious soldier that he had embraced Christianity. At that moment he was ready to welcome

the assistance of any tutelar divinity in his struggles for universal empire. We can see no trace of Christianity, far less any trace of the zeal of a new convert: but we can easily trace the old superstition of heathenism, in the new dress of Christianity. Were it not for such considerations, the Labarum would have been the display of the most daring dishonor to the blessed Lord. But it was done in ignorance. He was also anxious to meet the mind of his heathen soldiers and subjects, and to dissipate their fears as to the safety of their old religion.

The earlier edicts of Constantine, though in their effects favorable to Christianity, were given in such cautious terms as not to interfere with the rites and liberties of paganism. But the Christians gradually grew in his favor, and his acts of kindness and liberality spoke louder than edicts. He not only restored to them the civil and religious rights of which they had been deprived; the churches and estates which had been publicly confiscated in the Dioclesian persecution; but enabled them by his own munificent gifts, to build many new places for their assemblies. He showed great favor to the bishops; had them constantly about him in the palace, on his journeys, and in his wars. He also showed his great respect for the Christians} by committing the education of his son Crispus to the celebrated Lactantius, a Christian. But with all this royal patronage; he assumed all supremacy over the affairs of the Church. He appeared in the synods of the bishops without his guards, mingled in their debates, and controlled the settlement of religious questions. From this time forward, the term Catholic was invariably applied, in all official documents, to the Church.

CONSTANTINE AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND HIGH PRIEST OF THE HEATHEN.

After the total defeat of Licinius, already referred to, the whole Roman world was reunited under the scepter of Constantine. In his proclamation issued to his new subjects in the East, he declares himself to be the instrument of God for spreading the true faith; and that God had given him the victory over all the powers of darkness, in order that His own worship by his means might be universally established. "Freedom," he says, in a letter to Eusebius. "being once more restored, and, by the providence of the great God and my own ministry, that dragon driven from the ministration of the state, I trust that the divine power has become manifest to all, and that they, who through fear or unbelief have fallen into many crimes, will come to the knowledge of the true God, and to the right and true ordering of their lives." Constantine now took his place more openly to the whole world as the head of the Church; but at the same time retained the office of the Pontifex Maximus—the high priest of the heathen; this he never gave up: he died head of the Church and high priest of the heathen.

The unholy alliance, the unhallowed mixture of which we have spoken, and which is referred to and mourned over in the address to Pergamos, meets us at every step in the history of this great historical prince. But having given some explanation of the address, we must leave the reader to compare the truth and the history in a godly way. What a mercy to have such a guide in studying this remarkable period in the history of the Church!

Among the first acts of the now sole emperor of the world was the repeal of all the edicts of Licinius against the Christians. He released all prisoners from the dungeon or the mine, or the servile and humiliating occupations to which some had been contemptuously condemned. All who had been deprived of their rank in the army or in the civil service he restored, and restitution was made for the property of which they had been despoiled. He issued an edict addressed to all his subjects, advising them to embrace the gospel, but pressed none: he wished it to be a matter of

conviction. He endeavored, however, to render it attractive by bestowing places and honors on proselytes of the higher classes and donations on the poor—a course which, as Eusebius acknowledges, produced a great amount of hypocrisy and pretended conversion. He ordered that churches should be everywhere built, of a size sufficient to accommodate the whole population. He forbade the erection of statues of the gods and would not allow his own statue to be set up in the temples. All state sacrifices were forbidden, and in many ways he exerted himself for the elevation of Christianity and the suppression of heathenism.

THE EFFECTS OF ROYAL FAVOR.

We now come to the consideration of that which has been the great historical problem to men of all creeds, nations, and passions; namely, whether the state which seeks to advance Christianity by the worldly means at its command, or the earthly power which opposes it by legal violence, does the greater injury to the Church and people of God on the earth? Much may be said, we admit, as to the great blessing of impartial toleration, and of the great advantages to society of the legal suppression of all wicked customs; but court favor has always been ruinous to the true prosperity of the Church of God. It is a great mercy to be unmolested, but it is a greater mercy to be unpatronized by princes. The true character of Christians is that of strangers and pilgrims in this world. The possession of Christ, and of Christ in heaven, has changed everything on earth to Christians. They belong to heaven, they are strangers on earth. They are the servants of Christ in the world, though not of it. Heaven is their home; here they have no continuing city. What has the Church to expect from a world that crucified her Lord? or rather, what would she accept from it? Her true portion here is suffering and rejection; as the apostle says, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The Lord may spare His people, but if trial should come, we are not to think that some strange thing has happened to us. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Rom. 8:36; John 16:33.

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But even from history, we think it can be proved that it was better for Christianity when Christians were suffering at the stake for Christ, than when they were feasted in king's palaces, and covered with royal favors. By way of illustrating our question, we will give our readers a page from the history of the great persecution under Dioclesian, and one from the brightest days of Constantine; and we will quote both from Milman, late Dean of St. Paul's, who will not be suspected of unfairness to the clergy. We speak of the faithful only. It is well known that in the later persecutions, when the assemblies of Christians had greatly increased, many proved unfaithful in the day of trial; though these were comparatively few, and many of them afterward repented.

"The persecution had now lasted for six or seven years (309), but in no part of the world did Christianity betray any signs of decay. It was far too deeply rooted in the minds of men, far too extensively promulgated, far too vigorously organized, not to endure this violent but unavailing shock. If its public worship was suspended, the believers met in secret, or cherished in the unassailable privacy of the heart, the inalienable rights of conscience. But of course the persecution fell most heavily upon the most eminent of the body. Those who resisted to death were animated by the presence of multitudes, who, if they dared not applaud, could scarcely conceal their admiration. Women crowded to kiss the hems of the martyrs' garments, and their scattered ashes, or unburied bones, were stolen away by the devout zeal of their flocks."

Under the edict issued from the dying bed of Galerius, the persecution ceased, and the Christians were permitted the free and public exercise of their religion. This breathing time lasted only a few months. But how grand the sight which followed, and what a testimony to the truth and the power of Christianity! The Dean goes on to say:—"The cessation of the persecution showed at once its extent. The prison doors were thrown open; the mines rendered up their condemned laborers; everywhere long trains of Christians were seen hastening to the ruins of their churches, and visiting the places sanctified by their former devotions. The public roads, the streets, and market places of the towns were crowded with long processions singing psalms of thanksgiving for their deliverance. Those who had maintained their faith under these severe trials received the affectionate congratulations of their brethren: those who had failed in the hour of affliction hastened to confess their failure and seek for re-admission into the now joyous fold."

We now turn to the altered state of things under Constantine, about twenty years after the death of Galerius. Mark the mighty change in the position of the clergy.

"The bishops appeared as regular attendants upon the court; the internal dissensions of Christianity became affairs of state. The prelate ruled, not now so much by his admitted superiority in christian virtue, as by the inalienable authority of his office. He opened or closed the door of the Church, which was tantamount to an admission or an exclusion from everlasting bliss: he uttered the sentence of excommunication, which cast back the trembling delinquent amongst the lost and perishing heathen. He had his throne in the most distinguished part of the christian temple; and though yet acting in the presence and in the name of his college of presbyters, yet he was the acknowledged head of a large community, over whose eternal destiny he held a vague, but not therefore less imposing and awful dominion."

Intellectual and philosophical questions took the place of the truth of the gospel, and mere outward religion for faith, love, and heavenly-mindedness. A crucified Savior, true conversion, justification by faith alone, separation from the world, were subjects never known by Constantine, and probably never introduced in his presence. "The connection of the physical and moral world had become general topics; they were, for the first time, the primary truths of a popular religion, and naturally could not withdraw themselves from the alliance with popular passion's. Mankind, even within the sphere of Christianity, retrograded to the sterner Jewish character; and in its spirit, as well as its language, the Old Testament began to dominate over the gospel of Christ."

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH DISAPPEARS.

However agreeable to mere nature, the sunshine of the imperial favor might be, it was destructive of the true character of the individual Christian, and of the Church corporately. All testimony to a rejected Christ on earth, and an exalted Christ in heaven, was gone. It was the world baptized, in place of believers only, as dead and risen in Christ—as having died in His death, and risen again in His resurrection. The word of God is plain. "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.) Baptism is here used as the sign both of death and resurrection. But to whom was that solemn and sacred ordinance now administered? Again, we repeat, To the Roman world. Faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins, acceptance in the Beloved, were not looked for by the obsequious clergy.

The profession of Christianity being now the sure way to wealth and honors, all ranks and classes applied for baptism. At the Easter and Pentecostal festivals, thousands, all clothed in the white garment of the neophyte, crowded round the different churches, waiting to be baptized. The numbers were so great, and the whole scene so striking, that many thought these conspicuous neophytes must be the innumerable multitude spoken of in the Revelation, who stood before the Lamb, clothed with white robes. According to some writers, as many as twelve thousand men, besides women and children, were baptized in one year in Rome; and a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, was promised by the emperor to every new convert of the poorer classes. Under these circumstances, and by these venal means, the downfall of heathenism was accomplished, and Christianity seated on the throne of the Roman world.

THE BAPTISM AND DEATH OF CONSTANTINE.

The baptism of Constantine has given rise to almost as much speculation as his conversion. Notwithstanding the great zeal he displayed in favor of Christianity, he delayed his baptism, and consequently his reception into the Church, till the approach of death. Many motives, both political and personal, have been suggested by different writers as reasons for this delay; but the real one, we fear, was personal. Superstition had by this time taught men to connect the forgiveness of sins with the rite of baptism. Under this dreadful delusion, Constantine seems to have delayed his baptism until he could no longer enjoy his imperial honors, and indulge his passions in the pleasures of the world. It is impossible to conceive of any papal indulgence more ruinous to the soul, more dishonoring to Christianity, or more dangerous to every moral virtue. It was a license for such as Constantine to pursue the great objects of his ambition through the darkest paths of blood and cruelty, as it placed in his hands the means of an easy forgiveness, when convenient to himself. But on the other hand, we think it was a great mercy of the Lord, that one, whose private and domestic life, as well as his public career, was so stained with blood, should not have made a public profession of Christianity by receiving baptism and the Lord's supper. Let us hope that he really repented on his deathbed.

The bishops, whom he summoned in his last illness to the palace of Nicomedia, heard his confession, were satisfied, and gave him their blessing; Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, baptized him! He now professed for the first time, that if God spared his life, he would join the assembly of His people, and that having worn the white garment of the neophyte, he would never again wear the purple of the emperor. But these resolutions were too late in coming; he died shortly after his baptism, in the year 337.

HELENA, the emperor's mother, deserves a passing notice. She embraced the religion professed by her son. Her devotion, piety, and munificence were great. She traveled from place to place; visited the scenes which had been hallowed by the chief events of scripture history; ordered the temple of Venus to be demolished, which Hadrian had built on the site of the holy sepulcher, and gave directions for a church to be built on the spot, which should exceed all others in splendor. She died A.D. 328.

We have now seen, alas, too plainly, the sorrowful truth of the Lord's words, that the Church was dwelling where Satan's seat is. Constantine left it there. He found it imprisoned in mines, dungeons, and catacombs, and shut out from the light of heaven; he left it on the throne of the world. But the picture is not yet complete; we must notice other features in the history, answering

to the likeness in the epistle.

The reign of Constantine was marked, not only by the Church being taken out of her right place, through the deceptions of Satan, but by the bitter fruits of that degrading change. The seeds of error, corruption, and dissension sprang up rapidly, and now came publicly before the tribunals of the world, and in some instances before the pagan world.

THE DONATISTIC AND ARIAN CONTROVERSIES.

Two great controversies—the Donatistic and the Arian, had their beginning in this reign. The former, arising in the west, from a disputed appointment to the episcopal dignity at Carthage; the latter, of eastern origin, and involving the very foundations of Christianity. The one was a question of doctrine, the other of practice. Both were now corrupted in their very springs and essence; and may have been represented by the false prophet and the Nicolaitanes; but more as to this afterward. We will now briefly notice the two schisms, as they throw light on the nature and results of the union of church and state. The emperor took part in the councils of the bishops as head of the Church.

On the death of Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, a council of neighboring bishops was called to appoint his successor. The council was small through the management of Botrus and Celesius, two presbyters who aspired to the office, but Caecilian, the deacon, who was much loved by the congregation, was elected bishop. The two disappointed persons protested against the election. Mensurius died on a journey; but before leaving home he had entrusted some plate and other property of the church to certain elders of the congregation, and had left an inventory in the hands of a pious female. This was now delivered to Caecilian; he of course demanded the articles from the elders; they were unwilling to deliver them up, as they had supposed no one would ever inquire for them, the old bishop being dead. They now joined the party of Botrus and Celesius in opposition to the new bishop. The schism was also supported by the influence of Lucilla a rich lady whom Caecilian had formerly offended by a faithful reproof; and the whole province assumed the right of interference.

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Donatus, bishop of Cosae Nigrae, placed himself at the head of the Carthaginian faction. Secundus, primate of Numidia, at the summons of Donatus, appeared in Carthage at the head of seventy bishops. This self-installed council, cited Caecilian before them; alleging that he ought not to have been consecrated except in their presence and by the primate of Numidia and inasmuch as he had been consecrated by a bishop who was a Tradator, the council declared his election void. Caecilian refused to acknowledge the authority of the council; but they proceeded to elect Majorinus to the see, declared to be now vacant by the excommunication of Caecilian. But, unfortunately for the credit of the bishops, Majorinus was a member of Lucilla's household, who, to support the election, gave large sums of money, which the bishops divided among themselves. A decided schism was now formed, and many persons who before stood aloof from Caecilian returned to his communion.

Some reports of these discords reached the ears of Constantine. He had just become master of the West; and had sent a large sum of money for the relief of the African churches. They had suffered greatly during the late persecutions. But as the Donatists were considered sectaries, or

dissenters from the true Catholic Church, he ordered that the gifts and privileges conferred on the Christians by the late edicts should be confined to those in communion with Caecilian. This led the Donatists to petition the Emperor, desiring that their cause might be examined by the bishops of Gaul, from whom it was supposed that impartiality might be expected. Here, for the first time, we have an application to the civil power, to appoint a Commission of Ecclesiastical Judges.

Constantine agreed; a council was held at Rome in 313, consisting of about twenty bishops. The decision was in favor of Caecilian, who thereupon proposed terms of reconciliation and reunion; but the Donatists disdained all compromise. They prayed the Emperor for another hearing, declaring that a synod of twenty bishops was insufficient to overrule the sentence of seventy who had condemned Caecilian. On this representation Constantine summoned another council. The number of bishops present was very large, from Africa, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, but especially from Gaul. This was the greatest ecclesiastical assembly which had yet been seen. They met at Aries in 314. Caecilian was again acquitted, and several canons were passed with a view to the African dissensions.

In the meantime, Majorinus died, and a second Donatus was appointed his successor. He was surnamed by his followers "the Great," for the sake of distinction from the first Donatus. He is described as learned, eloquent, of great ability, and as possessing the energy and fiery zeal of the African temperament. The sectaries, as they were called, now assumed the name of the Donatists, and took their character, as well as their name, from their chief.

CONSTANTINE AS ARBITER OF ECCLESIASTICAL DIFFERENCES.

The Emperor was again entreated to take up their cause, and on this occasion to take the matter entirely into his own hands; to which he agreed, though offended by their obstinacy. He heard the case at Milan in the year 316; where he gave sentence in accordance with the councils of Rome and Aries. He also issued edicts against them, which he afterward repealed, from seeing the dangerous consequences of violent measures. But Donatism soon became a fierce, wide-spread, and intolerant schism in the Church. As early as 330 they had so increased that a synod was attended by two hundred and seventy bishops; in some periods of their history they numbered about four hundred. They proved a great affliction to the provinces of Africa for above three hundred years: indeed down to the time of the Mahomedan invasion.

Reflections on the first great schism in the church.

As this was the first schism that divided the Church, we have thought it well to give a few details. The reader may learn some needed lessons from this memorable division. It began with an incident so inconsiderable in itself that it scarcely deserves a place in history. There was no question of bad doctrine, or of immorality, but only a question of a disputed election to the see of Carthage. A little right feeling; a little self-denial; a true desire for the peace, unity, and harmony of the Church; and above all, a proper care for the Lord's glory, would have prevented hundreds of years of inward sorrow, and outward disgrace to the Church of God. But pride, avarice, and ambition—sad fruits of the flesh—were allowed to do their fearful work. The reader will also see, from the place that the Emperor had in the councils of the Church, how soon her position and character were utterly changed. How strange it must have appeared to Constantine, that immediately on his adopting the cross as his standard, an appeal should be made from an

episcopal decision on ecclesiastical matters to his own tribunal! This proved the condition of the clergy: but mark the consequences which such an appeal involves; if the party against whom the sentence of the civil power is given refuse to yield they become transgressors against the laws. And so it was in this case.

The Donatists were henceforth treated as offenders against the imperial laws: they were deprived of their churches; many of them suffered banishment and confiscation; even the punishment of death was enacted against them, although it does not appear that this law was enforced in any case during the reign of Constantine. Strong measures, however, were resorted to by the state, with the view of compelling the Donatists to reunite with the Catholics, but, as is usual in such cases, and as experience has taught ever since, the force that was used to compel them only served to develop the wild spirit of the faction that already existed among them. Aroused by persecution, stimulated by the discourses of their bishops, and especially by Donatus who was the head and soul of his party, they were hurried on to every species of fanaticism and violence.

Constantine at length, taught by experience, that although he could give the Church protection, he could not give her peace, issued an edict, granting to the Donatists full liberty to act according to their own convictions, declaring that this was a matter which belonged to the judgment of God.

The Arian controversy.

Scarcely had the outward peace of the Church been secured by the edict of Milan, when it was distracted by internal dissensions. Shortly after the breaking out of the Donatist schism in the province of Africa, the Arian controversy, which had its origin in the East, extended to every part of the world. We have already spoken of these angry contentions as the bitter fruit of the unscriptural union of the Church with the state; not that they necessarily sprang from that union, but from Constantine becoming the avowed and ostensible head of the Church, and presiding in her solemn assemblies: questions of doctrine and practice produced an agitation throughout the whole Church, and not the Church only, but they exercised a powerful political influence on the affairs of the world. This was unavoidable from the new position of the Church. The empire being now christian, at least in principle, such questions were of world-wide interest and importance. Hence, the Arian controversy was the first that rent asunder the whole body of Christians, and arrayed in almost every part of the world the hostile parties in implacable opposition.

Heresies, similar in nature to that of Arius, had appeared in the Church before its connection with the state; but their influence seldom extended beyond the region and period of their birth. After some noisy debates and angry words were discharged, the heresy fell into dishonor, and was soon almost forgotten. But it was widely different with the Arian controversy. Constantine, who sat upon the throne of the world, and assumed to be the sole head of the Church, interposed his authority, in order to prescribe and define the precise tenets of the religion he had established. The word of God, the will of Christ, the place of the Spirit, the heavenly relations of the Church, were all lost sight of, or rather had never been seen, by the Emperor. He had probably heard something of the numerous opinions by which the Christians were divided; but he saw at the same time, that they were a community who had continued to advance in vigor and magnitude; that they were really united in the midst of heresies, and strong under the iron hand of oppression. But he could not see, neither could he understand, that then, spite of her failure, she was looking to the Lord and leaning on Him only in the world. Every other hand was against her, and was led on by the

craft and power of the enemy. But, professedly, she was going up through the wilderness leaning on her Beloved, and no weapon formed against her could prosper.

The Emperor, being entirely ignorant of the heavenly relation of the Church, may have thought that as he could give her complete protection from outward oppression, he could also by his presence and power give her peace and rest from inward dissensions. But he little knew that the latter was not only far beyond his reach, but that the very security, worldly ease, and indulgence, which he so liberally granted to the clergy, were the sure means of fomenting discords, and of inflaming the passions of the disputants. And so it turned out; he was continually assailed by the complaints and mutual accusations of his new friends.

THE BEGINNING OF ARIANISM.

Arianism was the natural growth of the gnostic opinions; and Alexandria—the hotbed of metaphysical questions and subtle distinctions—its birthplace. Paul of Samosata, and Sabellius of Libya, in the third century, taught similar false doctrines to Arius in the fourth. The Gnostic sects in their different varieties, and the Manichean—which was the Persian religion with a mixture of Christianity—may be considered rather as rival religions, than as christian factions; nevertheless they did their evil work among Christians as to the doctrine of the Trinity. Nearly all of these heresies, as they are usually called, had fallen under the royal displeasure, and their followers subjected to penal regulations. The Montanists, Paulites, Novations, Marcionites, and Valentinians, were amongst the proscribed and persecuted sects. But there was another, a deeper, a darker, and a much more influential heresy than had yet arisen, about to burst forth, and that from the very bosom of the so-called holy Catholic Church. It happened in this way.

Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, in a meeting of his presbyters, appears to have expressed himself rather freely on the subject of the Trinity; when Arius, one of the presbyters, questioned the truth of Alexander's positions, on the ground that they were allied to the Sabellian errors, which had been condemned by the Church. This disputation led Arius to state his own views of the Trinity; which were substantially the denial of the Savior's Godhead—that He was, in fact, only the first and noblest of those created beings whom God the Father formed out of nothing—that though He is immeasurably superior in power and in glory to the highest created beings, He is inferior in both to the Father. He also held, that though inferior to the Father in nature and in dignity, He is the image of the Father, and the vicegerent to the divine power, by whom He made the worlds. What his views were of the Holy Spirit are not so plainly stated.

Not only is Arianism fundamentally inconsistent with the place given to the Son from first to last throughout scripture, as well as with the infinite work of reconciliation and new creation, for which the old creation furnished but the occasion, but it is distinctly refuted beforehand by many passages of holy writ. A few of these it may be well here to cite. Him, who, when born of woman, was named Jesus, the Spirit of God declares (John 1:1-3) to be in the beginning the Word who was with God and was God. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Impossible to conceive a stronger testimony to His uncreated subsistence to His distinct personality when He was with God before creation, and to His divine nature. He is here spoken of as the Word, the correlate of which is not the Father but God (and thus leaving room for the Holy Spirit); but, lest His own consubstantiality should be overlooked, He is carefully and at once declared to be God. Go back beyond time and the creature, as far as one may in

thought, “in the beginning was the Word.” The language is most precise; he was in the beginning with God, not ἦν “He was,” in the sense of coming into being or caused to be, but ἦν, ‘He was’ in His own absolute being. All things ἐγένετο ‘came into being’ through Him. He was the Creator so completely that St. John adds, “and without him not one thing came into being which is come into being.” On the other hand, when the incarnation is stated in verse 14, the language is, the Word was made flesh, not ἦν but ἐγένετο. Further, when come among men, He is described as “the only begotten Son ‘who is’ [not merely who was] in the bosom of the Father”—language unintelligible and misleading unless to show that His manhood in no way detracted from His Deity, and that the infinite nearness of the Son with the Father ever subsists.

Again, Rom. 9:5 is a rich and precious expression of Christ’s underivative and supreme Godhead, equally with the Father and the Spirit. “Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen.” The efforts of heterodox critics bear witness to the all-importance of the truth, which they vainly essay to shake by unnatural efforts which betray the dissatisfaction of their authors. There is no such emphatic predication of supreme Deity in the Bible: not of course that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not co-equal, but because the humiliation of the Son in incarnation and the death of the cross made it fitting that the fullest assertion of divine supremacy should be used of Him.

Next, the apostle says of Christ, “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things subsist.” Col. 1:15-17. The reveries of the Gnostics are here anticipatively cut off; for Christ is shown to have been chief of all creation, because He was Creator, and this of the highest invisible beings as well as of the visible: all things are said to have been created for Him as well as by Him: and as He is before all, so all subsist together in virtue of Him.

The only other passage I need now refer to is Heb. 1, where the apostle illustrates the fullness of Christ’s person among other Old Testament scriptures by Psalm 45 and 102. In the former He is addressed as God and anointed as man; in the latter He is owned as Jehovah, the Creator, after He is heard pouring out His affliction as the rejected Messiah to Jehovah.

It is impossible then to accept the Bible without rejecting Arianism as a heinous libel against Christ and the truth; for it is not more certain that He became a man than that He was God before creation, Himself the Creator, the Son, and Jehovah.

(From unpublished MSS of W. K.)

Alexander, indignant at the objections of Arius to himself, and because of his opinions, accused him of blasphemy. “The impious Arius,” he exclaimed, “the forerunner of Antichrist, had dared to utter his blasphemies against the divine Redeemer.” He was judged by two councils assembled at Alexandria, and cast out of the Church. He retired into Palestine, but in nowise discouraged by the disgrace. Many sympathized with him, among whom were the two prelates named Eusebius; one of Caesarea, the ecclesiastical historian; the other, bishop of Nicomedia, a man of immense influence. Arius kept up a lively correspondence with his friends, veiling his more offensive opinions, and Alexander issued warnings against him, and refused all the intercessions of his friends to have him restored. But Arius was a crafty antagonist. He is described in history as tall

and graceful in person; calm, pale, and subdued in countenance; of popular address, and an acute reasoner; of strict and blameless life, and agreeable manners; but that under a humble and mortified exterior, he concealed the strongest feelings of vanity and ambition. The adversary had skillfully selected his instrument. The apparent possession of so many virtues fitted him for the enemy's purpose. Without these fair appearances he would have had no power to deceive.

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The dissension soon became so violent, that it was judged necessary to appeal to the emperor. He at first considered the whole question as utterly trifling and unimportant. He wrote a letter to Alexander and Arius jointly, in which he reproves them for contending about idle questions and imaginary differences, and recommends them to suppress all unhallowed feelings of animosity, and to live in peace and unity. It is more than probable that the emperor had not thought of the serious nature of the dispute, or he could not have spoken of it as trifling and unimportant: but if the letter was drawn up by Hosius, bishop of Cordova, as is generally believed, he could not plead ignorance of its character; and must have framed the document according to the expressed feelings of Constantine, rather than according to his own judgment. The letter has been highly extolled by many as a model of wisdom and moderation; and, had the matter been of no graver importance than fixing the time for the Easter festival, it might have deserved that praise; but the Godhead and the glory of Christ were in question, and consequently the salvation of the soul.

Hosius was sent to Egypt as the imperial commissioner, to whom the settlement of the affair was committed. But he found that the dissensions occasioned by the controversy had become so serious, that both parties refused to listen to the admonitions of the bishop, though accompanied with the authority of the sovereign.

CHAPTER 12

THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

Constantine was now obliged to look more closely into the nature of the dispute. He began to understand that the question was one not of trifling, but of the highest and most essential importance; and resolved to convoke an assembly of bishops, in order to establish the true doctrine, and to allay forever, as he vainly hoped, this propensity to hostile disputation. Everything necessary for their journey was provided at the public charge, as if it had been an affair of State.

In the month of June, A.D. 325, the first general council of the Church assembled at Nice, in Bithynia. About three hundred and eighteen bishops were present, besides a very large number of priests and deacons. "The flower of the ministers of God," as Eusebius says, "from all the Churches which abound in Europe, Africa, and Asia, now met together." The spectacle was altogether new; and surely to none more so than to the bishops themselves. Not many years had elapsed since they had been marked as the objects of the most cruel persecution. They had been chosen on account of their eminence, as the peculiar victims of the exterminating policy of the government. Many of them bore in their bodies the marks of their sufferings for Christ. They had known what it was to be driven into exile; to work in the mines; to be exposed to every kind of humiliation and insult; but now, all was changed, so changed, that they could scarcely believe that it was a reality, and not a vision. The palace gates were thrown open to them, and the emperor of the world acted as moderator of the assembly.

Nothing could so confirm and declare to the world the sad fall of the Church, and her subjection to the State, as the place which the emperor had in these councils. He did not arrive at Nice till the 3rd of July. On the following day the bishops assembled in the hall of the palace, which had been prepared for the purpose. We learn from Eusebius, that the assembly sat in profound silence, while the great officers of State and other dignified persons entered the hall, and awaited in trembling expectation the appearance of the emperor. Constantine at length entered; he was splendidly attired: the eyes of the bishops were dazzled by the gold and precious stones upon his raiment. The whole assembly rose to do him honor. He advanced to a golden seat prepared for him, and there stood, in respectful deference to the spiritual dignitaries, till he was requested to sit down. After a hymn of praise was sung, he delivered an exhortation on the importance of peace and union. The council sat for rather more than two months; and Constantine seems to have been present during the greater part of the sittings, listening with patience, and conversing freely with the different prelates.

THE NICENE CREED.

The celebrated confession of faith, usually called "The Nicene Creed," was the result of the long and solemn deliberations of the assembly. They decided against the Arian opinions, and firmly maintained the doctrines of the holy Trinity, of the true Godhead of Christ, and of His oneness with the Father in power and glory. Arius himself was brought before the council, and questioned as to his faith and doctrine; he did not hesitate to repeat, as his belief, the false doctrines which had destroyed the peace of the Church. The bishops, when he was advancing his blasphemies, with one accord stopped their ears, and cried out that such impious opinions were worthy of anathema together with their author. St. Athanasius, although at the time but a deacon, drew the attention of the whole council by his zeal in defense of the true faith, and by his penetration in unraveling and laying open the artifices of the heretics. But more of the noble Athanasius by and by.

This famous creed was subscribed by all the bishops present, with the exception of a few Arians. The decision of the council having been laid before Constantine, he at once recognized in the unanimous consent of the council the work of God, and received it with reverence, declaring that all those persons should be banished who refused to submit to it. The Arians, hearing this, through fear, subscribed the faith laid down by the council. They thus laid themselves open to the charge of being dishonest men. Two bishops only, Secundus and Theonas, both Egyptians, continued to adhere to Arius; and they were banished with him to Illyria. Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nice, were condemned about three months later, and sentenced by the emperor to banishment. Severe penalties were now denounced against the followers of Arius: all his books were sentenced to be burnt, and it was even made a capital offense to conceal any of his writings. Their labors being completed, the bishops dispersed to their respective provinces. Besides the solemn declaration of their opinion of the doctrine in question, they finally set at rest the question respecting the celebration of Easter; and settled some other matters which were brought before them.

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As the emperor had no independent judgment of his own in ecclesiastical matters, and certainly no spiritual discernment into these doctrinal controversies, the continuance of his favor could not be relied upon. In little more than two years his mind was completely changed. But these two years

were eventful in the domestic history of Constantine, in what was much more serious than a change of mind as to Arianism. The same year that he convened the council of Nice, he gave private orders for the execution of Crispus, his eldest son, and for the suffocation of his wife, Fausta, in a hot bath, who had been married to him for about twenty years. History can find no better reasons for those deeds of darkness than a mean and an unworthy jealousy. The wisdom and bravery of Crispus in the final overthrow of Licinius, is said to have excited his father's jealousy, and which was probably fomented by Fausta, who was his stepmother. Knowing that he was bitterly reproached for his cruelty to his own son, he ordered the death of Fausta in his remorse and misery. As we have expressed a very decided judgment against the unhallowed nature of the church's connection with the state, we have said this much of the private life of the emperor, so that the reader may judge as to the fitness, or rather the unfitness, of one so polluted with blood, to sit as president in a christian council. From that day to this, the state church has been exposed to the same defilement, either in the person of the sovereign or the royal commissioner.

Constantia, the widow of Licinius, and sister of Constantine, possessed great influence with her brother. She sympathized with the Arians, and was under their influence. On her death bed in 327, she succeeded in convincing her brother that injustice had been done to Arius, and prevailed on him to invite Arius to his court. He did so, and Arius appeared, presenting to the emperor a confession of his faith. He expressed in a general way his belief in the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and besought the emperor to put a stop to idle speculations, so that schism might be healed, and all, united in one, might pray for the peaceable reign of the emperor, and for his whole family. By his plausible confession, and his fair speeches, he gained his point. Constantine expressed himself satisfied, and Arius and his followers, in turn, stood high in the imperial favor. The banished ones were recalled. A breath of court air changed the outward aspect of the whole Church. The Arian party had now full possession of the emperor's weighty influence, and they hastened to use it.

SAINT ATHANASIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.

In the Council of Nice Athanasius had borne a distinguished part; his zeal and abilities designated him at once as the head of the orthodox party, and as the most powerful antagonist of the Arians. On the death of Alexander, in the year 326, he was elevated to the see of Alexandria, by the universal voice of his brethren. He was then only thirty years of age, and knowing something of the dangers as well as the honors of the office, he would have preferred a less responsible position; but he yielded to the earnest desires of an affectionate congregation. He held the see for nearly half a century. His long life was devoted to the service of the Lord and His truth. He continued steadfast in the faith, and inflexible in his purpose, according to the noble stand which he made in the Council of Nice, down to his latest hour. The divinity of Christ was to him no mere speculative opinion, but the source and strength of his whole christian life. And nowhere else is it to be found by anyone; as the apostle assures us. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11, 12.) This life dwells in the only-begotten Son of the Father. He is "the eternal life." And this life, to the praise of the glory of God's grace, is given to all who believe in the true Christ of God. In receiving Christ, we receive eternal life, and become the sons of God—heirs of God—and joint heirs with Christ. This life is not the property of any mere creature, however

exalted. The holy angels have a most blessed and an unceasing existence by the power of God; but the Christian has eternal life, through faith in Christ, by the grace of God. Nothing could be more fatal to the well-being of the human soul than the doctrine of Arius. But to return to our history.

While the advancement of Athanasius to the see of Alexandria gave great joy and hope to his friends, it filled his enemies with the bitterest resentment. They now saw the great leader of the Catholics the bishop of that church from which Arius had been expelled; and that he was supported by the affections of his people and by a hundred bishops who owned allegiance to the great see of Alexandria. They knew his power and indefatigable zeal in defense of the decrees of the Nicene Council; and might well judge, that if his influence had been so great when in a private capacity, what may now be expected when he is placed in so eminent a station? Wherefore, they laid their plans and united their powers to overthrow him.

ATHANASIUS CONTESTS THE AUTHORITY OF CONSTANTINE.

Eusebius, of Nicomedia, first resorted to apparently friendly measures with Athanasius, for the purpose of inducing him to re-admit Arius to the fellowship of the Church; but failing completely in this, he influenced the emperor to command him. An imperial mandate was issued to receive Arius and all his friends who were willing

to connect themselves once more with the catholic church; and informing him that unless he did so, he should be deposed from his station, and sent into exile. Athanasius, however, was not to be intimidated by imperial edicts, but firmly replied, that he could not acknowledge persons who had been condemned by a decree of the whole Church. "Constantine now found to his astonishment," says Milman, "that an imperial edict—which would have been obeyed in trembling submission from one end of the Roman empire to the other, even if he had enacted a complete political revolution, or endangered the property and privileges of thousands—was received with deliberate and steady disregard by a single christian bishop. During two reigns, Athanasius contested the authority of the emperor." He endured persecution, calumny, exile; his life was frequently endangered in defense of the one great and fundamental truth—the Godhead of the blessed Lord; he confronted martyrdom, not for the broad distinction between Christianity and heathenism, but for that one central doctrine of the christian faith.

A succession of complaints against Athanasius was carried to the emperor by the Arian, or more properly the Eusebian party. But it would be outside our purpose to go into details; still we must trace the silver line a little farther in this noble and faithful witness.

The most weighty charge was, that Athanasius had sent a sum of money to a person in Egypt, to aid him in the prosecution of a design of conspiracy against the emperor. He was ordered to appear and answer the charge. The prelate obeyed and stood before him. But the personal appearance of Athanasius, a man of remarkable power over the minds of others, seems for the moment to have over-awed the soul of Constantine. The frivolous and groundless accusations were triumphantly refuted by Athanasius, before a tribunal of his enemies, and the unblemished virtue of his character, undeniably established. And such was the effect of the presence of Athanasius on the emperor, that he styled him a man of God; and considered his enemies to be the authors of the disturbances and divisions: but this impression was of short duration, as he

continued to be governed by the Eusebian party.

THE COUNCIL OF TYRE.

In 334 Athanasius was summoned to appear before a council at Caesarea. He refused on the ground that the tribunal was composed of his enemies. In the following year he was cited before another council, to be held at Tyre, by imperial authority; which he attended. Upwards of a hundred bishops were present; a lay commission of the emperor directed their proceedings. A multitude of charges were brought against the undaunted prelate; but the darkest, and the only one we will notice, was the twofold crime of magic and murder. It was said that he had killed Arsenius, a Miletian bishop; had cut off one of his hands, and had used it for magical purposes; the hand was produced. But Athanasius was prepared for the charge. The God of truth was with him. He calmly asked whether those present were acquainted with Arsenius? He had been well known to many. A man was suddenly brought into the court, with his whole person folded in his mantle. Athanasius first uncovered the head. He was at once recognized as the murdered Arsenius. His hands were next uncovered; and on examination he was proved to be Arsenius, alive, un mutilated. The Arian party had done their utmost to conceal Arsenius, but the Lord was with his guiltless servant, and the friends of Athanasius succeeded in discovering him. The malice of the unprincipled Arians was again exposed, and the innocence of Athanasius triumphantly vindicated.

But the implacable enemies of the bishop were yet fruitful in their accusations against him. Once more he was commanded to appear in Constantinople, and answer for himself in the imperial presence.

The old charges, on this occasion, were dropped, but a new one was skillfully chosen, with the view of arousing the jealousy of the emperor. They asserted that Athanasius had threatened to stop the sailing of the vessels laden with corn from the port of Alexandria to Constantinople. By this means a famine would be produced in the new capital. This touched the pride of the emperor; and whether from belief of the charge, or from a wish to remove so influential a person, he banished him to Treves, in Gaul. The injustice of the sentence is unquestionable.

THE DEATH OF ARIUS.

Neither Constantine nor Arius long survived the exile of Athanasius. Arius subscribed an orthodox creed; Constantine accepted his confession; he sent for Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, and told him that Arius must be received into communion on the following day, which was Sunday. Alexander, who had almost completed a hundred years, was greatly distressed by the emperor's orders. He entered the church, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would prevent such a profanation. On the evening of the same day, Arius was talking lightly, and in a triumphant tone of the ceremonies appointed for the morrow; but the Lord had ordered otherwise: He had heard the prayer of His aged servant; and that night the great heresiarch died. His end is related with circumstances which recall to mind that of the traitor Judas. What effect the event had on Constantine we are not informed; but he died soon after, in his sixty-fourth year.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GREAT EVENTS IN CONSTANTINE'S REIGN.

Before proceeding farther with our general history, we shall do well to pause for a moment, and consider the bearings of the great changes which have taken place both in the position of the Church and the world, during the reign of Constantine the Great. It would not be too much to say, that the Church has passed through the most important crisis of her history; and that the downfall of idolatry may be partly considered as the most important event in the whole history of the world. From a period shortly after the flood, idolatry had prevailed among the nations of the earth, and Satan, by his craft, had been the object of worship. But the whole system of idolatry was doomed throughout the Roman earth, if not finally overthrown, by Constantine; it had, at any rate, received its deadly wound.

The Church, doubtless, lost much by her union with the state. She no longer existed as a separate community, and was no longer governed exclusively by the will of Christ. She had surrendered her independence, lost her heavenly character, and become inseparably identified with the passions and interests of the ruling power. All this was sad in the extreme, and the fruit of her own unbelief. But, on the other hand, the world gained immensely by the change. This must not be overlooked in our lamentations over the failure of the Church. The standard of the cross was now raised all over the empire; Christ was publicly proclaimed as the only Savior of mankind; and the holy scriptures acknowledged to be the word of God, and the only safe and certain guide to eternal blessedness. The professing church was no doubt in a low, unspiritual state, before she was connected with the civil power, so that she may have thought more of her own ease, than of her mission of blessing to others; nevertheless, God could work by means of these new opportunities, and hasten the disappearance, from the face of the Roman world, of the fearful abominations of idolatry.

The general legislation of Constantine bears evidence of the silent under-working of christian principles; and the effect of these humane laws would be felt far beyond the immediate circle of the christian community. He enacted laws for the better observance of Sunday; against the sale of infants for slaves, which was common among the heathen; and also against child-stealing for the purpose of selling them; with many other laws both of a social and moral character, which are given in the histories already noted. But the one grand, all-influential event of his eventful reign, was the casting down of the idols, and the lifting up of Christ. The Ethiopians and Iberians are said to have been converted to Christianity during his reign.

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Valentinian was succeeded by his son Gratian in 375. He was then only sixteen years of age. He admitted as a nominal colleague his half-brother, the younger Valentinian; and soon after he chose Theodosius as an active colleague, on whom he bestowed the sovereignty of the East. Gratian had been educated in the christian faith, and gave evidence of being a true believer. He was the first of the Roman emperors who refused the title and robe of high priest of the ancient religion. How could a Christian, he said, be the high priest of idolatry? It is an abomination to the Lord. Thus we see in the early piety of this young prince, the blessed effects of the testimony of the faithful. What a new and strange thing in Rome; a pious prince to ascend the throne of the Caesars at the age of sixteen! But he was humble as well as pious.

Being conscious of his own ignorance in divine things, he wrote to Ambrose, bishop of Milan, to visit him. "Come," he said, "that you may teach the doctrines of salvation to one who truly believes; not that we may study for contention, but that the revelation of God may dwell more intimately in

my heart.” Ambrose answered him in an ecstasy of satisfaction: “Most christian prince,” he says, “modesty, not want of affection, has hitherto prevented me from waiting upon you. If, however, I was not with you personally, I have been present with my prayers, in which consists still more the duty of a pastor.”

The young emperor was generally popular; but his attachment to the orthodox clergy, the time he spent in their company, the influence they gained over him, especially Ambrose, exposed him to the contempt of the more warlike part of his subjects. The frontiers were sorely pressed at this time by the barbarians, but Gratian was unable to undertake the conduct of a war against them. Maximus, taking advantage of the disaffection of the army, raised the standard of revolt. Gratian, seeing the turn things had taken, fled with about three-hundred horse, but was overpowered and killed at Lyons in the year 383. Maximus, the usurper and assassin, placed himself on the throne of the West. He was afterward overthrown and slain by Theodosius, and the younger Valentinian placed upon the throne of his father.

THEODOSIUS, SURNAMED THE GREAT.

The measure of our interest in the history of the Roman emperors, must be proportionate to their acknowledgment of the truth, and their treatment of Christians. Did we not seek to discern God’s hand in their government? It would be wearisome and profitless, at this distant period, to examine what remains of them. But to see God’s hand, and to hear His voice, and to trace the silver line of His grace, throughout those rude times, keeps us in company with Himself, and our experience is increased. But almost everything depends, as to service to God, or blessing to ourselves, in the motive or object with which we study the history of the Church, and that which affects it. According to this principle of estimation, Theodosius claims an earnest and careful study. He was God’s minister, as well as the Roman emperor; and used of Him to subdue Arianism in the East, and to abolish the worship of idols throughout the Roman world. Idolatry is the boldest sin of man, and can never be exceeded until “that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. 2:3, 4.) The full expression of this blasphemy is still future, and will be the signal for immediate judgment, and the dawn of the millennial day.

But the zeal of Theodosius was not merely negative. He supported Christianity, according to his light, more vigorously than any of his predecessors. He completed what Constantine commenced, and far surpassed him in christian zeal and earnestness. Soon after his baptism, he assembled a council, which met at Constantinople on May 2nd, 381. The principal objects for which this council was convoked were the following: —To give greater fullness and definiteness to the Nicene creed—to condemn heresies, such as those of the Arians, Eunomians, Eudoxians, Sabellians, Apollinarians, and others—and to take measures for the union of the Church.

Most of our readers, even the youngest, have heard of “The decline and fall of the Roman empire”—the fourth great world-power spoken of by the prophet Daniel, and by St. John in the Apocalypse. It had been on the decline for some time, and was rapidly approaching its fall, when Theodosius was called to the throne. The frontiers were menaced on all sides by the barbarians, who dwelt immediately outside the Roman earth. “On the shores of each of the great rivers which bounded the empire,” says Dean Milman, “appeared a host of menacing invaders. The Persians,

the Armenians, the Iberians, were prepared to pass the Euphrates or the eastern frontier; the Danube had already afforded a passage to the Goths; behind them were the Huns in still more formidable and multiplying swarms; the Franks and the rest of the German nations were crowding to the Rhine." This frightful array of barbaric invasion, will show the reader at a glance, the then position of the fourth empire; and that it is as easy for God to break in pieces the iron, as the brass, the silver, or the gold.

Within the limits of the Roman earth, idolatry still existed, and its worship was undisturbed. Its thousands of temples in all their ancient grandeur and imposing ceremony, covered the land. Scarcely could the Christian turn anywhere without seeing a temple, and inhaling the incense offered to idols. Christianity had only been raised to an equal toleration. Arianism, and semi-Arianism, in their many forms, greatly prevailed. In Constantinople and the East, they were supreme. Other heresies abounded. Such was the state of things both within and without the empire on the accession of Theodosius. But for the details of his civil history, we must refer the reader to the authors already noted. We would only add, that he was used of God in arresting for a time the progress of invasion; in demolishing the images and some of the temples of heathen worship; in abolishing idolatry; in suppressing superstition; in causing the decisions of the Nicene council to prevail everywhere; and in giving triumph and predominance to the profession of Christianity.

THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THEODOSIUS.

We will now glance at some of the leading events in the history of the great Theodosius. In the circumstances of these events, will be found the best commentary on the life of the emperor, the power of the priesthood, and the character of the times.

Theodosius was a Spaniard. Christianity, at an early period, had been established in the Peninsula. It was famous for its firm adherence to the Athanasian doctrines, throughout the Trinitarian controversy. Hosius, a Spanish bishop, was president of the Nicene council. Towards the end of the first year of his reign, Theodosius was admonished by a serious illness not to delay his baptism, as the practice then was. He sent for the bishop of Thessalonica and was at once baptized. Some say that he was the first of the emperors baptized in the full name of the holy Trinity. His admission to the Church was immediately followed by an edict which proclaimed his own faith, and prescribed the religion of his subjects. "It is our pleasure that all the nations which are governed by our clemency and moderation, should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans According to the discipline of the apostles, and the doctrine of the gospel, let us believe the sole deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty, and a pious Trinity.... Beside the condemnation of divine justice they must expect to suffer the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them."

Such was the stern and uncompromising orthodoxy of Theodosius. Still, however mistaken, he believed it was his duty so to rule as a christian emperor, and the bishops that he consulted were more inclined to increase than to soften its severity. On one occasion, his sense of justice determined him to order some Christians to rebuild at their own expense a Jewish synagogue, which, in a tumult, had been pulled down, But the vigorous bishop of Milan interfered and prevailed on him to set aside the sentence, on the ground that it was not right for Christians to build a Jewish

synagogue. Herein the bishop evidently failed in a matter of common justice. He was less righteous than his imperial master.

THE FAILINGS AND VIRTUES OF THEODOSIUS.

The most prominent defect in the character of Theodosius was a proneness to violent anger; yet he could be softened down and moved to be most merciful after great provocation, if properly appealed to. We have a remarkable instance of this in his forgiving the people of Antioch. It happened in this way:

In the year 387, the inhabitants became impatient on account of a tax which the emperor had imposed upon them; and having been haughtily treated by the rulers, to whom they had respectfully appealed for relief, a great tumult arose in the city. The statues of the imperial family were thrown down and treated with contempt. But a company of soldiers immediately appearing, the sedition was suppressed. The governor of the province, according to the duty of his office, dispatched a faithful narrative of the whole transaction to the emperor. But as eight hundred miles lay between Antioch and Constantinople, weeks must elapse before an answer could be received. This gave the Antiochians leisure to reflect on the nature and consequences of their crime. They were greatly and constantly agitated with hopes and fears, as may be well supposed. They knew their crime was a serious one, but they had confessed it to Flavian their bishop, and to other influential persons, with every assurance of genuine repentance. At length, twenty-four days after the sedition, the imperial commissioners arrived, bearing the will of the emperor, and the sentence of Antioch. The following imperial mandate will show the reader, how much depended on the will or temper of a single man in those times.

Antioch, the metropolis of the East, was degraded from the rank of a city; stripped of its lands, its privileges, and its revenues; it was subjected, under the humiliating denomination of a village, to the jurisdiction of Laodicea. The baths, the circus, and the theaters were shut: and, that every source of plenty and pleasure might at the same time be intercepted, the distribution of corn was abolished. The commissioners then proceeded to inquire into the guilt of individuals. The noblest and most wealthy of the citizens of Antioch, appeared before them in chains; the examination was assisted by the use of torture, and their sentence was pronounced, or suspended, according to the judgment of these extraordinary magistrates. The houses of the criminals were exposed to sale, their wives and children were suddenly reduced from affluence and luxury, to the most abject distress; and a bloody execution was expected to conclude the horrors of a day, which the eloquent Chrysostom has represented as a lively image of the final judgment of the world. But God, who has the hearts of all men in His hand, and in the remembrance of what Antioch had been in the early days of the Church, moved the ministers of Theodosius to pity. They are said to have shed tears over the calamities of the people; and they listened with reverence to the pressing entreaties of the monks and hermits, who descended in swarms from the mountains. The execution of the sentence was suspended, and it was agreed that one of the commissioners should remain at Antioch, while the other returned, with all possible speed to Constantinople.

The exasperated rage of Theodosius had cooled down. The deputies of the distressed people obtained a favorable audience. The hand of the Lord was in it, He had heard their cry. Grace triumphed in Theodosius. A free and general pardon was granted to the city and citizens of Antioch: the prison doors were thrown open; and senators, who despaired of their lives, recovered

the possession of their houses and estates; and the capital of the East was restored to the enjoyment of her ancient dignity and splendor. Theodosius condescended to praise and reward the bishop of Antioch and others who had generously interceded for their distressed brethren; and confessed, that if the exercise of justice is the most important duty, the indulgence of mercy is the most exquisite pleasure, of a sovereign.

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The history of the tumult and massacre at Thessalonica in 390, graves yet deeper lines in the character of Theodosius. In studying this period of his life, we are reminded of David the king of Israel. In this sorrowful affair the enemy gained a great advantage over the christian emperor; but God overruled it for the deeper blessing of his soul.

Botheric, commander in chief of the district, and several of his principal officers, were killed by the populace, on the occasion of a chariot-race. A favorite charioteer had been thrown into prison for a notorious crime, and, consequently, was absent on the day of the games. The populace unreasonably demanded his liberty; Botheric refused, and thus the tumult was raised and the dreadful consequences followed. The news exasperated the emperor, and he ordered the sword to be let loose upon them. Ambrose interceded, and Theodosius promised to pardon the Thessalonians. His military advisers, however, artfully insisted on the heinous character of the crime, and procured an order to punish the offenders; which was carefully kept secret from the bishop. The soldiers attacked the people indiscriminately when assembled in the circus, and thousands were slain, to revenge the death of their officers.

The mind of Ambrose was filled with horror and anguish on hearing of this massacre. As the servant of God he rises to the place of separation from evil, even in his imperial master. He retired into the country to indulge his grief, and to avoid the presence of the emperor. But he wrote a letter to him, in which he set before him, in the most solemn manner, his fearful guilt; and assuring him that he could not be allowed to enter the church of Milan until satisfied of the genuineness of his repentance. The emperor, by this time, was deeply affected by the reproaches of his own conscience, and by those of his spiritual father. He bitterly bewailed the consequences of his rash fury in substituting barbarity for justice; and proceeded to perform his devotions in the church at Milan. But Ambrose met him at the porch, and, laying hold of his robe, desired him to withdraw as a man stained with innocent blood. The emperor assured Ambrose of his contrition; but he was told that private regrets were insufficient to expiate public offenses. The emperor referred to David, a man after God's own heart. "You have imitated him in his crime, imitate him in his repentance," was the reply of the undaunted bishop.

The emperor submitted to the priest. For eight months he remained in penitential seclusion; laying aside all his imperial ornaments, until at the Christmas season he presented himself before the archbishop, and humbly entreated re-admission into the church. "I weep," said he, "that the temple of God, and consequently heaven, is shut from me, which is open to slaves and beggars." Ambrose was firm, and required some practical fruit of his repentance. He demanded that in future, the execution of capital punishment should be deferred until thirty days after the sentence, in order that the ill effects of intemperate anger might be prevented. The emperor readily agreed, and was then allowed to enter the church. The scene which followed was overwhelming. The emperor pulling off his imperial robes, prayed prostrate on the pavement. "My soul cleaveth to the

dust," he cried, "quicken thou me according to thy word" The people wept and prayed with him, being moved with Ms grief and humiliation.

Ambrose mentions in his funeral oration, that from the time of the emperor's deep anguish, he never passed a day without recalling to mind, the crime into which he had been betrayed by his great failing—an infirmity of temper.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DISCIPLINE OF AMBROSE, AND THE PENANCE OF THEODOSIUS.

There are few events in the annals of the Church more deeply interesting than the penance of the great Theodosius; and the rigorous conditions of restoration demanded by Ambrose. Stripped of the superstition and formalities peculiar to the times, we have a case before us of the most genuine and salutary discipline. We must not suppose for a moment, that the behavior of Theodosius was the result of weakness or pusillanimity; but of a true fear of God; a real feeling of his guilt; a tender conscience, an acknowledgment of the claims of God, to whom all worldly greatness is subject.

Ambrose was neither haughty nor hypocritical, as we find many of the pontiffs became in later times. He cherished a strong affection for the emperor, and a sincere concern for his soul; but he acted towards him from a solemn sense of his duty. He had a great idea, no doubt, of the dignity with which his office invested him; and he felt himself bound to use it in behalf of justice and humanity and in controlling the power of earthly sovereignty: a character of power, most certainly, never granted by God to a christian minister; and which often proved in after ages to be a most dangerous power, as the priest who holds in his hands the king's conscience, may inflame to moderate his sanguinary passions. In the case of Ambrose it was pure christian influence. He appeared, though somewhat out of character, as the vindicator of outraged humanity, and as exercising a judicial authority over the meanest and the mightiest of mankind. But it is always disastrous to interfere with God's order, even when the best of objects seem to be thereby gained.

About four months after his victory over Eugenius, and the chastisement of the assassins of Valentinian, Theodosius the Great died at Milan, in the year 305—not exceeding fifty years of age; the last emperor who maintained the dignity of the Roman name. Ambrose did not long survive his imperial friend. He died at Milan on Easter-eve, 397 He deepened and strengthened the foundations of ecclesiastical power which was to influence Christianity in all future ages. Basil, the two Gregories, and Chrysostom flourished about this time.

Chapter 8

THE INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

The century which closes with the death of the great Theodosius and Ambrose, has been full of the deepest interest to the christian reader. Events, the most momentous— affecting the majesty and glory of God, and the well-being of mankind—have transpired. From 303 till 313, the Church passed through her most trying ordeal under Diocletian. Ten years she was in a fiery furnace; but in place of being consumed, as her enemies vainly imagined, she seemed to increase in numbers as well as in purity and power. Satan was permitted to do his utmost against her; and he so moved and stirred up the heathen population, that in all parts of the empire they arose in arms; first, to defend their ancient polytheism; and, secondly, to root out Christianity, by persecuting the

Christians, and destroying their sacred books. Thus the century commenced with the great and final struggle between paganism and Christianity, and closed with the total ruin of the former, and the complete triumph of the latter. The contest ended with the fourth century, and victory has rested with Christianity ever since.

Such has been the external history of the Church, and the accomplishment, so far, of the word of the Lord in the epistles to Smyrna and Pergamos. But there are other things which most reasonably demand a little of our attention before entering on the fifth century; and no part of the wide field which lies before us, seems to have a stronger claim than the sphere and influence of the great prelates of the East and the West. It must also have occurred to our readers from the necessary allusions to baptism, that the observance of that rite had an immense place in the minds of those early Christians. They believed that the waters of baptism purified the soul completely. We have thought, then, of combining the two—of giving a brief history of baptism from the writings of the fathers; which will, at the same time, give us an opportunity of seeing what views they held, not only on baptism, but on the fundamental truths of the gospel.

ECCLESIASTICAL VARIATIONS OF BAPTISM.

In the New Testament there is perfect uniformity, both as to precept and example, on the subject of baptism; but in our own day, and ever since the beginning of the third century, we find in the professing church endless variations both as to theory and practice on this important subject. Those not acquainted with ecclesiastical history naturally inquire, When, and by what means, did such differences arise in the Church?

As it has been our plan all through these “short papers” to find out the beginnings of great questions which have affected the peace and prosperity of the Church, we will endeavor, very briefly, to point out the beginning and early history of ecclesiastical baptisms. We use the term ecclesiastical, as distinguished from scriptural. Nothing is of divine authority either in theory or practice that was introduced after the days of the inspired apostles. So that nothing can be christian baptism that varies from the institution of Christ and the practice of His apostles. To bring in alterations is to change the thing itself, and make it not the same, but another baptism; hence we find in history there were baptisms many.

As the early history of these variations, and not controversy, is our object, we will avoid giving any opinion on the long-agitated question. For more than sixteen hundred years the controversy has been maintained with great determination, and by able men on both sides. No controversy in the history of the Church has been of such continuance, or conducted with such confidence of victory by both parties. As there is no express mention of infant baptism in scripture, the Baptists think that their position is beyond question; and the pedobaptist's as firmly believe that it may be inferred from several well-known passages that infant baptism was practiced in the days of the apostles. There has not been so much controversy as to the mode of baptism. The Greeks, Latins, Franks, and Germans, appear to have baptized by immersion. “Baptism is a Greek word,” says Luther, “and in Latin it may be rendered mersio, immersion;.... and though among the greater part of us this practice has fallen into disuse, nevertheless, they that are baptized ought to be entirely immersed, and forthwith lifted out of the water, and this the etymology of the word indicates, as also in the German language.” Neander's testimony is to the same effect: “Baptism was originally administered by immersion; and many of the comparisons of St. Paul allude to this form of its

administration. The immersion is a symbol of death, of being buried with Christ; the coming forth from the water is a symbol of resurrection with Christ; and both, taken together, represent the second birth, the death of the old man, and a resurrection to a new life." Cave, Tillotson, Waddington, &c, &c, speak of the mode of baptism in a similar way. And as all these testimonies are from paedobaptists, we may dismiss this part of the subject as fairly proved in church history; nevertheless, faith can only stand in the word of God. We follow not the fathers but Christ.

IRENAEUS, bishop of Lyons, is the first of the fathers that alludes to infant baptism. He died about the year 200, so that his writings are placed towards the close of the second century. The apostolical fathers never mention it. By this time, superstition, to a great extent, had taken the place of faith, so that the reader must be prepared to hear some extravagant notions advanced by some of the great doctors; yet many of them, we doubt not, were true, earnest Christians. "Christ came to save all persons by himself," says Irenaeus, "all, I mean, who by him are regenerated—baptized—unto God: infants and little ones; children and youths, and elder persons. Therefore he went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants: to little ones he was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age: and also giving to them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness: to youths he was a youth," &c. &c. Baptism was thus taught to be a complete lustration of the soul for all ages and conditions of mankind. But the controversy soon resolved itself into the one question—infant or adult. Regeneration, being born again, baptism, are used as interchangeable terms, and as meaning the same thing, in the writings of the fathers.

Here we have the origin, so far as ecclesiastical antiquity informs us, of infant baptism. The passage is somewhat obscure and extremely fanciful; but it is the first trace we have of the yet unsettled question, and probably the root of all its variations ecclesiastically viewed. The effect of such teaching on superstitious minds was immense. Anxious parents hastened to have their delicate infants baptized lest they should die under the curse of original sin, and the man of the world delayed his baptism until the near approach of death, to avoid any subsequent stain, and that he might emerge from the waters of regeneration, to the realms of pure and unmingled blessedness. The example and reputation of Constantine led many thus to delay their baptism, though the clergy testified against the practice.

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TERTULLIAN. The testimony of this father would prove that infants were baptized in his day—he died about 240—but that he was not favorable to the practice: as he says, "But they whose duty it is to administer baptism, are to know that it must not be given rashly.....Therefore according to every man's condition and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children. For what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? because they either fail of their promises by death, or they may be mistaken by a child's proving of wicked disposition."

ORIGEN, in discoursing on the sin of our nature alludes to baptism, as the appointed means for its removal: "Infants are baptized," he says, "for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? or when have they sinned? or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now: none is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth? And it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism, the

pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized.”

CYPRIAN, bishop of Carthage, about the year 253, received a letter from one Fidus, a country bishop, inquiring, whether an infant, before it was eight days old, might be baptized if need required. The answer proves, not only that infant baptism was then practiced, but the necessity of it in their minds because of its efficacy. Cyprian, with sixty-six bishops in council, says, “As to the case of infants; whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born: we were all in our assembly of the contrary opinion. For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. For whereas our Lord in His gospel says, ‘the Son of man came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them,’ so far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost,” &c. &c.

Gregory Nazianzen, bishop of Constantinople, was a father of great note about the year 380. He was the means of destroying the power of Arianism in the eastern capital, where it had been maintained in great strength for nearly forty years. He had to encounter much opposition and even persecution at first; but by degrees, his eloquence, the practical and serious tone of his teaching, and the influence of his godly life, began to tell, and gained him a firm footing, though he never liked the imperial style of the capital.

Dr. Wall quotes largely from Gregory on baptism; our extracts will be brief. Like the rest of the fathers, he is wild on this subject. “What say you to those that are as yet infants, and are not in capacity to be sensible either of the grace or the loss of it? Shall we baptize them too? Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite. For it is better that they be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should die unsealed and uninitiated. And a ground of this to us is circumcision, which was given on the eighth day, and was a typical seal, and was practiced on those that had no use of reason.” Against the practice of delaying baptism till a death-bed, he speaks strongly and earnestly; comparing the service to the washing of a corpse, rather than to christian baptism.

Basil, bishop of Caesarea, is constantly associated with the two Gregories. Gregory of Nyssa was his brother; the other, his chief friend. Cappadocia gave birth to the three fathers. Basil was faithful to the Athanasian creed during its days of depression and adversity, but did not live to behold its final triumph. He died about 379. He was a great admirer and a true example of monastic Christianity. He embraced the ascetic faith, abandoned his property, and practiced such severe austerities as to injure his health. He fled into the desert; his fame collected, as it were, a city around him; he built a monastery, and monasteries sprang up on every side.

His views of baptism are similar to those of his friend Gregory; he urges the necessity of it from the same superstitious feeling that they all had. “If Israel had not passed through the sea,” he says, “they had not got rid of Pharaoh: and unless thou pass through the waters of baptism, thou shalt not be delivered from the cruel tyranny of the devil,” &c. &c. This he would apply to all ages, and enforce it by the words of the Lord to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, like all the fathers we have yet met with, is thoroughly mistaken as to the meaning of John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "You see," he says, "that Christ excepts no person, not an infant, not even one that is hindered by unavoidable accident."

JOHN, surnamed CHRYSOSTOM, which means the golden-mouthed; he obtained this name from his smooth, flowing eloquence. He was such a favorite of the people, that they used to say, "We had rather the sun should not shine, than that John should not preach." He was evidently in favor of infant baptism, though it is not clear that he believed in original sin. "For this cause we baptize infants also," he says, "though they are not defiled with sin; that there may be superadded to them saintship, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, a brotherhood with Christ, and to be made members with Him." It would be difficult to say more as to the alleged benefits of baptism than what we have here enumerated. But extravagant as the whole sentence may seem, it has been the text of the Paedobaptists from that day to this. Most of our readers are familiar with these words, "Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." These words are taken, not from scripture, but from Chrysostom.

Dr. Wall is anxious to make it appear, that this great doctor was not unsound as to original sin. He suggests that the meaning of his words may be, "they are not defiled with their own actual sins." But Chrysostom does not say with their own, but that they are not defiled with sin. And surely every child is defiled, as saith the Psalmist, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In vain do we look for soundness on many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity among the fathers; to say nothing of what they all overlooked, such as, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, the heavenly calling, and the heavenly relations of the Church, the difference between the house of God and the body of Christ, and the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Titus 2:11-15.

REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM.

Enough, we believe, for our present purpose, has been said on the subject of infant baptism. The reader has before him the testimony of the most trustworthy witnesses, for the first two hundred years of its history. The practice seems to have taken its rise, and derived all its wondrous influence, from a misinterpretation of John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It was argued from this passage that baptism was necessary to salvation, and all the blessings of grace. The efficacy of the blood of Christ, the purifying power of the word of God, and the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit, were all attributed to the due observance of external baptism. And need we wonder at the place it has held in the professing church these sixteen hundred years, or at its mighty influence over all classes and all ages? though many do not hold with baptismal regeneration.

The ancient Christians, Dr. Wall affirms, without the exception of one man, teach that these words of the Savior refer to baptism. Calvin, he believes, was the first man that ever denied this text to mean baptism. Supposing these statements to be correct, they prove, that the great ecclesiastical fabric that arose out of baptism, was founded on a misinterpretation. The church of Rome, Lutherans, and Anglicans, continue to follow the fathers in this misapplication of the truth. "Shall that," says Hooker, referring to Calvin's new interpretation of John 3:5, "which hath always received this and no other construction be now disguised with the toy of novelty? God will have

baptism embraced, not only as a sign or token of what we receive, but also as an instrument or means whereby we receive grace.” Bishop Burnet also observes, speaking of the ancient times: “The words of our Savior to Nicodemus were expounded so as to import the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation.” These words ‘the kingdom of God,’ being taken to mean eternal glory, that expression of our Savior’s was understood to import this, that no man could be saved unless he were baptized, &c. &c Calvin taught, that the benefits of baptism were limited to the children of the elect, and thus introduced the idea of hereditary Christianity. The Presbyterians follow Calvin, and as a consequence of his teaching, circumcision becomes both the warrant and the rule of infant baptism. But some of our readers may be anxious to know what we believe to be the true interpretation of John 3:5, seeing that so much is built upon it. What is the teaching of John 3:5?

The expression “born of water,” we believe, in no way means baptism. The new birth is the Savior’s theme; without which no man can see or enter into the kingdom of God. It was not yet come visibly—“not with observation”— but it was there among them, as God’s new sphere of power and blessing. Flesh cannot even perceive this kingdom. Christ had not come to teach and improve the flesh, as Nicodemus seemed to think; but that man might be partaker of a divine nature which is imparted by the Spirit. No mere external rite admits to the kingdom. There must be a new nature or life suited to the new order of things. “And Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Then the Lord shows Nicodemus the only way of entering into the kingdom. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Water is here used as the symbol of the cleansing and purifying power of the word of God; as in Peter, “seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.” Here, the truth is spoken of as the instrument, and the Spirit as the agent, in the new birth; as he goes on to say, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.” Two things are necessary—the word, and the Spirit. 1 Pet. 1:22, 23.

The passage obviously means, the application of the word of God in the power of the Spirit; operating in the heart, conscience, thoughts, and actions; and thereby bringing in a new life from God, in which we have His mind, and his thoughts about the kingdom. The following passages will make it still plainer. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” (Jas. 1:18.) “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” (Eph. 5:26.) “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3.) Here we have the moral cleansing or purifying of the soul, by the application of the word through the Spirit, which judges all things, and which works in us new thoughts and affections, suitable to the presence and glory of God.

As a question of interpretation, then, we see no allusion to baptism in John 3:5: baptism may set forth that which is conveyed by it, but baptism itself conveys nothing. On the other hand—according to the inspired commentaries in the epistles—baptism is the sign of death, not of giving life, as the fathers uniformly affirm. “Know ye not,” says the apostle, “that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.” (Rom. 6; Col. 2; 1 Pet. 3) Besides it is perfectly plain that Nicodemus could not possibly have known anything of proper christian baptism, as it was not instituted by our Lord till after He arose from the dead.

MODERN PAEDOBAPTISTS.

The Church of Rome and all who follow the fathers, confess that the origin of their practice is tradition. But there are many in our day, and have been since the Reformation, who hold infant baptism from the writings of the New Testament. The following are the principal passages they refer to: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."..... "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."..... "For the promise is unto you, and to your children."..... "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And many draw their arguments chiefly from the baptism of households, and from the Abrahamic covenant. Mark 10 Cor. 7; Acts 2; Eph. 6; Acts 16; Gen. 17

ANTI-PAEDOBAPTISTS, or "the Baptists" as they call themselves, simply affirm, that in all the allusions to baptism in the writings of the apostles, it is uniformly coupled with faith in the gospel; and that such expressions as "buried with him by baptism;" and "planted together in the likeness of His death," &c, must mean, that the person so baptized has part with Christ by faith. And, further, that as baptism is an ordinance of Christ, it must of necessity be celebrated exactly as He appointed. Nothing, it is said, but direct scripture ought to be the foundation for our faith and practice in divine things. And since to the very being of baptism a subject to whom it must be administered is necessary, and a mode of administering, without which it would only be a notion in the human mind, —these things, therefore, are as necessary as baptism itself. And hence it follows that the true subjects, which are professed believers only, and the true mode, which is immersion only, are necessary to true christian baptism.

THE ORIGIN OF INFANT COMMUNION.

When superstition in general takes the place of faith, and human notions the place of God's word, where will even serious and enlightened men not be carried to! Augustine strongly advocated the practice of infant communion. But it followed infant baptism as a necessary consequence. The fathers affirmed that the grace of God bestowed upon the subjects of baptism, was given without measure, and without any limitation as to age; therefore, they reasoned, that the Lord's supper might consistently be administered to all who had been baptized, whether infants or adults. The custom prevailed for many ages; it is still observed by the Greek church; but we refrain from details. In general, the true, inward, spiritual meaning and desire of the Lord's supper were greatly lost sight of; and the most superstitious reverence was expressed for the external symbols of the ordinance.

Short Papers on Church History

In studying the internal history of the Church during the fourth century, innumerable things crowd for a brief notice; but we can only refer to those which characterize the period. The altered position of the clergy is an important one, and will account for many changes that were introduced by them. From the time of Constantine, the members of the christian ministry attained a new social position, with certain secular advantages. This led great numbers to join the sacred order from the most unworthy motives. Hence the sorrowful influence of this unhallowed mixture on the whole professing church. We constantly meet with it in the pride, arrogance, luxury, and assumed dignity of the whole clerical order. Thus, it is said, that Martin of Tours, when at the court of Maximus, allowed the Empress to wait on him at table; and that when the Emperor had desired him to drink

before him, and expected to receive the cup back after the bishop had drunk, Martin passed it to his own chaplain, as being higher in honor than any earthly potentate. This circumstance shows us where the clergy now were, what they thought of themselves and of spiritual dignity in opposition to secular rank. The Church had now become like “a great house, wherein are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.” And such it has been ever since, and such it will be to the end; but the path of the faithful is plain. “If a man therefore purge himself from these, [the vessels to dishonor,] he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” 2 Tim. 2:20-21.

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF MONASTICISM.

Before we approach the period of “the Church of Thyatira,” it may be well to notice the rise and growth of the early ascetic tendencies. The influence of monasticism was indeed great during the dark ages, and throughout the Western Churches. Let us trace it to its source. It is well to know the beginning of things, especially of important and influential things.

During the violence of the Decian persecution, about the year 251, many Christians fled into voluntary exile. Among these was a young man named PAUL, of Alexandria; who took up his abode in the desert of Thebais, or Upper Egypt. By degrees he became attached to the mode of life he had adopted from necessity; and is celebrated as the first christian hermit, though without fame or influence at the time. Not so, with His immediate and great successor.

ANTONY, who is regarded as the father of monasticism, was born at Coma, in Upper Egypt, about the year 251. In boyhood and youth, it is said, he was thoughtful, serious, and of a retiring disposition. He cared little for worldly learning, but desired earnestly the knowledge of divine things. Before reaching the age of nineteen, he lost his parents, and came into possession of considerable property. One day while in church, it so happened that the gospel concerning the rich young man was read before the assembly. Antony considered the words of the Savior as addressed from heaven to himself: “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:22.) He forthwith made over his lands to the inhabitants of his village, turned the rest of his estates into money, and gave all to the poor, except a small portion which he reserved for the maintenance of his only sister. On another occasion, he was deeply impressed with the words of the Lord, SHORT PAPERS ON CHURCH HISTORY. 255

“Take no thought for the morrow” (Matt. 6:25-34), and taking these words in a literal sense, he parted with the remainder of his property, placed his sister with a society of pious virgins, that he might be free from all cares about earthly things, and embraced a life of rigid asceticism.

Antony is said to have visited Paul the hermit, and all the most famous ascetics he could hear of, endeavoring to learn from each his distinguishing virtue, and to combine all their graces in his own practice. He shut himself up in a tomb, where he lived ten years. By excessive fastings, exhaustion, and an over-excited imagination, he fancied himself beset by evil spirits, with whom he had many and severe conflicts. Antony became famous. Many visited the unnatural place of his abode in the hope of seeing him, or of hearing the noise of his conflicts with the powers of darkness. But he left his tomb, and dwelt in a ruined castle near the Red Sea, for other twenty years. He increased his mortifications with the view of overcoming the evil spirits, but the same

temptations and conflicts followed him.

Strange as it may seem, this remarkable and deluded man had a true heart for Christ, and a tender heart for His people. The persecution under Maximus (311) drew him from his cell to the public scenes in Alexandria. His appearance produced a great effect. He attended on the sufferers, exhorting them to unwavering confidence in their confession of Christ, and manifested great love to the confessors in the prisons and in the mines. He exposed himself in every way to danger, yet no one ventured to touch him. When the fury of the persecution was past, he escaped to a new place of solitude in the side of a lofty mountain. Here he cultivated a small piece of ground; multitudes flocked to him; great numbers imitated him. Mourners came to him to be comforted, the perplexed to be advised, and enemies to be reconciled. Miracles were ascribed to him, his influence was boundless.

In the year 352, when he was a hundred years old, he appeared a second time in Alexandria. This was to counteract the spread of Arianism, and defend with all his influence the true orthodox faith. His appearance produced a great sensation; multitudes thronged to see the monk—the man of God, as he was called—and hear him preach; and many pagans were converted to Christianity by his means. Antony and his monks were steady and powerful supporters of the Nicene creed. He lived to the age of a hundred and five, and died only a few days before Athanasius sought a refuge among the monks of the desert in 356.

THE VIRTUES AND FAILURES OF ANTONY.

Antony was evidently sincere and honest, though utterly mistaken and misled by the craft and power of Satan. In place of acting upon the Savior's commission to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," or following His example who went about doing good, he thought to attain to a more elevated spirituality by withdrawing from mankind, and devoting himself to austerity of life, and to uninterrupted communion with heaven. He was a Christian, but utterly ignorant of the nature and object of Christianity. Holiness in the flesh was his one grand object; though the apostle had said, "In me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing." Therefore all was failure, utter failure; as it ever must be, if we think there is any good tiling in human nature, or try to become better in ourselves. In place of sanctifying his nature by fastings and idleness, he found that every evil passion was excited to greater activity.

"Hence, in his solitude," says Neander, "he had to endure many conflicts with sense, which in some active vocation, demanding the exertion of all his powers, might perhaps have been avoided. The temptations he had to battle with were so much the more numerous and powerful, as he was given to idle self-occupation, as he busied himself in fighting down the impure images that were constantly coming up from the abyss of corruption within his heart, instead of forgetting himself in worthier employments, or in looking away to the everlasting source of purity and holiness. At a later period, Antony, with a conviction grounded on long years of experience, acknowledged this, and said to his monks. Let us not busy our imaginations in painting specters of evil spirits; let us not trouble our minds as if we were lost. Let us rather be comforted and cheerful at all times, as those who have been redeemed; and let us be mindful that the Lord is with us who has conquered them and made them nothing. Let us ever remember that, if the Lord is with us, the enemy can do us no harm. The spirits of evil appear different to us, according to the different moods of mind in which they find us..... But if they find us joyful in the Lord, occupied in the

contemplation of future blessedness and of the things of the Lord, reflecting that everything is in the Lord's hand, and that no evil spirit can do any harm to the Christian, they turn away in confusion from the soul which they see preserved by such good thoughts."

It is perfectly plain from these counsels to his monks, that Antony was not only a sincere Christian, but that he had a good knowledge of the Lord and of redemption, though so completely turned aside by a deceived heart. We are never safe unless moving on the direct lines of the truth of God. The system which this man introduced in his false dreams of perfection in the flesh, became, in process of time, the very hot-bed of profligacy and vice. And thus it continued for more than a thousand years. It was not until the sixteenth century, when the divine light of the blessed Reformation, bursting upon a scene of dense moral darkness, revealed the deep-seated corruptions and the flagrant enormities of the different monastic orders. The monks at that time, like swarms of locusts, covered all

Europe; they proclaimed everywhere, as history informs us, the obedience due to holy mother church, the reverence due to the saints, and more especially to the Virgin Mary, the efficacy of relics, the torments of purgatory, and the blessed advantages arising from indulgences. But as the monks lost their popularity and influence at the Reformation, a new order was necessary to fill their place and do their evil work; and such was found in the Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius Loyola—the Jesuits. But we must take another glance at the early history of monasticism.

THE FIRST SOCIETY OF ASCETICS.

The earliest form in which the ascetic spirit developed itself in the christian Church, was not in the formation of societies or communities, as we find in later times, but in the seclusion of single individuals. They believed, however mistaken, that they had a special call to strive after a higher christian life; and in order to attain this eminent holiness, they imposed upon themselves the most severe restraints. They retired to desert places, that they might give themselves up to close meditation on divine things, and that their minds might be entirely abstracted from all natural objects, and from whatever delights the senses. Both men and women supposed that they must emaciate their bodies with watchings, fasting, toil, and self-torture. As the poor body was considered an oppressive load and hindrance to their spiritual aspirations, they vied with each other in the extent to which they could carry their self-mortifications. They existed on the coarsest and most unwholesome diet; they sometimes abstained from food and sleep till nature was almost wholly exhausted. The contagion of this new device of Satan spread far and wide. The mysterious recluse was regarded as necessarily invested with peculiar sanctity. The hermit's cell was visited by the noble, the learned, the devout—all desirous to pay homage to the holy man of God; and thus spiritual pride was engendered by the flattery of the world. From this time the monastic life was held in such esteem, that many adopted it as a highly honorable employment; and afterward formed themselves into communities, or monastic institutions.

PACHOMIUS, who was, like Antony, a native of Thebais, was converted to Christianity in the early part of the fourth century. After practicing austerities for some time, he was told by an angel in his dreams, that he had made sufficient progress in the monastic life, and must now become a teacher of others. Pachomius then founded a society on an island of the Nile. Thus began ascetics to live in an association. The institution soon extended, so that before the founder's death it embraced eight monasteries, with three thousand monks; and in the beginning of the following

century the number of monks was no less than fifty thousand. They lived in cells, each of which contained three. They were under engagements of absolute obedience to the commands of the Abbot or father. They wore a peculiar dress, the chief article of which was a goatskin, in imitation of Elijah, who, with John the Baptist, was regarded as exemplifying the monastic condition. They were never to undress; they slept with their clothes on, and in chairs so constructed as to keep them almost in a standing posture. They prayed many times a-day, fasted on the fourth and sixth days of the week, and communicated on the Sabbath and on the Lord's day. Their meals were eaten in silence, and with their hoods drawn over their faces, so that no one could see his neighbor. They employed themselves in agriculture and various forms of industry, and had all things in common, in imitation of the first Christians after the day of Pentecost. Pachomius founded similar societies for women.

Short Papers on Church History

Until nearly the close of the fifth century, the monasteries were placed under the superintendence of the bishops; the monks were regarded simply as laymen, and had no claim to be ranked among the sacerdotal order. Circumstances, however, in course of time, led the monks to assume a clerical character. Many of them were occupied in the work of reading and expounding the scriptures, and all of them were supposed to be engaged in the cultivation of the higher spiritual life; so that they were in great favor with the multitude, especially as they began to exercise their clerical functions beyond the confines of their establishments. Jealousies soon sprung up between the bishops and the abbots; the result was, that the abbots, to deliver themselves from dependence upon their spiritual rivals, made application to be taken under the protection of the Pope at Rome. The proposal was gladly accepted, and very quickly all the monasteries, great and small, abbeys, priories, and nunneries, were subjected to the authority of the See of Rome. This was an immense step towards the pontifical power of Rome.

The Pope could now establish in almost every quarter, a kind of spiritual police, who acted as spies on the bishops as well as on the secular authorities. This event is carefully to be noted, if we would watch the ways and means of the rising power, and ultimate supremacy, of the Roman Pontiff.

The monastic system soon spread far beyond the borders of Egypt; and all the great teachers of the age, both in the east and in the west, advocated the cause of celibacy and monasticism. St. JEROME, in particular, the most learned man of his day, is regarded as the connecting link between the two great divisions of the Church—the Greek and the Roman, or the eastern and the western. He was the means of powerfully forwarding the cause of celibacy and monasticism; especially among females. Many Roman ladies of rank became nuns through his influence. AMBROSE so extolled virginity in his sermons, that the mothers of Milan restrained their daughters from attending his ministry; but crowds of virgins from other quarters flocked to him for consecration. BASIL introduced monastic life into Pontus and Cappadocia; MARTIN, into Gaul; AUGUSTINE, into Africa; and CHRYSOSTOM was prevented by the wisdom of his mother, from retiring in his youth to a remote hermitage in Syria.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ASCETICISM.

It is truly sorrowful to reflect on the many and serious mistakes, or rather positive errors, of these great doctors, or early fathers, as they are usually called. We know of nothing more grave and solemn than the fact, that they greatly misled the people then, and that by their writings they have been misleading the Church ever since. Who can estimate the evil consequences of such teaching for the last fourteen hundred years at least? The misinterpretation or the misapplication of the word of God, is evidently the rule with these leaders; to teach sound doctrine, the exception. And still they are the boast and the alleged authority of a large portion of Christendom even until now.

On the subject of asceticism, anyone having an ordinary acquaintance with scripture, may see their ignorance of the mind of God, and their perversion of His word. We are exhorted, for example, to “mortify the deeds of the body,” but never to mortify the body itself. The body is the Lord’s, and to be cared for. “Know ye not,” says the apostle, “that your bodies are the members of Christ?” True, they are to be kept under and brought into subjection, but that is the wisest way of caring for the body (Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 6:15; 9:27). Again, the apostle says, “mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;” and then states what these are; “fornication, un-cleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” These are the deeds of the body which we are to mortify—to put to death practically; and that on the ground that the flesh was put to death on the cross. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.” Not, observe, are crucifying it, or ought to crucify it, but have crucified it. God has put it out of His sight by the cross, and we are to keep it out of sight by self-judgment. The body, on the contrary, has a most important place in the New Testament as the temple of the Holy Ghost; but the tendency of asceticism is to starve the body, and feed the flesh. “Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.” Col. 2:23.

The fathers seem to have overlooked that asceticism was the offspring of heathen philosophy, and not in any way of divine Christianity; but they never fairly looked into scripture for the mind of God on these subjects. The total ruin of man in the flesh not being understood by them, they vainly thought it might be improved, and were thus led astray in ways innumerable; especially as to the work of Christ, God’s judgment of the flesh, the true principle of worship, and the whole path of christian service.

Having now seen the foundation laid of the great monastic system, which was to exert so powerful an influence in connection with Christianity, literature, and civilization, throughout the dark ages; we may leave it for the present, and return to our general history.

ARCADIUS AND HONORIUS. A.D. 395.

Theodosius the Great left two sons—Arcadius, aged eighteen years, and Honorius, who was only eleven. The elder succeeded to the sovereignty of the East, the younger to that of the West. Nothing can be more striking than the condition of the Roman world at this moment, or more fitted to excite our compassion. Two emperors of such weakness as to be incapable of conducting the administration of public affairs, and the whole empire in a state of danger and alarm from the Gothic invaders. The hand of the Lord is manifestly here. Where is now the genius, the glory, and the power of Rome? They expired with Theodosius. At a moment when the empire required the prudence, the martial skill, and the talents of a Constantine, it was professedly governed by two imbecile princes. But its days were numbered in the providence of God, it was fast passing away.

The fiercest storm that had ever assailed the empire was now ready to burst upon it in its hour of weakness. The Goths had yielded to the arms, and especially to the policy of Theodosius, but it needed only the news of his death to arouse them to revolt and revenge. The famous Alaric, the crafty and able leader of the Goths, only waited for a favorable opportunity to carry out a scheme of greater magnitude and daring than had entered into the mind of any of Rome's enemies since the time of Hannibal. He was, we doubt not, the minister of God's righteous judgments on a people so deeply stained with the blood of His saints, besides having crucified the Lord of glory, and slain His apostles. Details we must leave to the civil historian of Rome's decline and fall: but we may briefly say, that Alaric led his forces into Greece without opposition; devastated its fruitful lands, and plundered Athens, Corinth, Argos, and Sparta; and that which was impiously called, "the eternal city," he besieged and sacked. The richest provinces of Europe too, Italy, Gaul, and Spain, were laid waste and new kingdoms set up by the barbarians. Thus the history of the fourth great world-empire closes about A.D. 478, and in the twelve hundred and twenty ninth year from the foundation of Rome.

Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, a prince alike excellent in the arts of war and of government, restored an age of peace and prosperity, swept away all vestiges of the imperial government, and formed Italy into a kingdom.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CALAMITIES OF ROME.

The christian reader may here find it profitable to pause for a moment and contemplate the overthrow of the Western empire, and the division of its territory amongst the various hordes of the barbarians. It is our privilege and edification to see in all this, the fulfillment and harmony of scripture, the overruling providence of God, and the accomplishment of His purposes. We can also afford to drop the tear of compassion over the miseries of our deluded fellow men. This would be nothing more than the tender compassion of Him who wept over the devoted city Jerusalem. It is our duty to study history by the sure light of scripture; not scripture—as some have attempted—by the uncertain light of history. Thus we may be happy in the presence of God with the page of history open before us, and our faith strengthened by the mighty contrast between the kingdom of God and all earthly glory. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb. 12:28.) The superiority of Christianity to the most powerful of Pagan institutions was now manifest to all. When the overwhelming judgments of God fell upon Italy, and broke in pieces the iron rule of the empire, the Church suffered no harm. It was rather shielded, and the means of shielding others, than exposed to danger. Like the ark which rose above the dark waters of the deluge, the Church was preserved from the fury of the invader. There was no instance of the barbarians embracing the old religion of Greece and Rome; they either adhered to the superstitions of their ancestors, or adopted some form of Christianity. There is no sure footing for the sinner amidst the convulsions of earth, the rise and fall of empires; but the Rock of Ages—the risen and exalted Christ of God. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." (Psalm 2:12.) The Lord provided for the safety of His people, by the previous conversion of those who subverted the empire.

Note. —It was our original intention to discontinue "Short Papers on Church History," when we had reached the important epoch of the triumph of Christianity and the downfall of idolatry under

Constantine; but the record of these events not answering with the end of a volume, we have continued the papers until now. The complete disappearance of the empire and the further triumphs of the truth over the barbarians, fall in remarkably with the close of this year, and with the discontinuance of the history in "Things New and Old." But our intention, the Lord willing, is to bring down the history to the present century, and publish it in a separate form.

Competent Authority

I had to travel, some few weeks ago, from Bristol to Scarborough; and being anxious to procure a through carriage, I spoke to a very active, intelligent, and obliging official on the Midland platform, who most kindly undertook to put me into a carriage which, he assured me, would go right through to Scarborough. I knew him to be one in whose truthfulness and knowledge I could safely confide. In short, I felt most fully assured that he was a thoroughly competent authority, and therefore I took my seat without a shade of misgiving; nor do I think that anyone could have shaken my confidence, as to my being in my right place. I rested upon competent authority; and this is the true secret of peace, in everything.

We traveled by way of Derby, and I heard a good many passengers discussing the various routes and the different changes necessary to reach this place or that; but nothing occurred to test my position until the train reached Normanton. Here a good deal of shifting and shunting took place; and we all know that shifting and shunting times are sure to be testing times.

Thus it was with me. Very many of the passengers got out, and our train was shunted from the platform out of our sight altogether. I walked up and down while waiting for its return to the platform. An official, to whom I spoke about the line, told me there was no through carriage to Scarborough. This, under other circumstances, would have made me feel rather uneasy; but I fell back upon my competent authority, and on the return of the train, I stepped, with boldness, into my carriage. I felt sure my would-be guide was ignorant and incompetent, and I paid no attention to him whatever. I knew my Bristol friend and could trust him thoroughly, and hence my peace was not disturbed for a single moment. I knew in whom I had believed, and was persuaded that his testimony was true and safe.

Well, by and by we arrived at York, where further shunting and shifting took place; and I found myself shunted on to a siding, and down into a kind of shed where we were left standing for about twenty minutes. This, again, under other circumstances, would have made me feel very uncomfortable. As it was, I sat in perfect peace, without a single question or misgiving. I never even put my head out of the window to look, nor did I turn to a fellow-passenger to ask. I sat still reposing upon the competent authority on which I had originally started. I had unshaken confidence in my Bristol friend. I knew he would not deceive me. I knew he was both able and willing to guide me aright; and therefore spite of all the shifting and shunting—spite of the efforts of ignorant officials to shake my confidence—I sat perfectly quiet, and, in due time, reached my destination. And I can truly say that I had quite as much confidence in the testimony of my Bristol guide, when shunted on to the dark siding at York, as when I stood on the platform at Scarborough. The only difference was that I needed it more in the former case than in the latter. It is in dark and changeful times we most stand in need of competent authority. It is when the conflicting cries of blind guides fall upon the ear, that we feel the tranquilizing power of that word which is settled forever in heaven.

My reader will be at no loss to seize the moral of my tale. May the Eternal Spirit enable him to apply it! The word of God is the only competent authority. It is not the Church, or the doctors, or the fathers, or the brothers. It is the voice of God. Let us hear this and follow it.

Moreover, it is not feelings, or experience; it is the word of God. A person may say, "But must I not feel? I reply, "You must believe" The word "I feel" casts me upon myself. The word "believe" casts me upon God. Of what use would my feelings have been as an authority for my position in the railway carnage? None whatever. No doubt I had a very comfortable feeling; but it was because I was not trusting my feelings, but the testimony of a competent authority. I felt I was in my right place, because I rested upon a sure testimony.

Reader, art thou resting, for the salvation of thy precious soul, on a divinely competent authority? "If we receive the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater." And what is His testimony? "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life." If therefore you believe in Jesus, you have eternal life. God says so, and faith takes Him at His word. Faith is believing what God says because He says it, not because you feel it. No doubt you will feel when you believe it; but if you wait to feel in order to believe, it would be faith in your feelings and not in God's word at all.

Thus it is as to the grand and all-important question of salvation. And the same holds good as to all the details of the Christian's course, from first to last. How am I to know that I am in my right position, and pursuing my right path? By having competent authority, even a "Thus saith the Lord" for everything. Nothing but this will stand amid the shiftings and shuntings and dark sidings of Christendom; and in the face of ten thousand blind guides and incompetent authorities.

In one concluding sentence, The word of God is the only basis of my individual peace, and the only authority for my individual path.

May every reader of "Things New and Old" know the deep repose and solid blessedness of resting, as to all things, upon a divinely competent authority!

Correspondence

1. "E. S.," Blackheath. We do not exactly like the expressions to which you call our attention; though we can quite believe the person who used them meant what was right. It is important, on the one hand, to keep close to scripture; and, on the other hand, to avoid hair-splitting, or making a man an offender for a word. As to the first of the two expressions, we all know that nothing that men or devils have done could ever tarnish or sully the glory of God; it shines in its own undimmed luster, spite of earth and hell. As to the second expression, we should prefer leaving out the adjective, which certainly does not occur in Luke 12:50.

2. "W. I.," Dudley. It was essentially necessary that our blessed Lord should be legally, the son of Joseph; virtually, the son of Mary; really, the Son of God; and all three meet in Matt. 1:18, in such a way as to evoke from our souls accents of wonder, love, and praise. We can only exclaim, as we read such a record, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." If our Lord were not legally the son of Joseph, He could not claim the throne of David. If He were really his son, He could claim nothing at all.

3. "H. I. A.," Reading. We take those charming passages in Isaiah in their full force and beauty, as setting forth the ineffable blessedness of that time when our beloved Lord shall reign from pole to pole and from the river to the ends of the earth. How the heart longs for that time as we toil along through this sin-stricken world, where all is so contrary to the spirit and mind of Christ.

4. "H. H.," Hobart Town, Tasmania. Your truly kind and encouraging letter came duly to hand. We beg you will accept our warmest acknowledgments. We trust you will receive the volume safely. It was sent as you directed, at least we forwarded your instructions to our publisher. Pressure of work prevents our noticing your interesting letter in detail. The claims of public service leave little time for either reading or writing, beyond what is absolutely indispensable.

5. "Ellen." We must not expect to find in poetry all the accuracy of systematic theology. We have no objection to the expression to which you call our attention. It simply sets forth, in poetic language, the completeness of the work of redemption. We must not split hairs.

6. "C. C. F. A.," London. You had better apply to our publisher, Mr. Morrish.

7. "A reader of T. N. O." You will never know what true peace is until you get done with yourself as an utterly ruined, good-for-nothing thing, and rest on Christ's finished work and God's faithful word. Self-occupation is your special disease. You want to look off unto Jesus, for this is the divine remedy.

8. "D.," Cornwall. Your one grand aim should be to ascertain what the mind of the Lord is, as to your path, and to follow that at all cost. Do not sanction, for an hour, what you know to be contrary to the word of God. Study the New Testament, with a single eye. Ask the Lord to teach you, and then follow on where He leads. You have our deepest sympathy; and we can only say, May God Himself guide and sustain you! It might help you, if you could procure a copy of a little book entitled

“A Scriptural Inquiry into the true nature of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry.” Also, “The Assembly of God; or the All-sufficiency of the, Name of Jesus.” You can get them by enclosing seven postage stamps to “Mr. George Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London, E. C.” God bless and keep you!

9. “T. J.,” East Harptree. We must refer you to Vol. X. of “ Things New and Old,” in which you will find a paper on the subject on which you desire light. See page 201.

10. “G. B.,” Essex. Scripture does, most certainly, teach that the unconverted shall stand before the judgment-seat. 2 Cor. 5:10 takes in all, both believers and unbelievers, though not of course at the same time, or on the same ground. The expression “we all,” in chapter v. 10, differs materially from the “we all,” in chapter 3:18. (See Greek.) The latter refers only to believers; the former to both. Our Lord Christ will judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and kingdom. In Matt. 25:31, we have the judgment of the living nations. Rev. 20:11 gives the judgment of the wicked dead. In the former, not one will have passed through death; in the latter, all will have done so. In neither scene have we the Church or Israel as the subjects of judgment. We are somewhat surprised at your question; we have never met with anyone who called in question the judgment of the unconverted.

Correspondence

11. “S. C.,” Islington. 1 Cor. 8:10, 11 teaches us the very solemn truth that if we, by a false use of our liberty, embolden a weak brother to act against his conscience, we, as far as in us lies, cause him to perish, by destroying the action of his conscience toward God. It is of the utmost importance to allow scripture to have its full play upon the soul, and not to blunt its edge by the dogmas of systematic divinity. It is a good thing to open all the chambers of the heart and have them ventilated by the pure air of scripture. We constantly find theology acting as a barrier to interrupt the rays of heavenly light, and hinder their shining in upon the soul. The same authority that says “My sheep shall never perish” warns its against causing a weak brother to perish by a self-indulgent uncharitable use of our liberty; and it will be our wisdom, as it most assuredly is for our moral security, to hearken to the one as well as to the other.

12. “Alpha,” Teignmouth. It would be premature to introduce the idea of the Church, body or bride of Christ, into Matt. 22:1-14. Our Lord gives us in this parable, a similitude, not of the Church, but of “the kingdom of heaven.” To confound these things is to mar the integrity of the truth of God, and involve our minds in much confusion and perplexity. In order to read aright our Lord’s sayings in the gospels we must bear in mind the standpoint of those to whom He was speaking. The time had not arrived for unfolding the doctrine of the Church. It seems to us that your difficulty arises from confounding the Church and the kingdom.

13. “E. J.,” Norwich. We do not believe that Mal. 3:8-10 refers to christian liberality at all. It is our high privilege to consider all we have and all we are as belonging to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Oh that we realized this more fully, that the streams of christian liberality might flow forth more abundantly to the praise of Him whose we are and whom we are called to serve.

14. “M. J.,” Ryde. The birthright involved all that should have come to Esau as the eldest son: the blessing was something additional. Both had reference to earth.

15. "I. H. S.," Blackheath. Your note, with the accompanying lines, has come to hand.

16. "An Inquirer." (1.) We are to believe—even though we cannot understand—that the Holy Ghost dwells in the body of the believer (1 Cor. 6:19), as He also dwells in the body of Christ, which is the Church (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:21, 22); (2.) 1 Cor. 11:10 teaches that the woman, when praying or prophesying, should have her head covered, as the apt expression of her being in subjection—the Church's true place. (3.) Most surely, our blessed and adorable Lord Jesus Christ, when He hung on the cross, endured all that was due to us. He endured the wrath of God, which to us would have involved an eternity in the flames of hell.

17. "A Miner," W. Your letter has interested and encouraged us greatly. Accept our warmest thanks. We can only praise the Lord with a full heart for all you can tell us of His goodness to you. If you will send us your full address, we shall forward you some tracts, with very great pleasure.

18. "A. M.," London. I am glad you have called my attention to my little book, "Thou and thy House." I am aware of the use which has been made of it in a recent tract on the subject of "Baptism"—a use which I consider to be aught but disingenuous. With the theory of that tract I have no sympathy whatever; still less with its monstrous statements. I believe the course of some of our friends, in urging on this question of baptism will, unless God in His mercy interpose, lead to most disastrous results. I complain not of any who conscientiously hold this or that view on the subject; but I do complain of those, who instead of preaching and teaching Jesus Christ, are disturbing the minds of God's people by pressing infant baptism upon them. For my own part—seeing the question has been thus forced upon me—I can only say I have for thirty-two years been asking, in vain, for a single line of scripture for baptizing any save believers or those who professed to believe. Reasonings I have had, inferences, conclusions, and deductions; but of direct scripture authority not one tittle.

I may further add that there is not a word about baptism from beginning to end of my book, "Thou and thy House."

C.H.M., Ed. "T.N. &O."

Bristol, Dec. 22nd., 1871.

Correspondence

19. "E.," Norwich. We should say that the precious word "mercy" would be a most excellent substitute for any or all the words you name.

20. "W. E.," Wem. According to the New Testament, the Jewish night was divided into four periods, which are described either numerically, as first, second, third, or fourth watch, or by the terms, "even, midnight, cock crowing, and morning." (Compare Matt. 14:25; Mark 13:35.) These periods terminated respectively at 9 p. m.; midnight; 3 a.m.; and 6 a.m. The reckoning of the hours of the day began at 6 a. m. Thus the third hour would be 9 a. m. and so on.

21. "An Inquirer," Exeter. The Holy Ghost dwells in all those who truly believe in a risen and glorified Christ. Scripture is most distinct as to this.

22. "Inquirer," Walworth. You will kindly excuse our unwillingness to introduce the subject of your letter into our pages. We have endeavored for the last fourteen years to confine the pages of our magazine to simple truth bearing upon the conversion or edification of souls. To this course, we purpose, by the grace of God, to adhere. If you wait on the Lord, with a single eye, He will most assuredly guide you as to your path.

23. "E. T.," Heytesbury. None but the Lord Himself can guide you. It is far too solemn and sacred a matter for any human interference. Take it into the sanctuary, and there you will get light as to your path. We dare not attempt to give a judgment pro or con. May the Lord guide you most distinctly!

24. "Carrie," Glastonbury. We would all readily say that it is not a question of bodily attitude in prayer, but rather of the state of the heart—the true attitude of the soul. At the same time, we must confess we like to see people kneel down, when they can. We say "when they can," because, in many cases, it is utterly impossible when people are so packed together as to be hardly able to move. There is no attitude which so aptly expresses prostration of soul as kneeling. It looks lazy and irreverent to see people always sitting while praying. But we must not judge one another in this matter. Many things have to be taken into account. The Lord looks upon the heart. May He ever find our hearts in the right attitude before Him! This is the grand point.

25. "G. G.," Warren County, Pennsylvania. Your very interesting communication did not reach us in time for our February issue. It is remarkable that our leading article for this month, though written before the receipt of your letter, should contain so explicit an answer to many of your queries and remarks. We shall only add here that we do not, by any means, believe that, "The mystery of God " spoken of in Rev. 10 is the same as the mystery referred to in Ephesians and Colossians. We do not see the Church in the four living creatures. These latter are the heads of creation, and they are ever seen in immediate connection with the government of God. We believe that the Church and the Old Testament saints are seen in the twenty-four crowned elders in chapter 4. Not in their distinctive places which is not the object, until we reach the close of the book, when the Church reappears as the bride, and the elders disappear. The 144,000 of Rev. 7 represent the saved remnant of Israel; and the unnumbered multitude are saved Gentiles. Both these companies will come on the scene after the rapture of the saints, which is not formally or distinctly presented at all in the Apocalypse. We deem it a most serious error to place the Church on earth during the apocalyptic judgments. We are exceedingly interested in your letter, it shows a mind much engaged with the things of God. May we inquire in the temple! May we drink into the spirit while we study the letter of scripture! May our studies be carried on in the spirit of worship!

26. "Emma," Brixton. If you will let us have your full address, we shall send you some papers which may help you.

27. "A Perplexed Inquirer." What you need is a hearty acceptance of a full Christ, and a thorough surrender of yourself to Him. This we believe to be the true secret of solid peace and joyful liberty—Christ for the heart and the heart for Christ. May all perplexed inquirers know this!

28. "A Brother." It is but a small thing to say you have our prayers and hearty sympathy. May the gracious Lord strengthen and comfort your precious soul, by His own direct and powerful ministry!

29. "H. W." The subjects you name have been referred to in our back volumes. Thank you, most heartily, for your encouraging note.

Correspondence

30. "Z. A. B.," London. It is remarkable that two of our correspondents, for this month, have called our attention to the same subject, namely, a periodical devoted mainly, if not exclusively, to Sunday school work. We cannot but look upon such a thing as a desideratum—a positive want, at this moment, and we should heartily rejoice to see such a work undertaken by a competent hand. It would, we doubt not, be immensely useful. Sunday school workers could, through such a medium, communicate with one another. Questions might be asked and answered; interesting cases might be recorded; scenes from real life presented; actual experiences given; hints and suggestions furnished as to the best method of teaching the dear children. In short, in a thousand ways, a Magazine of this kind would, we believe, prove most helpful, interesting, and instructive to thousands engaged in this most blessed field of christian labor. As to a title, we should suggest the following, "The Sunday School Worker. A magazine designed for the help and encouragement of all who are engaged in this branch of christian service." [Communications may be sent, care of Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane.]

31. "A Christian," Swansea. All you say is most true, both as to the evil and the remedy; but your communication is too local and personal to appear in a magazine for general circulation.

32. "A. H. F.," Boyle. It is greatly to be feared that very many mistake their own inclinations for the movings of the Spirit of God—a terrible mistake! It needs much brokenness, self-emptiness, and singleness of eye to discern and follow the precious leadings of the Holy Ghost. As a general rule, we should say that where the glory of Christ is the exclusive object of any act to which we feel led, we may conclude that it is the Spirit that moves us. The Lord is so gracious that we can fully count upon Him to guide, and keep, and use us, where the heart is simple.

33. "L. M. Y." We could not recommend the publication of your lines.

Note.—Want of space compels us to leave a large number of letters unanswered. We have before us, at this moment, a mass of Correspondence which would demand an entire number for replies. We trust our friends will bear with us.

Correspondence

34. "A Young Disciple," Surrey. Accept our warmest thanks for your truly kind and encouraging letter. The Lord be praised for all you can tell us of His goodness to you, and for the help and blessing you have received through the books.

35. "J. W. L.," Peckham. Every person is made up of "spirit, soul, and body." Thus, in 1 Thess. 5:23, the apostle prays for the saints that the whole man may be preserved blameless.

36. "J. H.," Keswick. Rom. 14:13 is given quite correctly in our excellent Authorized Version, and it stands in fullest harmony with the glorious truth of an accomplished redemption. We must never forget that, while we stand in the free grace of God, we are called to walk in holy responsibility. The two things are most blessedly compatible. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." And again, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Let us seek to keep these things ever in the remembrance of the thoughts of our hearts.

37. "J. L.," Bishop Stortford. Most assuredly, all the saints, from the days of Adam downward, shall have part in the first resurrection. We believe that both the Old Testament saints and the Church are seen in Rev. 4; 5, under the figure of the twenty-four elders. They are not distinguished, however, until the close of the book when the elders disappear and the Church is seen as "the bride, the Lamb's wife." It will help you immensely in your study of the book of Revelation, to see the transitional character of chapters 4, 5. They show us, most distinctly, where the Church will be during the opening of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials. There is no mention of the Church on the earth, after chapter 3. We have a numbered company of Jews, and a countless multitude of Gentiles saved, in chapter 7. But the very fact of their being distinguished as Jews and Gentiles proves that they do not belong to the Church at all; for in this latter, as every intelligent Christian knows, all such distinctions vanish.

38. "S. E. S." Your two poems contain much precious truth, and breathe a very sweet spirit; but they are rather too long for our limited space. Accept our thanks for your truly kind note.

39. "Quartus," Cheltenham. Acts 10:35 teaches, most clearly, that God accepts all who work righteousness, whether Jew or Gentile. See Rom. 1.

40. "T. B. D.," Exeter. The expression in Heb. 9:28 does not at all apply to the world; but only to believers. It is never said in scripture that Christ bore the sins of the world. "He put away sin." "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.) "He is the propitiation for... the whole world." (1 John 2) But the moment you speak of sins, it becomes a question of persons, and then we have to do with the counsels of God, and the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul, producing repentance and faith. If Christ bore the sins of the whole world, then the whole world must be saved apart from all question of repentance and faith. In a word, this would involve the heresy of universal redemption. We must carefully distinguish between universal purchase and universal redemption. The former is a most weighty truth; the latter is a fatal heresy. Christ has bought the whole world, and every man, woman, and child therein. Hence the apostle Peter speaks of false teachers, "bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them." He does not say, "that redeemed them." But this is a wide and a weighty subject, and cannot be gone into here. If you can lay your hand on a little volume entitled, "Notes on Leviticus," and read chapter 16 it will help you.

41. "A. R.," Notting Hill. Jer. 3:22 furnishes a precious answer to your question. May the Holy Spirit apply it to your heart!

42. "T. S.," Otley. Thanks for your kind note and the accompanying card.

43. "Alpha," Teignmouth. It will help you in your study of the parable in Matt. 22 if you bear in mind the difference between Christians looked at individually, and the Church in its corporate character. Most surely, the guests are gathered in now by the gospel; but the object of the parable is not to set forth the Church, but a certain similitude of the kingdom of heaven. We are truly thankful for the large measure of light which the Lord has vouchsafed to you.

44. "E. B.," London. It must be entirely a question of individual faith. The word is plain, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." If any one says you ought to lay up, he must settle the matter with the Lord Christ. Eph. 4:28 teaches us that the object for which a man is to work with his hands is, not to lay up, but that he may have to give to him that needeth. It is a fine question to put to the

heart, namely, which would you rather have, a hoard of money or the living God? A genuine faith will not hesitate long about giving an answer.

45. "E. W.," Ramsgate. Scripture is totally silent on the point. It seems to us a very unprofitable question. We believe the Spirit in the intermediate state is in the enjoyment of unhindered communion with Christ. It is utterly useless for us to offer conjectures or imagination where scripture maintains an impenetrable reserve. We most fully agree with your mode of putting this subject.

46. "N. N.," Ivy House. Most gladly would we go into your questions were it not that they would carry us into a line of things quite unsuited to our pages.

47. "A Lamb in the Fold," York. If you apply to our publisher, " Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London, e.c." he will give you the desired information and supply you with the proper books and tracts.

48. "Bartholomew," Manchester. The subject to which you call our attention is, no doubt, one of deep interest and real practical value; but it hardly comes within the scope of this magazine.

49. "J. B.," Huddersfield. Acts 5:30 is perfectly correct as rendered in our excellent Authorized Version. Most clearly, it refers to resurrection. How could it be applied to incarnation, in the face of the words, "whom ye slew and hanged on a tree?"

50. "S. E. H." The Old Testament saints looked forward to a promised Savior. As to Israel, after the flesh, they went through the ordinances and ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual without any spiritual insight into their deep significance. You must distinguish between carnal Jews and true believers.

51. "W. E.," Wem. We have replied to your question as to the watches of the night. As to your second question, the holy scriptures were buried, as it were, in the cloisters of Rome, in dead languages, until God, in His great mercy, gave them forth in the vernacular tongue. There were MSS in various monasteries and libraries, preserved by the good hand of God until the due time came, and competent hands were found, to make use of them for the blessing of the Church.

Correspondence

52. "E. B.," Gosport. We judge that a sister might modestly serve in the circumstances which you describe. But, as a general rule, we should prefer having the service discharged by a brother.

53. "E.," Folkestone. 1 Cor. 3:16 speaks of the Church collectively as the temple of the Holy Ghost. In chapter 6:19, we have the body of the individual believer, as the temple likewise. As to the difference between "the temple" and "the body" compare Eph. 1:22, 23 with chapter 2:19-22.

54. "L. D.," Ramsgate. It is wholly a question of individual faith.

55. "D. W.," Norwich. Two correspondents have written on the same point. We judge that the integrity of the figure is duly maintained if an unmitigated loaf, or mass, of bread be laid on the table.

56. "J. A. O. B." Dublin. It simplifies the matter of the collection immensely to bear in mind that it is for the Lord—that He hath need of it, whether it be to pay for a room for His people to meet in; or

for His poor; or for His workmen. It is the Lord's collection. Marvelous grace on His part, to permit us to be co-workers with Him!

57. "W. L." John 16:8 refers to the world, as a whole, and not to the work wrought in individual souls. The very presence of the Holy Ghost proved the world guilty of rejecting the Son of God. Many thanks for your most kind and encouraging letter. May the Lord bless you, very abundantly, is our earnest prayer.

58. "A Constant Reader," Windsor. The sentence which you quote gives a very fair idea of the sense of Gal. 4:4. We are very thankful for the benefit you have received. How good of the Lord to make use of us in helping one another! Oh! that we may ever be vessels fit for His use!

59. "H.," Ottawa. Both your letters have come to hand, and we beg that you will accept our best thanks for them. It would be impossible, in our limited space, to enter upon the various subjects to which you call our attention. Indeed we should very much prefer sending you a private reply. May the Lord Himself be your teacher and guide in all things! To Him we would very earnestly and lovingly commend you and yours.

Correspondence

60. "An Unsettled One." What you want, dear friend, is to look off, entirely, from yourself—your feelings, your exercises, your repentance, yea, and your faith—in a word, from all that has to do with yourself, and rest in a divine work—a work finished on the cross and accepted on the throne. God is satisfied with Christ. Are you? Do you want something more than Christ? Do you want to throw into the scale something of your own to make Christ of full weight? This is the question. The true secret of rest and peace is to be satisfied with Christ. So long as ever you are occupied with yourself, you will have to subscribe yourself, "An unsettled one."

61. "Omicron." Your best plan would be to apply directly to the author himself for an explanation of his meaning.

62. "G. T." All the leading editors agree in omitting Acts 8:37.

63 "M. M." We do not know of any work to recommend you. May the Holy Spirit Himself open the contents of that precious portion to your soul!

64. "C." Near Stonehouse. We should know all the facts of the case in order to give an opinion.

65. "J. B.," Dublin. Your communication, and the answer, had quite escaped our memory. We remember receiving a suggestion as to the subject of the Lord's coming, and our acknowledging its immense importance; but we do not remember any reference to the subject you name. Pray excuse us in this.

66. "T. M. J.," Boston. We do not believe anything of the kind. We hold it to be fatally false doctrine. We believe that all who die in their sins shall suffer eternal punishment in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Oh! dear friend, beware of reasonings, and let your soul drink in the teachings of holy scripture. Human thoughts are vain. The word of the Lord shall endure forever. To Him and His living ministry we commend you. May He shield you from the fiery darts of the wicked.

67. "H. T.," Valence. We can see no connection whatever between Eph. 5:14 and Phil. 3:11. In the latter we have the blessed hope of the Christian ardently set forth by one who was living in the power of it. In the former, we have a solemn call to any who may have sunk down into a dead, sleepy condition.

68. "O. E. B.," The June number was in print and the proof sheets corrected when we received your communication. As the occasion is passed, it is useless to offer an opinion. We may, however, simply add that all such matters must be left very much to individual conscience before the Lord.

69. "C. C. F. A.," Kensington. Your kind package has come to hand.

70. "J. H. Y.," Durham. We consider 2 Cor. 6:14-18 a conclusive answer to your question. If that scripture does not govern a man's conscience, reasoning is worse than useless.

71. "J. T. C.," Pentonville. We quite agree with you; but the subject hardly comes within our range.

72. "S. J. L.," Shooters Hill. We do not know of any.

73. "H. W.," We could hardly give an opinion without hearing the other side of the story. "Audi alteram partem" is a very excellent motto.

74. "T. D. O.," Newport, Mon. There are four passages of holy scripture which furnish a distinct and definite answer to your question: namely, first, Luke 23:43, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." This is as clear as it is precious: "With me in paradise." That is where "the spirit is during the intermediate state." Secondly, Acts 7:59, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Here we learn that the spirit will be in the keeping of Jesus during the intermediate state. Safe and blessed place! With Jesus, and kept by Jesus. How precious! Thirdly, 2 Cor. 5:8, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." And fourthly, Phil. 1:23, "To depart and to be with Christ which is far better."

If it be a question respecting those who die in their sins, Luke 16:22, 23 gives the solemn answer, in our Lord's own words, "The rich man died and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." How awful! How truly appalling! What a contrast between the two states! Oh! dear friend, may we be solemnly in earnest in dealing with souls!

Correspondence

75. "E. T. L.," Lake Huron, Ontario. Your first two questions we cannot discuss in these pages; we must leave them entirely with your own conscience in the presence of God. We would merely say, Be consistent—be thorough—be out and out. If a thing is right, be in it and support it, with your whole heart and soul. If it is wrong, be out of it, once and forever. With respect to your third question, we hold the eternal Sonship of Christ to be a great cardinal and fundamental truth of Christianity. Our Lord Jesus Christ only became Son of man at His incarnation; He was Son of God from all eternity. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." He must have had Him, else He could not have given Him, and this proves, at least, His Sonship previous to incarnation. Study Pro. 8. Thanks for your kind suggestions as to the answers to correspondents. If we were to insert all the questions, we should, not infrequently, require a double number for that department alone. Sometimes we are obliged to reply, in a line or two, to questions filling three or four pages.

76. "T. B.," Ventnor. The Holy Ghost has given us the three grand distinguishing titles, namely, "The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God." Alas! that which calls itself the Church of God has become a corrupt thing— a vast mass of baptized profession. But clearly that which is called Christendom is no longer viewed as being on Jewish, or Gentile ground, nor will it be judged as such, but according to the profession which it takes up. Hence the appalling solemnity of Christendom's position. We believe it, beloved friend, to be the most terrible moral blot in the wide universe of God—the master-piece of Satan and the destroyer of souls. Oh! the awfulness of Christendom's condition—the awfulness of its doom! No human language can set it forth. May all who truly belong to the Church of God be enabled to yield a calm, clear, decided, and consistent testimony against the spirit, and principles and ways of that terrible thing called Christendom.

77. "E. F. G., Cheltenham. Thanks for your note and the accompanying lines. Your second communication is also to hand. It is not in our power to insert the twentieth part of the poetry sent to us. Our friends must not be offended, therefore, when their verses are omitted.

Correspondence

78. "M. H.," Twickenham. The speaker in Zech. 13:6 represents the Messiah. He, truly, was "wounded in the house of his friends."

79. "M. C.," Canada. If you can pursue the calling with a good conscience—if you can practice it to the glory of Christ—if you can ask God's blessing upon it, then, by all means, go on with it; if not, give it up. It must be a matter between your own soul and the Lord. It could, in no wise, touch the real merits of the case, or adjust the moral balance of the question for your soul, were we to answer in the affirmative, or in the negative. The grand question would still have to be asked and answered, "What is the mind of my Lord?" Oh! when will Christians learn the precious secret of taking all their questions into the sanctuary of God to get them answered there?

80. "G. I.," Wandsworth. It does not fall in with our line of things to enter upon such questions as you propose. We are not aware of any "rule" on the subject.

81. "L. W.," Poole. Thanks for your interesting letter. The Lord be praised for all you can say of His goodness. We do praise Him with you, dear Mend, and pray that He may sustain your spirit.

82. "M.," London. You have our full sympathy in your exercises. May the Lord lead you into His own blessed peace. If you can lay your hand on a little book entitled "Peace in Believing," by our late beloved and valued friend William Trotter, we feel sure it will help you as it has helped many. We should be delighted to send it to you, if we knew your address; but you can get it at our publisher's for two pence.

83. "A. M." Your MS has come duly to hand.

84. "J. A. S.," Oxford. The two expressions give us two distinct aspects of one and the same thing. 2 Corinthians 8 refers to the collection for the poor saints which has to be so ordered that no occasion might be given to any who might seek it. It is of the utmost importance that Christians should manage all their money matters in a clear, straightforward, upright manner, so as not to cause any reproach to be cast on that holy Name by which they are called. May we all exercise ourselves to have always a conscience void of offense both toward God and man.

85. "L. H. E." We must refer you to our answer given above to "M," London. May God's Spirit work true faith in your soul! Oh! how simple it is when He does it! Faith is believing what God says, because He says it. 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, and Rom. 10:9, 10, tell you what and how to believe in order to be saved.

86. "G. E. T.," Hoddesdon. We are expressly told, in Matt. 25 that the condemned nation "should go away into everlasting punishment." This is as plain as it is solemn.

87. "E. B. B.," Stratford, Connecticut. Accept our best thanks for your kind note and the accompanying little book. The latter we have not yet had time to peruse; but we doubt not it will prove helpful to all engaged in the blessed work of teaching the young, whether in Sunday schools or day schools. May God bless you and make you a blessing!

88. "J. K. or B.," Toronto. I am not quite sure of your second initial. Scripture is silent on the subject you name. Heb. 12:1, does not refer to disembodied spirits as being now "witnesses" of our ways, but to the various old testament saints referred to in chapter 11. As to Revelation 2:9, we apprehend there must be some mistake, inasmuch as there is no allusion whatever to disembodied spirits in the passage. We most surely believe that we shall know each other in the resurrection-state, but as to spirits, recognizing one another, the word is silent. It seems to us to be more a matter of pious sentimentality than of solid christian faith. Accept our warmest thanks for your most kind, interesting and encouraging letter.

89. "E. J. T.," Melbourne. Will you kindly accept this mode of acknowledging your most welcome letter? We are unusually pressed just now; but we long to assure you of our deep and hearty interest in all you tell us, both as to yourself, beloved brother, and as to the Lord's work around you. His holy Name be praised! Give our warmest love in Christ to all the beloved friends in Melbourne and Adelaide. May His richest blessings rest upon you all!

90. "G. K.," Hull. We had so fully gone into the subject of 2 Cor. 5:10, in a series of articles in volume x. on "the ministry of reconciliation," that we hardly deemed it needful to refer to it again. We believe that that weighty passage sets forth the broad fact that all, both believers and unbelievers, shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ; but not at the same time. But see the article named above.

Correspondence

91. "An Enquirer," Newbury. We cannot at all agree with you in your remark that, "It appears a yea and nay gospel" to call upon men to believe. Our blessed Master called upon men to "repent and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15.) And when asked by the men of His time, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" His reply was, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:28, 29.) Again, He challenges the Jews with this pungent, question, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John 8:46.) Then, when we turn to the Acts of the Apostles we find Peter calling upon the Jews to repent and be converted. We find Paul telling the Philippian jailor to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." He tells the Athenians that "God commandeth all men, everywhere to repent." We read in 2 Thessalonians that our Lord Jesus Christ will take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel, and further that "God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth."

Now, we must confess it seems to us a very serious thing, in the face of all these passages, to call it, “ a yea and nay gospel” to press upon men their responsibility to believe. But the fact is, dear friend, your difficulty is occasioned by the influence of a one-sided theology—a system which we can only compare to a bird with one wing or a boat with one oar. When we turn to the sacred page of God’s word, we find the truth, not one side of truth, but the whole truth in all its bearings. We find, lying side by side, the truth of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Are we called to reconcile them? Nay, they are reconciled already because they are both set forth in the word. We are to believe and obey. It is a fatal mistake for men to frame systems of divinity. You can no more systematize the truth of God than you can systematize God Himself. Let us abandon, therefore, all systems of theology and schools of divinity, and take the truth. There is not a single theological system under the sun that contains the truth. All may contain some truth, not one contains all. And very often you find that whatever little truth the system contains is misplaced and turned the wrong way, to the serious damage of truth as a whole, and the stumbling and injury of souls. Every day we live we are more and more struck with the vast difference between the dogmas of divinity and the heart—the word—the Christ of God.

Correspondence

92. “Τεχν■της.” If you can undertake such things as you name, to the glory of God, and in the name of Jesus, then by all means go on with them. Christ is the one grand touchstone for everything, and if we could only use Him as such, it would solve a thousand difficulties, and answer a thousand questions. Oh! to be able to say, “To me to live is Christ.”

93. “Sherborne.” Though agreeing in the main with your view of the subject, we do not judge it advisable to insert your paper. It would not promote the object we desire ever to keep before us in this work.

94. “ J. R. H.” The various passages you refer to, seem to show that the Lord’s supper was celebrated in the evening; but we do not see any principle involved in the matter.

95. “J. E.,” Canada. Your questions hardly fall in with our line of things. They would be more suitable for a private communication.

96. “H. H.,” Halifax. 1 Peter in. 19, refers to the preaching of Noah. The Spirit of Christ, in Noah, preached to the people whose “spirits” are now “in prison” because they did not believe the testimony.

97. “M. A. W.,” Peckham. Your affecting little narrative is hardly suitable for us; but if you wish, we can forward it to the publisher of “Good News.” From a sentence in your note, we rather judge you intended your paper for that publication. However, we shall await your instructions.

98. “A. B. C.,” Teignmouth. Sins are atoned for. Persons or things are redeemed. Christ has atoned for our sins. He has redeemed us; and He has redeemed the inheritance. He has done both by the same precious bloodshedding, blessed forever be His holy Name!

99. “G. F.,” Brighton. If you could procure a copy of “Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” by W. Kelly, it will help you much. It is published by W. H. Broom, Paternoster Row, London.

100. "M. J.," Dublin. The four leading editors, Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, agree in omitting Acts 8:37. This is a simple fact. You ask us, "Why do they?" We reply, Because, no doubt, they judged it ought not to be inserted.

Eternity

Come, O my soul, thy future glory trace,
If thou receive the Savior's offered grace,
Infinite years of pleasure thou shalt spend,
Which never, never, never, have an end!
Yes, thou shalt dwell where saints in glory are,
As many years as atoms in the air;
When those are past, as many to ensue
As blades of grass and drops of morning dew;
When those are past, as many yet behind
As forest leaves when shaken by the wind;
When those are gone as many thousands more
As grains of sand upon the ocean's shore;
When those are spent, as many millions more
As moments in the millions past before; —
When all those blissful years, exempt from pain,
Are multiplied by myriads yet again,
Till numbers drown the thought, could I suppose
That then my bliss in heaven would have to close,
Thrice happy then my glorious lot would be;
But still that would not be eternity.
Eternity would then be just begun,
The day of bliss just dawning, rising, heaven's bright sun;
The concert opening only, banquet just prepared,
First greetings scarcely past, first welcomes only shared;
The jubilee just commenced, the golden harps just strung,
Just tuned the lute, first timbrel struck, and anthem sung:

Just caught the strain, by east, west, south, and north!

Their joy is inconceivable! their happiness henceforth!

The Father's House

Lord, to be with thee in thine own abode,
The place prepared where thou wilt have us dwell,
Brought home unto thy Father and thy God,
Where harpers harping shall thy triumphs tell.
Sons of His love! heirs of his festal joy!
What bliss! how full, how pure beyond alloy!
To gaze around in that effulgent light,
With not a mist from earth to intervene;
Thy majesty, thy beauty, full in sight;
Thy glory flooding all the boundless scene;
Thy love in its perfection, known at last—
'Twill solve the long enigma of the past.
To read in full the story of the cross—
Known dimly—but with growing wonder now:
To measure, by God's glory, what it cost,
Beneath His curse, thy holy head to bow.
Thy royal garments (in that hour laid by)
Proving the depths of thy descent—to DIE!
To hear thee leading, in our midst, high praise.
To Him whom thou hast glorified on earth;
Whose will, the rule of all thy pilgrim days.
Made thee a suffering stranger from thy birth.
Proof—thou, the slain One—highest heavens above,
Of sovereign mercy and victorious love.
To know how thou hast made an end of sin;
Swept every hostile element away;

To see eternal righteousness brought in,
And watch the universe thy mind obey.
No longer to perceive and know in part;
But feel with thee—behold thee where thou art.
To worship Him who sitteth on the throne,
Whose Church are we, the purchased by thy blood.
Thine incorruptibility our own.
The dearest purpose of thy heart made good,
And through eternity's exhaustless days,
Our Lord, our Savior! to sound forth thy praise.

Fig Leaves

“How long have you known the Lord?” said a friend of mine, to an old man in Staffordshire. “About three weeks, sir; but I have been for forty years sewing fig leaves together.”

There is a good deal expressed in those few words. Thousands are employed in the same profitless work as our poor old Staffordshire friend. Yes; thousands are occupied in the useless business of sewing fig leaves together. The man who is seeking to save his soul by means of rites and ceremonies, ordinances and sacraments, church-going and chapel-going, is just sewing fig leaves together. So also, the man or woman who is building upon prayers, fastings, and alms deeds, is sewing fig leaves together.

All these things may be, and many of them really are, very good in their right place. But as a ground for the soul to rest upon for pardon and peace—as a title wherewith to draw nigh to a holy and righteous God—as a foundation on which to build for eternity, they are, in very truth, but sewing fig leaves together; and all who trust to them will find them to be so when alas! it will be too late.

But let us turn, for a moment, to the third chapter of Genesis, and look at the first attempt ever made, in this world, to sew fig leaves together. “There is nothing new under the sun,” and we may see in Adam’s apron of fig leaves the very earliest figure which scripture gives us of man’s righteousness in every shape and form—the very earliest type and illustration of all human effort to cover the sinner’s moral and spiritual nakedness, from the day of man’s fall in the garden of Eden, down to the present moment.

No sooner had man eaten the forbidden fruit, than his eyes were opened. But oh! what an opening! What a discovery! He found out that he was naked. He became possessed of a conscience of good and evil, and this selfsame conscience made a coward of him. “The eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked.” Sad, sad opening! Sad discovery! They had listened to the serpent, and this was the result. Discovered nakedness! A coward conscience! Up to this, they had lived in happy innocence, blissful ignorance of evil. They knew only good. But, now all was changed. They had gained the knowledge of their own nakedness and lost the true knowledge of God.

And what then? How did they seek to meet their new condition? Just like the old Staffordshire man. “They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.” Reader, mark this: “They sewed.” It was their work, not God’s. He never set a single stitch in the apron. It was man’s work from beginning to end. This stamped its character. It was impossible that the work of a ruined creature could ever lift him out of the ruin into which he had plunged himself. He might work in the ruin, but he never could work himself out of it. Hence we find that the very moment “they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden.” They dared not trust their fig-leaf apron. It did not even satisfy themselves. How then could it screen them from the

searching gaze of a righteous God? It was “weak and beggarly.”

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” Think of this! “I was naked.” Had he forgotten the apron? It would seem so. Ah! it was of no use; indeed he completely ignored it.

Thus it is ever. All human efforts prove valueless, when the testing time, the trial-moment, comes. Nothing will stand but God’s own work; and Adam’s apron was not that. It was man’s work and not God’s; and we may rest assured that nothing will, nothing can avail—nothing can give peace but that which is of God. There is not beneath the canopy of heaven, this day, a soul possessing true peace who is resting on, or looking to human efforts of any sort or description. In order to possess true, solid, divine peace, the soul must be resting simply on that which is absolutely and entirely of God.

Now, of this latter we have the earliest figure in the coats of skin which the Lord God made for Adam and his wife. There was this weighty difference between the apron and the coat, that God never set a single stitch in the former; and man never set a single stitch in the latter. That was wholly of man, and therefore could not avail: this was wholly of God, and therefore could not do otherwise.

Oh! that men would but ponder those early lessons of the apron and the coat. They are full of holy instruction for us. We may rest assured they have a voice for every age, and a special voice for the present moment. Christendom is studded, from one end to the other, with the manufactories of fig-leaf aprons. Millions of hands are employed in the miserable work; and those aprons may do well enough until that moment arrives when the voice of God must be heard, and their utter worthlessness will be found out when it is too late. “I heard thy voice; and I was afraid; because I was naked.”

What utterances! The voice of God! Fear! Nakedness! Beloved fellow-sinner, we beseech thee to think of those things. Think of them now. Say on what art thou leaning? To which art thou trusting? Man’s apron or God’s coat—which? Oh! which? Do not put this question aside. Look it straight in the face, this living moment. Come to the point now. Thou hast delayed long enough; delay no longer. Consequences of present and eternal moment hang on thine answer to this great question.

Say, then, dear friend, art thou trusting, in any way, to thine own works, or art thou reposing, in perfect confidence upon that precious blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin? Examine thy foundations closely and rigidly. Look well to thy title-deeds. It will be unspeakably awful to find out, when too late, that thou hast been building on human rubbish, instead of building upon the Rock of ages.

Hearken to the following magnificent passage, and may the eternal Spirit interpret and apply it to thy precious soul. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not be confounded.” Isa. 28:16 Pet. 2:6.

Here is thy ground. God has laid the foundation. He does not ask thee to add to it, but simply to lean upon it; to trust to it; to believe in it. And if thou wilt only believe in Jesus, thou hast the word

of Him who cannot lie to assure thee that thou shalt never be confounded, world without end.

The First Business of Lost Man

If “man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever,” surely man’s first business, as lost, guilty, and undone, is to be saved. “Salvation is of the Lord,” says the prophet Jonah; and all that is required for man’s salvation was finished on the cross, says the apostle John, therefore the sinner—the chief of sinners—has only to believe the good news and rest and rejoice therein.

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” Here the invitation approaches the character of a command—of a command to be saved. “Look unto me and be ye saved.” It is not by feeling, realizing, or appropriating, that I am saved; but simply in looking to Jesus as the one who died for me—who died for me just as I am. I am not called to be anything, or to bring anything, or to experience anything, but just what I am, as judged by God, sinful in my nature, and my sins actually committed, innumerable. But, oh! glorious truth! Jesus died for such—“the just for the unjust”—for me, faith exclaims! and God has accepted the mighty sacrifice in my stead, and faith accepts it too, and I stand complete in Him as risen and glorified. See Jonah 2:9; John 19:30; Isa. 45:22.

When man discovers that he is a lost sinner; that his sins bring burning wrath and banishment from God’s presence forever and ever; that by no supposed goodness, or good works, can he meet his righteous requirements, or satisfy the fair demands of His holy law; he is sure to have hard thoughts of God, and to wish in his heart that there were no God to judge, and no hell to punish. But when he is brought to listen to the gospel of peace, and hears that God so loved the world—a world of lost sinners—that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; he finds out two things, namely, that the very hopelessness of his condition establishes his title to the love of God and the work of Christ. And what more does he need—can he need? the love of God and the work of Christ. God loves me—Christ died for me—so loves me. What is its measure? the gift, sufferings, death of Jesus. He died for me, in my stead; that I should not perish, but have everlasting life. Christ has met all God’s claims—all my necessities—He not only suffered for my actual “sins” but made an end of “sin”—my evil nature. God has thus judged both our “sin” and “sins,” and put all away as corrupt—all that belongs to our fallen nature is gone and gone forever. Heb. 10:17 Pet. 3:18.

But the young believer, in his musings on the love of God and the work of Christ, must not rest here. Too many content themselves with only half a gospel, and that the human half; or, rather, with the human side of the gospel. It is said, that Christ having died for us, we are pardoned and accepted when we believe, in virtue of His death, and will surely go to heaven when we die. This is true, and precious truth so far as it goes. But it is not the whole truth, and must come short of perfect peace with God. When Christ “made an end of sin” on the cross—which means our old nature—that was really making an end of the old nature and all that belonged to it; consequently, the believer has the privilege of knowing, not only that Christ died for him, but that he died in Christ’s death—that the whole system in which he stood, as a man and as a sinner—as a child of the first Adam—has been abolished. But if we died in His death, we also rose in His resurrection. “

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:5, 6.

This is the only true ground of peace. There is nothing against the believer here. Sin, root and branch, has been judged, and the risen Lord has introduced him into a new position, in association with Himself, and there he stands complete in Him before God; free from all charge of sin, and free from all fear of judgment; "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Nothing less meets the full need of the sinner, the presence of God, and the glory of the great Workman. John 5:24; Rom. 8:2.

Surely man's first business is to be saved—saved according to the love of God, and the work of Christ. Has my reader thought of this, or has he neglected it? No question of equal importance can come before thee in this life; nothing can justify thy delay; nothing can be admitted as an excuse—all things are ready—all that is required for thy salvation is done, thou hast only to rest in that finished and accepted work. And this should be thy first business. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36.

His Own

“His own,” how sweet the portion
His people thence can claim;
Though in the world, not of it,
Theirs is no earthly name.
“His own,” how loved and tended,
How cared for, shepherded;
How called and sealed and folded,
How tenderly they’re led!
“His own,” they long to see thee,
“Chief Shepherd” of the sheep,
For whom the crown of glory,
Thy ceaseless love doth keep;
‘Tis not the crown they watch for,
“ His own” the Lord will claim,
The sharers of His glory,
They’ll praise His matchless name.

I Shall Be Satisfied

“I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness.”—Psalm 17:15.

Even now my heart is ravished

With my Savior’s precious love;

And, as hasting on to glory,

Daily, I His sweetness prove.

Though He leads to living pastures,

And I taste a flowing tide,

Yet, until I see His beauty,

I shall ne’er be satisfied.

Many a song He gives to brighten

All the long and dreary night;

Many a cup of joy He gives me,

For in me He has delight.

Surely, with such love abounding,

I could give up all beside;

Still, I’m sure, until I see Him,

I can ne’er be satisfied.

Oh, my heart, with grace uplifted,

Would each fiery trial stem;

But, to gaze upon the Victor,

Decked with many a diadem,—

Him to see, I’ve sweet desirings,

Who for me once bled and died;

And I know, till I behold Him,

I can ne’er be satisfied.

For with Him, I know, are treasured

Rarest things, both new and old;
But His love,—His heart's affection,
Choicer is than finest gold;
Changeless, too; than death e'en stronger,
For my Lord was crucified;
And until these eyes behold Him
I can ne'er be satisfied.
Soon the day-dawn will be breaking
And the shadows flee away;
Now, by faith, in joy and gladness,
I await the coming day,
For I know my soul is safely
Hidden in His wounded side;
And anon He sweetly tells me
I shall soon be satisfied.
Lo! He tells me now His secret,
Cheering with His heavenly smile;
Telling me, in love's low whisper,
It is but "a little while;"
Yes, for soon, to brightest glory,
He will fetch away His bride,
Then I'll shine in His own likeness,
And be ever satisfied!
H. R. K.

I Wait—I Wait for Thee

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

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

I wait—I wait for thee.

I've Got the Grip

"We have half an hour before the meeting," said my companion; "shall we go down and see poor Hugh M.? Perhaps a word from you might do him good. He has been for thirteen years in anxiety about his soul, but never seems able to accept God's salvation."

"Agreed," said I, and we went together. The evening had closed in, and we found him and his dear wife, a nice happy christian woman, at home, and with much kindness they welcomed us, and we sat around the bright turf fire that was sparkling on the hearth.

I gradually introduced the subject, speaking of ordinary topics first, then giving the conversation a religious turn, and finally putting the question home to him, as to whether he personally knew the blessedness of peace with God.

"Well," he said, and his genuine frankness won my heart from the first, "I dunna want to make ony secret on it: I've been these thirteen odd years looking for it, but I don't know how it comes, I canna get the grip."

I saw at once that the man was thoroughly in earnest, that he was upright in heart, had been in the presence of God, and knew his lost condition, and therefore I had no difficulty in presenting to him, in the plainest and simplest way, the gospel.

"Now, dear Hugh," I said, "I am sure you would take no ground but that of a vile guilty sinner, one that has no claim upon God whatever, and deserving of nothing but hell."

"Indeed I do," was his reply: "this old bad heart of mine is full of sin, and I know that I am a poor lost guilty sinner," and the earnest way he spoke revealed the really anxious condition of his soul.

"Well," I said, "I am thankful thus to see you in your true place before God, repentant to the very heart's core; now I want to ask you what is revealed in the word of God as to those for whom Jesus died. Will you turn to your Bible for a moment and read what is said in Rom. 5:8? "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Now, according to your own admission, you are a hell-deserving sinner, and God reveals to you that for such as you His Son was put to death, and therefore you may know that His death has satisfied God for your sin and put it away.

"Oh but," he said, "I canna get the grip. I see it all, it's so plain, but somehow I canna get the grip;" and the perspiration rolled down his face in his earnestness.

"Well, but," I answered, "you are making a difficulty where God makes none: you are waiting to get a grip, when you ought, like a little child, to be simply receiving God's testimony that Christ by His death has made a full atonement for your sins; that God has accepted His finished work, of which Christ's presence at His father's right hand is a proof to you, and that believing in Him you are free from all your sins in the sight of God; for He says, "all that believe are justified from all things." Acts 13:39.

“Well,” he said, “I dunna ken how it is, I feel I want to grip it, and I hae nae power. I canna believe it is for me.”

Well, again and again I pressed him with all the earnestness and clearness I could, for I felt the soul was hanging betwixt life and death, and the least turn the wrong way might end fatally; but he still maintained he “could na get the grip.”

Our time was up, and we had to leave; but so heavily was he laid upon my heart that I could not help praying for him specially at the meeting we were holding. The answer was not long deferred.

He says, it was about the middle of that night he awoke in fearful trouble about his soul: he felt he should have to cry out, for his heart was bursting; but he suddenly felt as if the blessed Savior was personally present, and saying so sweetly to him, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

“O Lord.” he said, “I’ll come, I’ll come,” and he then and there believing came to Jesus and found that peace he had sought for thirteen long years, and then that glorious hymn came to his mind,

“I bear the words of love,

I gaze upon the blood,

I see the mighty sacrifice,

And I have peace with God.”

He’d “got the grip” at last—and peace with God was his through faith in Jesus—and now he sits at the feet of Jesus, a purged worshipper, having no more conscience of sins.

As I write this simple story that happened last week, I am reminded of how, in Numb. 10, the ark of God went out of its due order in consequence of the failure of the people’s leader, God in His rich grace rising superior to His servant’s weakness; for, as in the present instance, though the gospel is His “power unto salvation to everyone that believeth,” and “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;” yet He would seem in the fullness of His love to have gone a little out of the ordinary course of things and granted some manifestation to his poor creature that he might no longer doubt, but “rejoice believing.” So with Thomas. John 20.

But be that as it may, dear reader, will you let me now affectionately turn to you and ask you, Have you received God’s testimony concerning Jesus, and are you therefore saved? Most solemn is your position if still dead in trespasses and sins, as we all by nature are—heirs of wrath and misery—but do not wait till you get the grip, do not wait till you have some vision in the night, for such may never come to you, but in simple faith believe on Him who said to that doubting heart, and who says to you, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37.) The Lord bless you. D. T. G.

The Light Shineth in Darkness

He came, the Son of God,
Into a cruel, heartless world,
To tell the story, then untold.
Of God's unfathomed love.
He came, and men stood by
To hurl upon Him dire contempt,
To spurn the truth that God had sent,
And listen to a lie.
He came, the Christ of God,
And shouting multitudes reviled;
He heeded not their tumults wild,
His feet with peace were shod.
Oh! wondrous tale of Jove!
For us He bore the wrath of God,
For us He passed through death's dark flood,
The deepest proof of love.
And, risen from the dead,
He made a home for us on high,
Unveiled the glory to our eye,
Which lights the path we tread.
And still He waits up there,
To gather in the lost, the vile,
To bring them home where God can smile,
And love casts out all fear.
He lives, and so we live,
To find His joy fulfilled in us,

To share His path of shame and loss,
Which He alone can give.
But oh! what untold joy,
That He whom men despise and scorn
Will usher in an endless morn,
With glory on His brow.
The bright and morning star
Which gilds with light our pathway here,
Will be outshone by daylight there,
Which clouds can never mar.
And walking in the light
Of God's own face for evermore,
We'll praise, and worship, and adore
The Son of God's delight.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: Part 12

"We must now draw this series of papers to a close; and it is with a strong feeling of reluctance that we do so. The theme is intensely interesting, deeply practical, and abundantly fruitful. Moreover, it is very suggestive, and opens up an extensive field of vision for the spiritual mind to range through with an interest that never flags, because the subject is inexhaustible.

However, we must, for the present at least, close our meditations on this most marvelous line of truth; but ere doing so, we are anxious to call the reader's attention, as briefly as possible, to one or two things which have been barely hinted at in the progress of these papers. We should not think of recalling them were it not that we deem them not only interesting, but of real practical value in helping to a clearer understanding of many branches of the great subject which has been engaging our attention during the current year.

And first, then, the reader who has traveled in company with us through the various numbers of this volume will remember a cursory reference to what we ventured to call "An unnoticed interval—break—or parenthesis" in the dealings of God with Israel and with the earth. This is a point of the deepest interest; and we hope to be able to show the reader that it is not some curious question, a dark mysterious subject, or a favorite notion of some special school of prophetic interpretation. Quite the contrary. We consider it to be a point which throws a flood of light on very many branches of our general subject. Such we have found it for ourselves, and as such we desire to present it to our readers. Indeed we strongly question if anyone can rightly understand prophecy or his own true position and bearings who does not see the unnoticed interval or break above referred to.

But let us turn directly to the word, and open at the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel.

The opening verses of this remarkable section show us the beloved servant of God in profound exercise of soul in reference to the sad condition of his much loved people Israel—a condition into which, through the Spirit of Christ, he most thoroughly enters. Though not having himself personally participated in these actings which had brought ruin upon the nation, yet he identifies himself, most completely, with the people, and makes their sins his own in confession and self-judgment before his God.

We cannot attempt to quote from Daniel's remarkable prayer and confession, on this occasion; but the subject which immediately concerns us now is introduced at the twentieth verse.

"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the

vision. Seventy weeks are determined (or portioned out) upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”

Now we cannot, in our limited space, enter upon any elaborate argument to prove that the “seventy weeks,” in the above quotation, mean really four hundred and ninety years. We assume this to be the fact. We believe that Gabriel was commissioned to instruct the beloved prophet, and to inform him of the fact that, from the going forth of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, a period of 490 years was to elapse, and that then Israel would be brought into blessing.

This is as simple and definite as anything can be we may assert, with all possible confidence, that it is not as certain that the sun shall rise, at the appointed moment, tomorrow morning, as that at the close of the period above named by the angelic messenger, Daniel’s people shall be brought into blessing. It is as sure as the throne of God. Nothing can hinder. Not all the powers of earth and hell combined shall be allowed to stand in the way of the full and perfect accomplishment of the word of God by the mouth of Gabriel. When the last sand of the four hundred and ninetieth year shall have run out of the glass, Israel shall enter upon the possession of all their destined preeminence and glory. It is impossible to read Dan. 9:24, and not see this.

But, it may be, the reader feels disposed to ask—and ask, too, with astonishment, “Have not the 490 years expired long ago?” We reply, Certainly not. Had they done so, Israel would be now in their own land, under the blessed reign of their own loved Messiah. Scripture cannot be broken; nor can we play fast and loose with its statements, as though they might mean anything or everything, or nothing at all. The word is precise. “Seventy weeks are portioned out upon thy people.” Neither more nor less than seventy weeks. If this be taken to mean literal weeks, the passage has no sense or meaning whatever. It would be an insult to our readers to occupy time in combating such an absurdity as this.

But if, as we are most thoroughly persuaded, Gabriel meant seventy weeks of years, then have we a period most distinct and definite before us—a period extending from the moment in which Cyrus issued his decree to restore Jerusalem, to the moment of Israel’s restoration.

Still, however, the reader may feel led to ask, “How can these things be? It is very much more than 490 years, four times told, since the King of Persia issued his decree, and yet there is no sign of Israel’s restoration. There must surely be some other mode of interpreting the seventy weeks.”

We can only repeat our statement, that the 490 years are not out yet. There has been a break—a parenthesis—a long unnoticed interval. Let the reader look closely at Dan. 9:25, 26. “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks (49 years) and threescore and two weeks (434 years); the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times,” or, as the margin reads it, “in strait of times,” that is, the street and the wall of Jerusalem were built in the shorter of the two periods named, or in 49 years. “And after threescore and two weeks (434 years from the rebuilding of Jerusalem), shall Messiah be cut off, and have nothing.” (See margin.)

Here then we reach the marked, memorable, and solemn epoch. The Messiah, instead of being received, is cut off. In place of ascending the throne of David, He goes to the cross. Instead of

entering upon the possession of all the promises, He has nothing. His only portion—so far as Israel and the earth were concerned—was the cross, the vinegar, the spear, the borrowed grave.

Messiah was rejected, cut off, and had nothing. What then? God signified His sense of this act, by suspending, for a time, His dispensational dealings with Israel. The course of time is interrupted. There is a great gap. Four hundred and eighty-three years are fulfilled; seven yet remain—a canceled week, and all the time since the death of the Messiah has been an unnoticed interval—a break or parenthesis, during which Christ has been hidden in the heavens, and the Holy Ghost has been working on earth in forming the body of Christ, the Church, the heavenly bride. When the last member shall have been incorporated into this body, then the Lord Himself shall come and receive His people to Himself, to conduct them back to the Father's house, there to be with Him in the ineffable communion of that blessed home, while God will, by His governmental dealings, prepare Israel and the earth for the introduction of the first-begotten into the world.

Now as to this interval and all that was to occur therein, Gabriel maintains a profound reserve. Whether he understood aught about it is not the question. It is clear he was not commissioned to speak of it, inasmuch as the time was not come for so doing. He passes, with marvelous and mysterious abruptness, over ages and generations—steps from headland to headland of the prophetic chart, and dismisses in a short sentence or two, a lengthened period of nearly two thousand years. The siege of Jerusalem by the Romans is thus briefly noticed, "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Then, a period which has already lasted for eighteen centuries is thus disposed of, "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Then, with intense rapidity, we are conducted on to the time of the end, when the last of the seventy weeks, the last seven of the four hundred and ninety years, shall be accomplished. "And he [the prince] shall confirm the covenant with many [of the Jews] for one week [seven years]; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator." (Margin.)

Here then we reach the end of the four hundred and ninety years which were determined or portioned out upon Daniel's people. To attempt to interpret this period without seeing the break and the long unnoticed interval, must of necessity plunge the mind in utter confusion. It cannot possibly be done. Numberless theories have been started; endless calculations and speculations have been attempted; but in vain. The four hundred and ninety years are not accomplished yet; nor will they have their accomplishment until the Church has left this scene altogether, and gone to be with her Lord in her bright heavenly home. The fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation show us the place which the heavenly saints shall occupy during the last of Daniel's seventy weeks; while from chapter 6-18 we have the various actings of God in government, preparing Israel and the earth for the bringing in of the first-begotten into the world.

We are very anxious to make these matters clear to the reader. It has greatly helped us in the understanding of prophecy, and cleared away many difficulties. We feel thoroughly persuaded that no one can understand the book of Daniel, or indeed the general scope of prophecy, who does not see that the last of the seventy weeks remains to be fulfilled. Not one jot or tittle of God's word can ever pass away, and seeing He has declared that "seventy weeks were portioned out upon

Daniel's people," and that at the close of that period they should be brought into blessing, it is plain that this period is not yet expired. But unless we see the break, and the dropping of time, consequent upon the rejection of the Messiah, we cannot possibly make out the fulfillment of Daniel's seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years.

Another important fact for the reader to seize is this, the Church forms no part of the ways of God with Israel and the earth. The Church does not belong to time, but to eternity. She is not earthly, but heavenly. She is called into existence during an unnoticed interval—a break or parenthesis consequent upon the cutting off of the Messiah. To speak after the manner of men, if Israel had received the Messiah, then the seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years would have been fulfilled; but Israel rejected her King, and God has retired to His place until they acknowledge their iniquity. He has suspended His public dealings with Israel and the earth, though most surely controlling all things by His providence, and keeping His eye upon the seed of Abraham, ever beloved for the fathers' sake.

Meanwhile He is calling out from Jews and Gentiles, that body called the Church, to be the companion of His Son in heavenly glory—to be thoroughly identified with Him in His present rejection from this earth, and to wait in holy patience for His glorious advent.

All this marks off the Christian's position in the most definite manner possible. His portion and his prospects too, are thus defined with equal clearness. It is vain to look into the prophetic page in order to find the Church's position, her calling or her hope. They are not there. It is entirely out of place for the Christian to be occupied with dates and historic events, as though he were in anywise involved therein. No doubt, all these things have their proper place and their value, and their interest, as connected with God's dealings with Israel and with the earth. But the Christian must never lose sight of the fact that he belongs to heaven, that he is inseparably linked with an earth-rejected, heaven-accepted Christ—that his life is hid with Christ in God—that it is his holy privilege to be looking out, daily and hourly, for the coming of his Lord. There is nothing to hinder the realization of that blissful hope at any moment. There is but the one thing that causes the delay, and that is, "the long-suffering of our Lord, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"—precious words these for a lost and guilty world! The salvation is ready to be revealed; and God is ready to judge. There is nothing now to wait for but the gathering in of the last elect one, and then—oh! most blessed thought—our own dear and loving Savior will come and receive us to Himself to be with Him where He is, and to go no more out forever.

Then when the Church has gone to be with her Lord in the heavenly home, God will resume His public actings with Israel. They will be brought into great tribulation, during the week already referred to. But at the close of that period of unexampled pressure and trial, their long-rejected Messiah will appear for their relief and deliverance. He will come forth as the rider on the white horse, accompanied by the heavenly saints, He will execute summary judgment upon His enemies, and take to Himself His great power and reign. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Satan shall be bound for a thousand years; and the whole universe shall repose beneath the blissful and benignant rule of the Prince of peace.

Finally, at the close of the thousand years, Satan shall be loosed, and permitted to make one more desperate effort—an effort issuing in his eternal defeat and consignment to the lake of fire, there to be tormented with the beast and the false prophet throughout the everlasting ages.

Then follows the resurrection and judgment of the wicked dead, and their consignment to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone—tremendous and appalling thought! No heart can conceive—no tongue can tell—the horrors of that lake of fire.

But hardly is there a moment to dwell upon the dark and awful picture, ere the unutterable glories of the new heavens and the new earth burst upon the vision of the soul; the holy city is seen descending from heaven, and these seraphic sounds fall on the ear, “ Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold I make all things new.”

Oh! beloved christian reader, what scenes are before us! What grand realities! What brilliant moral glories! May we live in the light and power of these things! May we cherish that blessed hope of seeing the One who loved us and gave Himself for us—who would not enjoy His glory alone but endured the wrath of God in order that He might link us with Himself, and share with us all His love and glory forever. Oh! to live for Christ and wait for His appearing!

High in the Father's house above
My mansion is prepared;
There is the home, the rest I love,
And there my bright reward.
With Him I love, in spotless white,
In glory I shall shine;
His blissful presence my delight,
His love and glory mine.
All taint of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away;
And I shall dwell with God's Beloved,
Through God's eternal day.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: Christendom

What varied thoughts and feelings are awakened in the soul by the very sound of the word "Christendom!" It is a terrible word. It brings before us, at once, that vast mass of baptized profession which calls itself the Church of God, but is not; which calls itself Christianity, but is not. Christendom is a dark and dreadful anomaly. It is neither one thing nor the other. It is not "The Jew or the Gentile, or the Church of God." It is a corrupt mysterious mixture, a spiritual malformation, the masterpiece of Satan, the corrupter of the truth of God, and the destroyer of the souls of men, a trap, a snare, a stumbling-block, the darkest moral blot in the universe of God. It is the corruption of the very best thing, and therefore the very worst of corruptions. It is that thing which Satan has made of professing Christianity. It is worse, by far, than Judaism; worse by far than all the darkest forms of Paganism, because it has higher light and richer privileges, makes the very highest profession, and occupies the very loftiest platform. Finally, it is that awful apostasy for which is reserved the very heaviest judgments of God—the most bitter dregs in the cup of His righteous wrath.

True it is, blessed be God, there are a few names even in Christendom who, through grace, have not defiled their garments. There are some brilliant embers amid the smoldering ashes—precious stones amid the terrible debris. But as to the mass of christian profession to which the term Christendom applies, nothing can be more appalling, whether we think of its present condition, or its future destiny. We doubt if Christians generally have anything like an adequate sense of the true character and inevitable doom of that which surrounds them. If they had, it would solemnize their minds, and cause them to feel the urgent need of standing apart, in holy separation from Christendom's ways, and distinct testimony against its spirit and principles.

But let us turn again to our Lord's profound discourse on the Mount of Olives in which, as we have already observed, He deals with the subject of the christian profession. This He does in three distinct parables, namely, the household servant; the ten virgins; and the talents. In each and all we have the two things noticed above, the genuine and the spurious; the true and the false; the bright and the dark; that which is of Christ, and that which is of Satan; that which belongs to heaven, and that which emanates from hell.

We shall glance at the three parables which embody, in their brief compass, a vast mine of most solemn and practical instruction.

Turn to Matt. 24:45-47. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

Here, then, we have at once the source and object of all ministry in the house of God. "Whom his lord hath made ruler." This is the source. "To give them meat in due season." This is the object.

These things are of the very highest possible moment, and they are worthy of the reader's most profound thought. All ministry in the house of God, whether in Old or New Testament times, is of divine appointment. There is no such thing recognized in scripture as human authority in appointing to the ministry. Neither is there such a thing as a self-constituted ministry. None but God can make or appoint a minister of any sort or description. Thus, in Old Testament times, Jehovah appointed Aaron and his sons to the priesthood; and if a stranger presumed to meddle with the functions of the holy office, he was to be put to death. Even the king himself dared not touch the priestly censer, for we are told of Uzziah, king of Judah, that, "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary: for thou hast trespassed: neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God.....And Uzziah the king teas a leper unto the day of his death." 2 Chron. 26

Such was the solemn result—the awful consequence of man's daring intrusion upon that which was wholly of divine appointment. Has this no voice for Christendom? Assuredly it has. It sounds a warning note in our ears. It tells the professing Church, in accents not to be mistaken, to beware of human intrusion upon a domain which belongs only to God. "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for [not by] men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.....And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called [not of men but of] God, as was Aaron."

Nor was this principle of divine appointment confined to the high and holy office of the tabernacle. No man dare put his hand to the most insignificant part of that sacred structure unless by Jehovah's direct authority. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah." Nor could Bezaleel choose his companions in labor, or appoint whom he would to the work, any more than he could choose or appoint himself. No; this, too, was divine. "And I," says Jehovah, "behold I have given with him Aholiab." Thus Aholiab, as well as Bezaleel, held his commission immediately from Jehovah Himself, the only true source of all ministerial authority.

Nor was it otherwise in the case of the prophetic office and ministry. God alone could make, and fit, and send a prophet. Alas! there were those of whom Jehovah had to say "I have not sent them, yet they ran." There were unhallowed intruders upon the domain of prophecy, just as there were upon the office of the priesthood; but all such brought down upon themselves the judgment of God.

And, may we not ask, Is this great principle changed now? Has ministry been shifted from its ancient base? Has the living stream been diverted from its divine source? Is it true that this most precious and glorious institution has been shorn of its lofty dignities? Can it be possible that, under the times of the New Testament, ministry has been cast down from its divine excellency? Has it become a mere human appointment? Can man appoint his fellow, or appoint himself to any one branch of ministry in the house of God?

What answer is to be returned to these questions? No doubtful one, thank God; but a distinct and emphatic No! Ministry was, is, and ever shall be, divine; divine in its source; divine in its nature; divine in its every feature and principle. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (1 Cor. 12:4-6.) "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him." "And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (Verses 18, 28.) "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men....And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:7-13.

Here lies the grand source of all ministry in the Church of God, from first to last—from the foundation laid in grace, to the topstone, in glory. It is divine and heavenly, not human or earthly. It is not of man or by man, but of Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Gal. 1) There is no such thing recognized in scripture as human authority in any one branch of ministry in the Church. If it be a question of gift, it is emphatically stated to be "the gift of Christ." If it be a question of assigned position, we are, with equal clearness and emphasis, told that "God hath set the members." If it be a question of local charge, whether elder or deacon, it was entirely of divine appointment, by apostolic hands or apostolic delegates.

All this is so clear, so distinct, so palpable, on the very surface of scripture, that it is only necessary to say, "How readest thou?" And the more we penetrate beneath the surface—the more we are conducted by the eternal Spirit into the profound and precious depths of inspiration—the more thoroughly convinced we shall be that ministry, in its every department and every branch, is divine in its source, nature, and principles. The truth of this shines out in full orb'd brightness, in the epistles; but we have the germ of it in the words of our Lord in Matt. 25:45, "Whom his lord hath made ruler over his household." The household belongs to the Lord, and He alone can appoint the servants, and this He does according to His own sovereign will.

Equally plain is the object of ministry, as stated in this parable, and elaborated in the epistles. "To give them meat in due season." "For the edifying of the body of Christ"—"that the Church may receive edifying." It is this that lies near the loving heart of Jesus. He would have His household perfected—His Church edified—His body nourished and cherished. For this end, He bestows gifts, and maintains them in the Church, and will maintain them until they shall be no longer needed.

But alas! alas! there is a dark side of the picture. For this we must be prepared since we have this picture of Christendom before us. If there is "a faithful, wise, and blessed servant," there is also "an evil servant" who "says in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming." Mark this. It is in the heart of the wicked servant that the thought originates as to the delay of the coming.

And what is the result? "He shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." How awfully this has been exemplified in the history of Christendom, we need not say.

Instead of true ministry flowing from the risen and glorified Head in the heavens, and promoting the edification of the body, the blessing of souls, and the prosperity of the household, we have a false clerical authority, arbitrary rule, a lording it over God's heritage, a grasping after this world's wealth and power, fleshly ease, self-indulgence, and personal aggrandizement, priestly domination in its nameless and numberless forms and practical consequences.

The reader will do well to apply his heart to the understanding of these things. He will need to seize, with clearness and power, the distinction between clericalism and ministry. The one is a thoroughly human assumption; the other, a purely divine institution. The former has its source in man's evil heart; the latter has its source in a risen and exalted Savior, who, being raised from the dead, received gifts for men, and sheds them forth upon His Church, according to His own will. That is a positive scourge and curse; this, a divine blessing to men. In fine, that in its root-principle, flows from heaven and leads back thither; this in its root-principle flows from hell and leads thither again.

All this is most solemn, and it should exert a mighty influence upon our souls. There is a day coming when the Lord Christ will deal, in summary justice, with that which man has dared to set up in His house. We speak not of individuals—though surely it is a most serious and terrible thing for anyone to put his hand unto, or have aught to do with, that on which such awful judgment is about to be executed—but we speak of a positive system—a great principle which runs, in a deep and dark current, through the length and breadth of the professing church—we speak of clericalism and priest craft, in all its forms and in all its ramifications.

Against this dreadful thing we solemnly warn our readers. No human language can possibly depict the evil of it, nor can human language adequately set forth the deep blessedness of all true ministry in the Church of God. The Lord Jesus not only bestows ministerial gifts, but, in His marvelous grace, He will abundantly reward the faithful and diligent exercise of those gifts. But as to that which man has set up, we read its destiny in those burning words, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

May the gracious Lord deliver His servants and His people from all participation in this great wickedness which is perpetrated in the very bosom of that which calls itself the Church of God. And, on the other hand, may He lead them to understand, to appreciate, and to exercise that true, that precious, that divine ministry which emanates from Himself, and is designed, in His infinite love, for the true blessing and growth of that Church which is so dear to His heart. We are in danger—very great danger, while seeking—as we most surely should—to keep clear of the evil of clericalism, of rushing into the opposite extreme of despising ministry.

This must be carefully guarded against. We have ever to bear in mind that ministry in the Church is of God. Its source is divine. Its nature is heavenly and spiritual. Its object is the calling out, the building up of the Church of God. Our Lord Christ imparts the varied gifts, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He holds the great reservoir of spiritual gifts. He has never given it up, and He never will. Spite of all that Satan has wrought in the professing church; spite of all the actings of "that evil servant;" spite of all man's daring assumption of authority which, in no wise, belongs to him; spite of all these things, our risen and glorified Lord "hath the seven stars." He possesses all ministerial

gift, power, and authority. It is He alone who can make anyone a minister. Unless He impart a gift, there can be no true ministry. There may be hollow assumption—guilty usurpation—empty affectation—worthless talking; but not one atom of true, loving, divine ministry can there be unless where our sovereign Lord is pleased to bestow the gift. And even where He does bestow the gift, that gift must be “stirred up,” and diligently cultivated, else “the profiting” will not “appear unto all.” The gift must be exercised, in the power of the Holy Ghost, else it will not promote the divinely appointed end.

But we are rather anticipating what is yet to come before us in the parable of the talents, so we shall close here by simply reminding the reader that the weighty subject on which we have been dwelling, has direct reference to the coming of our Lord, inasmuch as all true ministry is carried on in view of that great and glorious event. And not only so but the counterfeit, the corrupt, the evil thing will be judicially dealt with when the Lord Christ shall appear in His glory.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: Concluding Remarks

It only remains for us now to consider that portion of our Lord's discourse in which he again takes up the deeply solemn subject of ministerial responsibility during the time of His absence. That this stands closely connected with the hope of His coming is evident from the fact that having summed up the parable of the ten virgins with these most weighty words, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour," He goes on to say, "For as a man traveling into a far country, who called his servants, and delivered unto them his goods."

There is a material difference between the parable of the talents and that of the servant in chapter 24:45-51. In the latter, we have ministry inside the house. In the former, on the other hand, we have ministry abroad in the world. But in each we find the grand foundation of all ministry, namely, the gift and authority of Christ. "He called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." The servants are His and the goods are His. No one but the Lord Christ can put a man into the ministry, as none but He can impart spiritual gift. It is utterly impossible for anyone to be a minister of Christ unless He calls him and fits him for the work. This is so plain as not to admit of a single question. A man may be a minister of religion; he may preach the doctrines of the gospel, and teach theology; but a minister of Christ he cannot possibly be unless Christ calls him to, and gifts him for, the work. If it be a question of ministry inside the house, it is "whom his lord hath made ruler over his house." And if it be a question of ministry abroad in the world, we are told that "he called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods."

This great root-principle of ministry is powerfully embodied in these words of one of the greatest ministers that ever lived, when he says, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." 1 Tim. 1:12.

Thus it must be in every case, whatever be the measure, the character, or the sphere of ministry. The Lord Christ alone can put anyone into the ministry, and enable him to fulfill it. If it be not this, it will be either a man putting himself into the ministry, or his fellow man doing it, both of which are alike opposed to the mind of God, and to all the principles of true ministry as taught in the word. If we are to be guided by scripture, we must see that all ministry in or out of the house must be by divine appointment and divine ability. If it be not thus it is worse than worthless. A man may set himself up as a minister, or he may be set up by his fellows; but it is all utterly vain. It is not from heaven—it is not of God—it is not by Jesus Christ; and, in the sequel, it will be made manifest and judged as a most horrible and daring usurpation.

It is of the very last importance that the christian reader should thoroughly seize this grand principle of ministry. It is as simple as it is solemn. And, moreover, that it rests on a basis truly divine cannot be questioned by anyone who bows down—as every Christian ought—with unqualified and absolute submission to the authority of the divine word. Let the reader take his Bible, and read carefully every line therein which bears upon the subject of ministry. If he turns to the parable of the house-steward, he will read, "Whom his Lord hath made ruler." He does not make himself ruler; neither is he appointed by his fellows. The appointment is divine.

So also, in the parable of the talents, the Master calls his own servants, and delivers unto them his goods. The call and the equipment are divine.

We have another aspect of the same truth in Luke 19 “A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” The difference between Luke and Matthew appears to be this; in the former, human responsibility; in the latter, divine sovereignty is prominent. But in both the great root-principle is distinctly maintained and unanswerably established, namely, that all ministry is by divine appointment.

The same truth meets us in the Acts of the Apostles. “When one was to be appointed to fill the place of Judas, the appeal is made to Jehovah,” Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all, show whether of these two thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship.”

And even where it is a question of local charge, as of deacons, in chapter 6, or of elders in chapter 14, it is by direct apostolic appointment. In other words, it is divine. A man could not even appoint himself to a deaconship, much less to an eldership. In the case of the former, inasmuch as the deacons were to take charge of the people’s property, these latter were, in the grace and lovely moral order of the Spirit, permitted to select men in whom they could confide; but the appointment was divine, whether of deacons or elders. Thus, whether it be a question of gift or of local charge, all rests on a purely divine basis. This is the all-important point.

Again, if we turn to the epistles, the same great truth shines in full and undimmed luster before us. Thus, at the opening of Rom. 12 we read, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us” &c. In 1 Cor. 12 we read, “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him.” (Ver. 18.) And again, “God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles,” &c. (Ver. 28.) So also in Eph. 4, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

All these scriptures, and many more that might be quoted, go to establish the truth which we are intensely anxious to impress upon our readers, namely, that ministry in all its departments, is divine—is of God—is from heaven—is by Jesus Christ. There is positively no such thing in the New Testament as human authority to minister in the Church of God. Turn where we may, throughout its sacred pages, and we find only the same blessed doctrine as is contained in that one brief sentence in our parable, “He called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.” The whole New Testament doctrine of ministry is embodied here; and we earnestly entreat the christian reader to let this doctrine take full possession of his soul, and exert its full sway over his conduct, course, and character.

But it may perhaps be asked, “Is there no adaptation of the vessel to the ministerial gift deposited therein?” Unquestionably there is; and this very adaptation is distinctly presented in the words of our parable, “Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability.”

This is a point of deepest interest, and it must never be lost sight of. The Lord knows what use He means to make of a man. He knows the character of gift which He purposes to deposit in the vessel, and He shapes the vessel and molds the man accordingly. "We cannot doubt that Paul was a vessel specially formed of God for the place he was afterward to fill, and the work he had to do. And so in every case. If God designs a man to be a public speaker, He gives him lungs, He gives him a voice, He gives him a physical constitution adapted to the work which He designs him to do. The gift is from God; but there is always the most distinct reference to the ability of the man.

If this be lost sight of, our apprehension of the true character of ministry will be very defective indeed. We must never forget the two things, namely, the divine gift, and the human vessel in which the gift is deposited. There is the sovereignty of God, and the responsibility of man. How perfect and how beautiful are all the ways of God! But alas! alas! man mars everything, and the touch of the human finger only dims the luster of divine workmanship. Still, let us never forget that ministry is divine—in its source, its nature, its power, and its object. If the reader rises from this paper convinced in heart and soul of this grand truth, we have so far gained our object in penning it.

But it is not improbable the question may be asked, "What has all this subject of ministry to do with the Lord's coming?" Much every way. Does not our blessed Lord introduce the subject again and again, in His discourse on the Mount of Olives? And is not this entire discourse a reply to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?" Is not His coming the great prominent point of the discourse as a whole, and of each section of it in particular? Unquestionably.

And what, we may ask, is the next most prominent theme? Is it not ministry? Look at the parable of the servant made ruler over the household. How is he to serve? In view of His Lord's return. The ministry links itself on, as it were, to the departing and the return of the Master. It stands between, and is to be characterized by, these two grand events. And what is it that leads to failure in the ministry? Losing sight of the Lord's return. The evil servant says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," and, as a consequence "He begins to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken."

So also in the parable of the talents. The solemn and soul-stirring word is "Occupy till I come." In short we learn that ministry, whether in the house of God or abroad in the world, is to be carried on in full view of the Lord's return. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." All the servants are to keep continually before their minds the solemn fact that there is a reckoning time coming. This will regulate their thoughts and feelings in reference to every branch of their ministry. Hearken to the following weighty words in which one servant seeks to animate another, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For 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." 2 Tim. 4:1-8.

Does not this touching and weighty passage show how intimately the subject of ministry stands connected with the Lord's coming? The blessed apostle—the most devoted, gifted and effective workman that ever wrought in the vineyard of Christ—the most skillful steward that ever handled the mysteries of God—the wise master builder—the great minister of the Church and preacher of the gospel—the incomparable servant—this rare and precious vessel carried on his work, fulfilled his ministry, and discharged his holy responsibilities in full view of "that day." He looked forward, and is still looking, to that solemn and glorious occasion when the Righteous Judge shall place on his brow "the crown of righteousness." And he adds, with such affecting sweetness, "not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

This is peculiarly touching. There will be a crown of righteousness, in "that day," not merely for the gifted laborious and devoted Paul, but for every one that loves the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No doubt, Paul shall have gems in his crown of peculiar luster; but, lest anyone should think that the crown of righteousness was only for Paul, he adds these lovely words, "unto all them also that love his appearing." The Lord be praised for such words! May they have the effect of stirring up our hearts, not only to love the appearing of our Lord, but also to serve with more intense and whole-hearted devotedness. in view of that glorious day! That the two things are very closely connected, we may see in the sequel of the parable of the talents. We can do little more than quote the words of our Lord.

When the servants had received the talents, we read, "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord saith unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents, came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

It is interesting and instructive to note the difference between the parable of the talents as given in Matthew, and the parable of the ten servants, in Luke 19 In the former, it is a question of divine sovereignty; in the latter, of human responsibility. In that, each receives a like sum; in this, one receives five, another two, according to the master's will. Then, when the day of reckoning comes we find in Luke a definite reward according to the work; whereas in Matthew the word is, "I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." They are not told what they are to have, or how many things they are to rule over. The master is sovereign both in His gifts and rewards; and the crowning point of all is, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

This, to a heart that loves the Lord, is beyond everything. True, there will be the ten cities and the five cities. There will be ample, distinct, and definite reward for responsibility discharged, service

rendered, and work done. All will be rewarded. But above and beyond all shines this precious word, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." No reward can possibly come up to this. The sense of the love that breathes in these words will lead each one to cast his "crown of righteousness," at the feet of his Lord. The very crown which the righteous Judge shall give, we shall willingly cast at the feet of a loving Savior and Lord. One smile from Him will touch heart far more deeply and powerfully than the brightest crown that could be placed on the brow.

But one word ere we close. Who would not work? Who hid his lord's money? Who proved to be "a wicked and slothful servant?" The man who did not know his master's heart—his master's character—his master's love. "Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

How awfully solemn! How striking the contrast between the two servants! One knows, and loves, and trusts, and serves his lord. The other belies, fears, distrusts, and does nothing. The one enters into the joy of his lord, the other is cast out into outer darkness, into the place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. How solemn! How soul-subduing is all this! And when does it all come out? When the Master returns!

Note. —We may add, in connection with the foregoing remarks on ministry that every Christian has his and her own specific place to fill and work to do. All are solemnly responsible to the Lord to know their place and fill it. to know their work and do it. This is a plain practical truth, and most fully confirmed by the principle upon which we have been insisting namely, that all ministry and all work must be received from the Masters hand, carried on under His eye, and in full view of His coming. These things must never be forgotten.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: Introduction

The attentive reader of the New Testament will find, in its pages, three solemn and weighty facts presented to his view; namely, first, That the Son of God has come into this world and gone away; secondly, That the Holy Ghost has come down to this earth, and is here still; and, thirdly, That the Lord Jesus is coming again.

These are the three great subjects unfolded in the New Testament scriptures; and we shall find that each of them has a double bearing: it has a bearing upon the world, and a bearing upon the Church—upon the world, as a whole, and upon each unconverted man, woman, and child, in particular—upon the Church, as a whole, and upon each individual member thereof, in particular. It is impossible for anyone to avoid the bearing of these three grand facts upon his own personal condition and future destiny.

And, be it noted, we are not speaking of doctrines—though, no doubt, there are doctrines—but of facts—facts presented in the simplest possible manner, by the various inspired writers employed to set them forth, There is no attempt at garnishing or setting off. The facts speak for themselves; they are recorded and left to produce their own powerful effect upon the soul.

1. And, first of all, let us look at the fact that the Son of God has been in this world of ours. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” “The Son of God has come.” He came in perfect love, as the very expression of the heart and mind, the nature and character of God. He was the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of His Person, and yet a lovely, humble, gracious, social man; one who was to be seen, from day to day, about the streets; going from house to house; kind and affable to all; easily approached by the very poorest; taking up little children in His arms, in the most tender, gentle, winning way; drying the widow’s tears; soothing the stricken and sorrowing heart; feeding the hungry, healing the sick; cleansing the poor leper; meeting every form of human need and misery; at the bidding of all who stood in need of succor and sympathy. “ He went about doing good.” He was the unwearied servant of man’s necessities. He never thought of Himself, or sought His own interest’ in any one tiling. He lived for others. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of God, and gladden the sad and weary hearts of the sons and daughters of men. His loving heart was ever flowing out in streams of blessing to all who felt the pressure of this sin-stricken, sorrowful world.

Here, then, we have a marvelous fact before our eyes. This world has been visited—this earth has been trodden by that Blessed One of whom we have spoken—the Son of God—the Creator and Sustainer of the universe—the lowly, self-emptied, and loving, gracious Son of man—Jesus of Nazareth—God over all blessed forever, and yet a spotless, holy, absolutely perfect man. He came in love to men—came into this world as the expression of perfect love to those who had sinned against God, and deserved nothing but eternal perdition because of their sins. He came not to crush but to heal—not to judge but to save and to bless.

What has become of this Blessed One? How has the world treated Him? It has cast Him out! It would not have Him! It preferred a robber and a murderer to this holy, gracious, perfect man. The world got its choice. Jesus and a robber were placed before the world, and the question was put, "Which will you have?" "What was the answer?" "Not this man, but Barabbas." "The chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas." (Matt. 27:20, 21.) The religious leaders and guides of the people—the men who ought to have led them in the right way, persuaded the poor ignorant multitude to reject the Son of God, and accept a robber and a murderer instead!

Reader, remember, you are in a world that has been guilty of this terrible act. And not only so, but, unless you have truly repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are part and parcel of that world, and you are under the full guilt of that act. This is most solemn. The whole world stands charged with the deliberate rejection and murder of the Son of God. We have the testimony of no less than four inspired witnesses to this fact. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all bear record that the whole world—the Jew and the Gentile—kings and governors, priests and people—all classes, sects, and parties agreed to crucify the Son of God—all agreed to murder the only perfect man that ever appeared on this earth—the perfect expression of God—God over all blessed forever. We must either pronounce the four Evangelists to be false witnesses, or admit that the world as a whole, and each constituent part thereof, is stained with the awful crime of crucifying the Lord of glory.

This is the true standard by which to measure the world, and by which to measure the condition of every unconverted man, woman, and child in the world. If I want to know what the world is, I have only to reflect that the world is that which stands charged before God with the deliberate murder of His Son. Tremendous fact! A fact which stamps the world, in the most solemn manner, and places it before us in characters of appalling blackness. God has a controversy with this world. He has a question to settle with it—an awful question—the mere mention of which should make men's ears to tingle and their hearts to quake. A righteous God has to avenge the death of His Son. It is not merely that the world accepted a vile robber and murdered an innocent man; this, in itself, would have been a dreadful act. But no; that innocent man was none other than the Son of God, the beloved of the Father's heart.

What a thought! The world will have to account to God for the death of His Son—for having nailed Him to a cross between two thieves! What a reckoning it will be! How red will be the day of vengeance! How awfully crushing the moment in the which God will draw the sword of judgment to avenge the death of His Son! How utterly vain the notion that the world is improving! Improving!—though stained with the blood of Jesus. Improving!—though under the judgment of God for that act. Improving!—though having to account to a righteous God for its treatment of the beloved of His soul, sent in love to bless and save. What blind fatuity! What wild folly! Ah! no; reader, improvement there can be none till the besom of destruction and the sword of judgment have done their terrible work in avenging the murder—the deliberately planned and determinedly executed murder—of the blessed Son of God. We cannot conceive any delusion more fatally false than to imagine that the world can ever be improved while it lies beneath the awful curse of the death of Jesus. That world which preferred Barabbas to Christ can know no improvement. There is naught before it save the overwhelming judgment of God.

Thus much as to the weighty fact of the absence of Jesus, in its bearing upon the present condition and future destiny of the world. But this fact has another bearing. It bears upon the Church of God as a whole, and upon the individual believer. If the world has cast Christ out, the heavens have received Him. If man has rejected Him, God has exalted Him. If man has crucified Him, God has crowned Him. We must carefully distinguish these two things. The death of Christ, viewed as the act of the world—the act of man—involves naught but unmitigated wrath and judgment. On the other hand, the death of Christ, viewed as the act of God, involves naught but full and everlasting blessedness to all who repent and believe. A passage or two from the divine word will prove this.

Let us turn, for a moment, to the sixty-ninth psalm, which so vividly presents our blessed and adorable Lord suffering from the hand of man, and appealing to God for vengeance. “Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily: draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me, because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor: mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them,” &c. Verses 16-28.

All this is deeply and impressively solemn. Every word of this appeal will have its answer. Not a syllable of it shall fall to the ground. God will assuredly avenge the death of His Son. He will reckon with the world—with man for the treatment which His only begotten Son has received at their hands. We deem it right to press this home upon the heart and conscience of the reader. How awful the thought of Christ making intercession against people! How appalling to hear Him calling upon God for vengeance upon His enemies! How terrible will be the divine response to the cry of the injured Son!

But let us look at the other side of the picture. Turn to the twenty-second psalm, which presents the Blessed One Buffering under the hand of God. Here the result is wholly different. Instead of judgment and vengeance, it is universal and everlasting blessedness and glory. “I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.....My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live forever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations.....A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.” Ver. 22-31.

These two quotations present, with great distinctness, the two aspects of the death of Christ. He died, as a martyr, for righteousness, under the hand of man. For this man will have to account to

God. But He died, as a victim, for sin, under the hand of God. This is the foundation of all blessing to those that believe in His Name. His martyr sufferings bring down wrath and judgment upon a godless world: His atoning sufferings open up the everlasting well-springs of life and salvation to the Church, to Israel, and to the whole creation. The death of Jesus consummates the world's guilt; but secures the Church's acceptance. The world is stained, and the Church purged, by the blood of the cross.

Such is the double bearing of the first of our three great New Testament facts. Jesus has come and gone—come, because God loved the world—gone, because the world hated God. If God were to ask the question—and He will ask it—“What have you done with my Son?” What is the answer? “We hated Him, cast Him out, and crucified Him. We preferred a robber to Him.”

But, blessed forever be the God of all grace, the Christian, the true believer, can look up to heaven and say, “My absent Lord is there, and there for me. He is gone from this wretched world, and His absence makes the entire scene around me a moral wilderness—a desolate waste.”

He is not here. This stamps the world with a character unmistakable in the judgment of every loyal heart. The world would not have Jesus. This is enough. We need not marvel at any tale of horror now. Police reports, grand jury calendars, the statistics of our cities and towns need not surprise us. The world that could reject the divine personification of all human goodness, and accept a robber and a murderer instead, has proved its moral turpitude to a degree not to be exceeded. Do we wonder when we discover the hollowness and heartlessness of the world? Are we surprised when we find out that it is not to be trusted? If so, it is plain we have not interpreted aright the absence of our beloved Lord. What does the cross of Christ prove? That God is love? No doubt. That Christ gave His precious life to save us from the flames of an everlasting hell? Blessedly true, all praise to His peerless name! But what does the cross prove as regards the world? That its guilt is consummated, and its judgment sealed. The world, in nailing to the cross the One who was perfectly good, proved, in the most unanswerable manner, that it was perfectly bad. “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.” John 15:22-26.

2. But we must now glance, for a moment, at our second weighty fact. God the Holy Ghost has come down to this earth. It is now over eighteen long centuries since the Blessed Spirit descended from heaven; and He has been here ever since. This is a stupendous fact. There is a Divine Person on this earth; and His presence—like the absence of Jesus—has a double bearing: it has a bearing upon the world, and a bearing upon the Church—upon the world as a whole, and upon every man, woman, and child therein; upon the Church as a whole, and upon every individual member thereof in particular. As regards the world, this august Witness descended from heaven to convict it of the terrible crime of rejecting and crucifying the Son of God. As regards the Church, He came as the blessed Comforter, to take the place of the absent Jesus, and comfort, by His presence and ministry the hearts of His people. Thus, to the world, the Holy Ghost is a powerful Convicter; to the Church He is a precious Comforter.

A passage or two of holy scripture will establish these points in the heart and mind of the pious reader who bows in lowly reverence to the authority of the divine word. Let us turn to the sixteenth chapter of John's Gospel. "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convict (καταγγεῖλι) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Verses 5-11.

Again, in John 14 we read, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Verses 15-17.

These quotations prove the double bearing of the presence of the Holy Ghost. We cannot attempt to dwell upon this subject in this brief introduction; but we trust the reader may be led to study it for himself, in the light of holy scripture; and we are persuaded that the more he thus studies it, the more deeply he will feel its interest and immense practical importance. Alas! that it should be so little understood; that Christians should so little see what is involved in the personal presence of the Eternal Spirit, God the Holy Ghost, on this earth—its solemn consequences as regards the world, and its precious results as regards the assembly as a whole, and each individual member in particular.

Oh! that God's people everywhere may be led into a deeper understanding of these things; that they may consider what is due to that divine Person who dwells in them and with them; that they might have a jealous care not to "grieve" Him in their private walk, or "quench" Him in their public assemblies!

We shall, if God permit, enter, in our next number, upon the third fact, which is the immediate subject of the series of papers which we propose to write, namely, The coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May God the Spirit open this most glorious subject in living power and freshness to our souls, so that we may, in truth and reality, be waiting for God's Son from heaven!

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Coming and the Day

“THE COMING” AND “THE DAY.”

We must now ask the reader to turn with us, for a little, to the two Epistles to the Thessalonians. As we have already remarked, these Christians were converted to the blessed hope of the Lord's return. They were taught to look for Him, day by day. It was not merely the doctrine of the advent received and held in the mind, but a divine Person constantly expected by hearts that had learned to love Him and long for His coming.

But, as we can easily imagine, the Thessalonian Christians were ignorant of many things connected with this blessed hope. The apostle had been “taken, from them for a short time, in presence, not in heart.” He had not been allowed to remain long enough amongst them to instruct them in the details of the subject of their hope. They knew that Jesus was to return—that self-same blessed One who had graciously delivered them from the wrath to come. But as to any distinction between His coming for His people, and coming with them—between His “state of presence” and His “appearing”—His “coming” and His “day,” they were, at the first, wholly ignorant.

Hence, as might be expected, they fell into various errors and mistakes. It is wonderful how speedily the human mind wanders away into the wildest and grossest confusion and error. We need to be guarded on all sides by the pure, solid, all-adjusting truth of God. We must have our souls evenly balanced by divine revelation, else we are sure to plunge into all manner of false and foolish notions. Thus some of the Thessalonians conceived the idea of giving up their honest callings. They ceased to labor with their hands, and went about idle.

This was a great mistake. Even though we were perfectly certain that our Lord would come this very night, it would be no reason why we should not, most diligently and faithfully, attend to our daily round of duty, and do all that devolved upon us in that particular sphere in which His good hand has placed us. So far from this, the very fact of expecting the blessed Master would strengthen our desire to have everything done as it ought to be, up to the very moment of His return, so that not so much as a single righteous claim should be left neglected. In point of fact, the hope of the Lord's speedy return, when held in power in the soul, is most sanctifying, purifying, and adjusting in its influence upon christian life, conduct, and character. We know, alas! that even this most glorious truth may be held in the region of the understanding, and flippantly professed with the lips, while the heart and the life, the course, conduct, and character, remain wholly unaffected by it. But we are expressly taught by the inspired apostle John, that “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John in. 3.) And, most surely, this “purifying” embraces all that which goes to make up our whole practical life, from day to day.

But there was another grave mistake into which those dear Thessalonians fell, and out of which the blessed apostle, like a true and faithful pastor, sought to recover them. They imagined that their departed christian friends would not have part in the joy of the Lord's return. They feared that

they would fail to participate in that blissful and longed-for moment.

Now while it is quite true that this very mistake proves how vividly these Christians realized their blessed hope, still it was a mistake, and needed to be corrected. But let us carefully note the correction: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus [or are laid to sleep by Jesus] will God bring with him."

Mark this. He does not seek to comfort these sorrowing friends by the assurance that they should, ere long, follow the departed. Quite the reverse. He assures them that Jesus would bring the departed back with Him. This is plain and distinct, and founded upon the great fact that "Jesus died for us and rose again."

But the apostle does not stop here, but goes on to pour a flood of fresh light upon the understanding of His dear children in the faith. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [or precede] them that are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first [i.e., before the living are changed]. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in [the] clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Here, then, we have presented to us what is commonly spoken of amongst us as the rapture of the saints—a most glorious, soul-stirring, and enrapturing theme surely—the brightest hope of the Church of God, and of the individual believer. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a summons designed only for the ears and the hearts of His own. Not one uncircumcised ear shall hear—not one unrenewed heart be moved by, that heavenly voice, that divine trumpet call. The dead in Christ, including, as we believe, the Old Testament saints, as well as those of the New, who shall have departed in the faith of Christ—all those shall hear the blessed sound, and come forth from their sleeping places. All the living saints shall hear it, and be changed in a moment. And oh, what a change! The poor crumbling tabernacle of clay exchanged for a glorified body, like unto the body of Jesus.

Look at yonder bent and withered frame—that body racked with pain, and worn out with years of acute suffering. It is the body of a saint. How humiliating to see it like that! Yes; but wait a little. Let but the trumpet sound, and in one moment that poor crushed and withered frame shall be changed, and made like to the glorified body of the descending Lord.

And there, in yonder lunatic asylum, is a poor lunatic. He has been there for years. He is a saint of God. How mysterious! True; we cannot fathom the mystery; it lies beyond our present narrow range. But so it is; that poor lunatic is a saint of God, an heir of glory. He too shall hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and leave his lunacy behind him forever while he mounts into the heavens in his glorified body to meet his descending Lord.

Oh! reader, what a brilliant moment! How many sick chambers and beds of languishing shall be vacated then! What marvelous changes shall then take place! How the heart bounds at the thought, and longs to sing, in full chorus, that lovely hymn,

“Christ, the Lord, will come again,

None shall wait for Him in vain;

I shall then His glory see:

Christ will come and call for me.

Then, when the Archangel’s voice

Calls the sleeping saints to rise,

Rising millions shall proclaim

Blessings on the Savior’s name.

‘This is our redeeming God!’

Ransomed hosts will shout aloud:

‘Praise, eternal praise be given,

‘To the Lord of earth and heaven!’”

Amen and amen!

How glorious the thought of those rising millions! How truly delightful to be amongst them! How precious the hope of seeing that blessed One who loveth us and who gave Himself for us! Such is the hope of the Christian—a hope concerning which there is not a single line from cover to cover of the Old Testament. “The word of prophecy” is of all importance. We do well to take heed to it. It is an unspeakable mercy for those who find themselves in a dark place to have a bright lamp to cast its light athwart the gloom. But, let the Christian bear in mind, that what he wants is to have “the day star arising in his heart!” in other words, to have his whole heart governed by the hope of seeing Jesus as the bright and morning star. When the heart is thus filled and ruled by the proper christian hope, then the eye can intelligently scan the prophetic chart: it can take in the whole field of prophecy as our God has graciously opened it before us, and find interest and profit in every page and in every line. But, on the other hand, we may rest assured, that the man who looks into prophecy in order to find the Church or its hope there, has his face turned the wrong way. He will find “the Jew” there; and “Gentile” there; but not “the Church of God.” We earnestly trust that not one of our readers will fail to lay hold of this fact—a fact, we may safely say, of the very deepest moment.

But it will perhaps be asked, “Of what use, then, is prophecy? If indeed it be true that we cannot find aught about the Church on the prophetic page, of what possible value can it be to Christians? Why should we be told to take heed to it, if it does not immediately concern us?” We reply, is nothing of any value to us save what immediately concerns ourselves? Shall we take no interest in anything unless we ourselves form the immediate subject thereof? Is it nothing to us to have the counsels and purposes and plans of God laid open before us? Do we lightly esteem the high favor of having the thoughts of God communicated ‘to us in His holy word of prophecy? Surely it was not thus that Abraham treated the divine communications made to him in Gen. 18: “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” And what was that thing? Did it immediately concern Abraham?

Not at all. It concerned Sodom and the neighbor cities; and Abraham had no stake in them. But did that prevent his interest in the divine communication? Did it hinder his appreciation of the mark of special favor in his being made the honored and trusted depository of the thoughts of God? Surely not. We may safely assert that the faithful patriarch highly esteemed the privilege conferred upon him.

And so should we. We should study prophecy with all the interest arising from the fact that therein we have unfolded to us, with divine precision, what God is about to do on this earth, with Israel and with the nations. Prophecy is God's history of the future; and just in proportion as we love Him, shall we delight to study His history; not indeed, as some have said, that we may know its truth by its fulfillment, but that we may possess all that absolute, that divine certainty as to the future, which God's word is capable of imparting. Nothing can be more absurd, in the judgment of faith, than to suppose that we must wait until the accomplishment of a prophecy to know that it is true. What an insult offered—unwittingly no doubt—to the peerless revelation of our God!

But we must now turn, for a moment, to the solemn subject of "The Day of the Lord." This is a term of frequent occurrence in Old Testament scriptures. We cannot attempt to quote all the passages; but we shall refer to one or two, and then the reader can follow up the subject for himself.

In the second chapter of Isaiah we read, "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.....And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

So also, in the second chapter of Joel. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.... the earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.....for the clay of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?"

From these and similar passages, we learn that "The Day of the Lord" stands associated with the deeply solemn thought of judgment upon the world—upon apostate Israel—upon man and his ways—upon all that which the human heart prizes and longs after. In short the Day of the Lord stands in striking contrast with man's day. Man has the upper hand now; the Lord will have the upper hand then.

Now, while it is perfectly true that all the Lord's people can rejoice in the prospect of that day, which, though it will open in judgment upon the world, shall, nevertheless, be marked by the universal reign of righteousness; yet we must remember that the peculiar hope of the Christian is not the Day with its awful accompaniments of judgment, wrath, and terror; but the coming or presence of Jesus, with its precious accompaniments of peace and joy, love and glory. The Church shall have met her Lord, and returned with Him to the Father's house, before that terrible

clay bursts upon the world. It will be her blissful portion to taste the ineffable communion of that heavenly home, for an indefinite period previous to the opening of the Day of the Lord. Her eyes shall be gladdened by the sight of “The bright and morning Star,” long before even “The Sun of righteousness” shall arise, in healing virtue upon the pious portion of the nation of Israel—the God-fearing remnant of the seed of Abraham.

We are intensely anxious that the christian reader should thoroughly enter into this grand and important distinction. We feel persuaded that it will have an immense effect upon all His thoughts and views and hopes of the future. It will enable him to see, without a single intervening cloud, his true prospect, as a Christian. It will deliver him from all mist, vagueness, and confusion; and further, it will divest his mind of all that feeling of dread with which so many even of the Lord’s dear people contemplate the future. It will teach him to look for the Savior—the blessed Bridegroom—the everlasting lover of his soul, and not for judgments and terror, eclipses and earthquakes, convulsions and revolutions. It will keep his spirit sweetly tranquil and happy, in the sure and certain hope of being with Jesus, ere that great and terrible day of the Lord come.

See how the faithful apostle labored to lead his dear Thessalonian converts into the clear understanding of the difference between “The coming” and “The Day.”

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they [not ye] shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness”—The Lord be praised!—“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep (i.e., are dead or alive), we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another, even as also ye do.” 1 Thess. 5:1-11.

Here we have the distinction set forth with unmistakable clearness. The Lord Himself shall come for us as the Bridegroom. The day of the Lord shall come upon the world as a thief. Is it possible for contrast to be more striking? How can anyone confound these two things? They are as distinct as any two things can be. A bridegroom and a thief are surely two different things; and just as different are the coming of the Lord for His waiting people, and the coming of His day upon a slumbering or intoxicated world.

Some perhaps may find a difficulty in the fact that the Church in Sardis is addressed in such solemn words as these, “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” (Rev. 3:3.) The difficulty will vanish when we reflect that, in the case of Sardis, the professing body is looked upon as having a mere name to live while dead. It has sunk to the level of the world, and can only see things from the world’s standpoint. The Church has failed utterly; it has fallen from its high and holy position; it is under judgment; it cannot therefore be cheered by the Church’s proper hope; but is threatened with the world’s horrible doom. We do not see the Church here as the body or bride of Christ, but as the

responsible witness for God on the earth—the golden candlestick which ought to have held forth the divine light of testimony in this dark world, in the absence of her Lord. But alas! the professing Church has sunk lower and become darker than even the world itself. Hence the solemn threatening. The exception confirms the rule.

We shall, God willing, pursue this subject in our next as presented in second Thessalonians.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Double Bearing of the Fact

THE double bearing of the fact.

Having, as we trust, fully established, in our last paper the fact of the Lord's coming, we have now to place before the reader the double bearing of that fact—its bearing upon the Lord's people, and its bearing upon the world. The former is presented, in the New Testament, as the coming of Christ to receive His people to Himself; the latter is spoken of as "The day of the Lord"—a term of frequent use also in Old Testament scriptures.

These things are never confounded in scripture, as we shall see when we come to look at the various passages. Christians do confound them, and hence it is that we often find "that blessed hope" overcast with heavy clouds, and associated in the mind with circumstances of terror, wrath, and judgment, which have nothing whatever to do with the coming of Christ for His people, but are intimately bound up with "The day of the Lord."

Let the christian reader, then, have it settled in his heart, on the clear authority of holy scripture, that the grand and specific hope for him ever to cherish is the coming of Christ for His people. This hope may be realized this very night. There is nothing whatever to wait for—no events to transpire amongst the nations—nothing to occur in the history of Israel—nothing in God's government of the world—nothing, in short, in any shape or form whatsoever, to intervene between the heart of the true believer and his heavenly hope. Christ may come for His people tonight. There is actually nothing to hinder. No one can tell when He will come; but we can joyfully say that, at any moment, He may come. And, blessed be His Name, when He does come for us, it will not be with the accompanying circumstances of terror, wrath, and judgment. It will not be with blackness and darkness and tempest. These things will accompany "the day of the Lord," as the apostle Peter plainly tells the Jews in his first great sermon, on the day of Pentecost, in which he quotes the following words from the solemn prophecy of Joel, "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before"—what? the coming of the Lord for His people? Nay; but before "that great and notable day of the Lord come."

When our Lord shall come to receive His people to Himself, no eye shall see Him, no ear shall hear His voice, save His own redeemed and beloved people. Let us remember the words of the angelic witnesses in the first of Acts. Who saw the blessed One ascending into the heavens? None but His own. Well, "He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." As was the going, so shall be the coming, if we are to bow to scripture. To confound the day of the Lord with His coming for His Church is to overlook the plainest teachings of scripture, and to rob the believer of his own true and proper hope.

And here perhaps we cannot do better than to call the attention of the reader to a very important and interesting passage in the second epistle of Peter: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,

but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also the word of prophecy more sure [or confirmed], whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Chap. 1:16-19.

This passage demands the reader's most attentive consideration. It sets forth, in the clearest possible manner, the distinction between "the word of prophecy" and the proper hope of the Christian, namely, "the morning star." We must remember that the great subject of prophecy is God's government of the world in connection with the seed of Abraham. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Deut. 32:8, 9.

Here then is the scope and theme of prophecy—Israel and the nations. A child can understand this. If we range through the prophets, from the opening of Isaiah to the close of Malachi, we shall not find so much as a single line about the Church of God—its position, its portion, or its prospects. No doubt the word of prophecy is deeply interesting, and most profitable for the Christian to study; but it will be all this just in proportion as he understands its proper scope and object, and sees how it stands in contrast with his own special hope. We may fearlessly assert that it is utterly impossible for anyone to study the Old Testament prophecies aright who does not clearly see the true place of the Church.

We cannot attempt to enter upon the subject of the Church, in this brief paper. It has been repeatedly referred to and unfolded in former volumes, and we can now merely ask the reader to weigh and examine the statement which we here deliberately make, namely, that there is not so much as a single syllable about the Church of God, the body of Christ, from cover to cover of the Old Testament. Types, shadows, illustrations, there are, which, now that we have the full-orbed light of the New Testament, we can see, understand, and appreciate. But it was not possible for any Old Testament believer to see the great mystery of Christ and the Church, inasmuch as it was not revealed. The inspired apostle expressly tells us that it was "hid," not in the Old Testament scriptures, but "in God," as we read, in the third chapter of Ephesians, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship (or rather the administration) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Ver. 9.) So also in Colossians, we read, "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." Chap. 1:26.

These two passages establish the truth of our statement, beyond all question, for those who are willing to be governed absolutely by the authority of holy scripture; they teach us that the great mystery—Christ and the Church—is not to be found in the Old Testament. Where have we, in the Old Testament, a word about Jews and Gentiles forming one body, and being united by the Holy Ghost to a living Head in heaven? How could such a thing possibly be so long as "the middle wall of partition" stood as an insuperable barrier between the circumcised and the uncircumcised? If one were asked to name a special feature of the old economy, he would at once reply, "The rigid separation of Jew and Gentile." On the other hand, if he were asked to name a special feature of

the Church, or Christianity, he would as readily reply, "The intimate union of Jew and Gentile in one body." In short, the two conditions stand in vivid contrast, and it was wholly impossible that both could hold good at the same time. So long as the middle wall of partition stood, the truth of the Church could not be revealed; but the death of Christ having thrown down that wall, the Holy Ghost descended from heaven to form the one body, and link it, by His presence and indwelling, to the risen and glorified Head in the heavens. Such is the great mystery of Christ and the Church, for which there could be no less a basis than accomplished redemption.

Now, we entreat the reader to examine this matter for himself. Let him search the scriptures to see if these things be indeed true. This is the only way to get at the truth. We must lay aside all our own thoughts and reasonings, our prejudices and predilections, and come, like a little child, to the holy scriptures. In this way we shall learn the mind of God on this most precious and interesting subject. We shall find that the Church of God, the body of Christ, did not exist, as a fact, until after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost. And, further, we shall find that the full and glorious doctrine of the Church was not brought out until the days of the apostle Paul. (Comp. Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 1-3; Col. 1:25-29.) Finally, we shall see that the actual and unmistakable boundary lines of the Church's earthly history are Pentecost, Acts 2, and the rapture or taking up of the saints, 1 Thess. 4:13-17.

Thus we reach a position from which we can get a view of the Church's proper hope; and that hope is, most assuredly, "the bright and morning star." Of this hope the Old Testament prophets utter not a syllable. They speak largely and clearly of "The day of the Lord"—a day of judgment upon the world and its ways. (See Isa. 2:12-22 and parallel scriptures.) But "the day of the Lord, with all its attendant circumstances of wrath, judgment, and terror, must never be confounded with His coming for His people. When our blessed Lord comes for His people, there will be nothing to terrify. He will come in all the sweetness and tenderness of His love, to receive His loved and redeemed people to Himself. He will come to finish up the precious story of His grace. "To them that look for him shall he appear (οψ0■ο) the second time, without (i.e., apart from all question of) sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9) He will come as a Bridegroom to receive the bride; and when He thus comes, none but His own shall hear His voice or see His face. If He were to come this very night for His people—and He may, for aught we know—if the voice of the archangel and the trump of God were to be heard tonight, then all the dead in Christ—all who have been laid to sleep by Jesus—all the saints of God, both those of Old Testament and New Testament times, who he sleeping in our cemeteries and graveyards, or in the ocean's depths—all these would rise from their temporary sleep. All the living saints would be changed, in a moment, and all would be caught up to meet their descending Lord, and return with Him to the Father's house. John 14:3 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

This is what is meant by the rapture or catching up of the saints, and has nothing to do directly with Israel or the nations. It is the distinct and only proper hope of the Church; and there is not so much as a single hint of it in the entire Old Testament. If anyone asserts that there is, let him produce it. If there be such a thing, nothing is easier than to furnish it. We solemnly and deliberately declare there is no such thing. For all that respects the Church—its standing, its calling, its portion, its prospect—we must turn to the pages of the New Testament, and, of those pages, mainly to the epistles of Paul. To confound "the word of prophecy" with the hope of the Church is to damage the truth of God, and mislead the souls of His people. That the enemy has succeeded in doing all this,

throughout the length and breadth of the professing church, is, alas! too true. And hence it is that so very few Christians have really scriptural thoughts about the coming of their Lord. They are looking into prophecy for the Church's hope—they confound “the Sun of righteousness” with “the Morning Star”—they mix up the coming of Christ for His people, and His coming with them—they make His “coming” or “state of presence” to be identical with His “appearing” or “manifestation.”

All this is a most serious mistake, against which we desire to warn our readers. When Christ comes with His people, “every eye shall see him.” When He is manifested, His people will be manifested also. “When Christ our life shall appear (or be manifested), then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col. 3:4.) When Christ comes to execute judgment, His saints come with Him. “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.” (Jude 14, 15.) So also, in Rev. 19 the rider on the white horse is followed by the armies in heaven upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. These armies are not angels, but saints; for we do not read of angels being clothed in white linen, which is expressly declared, in this very chapter, to be “the righteousnesses of saints.” Verse 8.

Now, it is most evident that, if the saints accompany their Lord when He comes in judgment, they must be with Him previously. The fact of their going to Him is not presented in the book of Revelation, unless it be involved—as we doubt not it is—in the catching up of the man child, in chapter 12. The man child is, most surely, Christ; and inasmuch as Christ and His people are indissolubly joined in one, they are, most completely, identified with Him, blessed forever be His holy and precious name!

But, clearly, it does not at all lie within the scope of the book of Revelation to give us the coming of Christ for His people, or their being caught up to meet Him in the air, or their return to the Father's house. For these blessed events or facts, we must look elsewhere, as, for example, in John 14:3 Cor. 15:23, 51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:14-17. Let the reader ponder those three passages. Let him drink into his very soul their clear and precious teaching. There is nothing difficult about them, no obscurity, no mist or vagueness whatever. A babe in Christ can understand them. They set forth, in the clearest and simplest possible manner, the true christian hope, which—we repeat it emphatically, and urge it upon the reader as the direct and positive teaching of holy scripture—is the coming of Christ to receive His people—all His people, to Himself, to take them back with Him to His Father's house, there to remain with Him, while God deals govern-mentally with Israel and the nations, and prepares the way, by His judicial actings, for bringing in the First-begotten into the world.

Now, if it be asked, “Why have we not the coming of Christ for His people in the book of Revelation?” Because that book is preeminently a book of judgment—a governmental, judicial book, at least from chapter 1 to 20. Hence even the Church is presented as under judgment. We do not see the Church in chapter 2 and 3 as the body or the bride of Christ; but as a responsible witness on the earth, whose condition is being carefully examined and rigidly judged by Him who walks amongst the candlesticks.

It would not, therefore, comport with the character or object of this book to introduce, directly, the rapture of the saints. It shows us the Church on the earth, in the place of responsibility. This it gives us, in chapters 2 and 3, under the head of “the things that are.” But from that to chapter 19 there is not a single syllable about the Church on earth. The plain fact is, the Church will not be on

earth during that solemn period. She will be with her Head and Lord, in the divine retirement of the Father's house. The redeemed are seen in heaven, under the title of the twenty-four crowned elders, in chapters 4 and 5. There, blessed be God, they will be, while the seals are being opened, the trumpets sounded, and the vials poured out. To think of the Church as being on the earth, from Rev. 6-18—to place her amid the apocalyptic judgments—to pass her through “the great tribulation”—to subject her to “the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”—would be to falsify her position, to rob her of her chartered privileges, and to contradict the clear and positive promise of her Lord.

No, no, beloved christian reader; let no man deceive you, by any means. The Church is seen on earth in Rev. 2 and 3. She is seen in heaven, together with the Old Testament saints, in chapters 4 and 5. We are not told, in the Revelation, how she gets there; but we see her there, in high communion and holy worship; and then, in chapter 19 the rider on the white horse comes forth, with His saints, to execute judgment upon the beast and the false prophet—to put down every enemy and every evil, and to reign over the whole earth for the blissful period of a thousand years.

Such is the plain teaching of the New Testament to which we earnestly invite the attention of our readers. And let no one suppose that our object is to find an easy path for Christians in thus teaching, as we do most emphatically, that the Church will not be in “the great tribulation”—will not come into “the hour of temptation.” Nothing of the kind. The fact is, the true and normal condition of the Church, and therefore of the individual Christian, in this world, is tribulation. So says our Lord: “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” And again, “We glory in tribulation.”

It cannot, therefore, be a question of avoiding that which is our appointed portion in this world, if only we are true to Christ. But the fact is, that the entire truth of the Church's position and prospect is involved in this question, and this is our reason for urging it so upon the prayerful attention of our readers.

The great object of the enemy is to drag down the Church of God to an earthly level—to set Christians entirely astray as to their divinely appointed hope—to lead them to confound things which God has made to differ—to occupy them with earthly things—to cause them so to mix up the coming of Christ for His people, with His appealing in judgment upon the world, that they may not be able to cultivate those bridal affections and heavenly aspirations which become them as members of the body of Christ. He would fain have them looking out for various earthly events to come between them and their own proper hope, in order that they may not be—as God would have them—ever on the very tip-toe of expectation, looking out, with ardent desire, for the appearing of “the bright and morning Star.”

Well doth the enemy know what he is about; and surely we ought not to be ignorant of his devices, but rather give ourselves to the study of the word of God, and thus learn, as we most surely shall, “the double bearing” of the glorious fact of the Lord's coming.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Fact Itself

In approaching this most glorious subject, we feel that we cannot do better than to lay before the reader the distinct testimony of holy scripture to the broad fact itself, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come again—that He will leave the place which He now occupies on His Father's throne, and come in the clouds of heaven, to receive His people to Himself; to execute judgment upon the wicked; and set up His own everlasting and universal kingdom.

This fact is as clearly and fully set forth in the New Testament as either of the other two facts to which we have already referred. It is as true that the Son of God is coming from heaven, as that He is gone to heaven, or that the Holy Ghost is still on this earth. If we admit one fact, we must admit all; and if we deny one, we must deny all; inasmuch as all rest upon precisely the same authority. They stand or fall together. Is it true that the Son of God was refused, cast out, crucified? Is it true that He has gone away into heaven? Is it true that He is now seated at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor? Is it true that God the Holy Ghost came down to this earth, fifty days after the resurrection of our Lord; and that He is still here?

Are these things true? As true as scripture can make them. Then just as true is it that our blessed Lord will come again, and set up His kingdom upon this earth—that He will literally, and actually, and personally come from heaven, take to Himself His great power and reign from pole to pole, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

It may perhaps seem strange to some of our readers that we should deem it needful to undertake the proof of such a plain truth as this; but be it remembered that we are writing on this subject as though it were perfectly new to the reader; as if he had never heard of such a thing as the Lord's second coming; or as if, having heard of it, he still calls it in question. This must be our apology for handling this precious theme in so elementary a manner. Now for our proofs.

When our adorable Lord was about to take leave of His disciples, He sought, in His infinite grace, to comfort their sorrowing hearts by words of sweetest tenderness. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

Here we have something most definite. Indeed it is as definite as it is cheering and consolatory. "I will come again." He does not say, I will send for you. Still less does He say, "You will come to me when you die." He says nothing of the kind. To send an angel, or a legion of angels, would not be the same thing as coming Himself. No doubt it would be very gracious of Him, and very glorious for us, if a multitude of the heavenly host were sent, with horses of fire and chariots of fire, to convey us triumphantly to heaven. But it would not be the fulfillment of His own sweet promise. And most surely He will do what He promised to do. He will not say one thing and do another. He cannot lie or alter His word. And not only this, but it would not satisfy the love of His heart to send an angel or a host of angels to fetch us. He will come Himself.

What touching grace shines in all this! If I am expecting a very dear and valued friend by train, I shall not be satisfied with sending a servant or an empty cab to meet him; I shall go myself. This is precisely what our loving Lord means to do. He is gone to heaven; and His entrance there prepares and defines His people's place. Amid the many mansions of the Father's house, there would be no place for us if our Jesus had not gone before; and then, lest there should be in the heart any feeling of strangeness at the thought of our entrance into that place, He says, with such sweetness, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Nothing short of this can fulfill the gracious promise of our Lord, or satisfy the love of His heart.

And be it carefully noted that this promise has no reference whatever to the death of the individual believer. Who can imagine that, when our Lord said, "I will come again," He really meant that we should go to Him through death? How can we presume to take such liberties with the plain and precious words of our Lord? Surely if He meant to speak of our going to Him, through death, He could and would have said so. But He has not said so, because He did not mean so; nor is it possible that He could say one thing and mean another. His coming for us, and our going to Him, are totally different things; and being different ideas, they would have been clothed in different language.

Thus, for example, in the case of the penitent thief on the cross, our Lord does not speak of coming to fetch him; but He says, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." We really must remember that scripture is as divinely definite as it is divinely inspired, and hence it never could and it never does confound two things so totally different as the Lord's coming and the Christian's falling asleep.

It may be well, at this point, to remark that there are but four passages in the entire New Testament in which allusion is made to the subject of the Christian passing through the article of death. The first is that passage in Luke 23 already referred to: "Today! shalt thou be with me in paradise." The second occurs in Acts 7, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The third is that most familiar and lovely utterance in 2 Cor. 5, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The fourth occurs in that charming first of Philipians, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

These most precious passages make up the sum of scripture testimony on the interesting question of the disembodied state. There is a passage in Rev. 14 often misapplied to this subject; "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." But this has no application to Christians now, though no doubt all such who die in the Lord are blessed, and their works do follow them. The reference, however, is to a time yet future, when the Church shall have left this scene altogether, and other witnesses make their appearance. In a word, Rev. 14:13 bears upon apocalyptic times, and must be so viewed if we would avoid confusion.

We must now resume our subject, and proceed with our proofs, and in so doing, we shall ask the reader to turn to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The blessed Lord had just gone up from this earth, in the presence of His holy apostles. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven?" Ver. 10, 11.

This is intensely interesting, and furnishes a most striking proof of our present thesis. Indeed it is impossible to avoid its force. Alas! that any should seek or desire to avoid it! From the manner in which the angelic witnesses speak to the men of Galilee, it would seem like tautology; but, as we well know, there is—there can be—no such thing in the volume of God. It is therefore lovely fullness, divine completeness, that we see in this testimony. From it we learn that the selfsame Jesus who left tills earth, and ascended into heaven, in the presence of a number of witnesses, shall so come, in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven. How did He go? He went up personally, literally, actually, the very same person who had just been conversing familiarly with them—whom they had seen with their eyes, heard with their ears, handled with their hands—who had eaten in their presence, and “showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs.” Well, then, “He shall so come, in like manner.”

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

And here we may ask—though it be rather anticipating what may come before us in a future paper—Who saw the blessed Lord as He went up? Did the world? Nay; not one unconverted, unbelieving person ever laid his eyes upon our precious Lord, from the moment that He was laid in the tomb. The last sight the world got of Jesus was as He hung on the cross, a spectacle to angels, men, and devils. The next sight they will get of Him will be when, like the lightning flash, He shall come forth to execute judgment, and tread, in terrible vengeance, the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. Tremendous thought!

None, therefore, but His own saw the ascending Savior, as none but they had seen Him from the moment of His resurrection. He showed Himself, blessed be His holy Name! to those who were dear to His heart. He assured and Confirmed, strengthened and encouraged their souls by these “many infallible proofs” of which the inspired narrator speaks to us. He led them to the very confines of the unseen world, just so far as men could go while still in the body; and there He allowed them to see Him ascending into heaven; and while they gazed upon this glorious sight, He sent the precious testimony home to their very hearts. “This same Jesus”—no other, no stranger, but the same loving, sympathizing, gracious, unchanging friend—“whom ye have seen go into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

Is it possible for testimony to be more distinct or satisfactory? Could proof be more clear or conclusive? How can any counter argument stand for a moment, or any objection be raised? Either those two men in white apparel were false witnesses, or our Jesus shall come again in the exact manner in which He went away. There is no middle ground between those two conclusions. We read in scripture that, “in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established;” and therefore in the mouth of two heavenly messengers—two heralds from the region of light and truth, we have the word established that our Lord Jesus Christ shall come again in actual bodily form, to be seen by His own first of all, apart from all others, in the holy intimacy and profound retirement which characterized His departure from this world. All this, blessed be God, is wrapped up in the two little words “as” and “so.”

We cannot attempt in a brief paper like the present, to adduce all the proofs which are to be found in the pages of the New Testament. We have given one from the Gospels and one from the Acts, and we shall now ask the reader to turn with us to the Epistles. Let us take, for example, the First

Epistle to the Thessalonians. We select this epistle because it is acknowledged to have been the earliest of Paul's writings; and further, because it was written to a company of very young converts. This latter point is valuable, inasmuch as we sometimes hear it stated that the truth of the Lord's coming is not suitable to bring before the minds of young believers. That the Apostle Paul did not think it unsuitable is evident from the fact that of all the epistles which he wrote not one contains so much about the Lord's coming as that which he penned for the newly converted Thessalonians. The fact is, when a soul is converted and brought into the full light and liberty of the gospel of Christ, it becomes divinely natural for such a one to look for the Lord's coming. That most precious truth is an integral part of the gospel. The first coming and the second coming are most blessedly bound up together by the divine link of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church.

On the other hand, where the soul is not established in grace; where peace and liberty are not enjoyed; where a defective gospel has been received, there it will be found that the hope of the Lord's coming will not be cherished, for the simple reason that the soul is, of necessity, occupied with the question of its own state and prospects. If I am not certain of my salvation—if I do not know that I have eternal life—that I am a child of God, I cannot be looking out for the Lord's return. It is only when we know what Jesus has done for us at His first coming, that we can, with bright and holy intelligence, look out for His second coming.

But let us turn to our epistle. Take the following sentences from the first chapter: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.....So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Verses 5-10.

Here we have a fine illustration of the effect of a full clear gospel, received in simple earnest faith. They turned from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son. They were actually converted to the blessed hope of the Lord's coming. It was an integral part of the gospel which Paul preached; and an integral part of their faith. Was it a reality to turn from idols? Doubtless. Was it a reality to serve the living God? Unquestionably. Well then it was just as real, just as positive, just as simple, their waiting for God's Son from heaven. If we question the reality of one, we must question the reality of all, inasmuch as all are bound up together and form a beautiful cluster of practical christian truth. If you had asked a Thessalonian Christian what he was waiting for, what would have been his reply? Would he have said, "I am waiting for the world to improve by means of the gospel which I myself have received? or, I am waiting for the moment of my death when I shall go to be with Jesus?" No. His reply would have been simply this, "I am waiting for the Son of God from heaven." This, and nothing else, is the proper hope of the Christian, the proper hope of the Church. To wait for the improvement of the world is not christian hope at all. You might as well wait for the improvement of the flesh, for there is just as much hope of the one as the other. And as to the article of death—though, no doubt, it may intervene—it is never once presented as the true and proper hope of the Christian. It may, with the fullest confidence, be asserted that there is not so much as a single passage in the entire New

Testament in which death is spoken of as the hope of the believer; whereas, on the other hand, the hope of the Lord's coming is bound up, in the most intimate manner, with all the concerns and associations and relationships of life, as we may see in the epistle before us. Thus, if the apostle would refer to the interesting question of his own personal connection with the beloved saints at Thessalonica, he says, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Chap. 2:19, 20.

Again, if he thinks of their progress in holiness and love, he adds, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Chap. 3:12, 13.

Finally, if the apostle would seek to comfort the hearts of his brethren in reference to those who had fallen asleep, how does he do it? Does he tell them that they should soon follow them? Nay; this would have been in full keeping with Old Testament times, as David says of his departed child, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (2 Sam. 12:23.) But it is not thus that the Holy Ghost instructs us in 1 Thessalonians—quite the reverse. "I would not," He says, "have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye borrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that [not they which shall be, but] we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [come before or take precedence of them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Chap. 4:13-18.

It is impossible for any proof to be more simple, direct, and conclusive than this. The Thessalonian Christians, as we have already remarked, were converted to the hope of the Lord's return. They were taught to look out for it daily. It was as much a part of their Christianity to believe that He would come, as to believe that He had come and gone. Hence it came to pass that when some of their number were called to pass through death, they were taken aback; they had not anticipated this; and they feared lest the departed should miss the joy of that blissful and longed-for moment of the Lord's return. The apostle therefore writes to correct their mistake; and, in so doing, he pours a fresh flood of light upon the whole subject, and assures them that the dead in Christ—which includes all who had or shall have fallen asleep; in short, those of Old Testament times as well as those of the New—should rise first, that is, before the living are changed, and all shall ascend together to meet their descending Lord.

We shall have occasion to refer to this remarkable passage again, when handling other branches of this glorious subject. We merely quote it here as one of the almost innumerable proofs of the fact that our Lord will come again, personally, really, and actually; and that this His personal coming is the true and proper hope of the Church of God collectively, and of the believer individually. We shall close this paper by reminding the christian reader that he can never sit down to the table of his Lord without being reminded of this glorious hope, so long as those words shine on the page of inspiration, "For as often ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the

Lord's death till"—when? Till ye die? Nay; but—"till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26.) How precious is this! The table of the Lord stands between those two marvelous epochs, the cross and the advent—the death and the glory. The believer can look up from the table and see the beams of the glory gilding the horizon. It is our privilege, as we gather, on each Lord's day, round the Lord's table, to show forth the Lord's death, to be able to say, "This may be the last occasion of celebrating this precious feast. Ere another Lord's day dawn upon us, He Himself may come." Again we say—How precious is this!

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Jewish Remnant

We must ask the reader to open his Bible and read Matt. 24:1-44. It forms a part of one of the most profound and comprehensive discourses that ever fell on human ears—a discourse which takes in, in its marvelous sweep, the destiny of the Jewish remnant; the history of Christendom; and the judgment of the nations. At the last-named subject we have already glanced. (See No. 7.) It remains for us now to consider the subject of the remnant of Israel, and the history of professing Christianity whether genuine or spurious.

And, first, let us look at the Jewish remnant.

In order to understand Matt. 24:1-44, it will be needful for us to place ourselves at the standpoint of those whom our Lord was addressing at the moment. If we attempt to import into this discourse the light which shines in the epistle to the Ephesians, we shall only involve our minds in confusion, and miss the solemn teaching of the passage which now lies open before us. We shall find nothing about the Church of God, the body of Christ, here. The teaching of our Lord is divinely perfect, and hence we cannot, for a moment, imagine anything premature therein. But it would be premature to have introduced a subject which, as yet, was hid in God. The great truth of the Church could not be unfolded until Christ, being cut off as the Messiah, had taken His place at the right hand of God, and sent down the Holy Ghost, to form by His presence the one body, composed of Jew and Gentile.

Of this we hear nothing in Matt. 24. We are entirely on Jewish ground, surrounded by Jewish circumstances and influences. The scenery and the allusions are all purely Jewish. To attempt to apply the passage to the Church would be to miss completely our Lord's object, and to falsify the real position of the Church of God. The more closely we examine the scripture, the more clearly we shall see that the persons addressed occupy a Jewish standpoint, and are on Jewish ground, whether we think of those very persons whom our Lord was then addressing, or those who shall occupy the self-same ground at the close, when the Church shall have left the scene altogether. Let us examine the passage.

At the close of Matt. 23 our Lord sums up His appeal to the leaders of the Jewish nation with the following words of awful solemnity: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Ver. 32-39.

Thus closes Messiah's testimony to the apostate nation of Israel. Every effort that love, even divine love, could put forth had been tried, and tried in vain. Prophets had been sent, and stoned; messenger after messenger had gone and pleaded, and reasoned, and warned, and entreated; but to no purpose. Their mighty words had fallen upon deaf ears and hardened hearts. The only return made to all those messengers was shameful handling, stoning, and death.

At length, the Son Himself was sent, and sent with this touching utterance: "It may be that they will reverence my Son, when they see him." Did they? Alas! no. When they saw Him, there was no beauty that they should desire Him. The daughter of Zion had no heart for her King. The vineyard was under the control of wicked husbandmen who wanted to keep it for themselves. "The husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."

Thus much as to the moral condition of Israel, in view of which our Lord spoke those unusually awful words quoted above; and, then, "He went out and departed from the temple." How reluctant He was to do this we know; for, blessed be His name, whenever He leaves a place of mercy, or enters a place of judgment, He moves with a slow and measured pace. Witness the departure of the glory, in the opening chapters of Ezekiel. "Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the Cherubims. And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above." (Chap. 10:18, 19.) "Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city." Chap. 11:22, 23.

Thus, with slow and measured pace did the glory of the God of Israel take its departure from the house at Jerusalem. Jehovah lingered near the spot, reluctant to depart. He had come, with loving alacrity, with His whole heart and with His whole soul, to dwell in the midst of His people, to find a home in the very bosom of His assembly; but He was forced away by their sins and iniquities. He would fain have remained; but it was impossible; and yet He proved, by the very mode of His departure, how unwilling He was to go.

Nor was it otherwise with Jehovah Messiah, in Matt. 23. Witness His touching words, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gather-eth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Here lay the deep secret, "would." This was the heart of God. "Ye would not." This was the heart of Israel. He, too, like the glory in the days of Ezekiel, was forced away; but not, blessed be His name, without dropping a word which forms the precious basis of hope as to the brighter days to come, when the glory shall return, and the daughter of Zion shall welcome her King with joyful accents. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah."

But, until that bright day dawn, darkness, desolation, and ruin, make up the sum of Israel's history. The very thing which the leaders sought, by the rejection of Christ, to avert, came upon them, in stern and awful reality. "The Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation." How literally, how solemnly was this fulfilled! Alas! their place and their nation were gone already, and the significant movement of Jesus, in Matt. 24:1, was but the passing sentence, and writing desolation upon the whole Jewish system. "Jesus went out and departed from the temple." The

case was hopeless. All must be given up. A long period of darkness and dreariness must pass over the infatuated nation—a period which shall culminate in that “great tribulation” which must precede the hour of final deliverance.

But, as in the days of Ezekiel, there were those who sighed and cried over the sins and sorrows of the nation, so in the days of Matt. 24 there was a remnant of godly souls who attached themselves to the rejected Messiah, and who cherished the fond hope of redemption and restoration for Israel. Very dim indeed were their perceptions, and their thoughts full of confusion. Nevertheless, their hearts, as touched by divine grace, beat true to the Messiah, and they were full of hope as to Israel’s future.

Now, it is of the utmost importance that the reader should recognize and understand the position of this remnant, and that it is with it our Lord is occupied in His marvelous discourse on the Mount of Olives. To suppose, for a moment, that the persons here addressed were on christian ground, would involve the abandonment of all true thoughts of what Christianity is, and the ignoring of a company whose existence is recognized throughout the psalms, the prophets, and various parts of the New Testament. There was, and there always is, “a remnant according to the election of grace.” To quote the passages which present the history, the sorrows, the experiences, and the exercises of that remnant, would demand a volume, and hence we shall not attempt it; but we are extremely desirous that the reader should seize the thought that this godly remnant is represented by the handful of disciples which gathered round our Lord on the Mount of Olives. We feel persuaded that, if this be not seen, the true scope, bearing, and application of this remarkable discourse must be lost.

“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. 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. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (or age, αἰώνος.)

The disciples were, naturally, occupied with earthly and Jewish objects and expectations—the temple and its surroundings. This must be borne in mind, if we would understand their question and our Lord’s reply. As yet, they had no thought beyond the earthly side of things. They looked for the setting up of the kingdom, the glory of the Messiah, the accomplishment of the promises made to the fathers. They had not yet fully taken in the solemn and momentous fact that the Messiah was to be “cut off and have nothing.” (Dan. 9:26.) True, the blessed Master had, from time to time, sought to prepare their minds for that solemn event. He had faithfully warned them in reference to the dark shadows that were to gather round His path. He had told them that the Son of man should be delivered to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified.

But they understood Him not. Such sayings seemed dark, hard, and incomprehensible; and their hearts still fondly clung to the hope of national restoration and blessing. They longed to see the star of Jacob in the ascendant. Their minds were full of expectancy as to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. As yet, they knew nothing—how could they?—of that which was to spring out of the rejection and death of the Messiah. The Lord had no doubt spoken of building an assembly; but as to the position and privileges of that assembly, its calling, its standing, its hopes, they knew

absolutely nothing. The thought of a body composed of Jew and Gentile, united by the Holy Ghost to a living and glorified Head in the heavens, had never entered—how could it have entered?—their minds. The middle wall of partition was still standing; and one of their number—the very foremost amongst them—had, long after, to be taught, with much difficulty, to take in the idea of even admitting the Gentiles into the kingdom.

All this, we repeat, must be taken into account, if we would read aright our Lord's reply to the inquiry as to His coming and the end of the age. There is not a single syllable about the Church, as such, from beginning to end of that reply. Up to verse 14, He passes on to the end, giving a rapid survey of the events which should transpire amongst the nations. "Take heed," He says, "that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But all that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come."

Here then we have a most comprehensive sketch of the entire period from the moment in which our Lord was speaking, down to the time of the end. But the reader will need to bear in mind that there is an unnoticed interval—a parenthesis, a break—in this period, during which the great mystery of the Church is unfolded. This interval or break is entirely passed over in this discourse, inasmuch as the time had not arrived for its development. It was, as yet "hid in God," and could not be unfolded until the Messiah was finally rejected and cut off from the earth and received up into glory. The entire of this discourse would have its full and perfect accomplishment, although such a thing as the Church had never been heard of. For, let it never be forgotten, the Church forms no part of the ways of God with Israel and the earth. And as to the allusion, in verse 14, to the preaching of the gospel, we are not to suppose that it is at all the same thing as "The glorious gospel of the grace of God," as preached by Paul. It is styled, "This gospel of the kingdom;" and, moreover, it is to be preached, not for the purpose of gathering the Church, but "as a witness to all nations." We must not confound things which God, in His infinite wisdom, has made to differ. The Church must not be confounded with the kingdom; nor yet the gospel of the grace of God with the gospel of the kingdom. The two things are perfectly distinct; and, if we confound them, we shall understand neither the one nor the other. And, further, we would desire to press upon the reader the absolute necessity of seeing the break, parenthesis, or unnoticed interval in which the great mystery of the Church is inserted. If this be not clearly seen, Matt. 24 cannot be understood.

But we must proceed with our Lord's discourse.

At verse 15, He seems to call His hearers back a little, as it were, to something very specific—something with which a Jewish believer would be familiar from the fact of Daniel's allusion to it. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand): then let them which be in

Judaea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.... But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

All this is most definite. The quotation from Dan. 12 fixes the application beyond all question. It proves that the reference is not to the siege of Jerusalem, under Titus; for we read in Dan. 12 that, “At that time thy people shall be delivered;” and, most clearly, they were not delivered in the days of Titus. No; the reference is to the time of the end. The scene is laid at Jerusalem. The persons addressed and contemplated are Jewish believers—the pious remnant of Israel, in the great tribulation, after the Church has left the scene. How can any imagine that the persons here instructed are viewed as on Church ground? What force would there be to such in the allusion to the winter or the sabbath day?

Then, again, “If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.... If they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” What possible application could such words have to persons who are instructed to wait for God’s Son from heaven, and who know that, ere He returns to this earth, they shall have met Him in clouds and returned with Him to the Father’s house? Could any Christian, instructed in his proper hope, be deceived by persons saying that Christ is here or there, in the desert or in the secret chambers? Impossible. Such an one is looking out for the Bridegroom to come from heaven; and he knows that it is wholly out of the question that Christ can appear on this earth without bringing all His people with Him.

Thus, the simple truth settles everything; and all we want is to be simple in taking it in. The simplest Christian knows full well that his Lord will not appear to him like a flash of lightning, but as the bright and morning star, and hence he understands that Matt. 24 cannot apply to the Church, though most surely the Church can study it with interest, and profit, as it can all the other prophetic scriptures; and, we may add, the interest will be all the more intense, and the profit all the deeper, in proportion as we see the true application of such scriptures.

Limited space forbids our entering as fully as we could wish into the remaining portion of this marvelous discourse; but the more closely each sentence is examined, the more fully each circumstance is weighed, the more clearly we must see that the persons addressed are not on proper Christian ground. The entire scene is earthly and Jewish, not heavenly and Christian. There is ample instruction supplied for those who shall find themselves, by and by, in the position here contemplated; and nothing can be clearer than that the entire paragraph, from verse 15-42, refers to the period which shall elapse between the rapture of the saints, and the appearing of the Son of Man.

Some may perhaps feel a difficulty in understanding verse 34: “This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” But we must remember that the word “generation” is constantly used in scripture in a moral sense. It is not to be confined to a certain number of persons actually living at the time, but takes in the race. In the passage before us, it simply applies to the Jewish race; but the wording is such as to leave the question of time entirely open, so that the heart might ever be kept in readiness for the Lord’s coming. There is nothing in scripture, to interfere with the constant expectation of that grand event. On the contrary, every parable, every figure, every allusion is so

worded as to warrant each one to look for the Lord's return in his own lifetime, and yet to leave ample margin for the elongation of the time according to the long-suffering grace of a Savior God.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Judgment

There is something peculiarly painful in the thought of having, so frequently, to come in collision with the generally received opinions of the professing church. It looks presumptuous to contradict, on so many subjects, all the great standards and creeds of Christendom. But what is one to do? Were it indeed a mere question of human opinion, it might seem a piece of bold and unwarrantable temerity for any one individual to set himself in direct opposition to the established faith of the whole professing church—a faith which has held sway for centuries, over the minds of millions.

But we would ever impress upon our readers the fact that it is not at all a question of human opinion, or of a difference of judgment amongst even the very best of men. It is entirely a question as to the teaching and authority of holy scripture. There have been, and there are, and there will be, schools of doctrine, varieties of opinion, and shades of thought; but it is the obvious duty of every child of God, and every servant of Christ to bow down, in holy reverence, and hearken to the voice of God in scripture. If it be merely a matter of human authority, it must simply go for what it is worth; but, on the other hand, if it be a matter of divine authority, then all discussion is closed, and our place—the place of all—is to bow and believe.

Thus, in our last paper, we were led to see that there is no such thing in scripture as a general resurrection—a common rising of all at the same time. We trust our readers have, like the Bereans of old, searched the scriptures as to this, and that they are now prepared to accompany us in our examination of the word of God as to the subject of this article.

The great question, at the outset, is this, Does scripture teach the doctrine of a general judgment? Christendom holds it; but does scripture teach it? Let us see.

In the first place, as to the Christian individually, and the Church of God collectively, the New Testament sets forth the precious truth that there is no judgment at all. So far as the believer is concerned, judgment is past and gone. The heavy cloud of judgment has burst upon the head of our divine Sin-bearer. He has exhausted, on our behalf, the cup of wrath and judgment, and planted us on the new ground of resurrection to which judgment can never, by any possibility, apply. It is just as impossible that a member of the body of Christ can come into judgment as that the divine Head Himself can do so. This seems a very strong statement to make; but is it true? If so, its strength is part of its moral value and glory.

For what, let us ask, was Jesus judged on the cross? For His people. He was made sin for us. He represented us there. He stood in our stead. He bore all that was due to us. Our entire condition with all its belongings was dealt with in the death of Christ; and so dealt with that it is utterly impossible that any question can ever be raised. Has God any question to settle with Christ, the Head? Clearly not. Well, then, neither has He any question to settle with the members. Every question is divinely and definitively settled, and, in proof of the settlement, the Head is crowned with glory and honor, and seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

Hence, to suppose that Christians are to come into judgment, at any time, or on any ground, or for any object whatsoever, is to deny the very foundation truth of Christianity, and to contradict the plain words of our Lord Jesus Christ who has expressly declared, in reference to all who believe in Him, that they “shall not come into judgment.” John 5:24.

In point of fact, the idea of Christians being arraigned at the bar of judgment to try the question of their title and fitness for heaven, is as absurd as it is unscriptural. For example, how can we think of Paul or the penitent thief standing to be judged as to their title to heaven, after having been there already for nearly two thousand years? But thus it must be, if there be any truth in the theory of a general judgment. If the great question of our title to heaven has to be settled at the day of judgment, then clearly, it was not settled on the cross; and if it was not settled on the cross, then most surely we shall be damned; for if we are to be judged at all, it must be according to our works, and the only possible issue of such a judgment is the lake of fire.

If, however, it be maintained that Christians shall only stand in the judgment in order to make it manifest that they are clear through the death of Christ, then would the day of judgment be turned into a mere formality, the bare thought of which is most revolting to every pious and well-regulated mind.

But, in truth, there is no need of reasoning on the point. One sentence of holy scripture is better far than ten thousand of man’s most cogent arguments. Our Lord Christ hath declared, in the clearest and most emphatic terms, that believers “shall not come into judgment.” This is enough. The believer was judged over eighteen hundred years ago in the Person of his Head; and to bring him into judgment again would be to ignore completely the cross of Christ in its atoning efficacy; and, most assuredly, God will not, cannot allow this. The very feeblest believer may say, in thankfulness and triumph, “So far as I am concerned all that had to be judged is judged already. Every question that had to be settled is settled. Judgment is past and gone forever. I know my work must be tried, my service appraised; but as to myself, my person, my standing, my title, all is divinely settled. The Man who answered for me on the tree, is now crowned on the throne; and the crown which he wears is the proof that there remains no judgment for me. I am waiting for a life-resurrection.”

This, and nothing short of this, is the proper language of the Christian. It is simply due to the work of the cross that the believer should thus feel, and thus express himself. For such a one to be looking forward to the day of judgment, for a settlement of the question of his eternal destiny, is to dishonor his Lord, and deny the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. It may sound like humility, and savor of piety to hover in doubt. But we may rest assured that all who harbor doubts, all who live in a state of uncertainty, all who are looking forward to the day of judgment for a final settlement of their affairs—all such are more occupied with themselves than with Christ. They have not yet understood the application of the cross to their sins and to their nature. They are doubting the word of God, and the work of Christ, and this is not Christianity. There is—there can be—no judgment for those who, sheltered by the cross, have planted a firm foot on the new and everlasting ground of resurrection. For such, all judgment is over forever, and nothing remains but a prospect of cloudless glory and everlasting blessedness, in the presence of God and of the Lamb.

However, it is not at all improbable that, all this while, the mind of the reader has been recurring to Matt. 25:31-46 as a scripture which directly establishes the theory of a general judgment; and we feel it to be our sacred duty to turn with him for a moment, to that very solemn and important passage; at the same time, reminding him of the fact that no one scripture can possibly clash with another, and hence if we read, in John 5:24, that believers shall not come into judgment, we cannot read in Matt. 25 that they shall. This is a fixed and invaluable principle—a general rule to which there is, and can be, no exception. Nevertheless, let us turn to Matt. 25

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the hoi}’ angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats,”

Now, it is most necessary to pay strict attention to the precise terms made use of in this scripture. We must avoid all looseness of thought, all that haste, carelessness, and inaccuracy which have caused such serious damage to the teaching of this weighty scripture, and thrown so many of the Lord’s people into the utmost confusion respecting it.

And, first of all, let us see who are the parties arraigned. “Before him shall be gathered all nations.” This is very definite. It is the living nations. It is not a question of individuals, but of nations—all the Gentiles. Israel is not here, for we read in Numb. 23:9, that “the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” If Israel were to be included in this scene of judgment, then would Matt. 25 stand in palpable contradiction to Numb. 23 which is wholly out of the question. Israel is never reckoned amongst the Gentiles, on any ground or for any object whatever. Looked at from a divine point of view, Israel stands alone. They may, because of their sins, and under the governmental dealings of God, be scattered among the nations; but God’s word declares that they shall not be reckoned among them; and this should suffice for us.

If then it be true that Israel is not included in the judgment of Matt. 25 then, without proceeding one step further, the idea of its being a general judgment must be abandoned. It cannot be general, if all are not included; but Israel is never included under the term “Gentiles.” Scripture speaks of three distinct classes, namely, “The Jew, and the Gentile, and the Church of God,” and these three are never confounded. But, further, we have to remark that the Church of God is not included in the judgment of Matt. 25. Nor is this statement based merely upon the fact which has been already gone into of the Church’s necessary exemption from judgment; but also upon the grand truth that the Church is taken from among the nations, as Peter declared in the council at Jerusalem. “God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.” If then the Church be taken out of the nations, it cannot be reckoned among them; and thus we have additional evidence against the theory of a general judgment in Matt. 25. The Jew is not there; the Church is not there; and therefore the idea of a general judgment must be abandoned as something wholly untenable.

Who then are included in this judgment? The passage itself supplies the answer to any simple mind. It says, “Before him shall be gathered all nations.” This is distinct and definite. It is not a judgment of individuals, but of nations, as such. And further, we may add that not one of those here indicated shall have passed through the article of death. In this it stands in vivid contrast with the scene in Rev. 20:11-15, in the which there will not be one who has not died. In short, in Matt. 25, we have the judgment of “the quick;” and in Rev. 20 the judgment of “the dead.” Both these are referred to in 2 Tim. 4 “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the

quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.” Our Lord Christ shall judge the living nations at His appearing; and he shall “judge the dead small and great” at the close of His millennial reign.

But let us glance, for a moment, at the mode in which the parties are arranged in the judgment, in Matt. 25 “He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” Now, the almost universal belief of the professing church is that “the sheep” represent all the people of God, from the beginning to the end of time; and that “the goats,” on the other hand, set forth all the wicked, from first to last. But, if this be so, what are we to make of the third party referred to here, under the title of “these my brethren?” The king addresses both the sheep and the goats in respect to this third class. Indeed the very ground of judgment is the treatment of the king’s brethren. It would involve a manifest absurdity to say that the sheep were themselves the parties referred to. If that were so, the language would be wholly different, and in place of saying, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,” we should hear the king saying, “Inasmuch as ye have done it to one another,” or “amongst yourselves.”

We would beg the reader’s special attention to this point. We consider that were there no other argument, and no other scripture on the subject, this one point would prove fatal to the theory of a general judgment. It is impossible not to see three parties in the scene, namely, “the sheep” and “the goats,” and “these my brethren;” and, if there are three parties, it cannot possibly be a general judgment, inasmuch as “these my brethren” are not included either in the sheep or the goats.

No, dear reader, it is not a general judgment at all, but a very partial and specific one. It is a judgment of living nations, previous to the opening of the millennial kingdom. Scripture teaches us that after the Church has left the earth, a testimony will go forth to the nations; the gospel of the kingdom shall be borne, by Jewish messengers, far and wide, over the earth, into those regions which are wrapped in heathen darkness. These nations which shall receive the messengers and treat them kindly will be found on the King’s right hand. Those, on the contrary, who shall reject them and treat them unkindly will be found on His left. “These my brethren” are Jews—the brethren of the Messiah.

The treatment of the Jews is the ground on which the nations will be judged by and by; and this is another argument against a general judgment. We know full well that all those who have lived and died in the rejection of the gospel of Christ will have something more to answer for than unkindness to the King’s brethren. And, on the other hand, those who shall surround the Lamb in heavenly glory will do so on a very different title from aught that their works can furnish.

In short, there is not a single feature in the scene, not a single fact in the history, not a single point in the narrative which does not make against the notion of a general judgment. And not only so, but the more we study scripture; the more we know of the ways of God; the more we know of His nature, His character, His purposes. His counsels, His thoughts; the more we know of Christ, His Person, His work, His glory; the more we know of the Church, its standing before God in Christ, its completeness, its perfect acceptance in Christ; the more closely we study scripture; the more profoundly we meditate therein—the more thoroughly convinced we must be that there can be no such thing as a general judgment.

Who, that knows aught of God, could suppose that He would justify His people today, and arraign them in judgment tomorrow—that He would blot out their transgressions today, and judge them according to their works tomorrow? Who that knows aught of our adorable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, could suppose that He would ever arraign His Church, His body, His bride, before the judgment-seat, in company with all those who have died in their sins? Could it be possible that He would enter into judgment with His people for sins and iniquities of which He has said, “I will remember no more?”

But enough. We fondly trust that the reader is now most fully persuaded in his own mind, that there is and can be no such thing as a promiscuous resurrection—no such thing as a general judgment.

We cannot now enter upon the judgment in Rev. 20:11-15, further than to say that it is a post-millennial scene; and that it includes all the wicked dead, from the days of Cain down to the last apostate from millennial glory. There will not be one there who has not passed through the article of death—not one there whose name has been set down in life's fair book—not one there who shall not be judged according to his own very deeds—not one there who shall not pass from the dread realities of the great white throne into the everlasting horrors and ineffable torments of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. How awful! How terrible! How perfectly dreadful!

Oh! reader, what sayest thou to these things? Art thou a true believer in Jesus? Art thou washed in His precious blood? Art thou sheltered in Him from coming judgment? If not, let me entreat thee now, with all tenderness and earnestness, to flee this very hour, from the wrath to come! Flee to Jesus, who now waits to receive thee to His loving bosom, and to present you to God in the full value of His atoning work, and in the full credit of His peerless name.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Ten Virgins

We now approach that solemn section of our Lord's discourse in which He presents the kingdom of heaven under the similitude of "Ten Virgins." The instruction contained in this most weighty and interesting parable is of wider application than that of the servant to which we have already referred, inasmuch as it takes in the whole range of christian profession, and is not confined to ministry either within the house or outside. It bears directly and pointedly upon christian profession whether true or false.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Some have considered that this parable refers to the Jewish remnant; but it does not seem that this idea is borne out, either by the context in which the parable occurs, or by the terms in which it is couched.

As to the entire context, the more closely we examine it, the more clearly we shall see that the Jewish portion of the discourse ends with chapter 24:44. This is so distinct as not to admit of a question. Equally distinct is the christian portion, extending as we have seen, from chapter 24:45 to chapter 25:30; while from 25:31 to the end. we have the Gentiles. Thus the order and fullness of this marvelous discourse must strike any thoughtful reader. It presents the Jew, the Christian, and the Gentile, each on his own distinct ground, and according to his own distinctive principles. There is no merging of one thing in another, no confounding of things that differ. In a word, the order, the fullness, and the comprehensiveness of this profound discourse are divine and fill the soul "with wonder, love, and praise." We rise from the study of it, as a whole, with those words of the apostle upon our lips, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

And then when we examine the precise terms made use of by our Lord, in the parable of the ten virgins, we must see that it applies not to Jews but to christian professors —it applies to us—it utters a voice, and teaches a solemn lesson to the writer and the reader of these lines.

Let us apply our hearts thereto.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

Primitive Christianity was specially characterized by the fact here indicated, namely, a going forth to meet a returning and an expected bridegroom. The early Christians were led to detach themselves from present things, and go forth, in the spirit of their minds, and in the affections of their hearts, to meet the Savior whom they loved and for whom they waited. It was not, of course, a question of going forth from one place to another: it was not local, but moral, and spiritual. It was the outgoing of the heart after a beloved Savior whose return was eagerly looked for, day by day.

It is impossible to read the epistles to the various churches and not see that the hope of the Lord's sure and speedy return governed the hearts of the Lord's dear people, in early days. "They waited

for the Son from heaven.” They knew He was to come and take them away to be with Himself forever; and the knowledge and power of this hope had the effect of detaching their hearts from present things. Their bright, heavenly hope caused them to sit loose to the things of earth. “They looked for the Savior.” They believed that He might come at any moment, and hence the concerns of this life were just to be taken up and attended to for the moment—property, thoroughly attended to, no doubt—but only as it were on the very tip-toe of expectation.

All this is conveyed to our hearts, briefly but clearly, by the expression, “They went forth to meet the bridegroom.” This could not be intelligently applied to the Jewish remnant, inasmuch as they will not go forth to meet their Messiah, but, on the contrary, they will remain in their position and amid their circumstances, until He comes and plants His foot on the Mount of Olives. They will not look for the Lord to come and take them away from this earth to be with Him in heaven; but He will come to bring deliverance to them in their own land, and make them happy there under His own peaceful and blessed reign, during the millennial age.

But the call to Christians was to “go forth.” They are supposed to be always on the move; not settling down on the earth, but going out in earnest and holy aspirations after that heavenly glory to which they are called, and after the heavenly Bridegroom to whom they are espoused, and for whose speedy advent they are taught to wait.

Such is the true, the divine, the normal idea of the christian’s attitude and state. And this lovely idea was marvelously realized and practically carried out by the primitive Christians. But, alas! alas! we are reminded of the fact that we have to do with the spurious as well as the true in Christendom. There are “tares” as well as “wheat” in the kingdom of heaven: and thus we read of these ten virgins, that “five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” There are the true and the false, the genuine and the counterfeit, the real and the hollow, in professing Christianity.

Yes, and this is to continue into the time of the end, until the Bridegroom come. The tares are not converted into wheat, nor are the foolish virgins converted into wise ones. No, never. The tares will be burnt and the foolish virgins shut out. So far from a gradual improvement by the means now in operation—the preaching of the gospel and the various beneficent agencies which are brought to bear upon the world—we find, from all the parables, and from the teaching of the entire New Testament, that the kingdom of heaven presents a most deplorable admixture of evil; a corrupting process; a grievous tampering with the work of God, on the part of the enemy; a positive progress of evil in principle, in profession, and in practice.

And all this goes on to the end. There are foolish virgins found when the Bridegroom appears. Whence come they if all are to be converted before the Lord comes? If all are to be brought to the knowledge of the Lord by the means now in operation, then how comes it to pass that when the Bridegroom comes, there are quite as many foolish as wise?

But it will perhaps be said that this is but a parable, a figure. Granted; but a figure of what? Not surely of a whole world converted. To assert this would be to offer a grievous insult to the holy volume, and to treat our Lord’s solemn teaching in a manner in which we would not dare to treat the teaching of a fellow mortal.

No, reader, the parable of the ten virgins teaches, beyond all question, that when the Bridegroom comes, there will be foolish virgins on the scene; and, clearly, if there are foolish virgins, all cannot

have been previously converted. A child can understand this. We cannot see how it is possible, in the face of even this one parable, to maintain the theory of a world converted before the coming of the Bridegroom.

But let us look a little closely at these foolish virgins. Their history is full of admonition for all christian professors. It is very brief, but awfully comprehensive. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them." There is the outward profession, but no inward reality—no spiritual life—no unction—no vital link with the source of eternal life—no union with Christ. There is nothing but the lamp of profession, and the dry wick of a nominal, notional, head-belief.

This is peculiarly solemn. It bears down with tremendous weight upon that vast mass of baptized profession which surrounds us, at the present moment, in which there is so much of outward semblance, but so little of inward reality. All profess to be Christians. The lamp of profession may be seen in every hand; but ah! how few have the oil in their vessels, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost dwelling in their hearts. Without this, all is utterly worthless and vain. There may be the very highest profession; there may be a most orthodox creed. one may be baptized; he may receive the Lord's supper; be a regularly enrolled and duly recognized member of a christian community; be a Sunday school teacher; an ordained minister of religion: one may be all this; and not have one spark of divine life, not one ray of heavenly light, not one link with the Christ of God.

Now there is something peculiarly awful in the thought of having just enough religion to deceive the heart, deaden the conscience, and ruin the soul—just enough religion to give a name to live while dead—enough to leave one without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world—enough to prop the soul up with a false confidence, and fill it with a false peace, until the Bridegroom come, and then the eyes are opened when it is too late.

Thus it is with the foolish virgins. They seem to be very like the wise ones. An ordinary observer might not be able to see any difference, for the time being. They all set out together. All have lamps. And, moreover, all turn aside to slumber and sleep, the wise as well as the foolish. All rouse up at the midnight cry, and trim their lamps. Thus far there is no apparent difference. The foolish virgins light their lamps—the lamp of profession lighted up with the dry wick of a lifeless, notional, nominal faith; alas! alas! a worthless, worse than worthless thing, a fatal soul-destroying delusion.

But here the grand distinction—the broad line of demarcation comes out with awful, yea, with appalling clearness. "The foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." (See margin.) This proves that their lamps had been lighted; for had they not been lighted, they could not go out. But it was only a false, flickering, transient light. It was not fed from a divine source. It was the light of mere hp profession, fed by a head belief, lasting just long enough to deceive themselves and others, and going out at the very moment when they most needed it, leaving them in the dreadful darkness of an eternal night.

"Our lamps are going out." Terrible discovery! "The Bridegroom is at hand, and our lamps are going out. Our hollow profession is being made manifest by the light of His coming. We thought we were all right. We professed the same faith, had the same shaped lamp, the same kind of wick; but alas! we now find to our unspeakable horror, that we have been deceiving ourselves, that we lack the one thing needful, the spirit of life in Christ, the unction from the Holy One, the living link with

the Bridegroom. Whatever shall we do? Oh! ye wise virgins, take pity upon us, and share with us your oil. Do, do, for mercy's sake, give us a little, even one drop of that all essential thing, that we may not perish forever."

Ah! it is all utterly vain. No one can give of his oil to another. Each has just enough for himself. Moreover it can only be had from God Himself. A man can give light, but he cannot give oil. This latter is the gift of God alone. "The wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." It is of no use looking to christian friends to help us or prop us up. No use in flying hither and thither for someone to lean upon—some holy man, or some eminent teacher—no use building upon our church, or our creed, or our sacraments. We want oil. We cannot do without it. Where are we to get it? Not from man, not from the church, not from the saints, not from the Fathers. We must get it from God; and He, blessed be His name, gives freely. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But, mark, it is an individual thing. Each must have it for himself, and in himself. No man can believe, or get life for another. Each must have to do with God for himself. The link which connects the soul with Christ is intensely individual. There is no such thing as secondhand faith. A man may teach us religion, or theology, or the letter of scripture; but he cannot give us oil; he cannot give us faith; he cannot give us life. "It is the gift of God." Precious little word, "gift." It is like God. It is free as God's air; free as His sunlight; free as His refreshing dew-drops. But, we repeat, and with solemn emphasis, each one must get it for himself, and have it in himself. "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; that he should still live forever and not see corruption. For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever." Psalm 49:7-9.

Reader, what sayest thou to these solemn realities? Art thou a wise or a foolish virgin? Hast thou gotten life in a risen and glorified Savior? Art thou a mere professor of religion, content with the mere ordinary dead routine of church or chapel-going, having just sufficient religion to make thee respectable on earth, but not enough to link thee with heaven?

We earnestly beseech thee to think seriously of these things. Think of them, now. Think how unspeakably dreadful it will be to find thy lamp of profession going out and leaving thee in obscure darkness—darkness that may be felt—the outer darkness of an everlasting night. How terrible to find the door shut behind that brilliant train which shall go into the marriage; but shut in thy face!

How agonizing the cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us!" How withering, how crushing the response, "I know you not."

O, beloved friend, do give these weighty matters a place in thy heart, now, while yet the door is open, and while yet the day of grace is lengthened out in God's marvelous long suffering. The moment is rapidly approaching in the which the door of mercy shall be closed against thee forever, when all hope shall be gone, and thy precious soul be plunged in black and eternal despair. May God's Spirit rouse thee from thy fatal slumber, and give thee no rest until thou findest it in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and at His blessed feet, in adoration and worship.

We must now draw this paper to a close; but, ere doing so, we shall just for a moment, glance at the wise virgins. The great distinguishing feature which, according to the teaching of this parable, marks them off from the foolish virgins is that when starting at the first they "Took oil in their vessels with their lamps." In other words what distinguishes true believers from mere professors is that the former have in their hearts the grace of God's Holy Spirit; they have gotten the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and the Holy Ghost dwelling in them as the seal, the earnest, the unction, and the witness. This grand and glorious fact characterizes, now, all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—a stupendous, wondrous fact, most surely—an immense and ineffable privilege which should ever bow our souls, in holy adoration, before our God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, whose accomplished redemption has procured for us this great blessing.

But how sad to think that, notwithstanding this high and holy privilege, we should have to read, as in the words of our parable, "They all slumbered and slept!" All alike, wise as well as foolish, fell asleep. The Bridegroom tamed and all, without exception, lost the freshness, fervor, and power of the hope of His coming, and fell fast asleep.

Such is the statement of our parable, and such is the solemn fact of the history. The whole professing body fell asleep. "That blessed hope" which shone so brightly on the horizon of the early Christians very speedily waned and faded away; and as we scan the page of church history for eighteen centuries, from the Apostolic Fathers to the opening of the current century, we look in vain for any intelligent reference to the Church's specific hope—the personal return of the blessed Bridegroom. In fact that hope was virtually lost to the Church; nay more, it became almost a heresy to teach it. And even now, in these last days, there are hundreds of thousands of professed ministers of Christ who dare not preach or teach the coming of the Lord as it is taught in scripture.

True it is, blessed be God, we notice a mighty change within the last half century. There has been a great awakening. God is, by His Holy Spirit, recalling His people to long-forgotten truths, and, amongst the rest, to the glorious truth of the coming of the Bridegroom. Many are now seeing that the reason why the Bridegroom tarried was simply because God was long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Precious reason!

But they are also seeing that, spite of this long-suffering, our Lord is at hand. Christ is coming. The midnight cry has gone forth, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." May millions of voices re-echo the Soul-stirring cry until it passes in its mighty moral power, from pole to pole, and from the river to the ends of the earth, rousing the whole Church to wait, as one man, for the glorious appearing of the blessed Bridegroom of our hearts.

Brethren beloved in the Lord, awake! awake! Let every soul be roused. Let us shake off the sloth and the slumber of worldly ease and self-indulgence—let us rise above the withering influence of religious formality and dull routine—let us fling aside the dogmas of false theology, and go forth, in the spirit of our minds and in the affections of our hearts, to meet our returning Bridegroom. May His own solemn words come with fresh power to our souls, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." May the language of our hearts and our lives be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The dark stream of evil is flowing apace;

Awake, and be doing, ye children of grace.

Let's seek with compassion the souls that are lost,
Well knowing the price their redemption has cost.
While singing with rapture the Savior's great love,
And waiting for Him to translate us above—
"It may be tomorrow, or even tonight"—
Let our loins be well girded, and lamps burning bright.

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Two Resurrections

It is a fact full of the richest comfort and consolation to the heart of a true believer, that our God, in His marvelous grace, ever makes the eater to yield meat, and the strong, sweetness. He brings light out of darkness, life out of death, and causes the bright beams of His glory to shine amid the most disastrous ruin caused by the enemy's hand. The truth of this is illustrated on every page of the inspired volume, and it should fill our hearts with peace and our mouths with praise.

Hence it is that the varied doctrinal errors, and practical evils, into which the early Christians were permitted to fall, have been overruled of God, and used for the instruction, guidance, and solid profit of the Church to the close of her earthly history.

Thus, for example, the error of the Thessalonian Christians in reference to their departed brethren was made the occasion of pouring such a flood of divine light upon the Lord's coming, and upon the rapture of the saints, that it is impossible for any simple mind, that bows to scripture, ever to fall into a similar mistake. They looked for the Lord to come; and in that they were right. They expected Him to set up His kingdom on the earth; and in that they were right, as to the broad fact.

But they made a great mistake in leaving out the heavenly side of this glorious hope. Their intelligence was defective—their faith lacking. They did not see the two parts—the double bearing of the advent of Christ—His descent into the air to receive His people to Himself, and His appearing in glory to set up His kingdom in manifested power. Hence they feared that their departed brethren would necessarily be absent from the sphere of blessing—the circle of glory. This mistake is divinely corrected, as we have seen, in the first epistle, chapter 4. The heavenly side of the hope—the Christian's proper portion—is placed before the heart as the true corrective for the error in reference to the sleeping saints. Christ will gather all (and not merely part of) His people to Himself; and if there is to be any advantage—a shade of difference in the matter, it will be on the side of those very people about whom they were mourning. "The dead in Christ shall rise first."

But, from the second epistle to the Thessalonians, we learn that those dear young converts had been led into another grave error—an error, not as to the dead, but as to the living—a mistake, not respecting "the coming," but respecting "the day of the Lord." In the one case, they feared that the dead would not participate in the blissful triumph of the coming; and, in the other case, they feared that the living were actually, at the very moment, involved in the terrors of the day.

Such is the mistake with which the inspired apostle deals in his second letter to the Thessalonian believers; and nothing can exceed the tenderness and delicacy, and yet withal the wisdom and faithfulness of his dealing.

The Christians at Thessalonica were passing through intense persecution and tribulation; and it is very evident that the enemy, by means of false teachers, sought to upset their minds, by leading them to think that "the great and terrible day of the Lord" had actually arrived, and that the troubles through which they were passing were the accompaniments of that day. If this were so, the entire

teaching of the apostle was proved false; for if there was one truth that shone forth more brightly and prominently in his teaching than another, it was the association and identification of believers with Christ—an association so intimate, an identification so close, that it was impossible for Christ to appear in glory without His people. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” But He must appear in order to introduce “the day.”

Furthermore, when the day of the Lord does actually arrive, it will not be to trouble His people, but, on the contrary, to trouble their persecutors. Of this the apostle reminds them, in the most simple, forcible manner, in his very opening lines: “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God [Gentiles], and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ [Jews].” Chapter 1:3-8.

Thus, not only was the christian position involved in this matter, but the very glory of God—His actual righteousness. If, indeed, the day of the Lord brought tribulation to Christians, then was there no truth in the doctrine—the grand prominent doctrine of Paul’s teaching—that Christ and His people are one; and moreover it would impugn the righteousness of God. In short, then, if Christians were in tribulation, it was morally impossible that the day of the Lord could have set in, for when that day comes, it will be rest for believers, as their public recompense, in the kingdom—not merely in the Father’s house; which is not the point here. The tables will be completely turned. The Church will be in rest, the Church’s troublers is tribulation. During man’s day, the Church is called to tribulation; but in the day of the Lord all will be reversed.

Let the reader note this carefully. It is not the question of Christians suffering tribulation. They are actually called to it in this world, so long as wickedness has the upper hand. Christ suffered and so must they. But the point we want to fasten upon the mind and heart of the Christian is, that when Christ comes to set up His kingdom, it is utterly impossible that His people can be in trouble. Thus the entire teaching of the enemy, by which he sought to upset the Thessalonian believers, was proved to be utterly fallacious. The apostle sweeps away the very foundation of the whole fabric by the simple statement of the precious truth of God. This is the divine way of delivering people from false notions and vain fears. Give them the truth, and error must flee before it. Let in the sunshine of God’s eternal word, and all the mists and clouds of false doctrine must be rolled away.

But let us, for a moment, examine the further teaching of our apostle, in this remarkable writing. In so doing, we shall see how thoroughly he establishes the distinction between “the coming” and “the day”—a distinction which the reader will do well to ponder.

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by [or on the ground of] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of the Lord is present.”

Now, apart altogether from the question of various readings, a moment's reflection will suffice to show the simple minded Christian that the apostle could not possibly mean to teach the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord was not, even then, at hand. Scripture can never contradict itself. No one sentence of divine revelation can possibly collide with another. But if the reading given in our excellent Authorized Version were correct, it would stand in direct opposition to Rom. 13:12, where we are plainly and expressly told that "the day is at hand." What "day?" The day of the Lord, most surely, which is always the term used in connection with our individual responsibility in walk and service.

This, we may remark in passing, is a point of much interest and practical value. If the reader will take the trouble to examine the various passages in which "the day" is spoken of, he will find that they have reference, more or less, to the question of work, service, or responsibility. For instance, "That ye may be blameless [not at the coming, but] in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1:8.) Again, "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." (1 Corinthians in. 13.) "Without offense till the day of Christ." (Phil. 1:10.) "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." 2 Tim. 4:8.

From all these passages, and many more which might be adduced, we learn that "the day of the Lord" will be the grand time for reckoning with the workers; for the divine appraisal of service; for the settling of all questions of personal responsibility; for the distribution of rewards—the "ten cities" and the "five cities."

Thus wherever we turn, in whatever way we look at the subject, we are more and more confirmed in the truth of the clear distinction between our Lord's "coming" or "state of presence," and His "appearing" or "day." The former is ever held up before the heart as the bright and blessed hope of the believer, which may be realized at any moment. The latter is pressed rather upon the conscience, in deep solemnity, as bearing upon the entire practical career of those who are set in this world to work and witness for an absent Lord. Scripture never confounds these things, however much we may do it; nor is there a single sentence, from cover to cover of the holy volume, which teaches that believers are not always to be looking out for the coming of the Lord, and ever to bear in mind that "the day is at hand." It is only "that evil servant"—referred to in our Lord's discourse in Matt. 24—that "says in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;" and there we see the terrible results which must ever flow from the harboring of such a thought in the heart.

We shall now return, for a moment, to 2 Thess. 2—a passage of scripture which has given rise to much discussion amongst prophetic expositors, and presented considerable difficulty to the students of prophecy.

It is very evident that the false teachers had been seeking to disturb the minds of the Thessalonians by leading them to think that they were, even then, surrounded by the terrors of the day of the Lord. Not so, says the apostle; that cannot be. Before ever that day opens, we must all be gathered to meet the Lord in the air. He beseeches them on the ground (■π■ρ) of the Lord's coming, and our gathering together unto Him, not to be troubled about the day. He had already opened to them the heavenly side of the Lord's coming. He had taught them that they, as Christians, belonged to the day; that their home and their portion and their hope were all in that very region from which the day was to shine out. It was wholly impossible, therefore, that the day of the Lord could involve any terror or trouble to those who were, actually, through grace, the sons

of the day.

But, further, even looking at the subject from the earthly side of it, the false teachers were all wrong. "Let no man deceive you by any means for [that day shall not come] except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was with you, I told you these things. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [or the appearing of his presence]. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Verses 3-10.

Here, then, we are taught that ere the day of the Lord arrives, the lawless one, the man of sin, the son of perdition must be revealed. The mystery of iniquity must rise to a head. Man shall set himself up in open opposition to Gods nay, shall even assume to himself the name and the worship of God. All this has to be developed on the earth before that great and terrible day of the Lord shall burst in judgment upon the scene. For the present, there is a barrier, a hindrance to the manifestation of this awful personage. We are not told here what this barrier or hindrance is. God may vary it at different times. But we learn, most distinctly, from the book of Revelation, that ere the mystery of iniquity culminates in the person of the man of sin the Church shall have been removed from this scene altogether. It is impossible to read, with an enlightened eye, Rev. 4 and 5 and not see that the Church shall be in the very innermost circle of heavenly glory, ere a single seal is opened, a single trumpet sounded, a single vial poured out. We do not believe that any one can understand the book of the Apocalypse who does not see this.

We may have occasion to go more freely into this profoundly interesting point, in a future article. We can only now entreat the reader to study the subject for himself. Let him ponder Rev. 4 and 5 and ask God to interpret their precious contents to his soul. In this way, we feel persuaded he will learn that the twenty-four crowned elders set forth the heavenly saints, who shall be gathered round the Lamb, in glory, before a single line of the prophetic portion of the book is fulfilled.

And here we must close this paper; but, ere doing so we should like to put a very plain question to the reader—a question which can only be answered rightly in the immediate presence of God. It is this, What is it thou art looking for? What is thy hope? Art thou looking forward to certain events which are to transpire on this earth, such as the revival of the Roman empire, the development of the ten kingdoms; the gathering back of the Jews to their own land of Palestine; the rebuilding of Jerusalem; the appearance of Antichrist; the great tribulation; and finally the appalling judgments which shall, most surely, usher in the day of the Lord?

Say, beloved friend, are these the things which fill the vision of thy soul? Is it for these thou art looking and waiting? If so, be assured of it, thou art not governed by the Church's proper hope. It is quite true that all these things which we have named shall come to pass in their appointed time; but not one of them should be allowed to come between thee and thy proper hope. They all stand on the prophetic page; they are all recorded in God's history of the future; but they were never

intended to cast a shadow athwart the Christian's bright and blessed hope. That hope stands forth in glorious relief from the background of prophecy. What is it? Yes, we say again, What is it? It is the appearing of the bright and morning Star—the coming of the Lord Jesus—the blessed Bridegroom of the Church.

This, and naught else, is the true and proper hope of the Church of God. "I will give him the morning star." (Rev. 2:28.) "Behold the bridegroom cometh." (Matt. 25) When, we may ask, does the morning star appear in the natural world? Just before the dawning of the day. Who sees it? The one who has been watching during the dark and dreary hours of the night. How plain, how practical, how telling the application! The Church is supposed to be watching—to be lovingly wakeful—to be looking out—to be putting forth that inquiry of the intensely longing heart, "Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" Alas! the Church has failed in this. But that is no reason why the individual believer should not be in the full present power of the blessed hope. "Let him that heareth say, Come." This is deeply personal. Oh! that the writer and the reader of these lines may realize habitually the purifying, sanctifying, elevating power of this heavenly hope! May we understand and exhibit the practical power of those words of the apostle John, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Papers on the Lord's Coming: the Two Resurrections

It may be that some of our readers will feel startled by the title of this paper. Accustomed, from their earliest days, to look at this great question through the medium of Christendom's standards of doctrine and confessions of faith, the idea of two resurrections has never once entered their minds. Nevertheless scripture does speak, in the most distinct and unequivocal terms, of a "resurrection of life," and "a resurrection of judgment"—two resurrections, distinct in character, and distinct in time.

And not only so, but it informs us that there will be, at least, a thousand years between the two. If men teach otherwise—if they build up systems of divinity, and set forth creeds and confessions of faith contrary to the direct and positive teaching of holy scripture, they must settle that with their Lord, as must all who commit themselves to their guidance. But remember, reader, it is your bounden duty and ours to hearken only to the authority of the word of God, and to bow down, in unqualified submission, to its holy teaching.

Let us, then, reverently inquire, what saith the scripture on the subject indicated at the head of this article? May God the Spirit guide and instruct!

We shall first quote that remarkable passage in the fifth chapter of John's gospel: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Here, then, we have, indicated in the most unmistakable terms, the two resurrections. True, they are not distinguished as to time, in this passage; but they are as to character. We have a life resurrection; and a judgment resurrection, and nothing can be more distinct than these. There is no possible ground here on which to build the theory of a promiscuous resurrection. The resurrection of believers will be eclectic; it will be on the same principle, and partake of the same character as the resurrection of our blessed and adorable Lord; it will be a resurrection from among the dead. It will be an act of divine power, founded upon accomplished redemption, whereby God will interpose on behalf of His sleeping saints, and raise them up from among the dead, leaving the rest of the dead in their graves for a thousand years. Rev. 20:5.

There is an interesting passage, in the ninth chapter of Mark, which throws great light on this subject. The opening verses contain the record of the transfiguration; and then we read, "As they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from [from among] the dead should mean."

The disciples felt that there was something special, something entirely beyond the ordinary orthodox idea of the resurrection of the dead, and verily so there was, though they understood it not then. It lay beyond their range of vision at that moment.

But let us turn to the third chapter of Philippians, and hearken to the breathings of one who thoroughly entered into and appreciated this grand christian doctrine, and fondly cherished this glorious and heavenly hope. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead" [ἐξάνστασις]. Verses 10,11.

A moment's just reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the great broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again. But there was something specific before the heart of this dear servant of Christ, namely, "a resurrection from among the dead"—an eclectic resurrection—a resurrection formed on the model of Christ's resurrection. It was for this he longed continually. This was the bright and blessed hope that shone upon his soul and cheered him amid the sorrows and trials, the toils and the difficulties, the buffetings and the conflicts of his extraordinary career.

But, it may be asked, "Does the apostle always use this distinguishing little word (if) when speaking of resurrection?" Not always. Turn, for example, to the twenty-fourth chapter of the Acts, and fifteenth verse: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Here, there is no word to indicate the christian or heavenly side of the subject, for the simplest possible reason that the apostle was speaking to those who were utterly incapable of entering into the Christian's proper hope—far more incapable than even the disciples in Mark 9. How could he possibly unbosom himself in the presence of such men as Tertullus, Ananias, and Felix? How could he speak to them of his own specific and fondly cherished hope? No; he could only take his stand on the great broad truth of resurrection, common to all orthodox Jews. Had he spoken of "a resurrection from among the dead," he could not have added the words, "which they themselves also allow," for they did not "allow" anything of the kind.

But oh! what a contrast between this precious servant of Christ, defending himself from his accusers, in Acts 24 and unbosoming himself to his beloved brethren, in Phil. 3! To the latter he can speak of the true christian hope in the full orb'd light which the glory of Christ pours upon it. He can give utterance to the inmost thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of that great, large, loving heart, with its earnest throbbings after the life-resurrection in the which he shall be satisfied as he wakes up in the likeness of his beloved Lord.

But we must return, for a moment, to our first quotation, from John 5. It may perhaps present a difficulty to some of our readers in laying hold of the truth of the Christian's hope of resurrection, that our Lord makes use of the word "hour" in speaking of the two classes. "How," it is argued, "can there be a thousand years between the two resurrections, when our Lord expressly tells us that all shall occur within the limits of an hour?"

To this question we have a double reply. In the first place, we find our Lord making use of the self-same word "hour," at verse 25, where He is speaking of the great and glorious work of quickening dead souls. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

Now, here, we have a work which has been going on for nearly nineteen long centuries. During all that time, here spoken of as an "hour," the voice of Jesus, the Son of God, has been heard calling precious souls from death to life. If, therefore, in the very same discourse, our Lord used the word "hour" when speaking of a period which has already extended to well-nigh two thousand years, what difficulty can there be in applying the word to a period of one thousand years?

Surely, none whatever, as we judge. But even if any little difficulty yet remained, it must be thoroughly met by the direct testimony of the Holy Ghost, in Rev. 20 where we read, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Verses 5, 6.

This settles the question absolutely and forever, for all those who are willing to be taught exclusively by holy scripture, as every true Christian ought to be. There will be two resurrections, the first and the second; and there will be a thousand years between the two. To the former belong all the Old Testament saints—referred to in Heb. 12 under the title of the spirits of just men made perfect—then the Church of the firstborn ones—and finally all those who shall be put to death during "the great tribulation," and throughout the entire period between the rapture of the saints and the appearing of Christ in judgment upon the beast and his armies, in Rev. 19.

To the latter, on the other hand, belong all those who shall have died in their sins, from the days of Cain, in Gen. 4 down to the last apostate from millennial glory, in Rev. 20.

How solemn is all this! How real! How soul-subduing! If our Lord were to come tonight, what a scene would be enacted in all our cemeteries and graveyards! What tongue, what pen can portray—what heart can conceive—the grand realities of such a moment? There are thousands of tombs in which lie mingled the ashes of the dead in Christ, and the ashes of the dead out of Christ. In many a family vault may be found the ashes of both. Well, then, when the voice of the archangel is heard, all the sleeping saints shall rise from their graves, leaving behind them those who have

died in their sins, to remain in the darkness and silence of the tomb for a thousand years.

Yes, reader, such is the direct and simple testimony of the word of God. True, it does not enter into any curious details. It does not furnish any food for a morbid imagination or idle curiosity. But it sets forth the solemn and weighty fact of a first and second resurrection—a resurrection of life and everlasting glory, and a resurrection of judgment and everlasting misery. There is, positively, no such thing in scripture as a promiscuous resurrection—a common rising of all at the same time. We must abandon this idea altogether, like many others which we have received to hold, in which we have been trained from our earliest days, which have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength, until they have become actually ingrained as part of our very mental, moral, and religious constitution, so that to part with them is like the sundering of limb from limb, or rending the flesh from our bones.

Nevertheless, it must be done, if we really desire to grow in the knowledge of divine revelation. There is no greater hindrance to our getting into the thoughts of God than having our minds filled with our own thoughts, or the thoughts of men. Thus, for example, in reference to the subject of this paper, almost all of us have, at one time, held the opinion that all will rise together, both believers and unbelievers, and all stand together to be judged. Whereas when we come to scripture, like a little child, nothing can be simpler, nothing clearer, nothing more explicit than its teaching, as to this question. Rev. 20:5, teaches us that there will be an interval of a thousand years between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of the wicked.

It is of no use to speak of a resurrection of spirits. Indeed it is a manifest piece of absurdity; for inasmuch as spirits cannot die, they cannot be raised from the dead. Equally absurd is it to speak of a resurrection of principles. There is no such thing in scripture. The language is as plain as plainness itself. “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” Why should anyone seek to set aside the plain force of such a passage? Why not bow to it? Why not get rid, at once, of all our old and fondly cherished notions, and receive with meekness the engrafted word?

Reader, does it not seem plain to thee that if scripture speaks of a first resurrection, then it must follow that all will not rise together? Why should it be said, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,” if all are to rise at the same time?

In fact it seems to us impossible for any unprejudiced mind to study the New Testament and yet hold to the theory of a promiscuous resurrection. It is due to the glory of Christ, the Head, that His members should have a specific resurrection—a resurrection like His own—a resurrection from among the dead. And verily so they shall. “Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor. 15

Lost Soul: Christ Rejected

Lost! lost! and lost forever! You shrink from the words and say, O but can it be? Is it a reality? Did you see that soul go down into hell before your eyes, and you had no power to save her? Did you hear her death-cries of agony, and still could do nothing for her? Yes! yes! it was a terrible reality never to be forgotten by me; and though it is years since, I seldom can think of it without weeping, and the remembrance of it has often sent me with a word of warning to others; and this terrible death scene of which I was an eye witness has often brought from me the cry "Escape for thy life."

The story of A., the rejecter of Christ, is no phantom of some fevered imagination; it is no wrought up story to work upon your feelings and fill you with horror; but may the Lord use it to show you that death is a reality that hell is a reality! and you, sinner, have to meet both if you reject Christ.

It was in the autumn of 18—, we went to reside in a little villa near—. It was one of a cluster of villas looking upon the distant hills. Sometime after we had come there, a gay young couple came to live next door, and we had watched with some little interest the preparations for their arrival.

A few days after this, I saw the lady walking along the footpath near our windows; she was young, and her dress and bearing marked her as one of the world's chosen ones. As her graceful form passed up and down the shrubbery, I was struck with the delicacy of her appearance and a look of unrest upon her fair young face that told its own tale, No peace! no peace! My heart rose in silent prayer to God, that He might send me with a message to her soul. Next day I called. On asking for Mrs.—, the servant told me she was ill, but she thought she would see me. I went in and soon found myself in earnest conversation with Mrs.—. Her tale was soon told, for she was unreserved and very communicative; finding it, as she said, a great comfort to have any one to speak to, to break the monotony of a country life in the absence of her husband, who was all day engaged with business.

During my visit she frankly told me, that though only a few months married, and her heart thoroughly occupied with the world in every form, its ball-rooms, its concerts, its parties, yet she was very unhappy; and, in a simple child-like way, she said, "We have been watching you and your husband pass up and down, and we think you look so happy!" The moment had come: I thanked God for the opportunity to speak, and said, "You are right, we are happy; and the secret of our happiness is, we know Christ; we have peace with God, through believing in the finished work of Christ; and we have in Him what the world has never given you, and never can give you, for the end of all its joys is eternal misery."

As I pressed upon her the necessity of conversion, tears rolled down her cheeks, and she said, "But no one ever told me that before: is it all true?" "Yes," I answered, "for God's word declares to us 'Ye must be born again,' and, 'Except ye be converted.....ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" I pressed upon her the necessity of accepting Christ now, and rose to leave; slowly and solemnly she said, "Well, I would like to have your Christ, but I love the world; and though I am often unhappy. Yet I could never give up my dancing; and you know," she said, as a hollow smile

played upon her lips, "I sing at private concerts, and they say, A's voice is the best voice there." I shuddered! A little of the world's praise is more to thee, fair A., than the unsearchable riches of Christ. I said, "Remember, they that reject Christ here, will have to spend eternity in hell."

A few days after this, on returning from a walk, I found Mrs.—had called. I hastened to return her visit, and found her more miserable than before. Struggling to assume a gaiety she did not feel, she met me by saying, "O let me tell you about the concert I am to sing at next week." "Stop," I said, "there will be no singing in hell!" "O," she said, "don't speak in that way, I cannot bear it; speak of your Jesus if you like, but not of hell!" Again I told her of His love for sinners, but her mind was full of her coming concert, her dress, her songs, &c. And as I parted from her, very sad, she said, "When the concert is over I will come and talk to you:" but weeks passed and she came not.

We were leaving our country home for a time, so I called to say good-bye, and pressed once more upon her the salvation of her precious soul; but she was swamped in a whirlpool of coming gaiety, and had no time for Christ.

It was months ere we returned home, and almost immediately I was laid upon a bed of sickness, from which I was just recovering when a message came to me one morning from Mrs.—, whom I had not seen since my return.

"Do come at once, I wish to see you." I rose quickly and dressed, and soon found myself at her door. It was opened by a sister, who said, "O come in; A. is very ill, and is very anxious to see you." With noiseless footsteps I went upstairs to her room; gently I opened the door of that half-darkened chamber, and, O shall I ever forget the sight! There, on the bed, lay A., in the ravings of fever; her infant son, a few weeks old, on a little bed by her side. Her graceful form was racked by pain, her masses of dark tangled hair lay on the pillow, the dew of death was on her brow; and, as her large dark eyes opened and saw me, her parched and blackened lips parted, and she almost screamed, "O you have come at last; now do not leave me." And sitting up in bed, she grasped me with a strength that only fever gives. "Have you sent for the doctor?" I whispered to her sister. "No," said A., wildly, hearing me, "he will only tell me I am very ill, and you know I must be at the choral meeting next week. I am to sing at the concert;" and so saying, she fell back on her pillow in a swoon. I pointed to her sister to take my place, and hurried from the room.

In a few minutes my husband was off for the doctor. It seemed long till he came; never shall I forget that hour, while anxiously listening for his footsteps. I bathed the burning brow, and pleaded with her to let me cut off the tangled web of her once lovely hair; and as she again half swooned, I did so, hearing her murmur all the time, "But the concert! how can I go to the concert without my hair? and it was so beautiful! O they said A.'s hair was so beautiful!" At last I heard the doctor's hurried footsteps on the stair, and I left the room. As he came out I met him; his anxious face told all. "Doctor, is she dying?" "Yes, dying fast; but don't tell her! I am going for another doctor, but I know it's too late." And giving me a few hurried orders about his patient, he left me, with his words ringing in my ears, "Dying fast! don't tell her!" Yes, I must tell her, was my resolve, for she is unsaved and does not know it. I could only look up in agony and say, "O God, help me to speak to her!" The doctor had told me to give her champagne and brandy every quarter of an hour, till he returned; she heard the order and asked for it whenever I entered the room; drinking it down she exclaimed, "O I can live a quarter of an hour upon that, surely I am not dying?" "Yes, A.," I said, "you are dying; but I can tell you of One who died to save just such as you." Gently I told her in

very simple words of that One who met the prodigal in the far off land; and the dying thief upon the cross; but she almost threw me from her, and said, "I cannot hear it now; when I get better I'll come and sit with you and hear about your Jesus, but not now," and again she swooned.

I prayed, O as I had never prayed before, and as I rose from my knees I found her large dark eyes, already glazed by the hand of death, fixed upon me. "O," she said, "pray to your Jesus, He will hear you; but I don't know Him, and I cannot hear about Him now." Eagerly I asked, "What shall I pray to Him for, A.?" Horror filled me as I heard her answer, "Pray to Him that I may get well, and go to the concert."

Again I pleaded with her about her soul; but it was no use. She had rejected Christ all her life, and she would not have Him now. Hours passed and the doctors came, only to say; "Sinking fast!" Her husband and friends arrived to see the end of the fair A., and I would fain have left a scene so terrible; but she held me in her grasp.

Every quarter of an hour as I gave her her draft she said, "O, I can live upon that—it must make me live—I cannot die!" And then in plaintive accents she wailed out, "I'm too young to die, yes, I'm only twenty-one: yes, too young to die!"

"Father," she said, as her father drew near the bed, "will you take me to the concert next week?" "Yes," said her father, "I will." I was a stranger to her friends, and seeing she was sinking fast, I passed away from a scene so awful. In a few moments all was over, and the soul of A., the rejecter of Christ, had passed from the world and its pleasures, its balls, and its concerts, into the realities of an endless eternity. "Woe unto you, ye despisers!" "ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

The night is looming far, the hanging shadows spread,

The wand'ers stray on life's wild way, no starbeam's light is shed.

I hold the heaven-lit lamp, lit by my Savior's hand;

Its rays might light their path as mine, and guide to heaven's bright land.

O lamp, shine brightly round; O voice, be strong to call;

O hand, stretch far where the dying are with life's rich draft for all!

Be strong, thou ransom'd soul, rest on thy Savior's love,

Clasp His hand in the desert land, point to the home above.

A Motto for the Year 1872

Dear Reader, we want you to accept a little motto for the year on which you have just entered; and, if we mistake not, you will find it a precious motto for every year during which your Lord may see fit to leave you on this earth. It consists of two short but most weighty passages from the divine volume. You will find them in Psalm 119 The first is this: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Ver. 89.) The second is this: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Verse 11.

These are, in good truth, golden sentences for the present moment. They set forth the true place for the word, namely, "settled in heaven" and "hidden in the heart." Nor is this all; they also link the heart on to the very throne of God, by means of His own word, thus giving to the Christian all the stability and all the moral security which the divine word is capable of imparting.

We do not forget—God forbid we should—that in order to enter into the power and value of these words, there must be faith wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost. We would remember this. But our present subject is not faith, nor yet the precious work of the Spirit of God; but simply the word of God, in its eternal stability and its holy authority. We esteem it an unspeakable mercy and privilege—in the midst of all the strife and confusion, the discussion and controversy, the conflicting opinions and dogmas of men, the ever shifting sands of human thought and feeling—to have something "settled." It is a sweet relief and rest to the heart that has, it may be, been tossed about for many a long year, on the troubled sea of human opinion, to find that there is, after all, and spite of all, that on which one may lean with all the calm confidence of faith, and find therein divine and eternal stability.

What a mercy, in the face of the unrest and uncertainty of the present moment, to be able to say, "I have gotten something settled—settled forever—settled forever in heaven!" What effect, we may ask, can the bold and audacious reasonings of infidelity, or the sickly vaporings of superstition have upon the soul that can say, "My heart is linked to the throne of God by means of that word which is settled forever in heaven?" None whatever. Infidelity and superstition—the two great agents of hell in this very day in which we live—can only take effect upon those who really have nothing settled, nothing fixed, no link with the throne and heart of God. The wavering and undecided—those who halt between two opinions, who are looking this way and that way, who are afloat, who have no haven, no anchorage—these are in imminent danger of falling under the power of infidelity and superstition.

We invite the special attention of the young reader to all this. We would sound a warning note in the ears of such. The present is a moment of deep and awful solemnity. The arch-enemy is putting forth every effort to sap the very foundations of Christianity. In all directions the divine authority and all-sufficiency of holy scripture is being called in question. Rationalism is gaining ground, to a fearful extent, at our seats of learning, and polluting the fountains whence the streams of religious thought and feeling are emanating over the land. Truth is at a discount, even amongst those who ought to be its guardians. We may, now-a-days, behold the strange sight of professing christian

teachers taking part at meetings where professed infidels preside. Alas! alas! men who are professed infidels themselves may become pastors and teachers in that which calls itself the Church of God.

In the face of all this, how precious, how weighty is our motto, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven!" Nothing can touch this. It is above and beyond the reach of all the powers of earth and hell, men and devils. "The word of our God shall stand forever." The Lord be praised for the sweet and solid consolation of this!

But let us remember the counterpart: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Here lies the great moral safeguard for the soul in this dark and evil day. To have God's word hidden in the heart is the divine secret of being preserved from all the snares of the enemy, and from all the evil influences which are at work around us. Satan and his agents can do absolutely nothing with a soul that reverently clings to scripture. The man who has learned, in the school of Christ, the force and meaning of that one commanding sentence, "It is written," is proof against all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Dear reader, let us earnestly entreat you to ponder these things. Let us remind you that the one grand point for the people of God, now and at all times, is obedience. It is not a question of power, or of gift, or of external show, or of numbers; it is simply a question of obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice." To obey what? The Church? Nay, the Church is a hopeless ruin, and cannot therefore be an authority. Obey what? The word of the Lord. What a rest for the heart! What authority for the path! What stability for the whole practical career! There is nothing like it. It tranquillizes the Spirit in an ineffable manner, and imparts a holy consistency to the character. It is a divine answer to those who talk of power, boast of numbers, point to external show, and profess reverence for antiquity. Moreover, it is the divine antidote for the spirit of independence, so rife, at the present day—for the haughty uprisings of the human will—the hold assertion of man's rights. The human mind is tossed like a ball from superstition to infidelity, and can find no rest. It is like a ship without compass, rudder, or anchor, driven hither and thither. But thanks be to God for all those to whose hearts the Holy Ghost has interpreted our motto for 1872. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Nevertheless

The word which forms the heading of this paper occurs in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, and the last verse. It is a very important word, as indicating what we are all so prone to forget, that there are two sides to every question, and, in particular, to the great question before the apostle's mind, in this passage. He is speaking of the subject of marriage, and of the relative duties of husband and wife, and he uses as an illustration, "The great mystery of Christ and the Church."

Now, there are two sides to this subject. There is a heavenly side, and there is an earthly side. We want them both. We cannot dispense with either; and the Holy Ghost has, in His infinite wisdom, bound them indissolubly together by the little word "nevertheless;" and, may we not say, what God has joined together let not man put asunder? It is quite true—blessedly true—that the Church's relation to Christ is heavenly: that the Church is called to know, rejoice in, feed upon, walk with, follow, and be conformed to a heavenly Christ.

All this is what we may well call vital and fundamental truth, which cannot, for a moment, be given up or lost sight of, without giving up, so far, the heavenly side of Christianity.

But are we not in danger of forgetting the practical application of all this to our present walk, on the earth, amid the stern realities of actual life, day by day? Are not husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, earthly relationships? Unquestionably. True it is they are formed upon a heavenly model, and to be carried out after a heavenly pattern, as they also rest upon a heavenly base.

But still they are relationships in nature, formed on the earth, and to be carried out in daily life. There will be no such relationships in heaven. They do not belong to the resurrection-state. They belong to nature, to earth, to our time-condition, and we are called to walk in them as christian men, women, and children, and to glorify God by our spirit and temper and manner, our whole deportment therein, from hour to hour, and day to day.

Thus, for example, of what use is it for a man to traffic in lofty theories respecting the heavenly relationship of Christ and the Church, while he fails, every day of his life, in his earthly relationship as a husband? His wife is neglected; it may be treated coldly or harshly; she is not nourished, cherished, sustained and ministered to according to the heavenly model of Christ and His Church.

No doubt, the same pointed question may be asked in reference to the wife, and to all the other sacred relationships of our earthly and natural existence, for "there are two sides to every question."

Hence the very great importance of the apostle's "nevertheless." We may depend upon it, it has a wide application. It is most evident that the Holy Ghost anticipated the need of such a qualifying, modifying, regulating clause, when, having descanted upon the heavenly side of the subject of marriage, He adds, "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as

himself; and the wife See that she reverence her husband.”

Christian reader, let us remember the two sides. Let us deeply ponder the inspired “Nevertheless.” We may rest assured there is a need of it. There is the most urgent need of the practical application of divine and heavenly truth to our natural relationships and earthly ways. We have to remember that God recognizes nature, else why have we marriage? Flesh is not recognized, but nature is; and even admitted as a teacher (see Corinthians 11:14). We are not yet actually in heaven. We are there, thank God, as to our standing, there in spirit, there in principle, there by faith. Our life, our portion, our hope, our home is there, because Christ is there.

But we are here on this earth, called to represent Christ in this world, as He represents us in heaven. God views us as men, women, and children, called to tread the sand of the desert, and to meet the positive realities of daily life. Life is a reality—an actual bona fide practical reality; and our God has provided for us, in view of this fact, by the priestly ministry of Christ, on high; and by the ministry of the Holy Ghost and the teachings of holy scripture here below. We must have what is real to meet what is real. We are not called, thank God, to be occupied with visionary notions, with empty theories, with a powerless sentimentality, nor even with one-sided truth. No; we are called to be real, genuine, sound, practical christian men, women, and children. We are called to display, in our daily history here on this earth, the practical results of that which we know and enjoy by faith in heaven. In one word, we must never forget that when the very highest truths are being unfolded before us, there is a healthful and holy application of these truths indicated by the inspired “Nevertheless.”

Only One More or the Last Ball

Nellie was very fair! I had often watched her with admiration as she rode up and down the promenade; her golden hair floating in the wind, and her sweet face radiant with smiles; she had much natural amiability and sweetness of temper and was loved by many.

Her days passed in a whirl of gaiety, in which she was the center of attraction. Young, lovely, and wealthy, her company was sought after and courted; her silvery voice echoed through many a mansion, and her graceful form was constantly to be seen in the many ballrooms and fashionable circles of the very gay town in which she lived.

To the eye of the inexperienced, Nellie's fair face was blooming and healthy-looking, but there were some who watched her with anxious care, and knew well that the hectic tinge on her cheeks, and the diamond luster of her brilliant eye, gave warning of an early tomb. Her kind physician had oftentimes warned and pleaded with her to give up a life of gaiety and late hours, which was feeding a disease human skill had failed to arrest; but she laughingly put away such fears by saying, "Let me have one ball more, and then I shall become religious." But the one ball was followed by many; and night after night, Nellie, radiant as ever, was in crowded, heated rooms, as if determined to live in the whirl of pleasure as long as she possibly could.

Poor girl! there were few if any in the circle in which she moved to speak to her of Christ; few to tell her of the only One who could give her real joy and satisfaction; and who could, in place of the passing pleasures of a poor fleeting world, give her pleasures that would last forever, and would not pass away. To one who did speak to her of an eternity which might not be very far off, she answered, "Oh, but I'm not so ill as some people think I am and I do mean to be religious someday."

It was a night of intense cold; Nellie's elegant dressing room in L. Crescent was brilliantly lighted, everything in it showing the exquisite taste and refinement of its fair occupant; she lay in her dressing gown on the sofa, resting from the fatigue of her half-finished toilet; she looked pensive and a shade of sadness was over her large eyes, as she repeated again and again to the companion who was going with her, "And this is to be my last ball; I have made up my mind to have only one more, and then I shall retire into private life, and become religious." "Are you sure you are able to go tonight?" said her friend, "you don't look quite well." "Not quite well," said Nellie; "but I'm only to have one more:" and so saying she rang the bell for her maid.

Soon the lovely one was dressed in her snowy satin with its rich lace; it had been made on purpose for "Nellie's last ball." The freshly gathered hot-house roses were twined through her golden tresses. The white boots and gloves drawn on those tiny hands and feet, and she was ready. The carriage was at the door, Nellie's friend had taken her place in it, and she, wrapped in her white cloak, was descending the staircase. The keen blast of a severe winter night had to be faced by that fragile form; the little foot was on the carriage step, she shuddered and drew back, quickly retraced her steps into the hall, and fell backwards at the foot of the staircase.

She was dead!

Awe-stricken, yet not realizing the fact that this was more than a faint, her friends carried her to her room, and her doctor who lived very near was present in a minute; but no power of man could recall life, and horror-stricken friends gathered round to hear that the heart of that gay worldly one had ceased to beat forever.

This is a true story; many details I refrain from giving. I have told it simply as I got it from one who knew her. I was myself living but a few doors from the house in which she lived, at the time she was thus called to meet God in a moment. And for you who are unsaved, I write it as a word of warning. Take heed lest ye too be cut off in your sins!

Where is Nellie now? Her silvery laugh will never ring again. She had "the pleasures of sin for a season" here without Christ, but let a veil be drawn over her eternity of woe. It is for me now to cry aloud to you, Escape, escape, lest ye perish like her! Harken, ye gay ones! Stop and think! Tomorrow you may be in eternity! Your laughter may be turned into weeping and wailing, your mirth into anguish and woe! I would reason with you, I would plead with you, I would beseech you to come to Jesus now! "He ready stands to bless you." Flee to Him now! Surely you are not going to wait for "only one ball more." The risk is too great. Your whole eternity may depend upon it. Cast yourself into those loving arms now, ere it be too late.

He offered Himself a sacrifice for sin that He might give eternal life without money and without price. Did it cost Him little to purchase salvation for guilty rebels? to leave the brightness of the glory and come down here to die? "Ah," you say. "but I shall not die like Nellie: I am not likely to be cut off in a moment. I shall have time to repent and turn to God ere I die!"

And who has given you this promise, may I ask? I find none such in God's word. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 28:3.) There is time, now this moment, for you to turn to God. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." I have no promise for tomorrow. There is salvation for everyone who believes in Jesus now, but I dare not say, You may have one ball more and then come to Christ: the risk is too great: come now, just as you are, delay not a moment. I was asked lately by one who had heard the gospel, and had been pressed to accept Christ, "But could I not put it off for a year, am not likely to die?" O horrible thought! put off the salvation of your precious soul for twelve months more! Thousands of souls go down into hell every year, and why not yours, ye rejecters of Christ? God is not mocked: if ye live to the world and refuse Christ, ye shall die in your sins. You may be very attractive and very amiable in the world's eyes, and you may even have a profession of being Christ's; but if you have never been converted, your mask will be torn off some day and you will have to stand before God an unveiled liar. How? oh! how will you stand the gaze of His eyes, who "knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth?"

O reader, that would be an evil day for thee, to be found, like one who when called to die cried out, "I would give millions for one moment of time." But too late, too late then! your season of grace is past, and you have lost Christ forever, for the sake of the unreality of this world's fleeting joys.

Reader, it is of the Lord's mercy you are still alive: do not trifle with the grace that still pleads with you. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18.

Do you wish to spend eternity with Christ, with Christ forever? Look unto Him now. Or do you wish to have only one ball more? one more! one more! It matters not what; only one more of anything that keeps you away from Christ; one more grain of sand it may be from the sirocco of sin; one more breath from the poisoned simoom of pleasure; one more wave from the sea of sunny enjoyments here, bearing you onward, poor victim, upon its deceitful tide to your eternal doom! "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame." Luke 16:23, 24.

The Poor Charwoman! or Jesus Is Mine

Since reading the foregoing paper in MS, a scene, long past, has been brought afresh to my mind, as a blessed contrast. It happened in a country town about twelve years ago. A brief sketch of which may serve as a companion.

Several evenings had been devoted to preaching, prayer, and conversation with anxious souls. A goodly number were deeply impressed, and many were truly converted; but our present object is to speak of one only.

It was thought desirable to have a general tea meeting, and invite the anxious and those interested in the gospel. After tea and before the address, when many were moving about and conversing freely on the concerns of the soul—a poor emaciated-looking woman came up to me with a sheet of hymns in her hand, and placing her finger on the words, “Jesus is mine,” said, with much feeling, “I could not sing these words last evening, but, oh, thank the Lord, I can sing them tonight.” “Thank the Lord indeed, my dear woman,” I replied, “and are you happy now?” “O yes,” she said, “but I was so unhappy last night,” and went on explaining her feelings and experience in something like the following words:

“When we all stood up to sing that hymn, ‘Jesus is mine,’ something said to me, You can’t sing that, Jesus is not yours. And there I stood trembling with fear, and could not sing a word. And when I saw you all so happy, my heart was like to break. I did not know what to do; and after I went home I could do nothing but cry; I could not sleep; and I prayed, and prayed, that the Lord would save my soul, and give me faith to say ‘Jesus is mine.’ And the Lord had mercy on me, for He did answer my prayer, and I could say before I fell asleep, ‘Jesus is mine,’ and I am quite happy now.”

“I am delighted to hear what you say; you ought to be the happiest woman on earth, what a noble prize you have found! But do you remember how you came to feel sure of Jesus being yours?”

“Well, it somehow came before my mind, that Jesus had died for me as well as for the others, and I should believe that and put my trust in Him, for He will never cast me off; and I did feel that I could trust in Jesus, and that I could love Him for having died for me a great sinner; and I should like to sing that hymn tonight, if you will give it out.”

It was not difficult to see that all was real, and that the Holy Spirit had been her teacher. I mentioned the woman’s desire to the meeting with some of the circumstances, and we sung the hymn with great joy of heart, the woman joining with us. Those who are familiar with such scenes know the peculiar joy which such an instance of God’s grace produces. It is a sweet foretaste of heaven. Having ascertained how she came to the meetings, we parted, never to meet again in this world. Soon after this she was called home.

I afterward learned from the sister who induced her to come to the meetings, that she was a poor charwoman in bad health. But rest was near. Her illness increased. She was told at the hospital, that she must undergo an operation as the only hope of recovery, but the surgeon was afraid that

she was too weak to survive it. After consulting the kind friend who had brought her to the meetings, she consented to submit to the operation. She said she was not afraid to die, and that if it were the Lord's will to take her home she was happy to go. Her friend accompanied her to the operating room, but a scene occurred, seldom witnessed in that frightful place. When fixed in the right position for the operation, her mind seems to have turned to Jesus. In place of thinking of the terrors of the knife—and full of terrors it must be to a woman's heart—she commenced singing her favorite hymn: "Now I have found a Friend, Jesus is mine; His love will never end, Jesus is mine; Though earthly joys decrease, Though human friendships cease, Now I have lasting peace, Jesus is mine."

We must leave the reader to imagine the effect of such an unusual occurrence in an operating room, especially if the students were present. The operation was performed, but the patient sank under it, and shortly after fell asleep in Jesus.

But whence this courage? the courage that could sing in such overwhelming circumstances? To be strapped to a table, to be surrounded with students, to see the surgeon with the sharp instrument in his hand, is more than enough to shake the strongest nerve, and make the stoutest heart to quail. How then, it may be asked, could a poor charwoman—a woman without education, without cultivation of any kind, so rise above the circumstances in which she was placed? There is but one answer to this question—She knew Jesus. Not merely, observe, pardon and salvation, precious as these are; but she knew Jesus Himself—the person, as well as the work, of the Lord Jesus. We believe a doctrine, we rest in a truth, but strictly speaking we love neither. We can only love a person. This is power; this was the power of the poor charwoman. To lean upon an arm that will never grow feeble, to meet an eye that will never grow dim, to confide in a heart that will never grow cold, is rest and peace and joy; but joyless must the soul be that knows not the person of the Lord Jesus, even though knowing pardon and salvation.

Dear reader, where art thou, what hast thou? Knowest thou the value of His work for thy conscience, and the preciousness of His person for thy heart? Thou believest that He is the Savior of the world, but believest thou that He is thy Savior? What art thou without Him? What would this world be without a sun? Bright, compared to the darkness and desolation of thy Christless state. Still He lingers in love for thee. Come to Jesus now. He waits, He longs, He loves to receive thee. Turn not a deaf ear, a careless heart, to His invitations. Wrath is reserved for the rejecter of Christ; the sword but slumbers in its sheath. Oh! turn, turn, TURN, to Him now—just now—while His arms are extended wide to fold thee in the everlasting embrace of His eternal love. Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:37; Luke 7:36-50.

Repentance

Repentance is a great word, says one; it is altogether contrary to the bent of the human will. Man may make efforts, but he will never repent. Only grace gives real repentance, which, when used in its proper sense, means simply and invariably the judgment of self. Now to this, man will never bend. Amends he may offer, he may endeavor to do good, and repair the evil; but to own self wrong, without qualification, reserve, or endeavoring to move the blame on others, is never the nature of man, but the result of the working of divine grace, and true therefore of every soul that is truly renewed. It is impossible for a sinner to be brought to God without repentance. Faith no doubt is the spring of all; it alone gives power by the revelation of grace in the person and work of Christ; but repentance is the invariable consequence or concomitant.

Repentance is the judgment we form, under the effect of God's testimony, of all in ourselves to which that testimony applies: it is the estimate man forms of sin, of his own ways as a sinner, on reflection, through the light of God penetrating into his soul, and some sense of goodness in Him, and setting up withal divine authority there. This may be through divine warnings, as in the case of Jonah, or the lamenting of a John Baptist announcing that the ax is laid to the root of the tree. It is always mercy. He gives repentance to Israel, grants repentance unto life: His goodness leads us to it. There would be no returning if there was not hope; it may be very vague, but still a hope of being received, and goodness trusted to. So it was with the prodigal son, and with the Ninevites. But faith is the only and necessary source of repentance. It is by the testimony of the word it is wrought. Be it prophets, or Jonas, or John, or the Lord Himself, or the apostles, who taught that man should repent and turn to God, it was wrought by a testimony of God, and a testimony believed. Now this testimony is the testimony to Christ Himself. Repentance, as well as remission of sins, was to be preached in His name.

The true working of the gospel in the heart is to bring first of all to repentance. It brings into the light, though it tells of love, for God is both; and that love makes us judge ourselves when God is really revealed. It cannot be otherwise. If men have been already exercised, the preaching of a simple and clear redemption will, through grace, give peace. It answers the soul's need, which, having already looked at itself, is now enabled to look to God through Christ, learns that God is for it, and learns divine righteousness. If a man has not been previously exercised, wherever there is a true work, the effect of the fullest grace is to reach the conscience, to lead to repentance. The soul feels it has to do with God responsibly; has failed, been evil, corrupt, without God; is humbled, has a horror of itself and its state; may fear, will surely hope, and eventually, if simple, very soon find peace. But it will say, "Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

We cannot preach the gospel too clearly or too fully—grace abounding where sin abounded, grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life—but the effect of this gospel when fully received, the effect we ought to look for in souls, is repentance, as the present first effect: and it will be a deepening one all through our course.

Salvation

Salvation is too great a thought for the heart of man to suggest. God must provide us with it. The religious mind of man resents it as inconsistent with the obligations he owes to God, and with the relationship and responsibility under which he stands to Him. The moral sense resents it as being no security for practical life and righteousness. How deeply at fault they both are! How unequal is the best human tiling to reach the divine! While neither man's religion, nor man's morality gives toleration to the idea of salvation, God, as we see, is occupied with it from first to last. The mention of it, the history of it, the gradual display of it, the exercise of it, illustrations of it in one sinner after another, stretch along the whole volume. He dispenses it now, and calls on us to enjoy it; He will perfect it by and by, and will call on us to celebrate it.

Having begun to tell of itself as soon as it was needed, that is, as soon as sin entered, in the very first promise; and having given further and various notice of itself in patriarchal, Mosaic, and prophetic ages; when the Son in due time was manifested, when the Word was made flesh, salvation, so to speak, was presented in a Person. God in flesh was named "Jesus;" and this because "he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus is the imperishable name. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." It is the name which abides in bloom and freshness, the unfading title which eternity has no power to efface. Time wears away the rocks; eternity will do nothing with that name, save to celebrate it. "Jesus," or Savior, was the first word written by the finger of God in the record-book of this world of sin, and it has ever since been kept, like the bow in the cloud, in the freshness of its first hour. It is the unchanging, unchangeable, name. God's salvation, the anointed Savior, Jesus Christ, is the enduring, pervading, commanding thought. It is not the unutterable, but it is the imperishable name. Israel under the law found the divine name to be too high, too distant, too sacred for human lips. It was the unutterable name. But the sinner under grace talks of the divine name now, and will forever.

Salvation comprehends a wondrous system of high and glorious privileges, which are all ours, through the faith of Jesus. In the Epistles especially we get an account of this great comprehension. As for instance, we there learn that divine righteousness, sonship, and the spirit of adoption, the indwelling Spirit, the glorified body, translation in the hour of the Lord's coming, share in the kingdom, and place in the house of the Father, acceptance in the Beloved, the confidence and friendship of the Lord, and inheritance of all things with Him, His own eternity—these are among the high conditions of those who are in the salvation of God.

But while it comprehends all this and more of like excellency, that on which it rests is simple as it can be. It is satisfaction—the satisfaction which God has found in the sacrifice on Calvary. This sustains everything. Call our good things by what name we may, justification, acceptance, grace, peace, glory, sanctification, sonship, reconciliation, redemption, or whatever description in name it may carry, all rests on the simple fact that Christ has satisfied God, in that which He has done for us sinners. The rent veil and the resurrection, His seat in the highest heavens, and the presence here of the Holy Ghost, are the blessed witnesses of this satisfaction; such august and wondrous

witnesses as none can gainsay them on the side of our accuser, and none can exceed them as from God Himself. We are to accept salvation from God because He has accepted satisfaction from Christ.

Short Papers on Church History

Constantine the Great was succeeded by his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. They had been educated in the faith of the gospel, and had been named Caesars by their father, and on his death they divided the empire among them. Constantine obtained Gaul, Spain, and Britain; Constantius, the Asiatic provinces, with the capital, Constantinople; and Constans, held Italy and Africa. The beginning of the new reign was characterized—as was usual in those times—by killing the relatives who might one day prove rivals to the throne; but along with the old and usual political jealousies and hostilities, a new element now appears—that of religious controversy.

The eldest son, Constantine, was favorable to the catholics, and signalized the commencement of his reign by recalling Athanasius, and replacing him in his see at Alexandria. But Constantine was killed in 340, in an invasion of Italy; and Constans took possession of his brother's dominions, and thus became the sovereign of two-thirds of the empire. He was favorable to the decisions of the Nicene Council, and adhered with firmness to the cause of Athanasius. Constantius, his empress, and court, were partial to Arianism. And thus the religious war began between the two brothers—between the East and the West, and was carried on without either justice or humanity, to say nothing of the peaceful spirit of Christianity. Constantius, like his father, interfered much in the affairs of the Church; he pretended to be a theologian, and throughout his reign the empire was incessantly agitated by religious controversy. The councils became so frequent that the public posting establishments, were constantly employed by the continual traveling of the bishops; on both sides councils were assembled to oppose councils. But as the principal events of the period, as well as the silver line of God's grace, are connected with Athanasius, we will return to his history.

THE HISTORY OF ATHANASIUS.

After a banishment of two years and four months, Athanasius was restored to his diocese by the younger Constantine, where he was received with a joyful welcome by his flock. But the death of that prince exposed Athanasius to a second persecution. Constantius, who is described as a vain but weak man, soon became the secret accomplice of the Eusebians. In the end of 340 or beginning of 341, a council met at Antioch for the dedication of a splendid church which had been founded by Constantine the elder. The number of bishops is said to have been about ninety-seven, of whom forty were Eusebians. Amongst the number of canons which were passed, it was decided, and with some appearance of equity, that a bishop, deposed by a synod, should not resume his episcopal functions till he had been absolved by the judgment of another synod, equal in authority. This law was evidently passed with a special reference to the case of Athanasius; and the council pronounced, or rather confirmed, his degradation. Gregory, a Cappadocian, a man of a violent character, was appointed to the see, and Philagrius, the prefect of Egypt, was instructed to support the new primate with the civil and military powers of the province. Athanasius being the favorite of the people, they refused to have a bishop thrust upon them by the emperor: scenes of disorder, outrage, and profanation followed. "Violence was found

necessary to support iniquity," says Milner, "and an Arian prince was obliged to tread in the steps of his pagan predecessors, to support what he called the Church."

Athanasius, oppressed by the Asiatic prelates, withdrew from Alexandria, and passed three years in Rome. The Roman pontiff, Julius, with a synod of fifty Italian bishops, pronounced him innocent, and confirmed to him the communion of the Church. No fewer than five creeds had been drawn up by the Eastern bishops in assemblies convened at Antioch between 341 and 345, with the view of concealing their real opinions; but not one of them was admitted to be free from an Arian element, though the more offensive positions of Arianism were professedly condemned. The two emperors, Constantius and Constans, now became anxious to heal the breach which existed between the Eastern and the Western churches; and accordingly they summoned a council to meet at Sardica in Illyria, A.D. 347, to decide the disputed points. Ninety-four bishops of the West, twenty-one of the East, having assembled, and duly considered the matter on both sides, decided in favor of Athanasius, the orthodox party, restoring the persecuted primate of Alexandria, and condemning all who opposed him as the enemies of the truth. In the meantime the intruder Gregory died, and Athanasius, on his return to Alexandria, after an exile of eight years, was received with universal rejoicing. "The entrance of the archbishop into his capital," says one, "was a triumphal procession: absence and persecution had endeared him to the Alexandrians; and his fame was diffused from Ethiopia to Britain, over the whole extent of the christian world."

After the death of Constans, the friend and protector of Athanasius, in 350, the cowardly Constantius felt that the time was now come to avenge his private injuries against Athanasius. He had no longer Constans to defend him. But how to accomplish his object was the difficulty. Had he decreed the death of the most eminent citizen, the cruel order would have been executed without any hesitation: but the condemnation and death of a popular bishop, must be brought about with caution, delay, and some appearance of justice. The Arians set to work; they renewed their machinations; more councils were convened.

THE COUNCILS OF ARLES AND MILAN.

In the year 353 a synod was held at Arles; and in 355 another met at Milan. Upwards of three hundred bishops were present at the latter. The sessions of the council were held in the palace, Constantius and his guards being present. The condemnation of Athanasius was artfully represented as the only measure which could restore the peace and union of the catholic church. But the friends of the primate were true to their leader and the cause of truth. They assured the emperor, in the most manly and christian spirit, that neither the hope of his favor, nor the fear of his displeasure, would prevail on them to join in the condemnation of an absent, an innocent, an honored servant of Christ. The contest was long and obstinate; the interest excited was intense, and the eyes of the whole empire became fixed on a single bishop. But the Arian emperor was impatient, and before the council of Milan was dissolved, the archbishop of Alexandria had been solemnly condemned and deposed. A general persecution was directed against all who favored him; and also for the purpose of enforcing conformity to the emperor's opinion. And so sharp did this persecution become, that the orthodox party raised the cry, that the days of Nero and of Decius had returned. Athanasius himself found a refuge in the deserts of Egypt.

THE DEATH, AND SUCCESSORS, OF CONSTANTIUS.

In the year 361, Constantius, the patron of the Arians died. Like his father, he delayed his baptism till a short time before his death. The prosperous days of the Arians were now ended.

JULIAN, commonly called the Apostate, succeeded to the throne; and probably to show the utter indifference to the theological question in dispute, he ordered the restoration of the bishops whom Constantius had banished. After a brief reign of twenty-two months, and a vain attempt to revive heathenism, he died suddenly of a wound in the breast from a Persian arrow.

JOVIAN, who immediately succeeded Julian to the throne, professed Christianity. He is the first of the Roman emperors who gave anything like clear evidence that he really loved the truth as it is in Jesus. He seems to have been a sincere Christian before he came to the throne, as he told the apostate Julian that he would rather quit the service than his religion; nevertheless, Julian valued him and kept him near his person until his death. The army declared itself Christian; the Labarum, which had been thrown aside during the reign of Julian, was again displayed at its head. Jovian, however, had learned from the preceding times, that religion could not be advanced by outward force. Hence, he allowed full toleration to his pagan subjects; and, with respect to the divisions among Christians, he declared that he would molest no one on account of religion, but would love all who studied the peace and welfare of the church of God. Athanasius, on hearing of the death of Julian, returned to Alexandria, to the agreeable surprise and joy of his people. Jovian wrote to Athanasius, confirming him in his office, and inviting him to his court. The bishop complied; the emperor desired instruction and advice; by personal intercourse he gained an influence over Jovian which his enemies in vain attempted to disturb. But the reign of this christian prince lasted only about eight months. He was found dead in his bed, on February 17th, 364; having been suffocated, as was supposed, by charcoal.

VALENTINIAN and VALENS. Jovian was succeeded by two brothers—Valentinian and Valens; the former governed in the West, the latter in the East. In the affairs of the Church, Valentinian is said to have followed the plan of Jovian. He declined all interference in questions of doctrines, but adhered firmly to the Nicene faith. As a soldier and a statesman, he was possessed of many great abilities. Both brothers are said to have exposed themselves to danger by the profession of Christianity in the reign of Julian; but Valens was afterward won over to Arianism by his wife, who persuaded him to receive baptism from the Arian bishop of Constantinople. It is said that the bishop exacted of him an oath to persecute the catholics. Be this as it may, it is certain that soon after his baptism he manifested great zeal in favor of the Arians, and bitterly persecuted the ecclesiastics for their adherence to the Nicene faith and the exercise of their influence on its behalf.

Under the edict of Valens, A.D. 367, Athanasius was once more attacked by the Arians—the enemies of christian piety. Tatian, governor of Alexandria, attempted to drive him out of the city; but the feeling of the people was so strong in favor of the venerable bishop, that he dared not for some time to execute his orders. In the meantime, Athanasius, knowing what was near at hand, quietly retired, and remained for four months concealed in his father's sepulcher. This was the fourth time that he had fled from Alexandria. Valens, however, from the dread he seems to have had of the people, recalled him, and permitted him, without any further hindrance, to prosecute his pastoral labors until, A.D. 373, when he was summoned from his work on earth to his rest in heaven. Valens perished in a battle with the Goths, in the year 378, after having reigned fourteen

years.

WHAT SERVICE DID ATHANASIUS RENDER TO THE CHURCH?

We are disposed to believe, that under the blessing of God, he was the means of preserving the Church from the Arian heresy, which threatened to extinguish from Christianity, both the name and the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy aimed at nothing short of a Christless system, which might ere long issue in an utter abandonment of Christianity. But the Nicene Council was used of God to overthrow his wicked devices. The assertion of the Godhead of Christ and of the Holy Ghost as equal to God the Father, was greatly blessed of God then, and has been from that day even until now. Though the Church had been unfaithful, and drifted into the world, "even where Satan's seat is," the Lord in mercy raised up a great testimony to His holy name, and to the faith of His saints. Historians, both civil and ecclesiastical, bear the most honorable testimony to the ability, activity, constancy, self-denial, and unwearied zeal of Athanasius, in the defense of the great doctrine of the holy Trinity. "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith," are words that refer, we doubt not, to the faithfulness of Athanasius and his friends, as also to the faithful in other times.

The overcomers spoken of in the address were also there, without doubt; but it is not permitted of the Lord that they should be seen or recorded by the historian. They were God's hidden ones who were nourished on the hidden manna. They will have a place of great nearness to the Lord in the glory. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2:17.

Tonight

Rev. 3:20.

I stand at thy door tonight, O soul,

Outside thy closed door;

The watches are winging their flight, O soul,

Thine hour will soon be o'er.

I have left the golden glories of home,

Thy heart-housed guest to be;

By the manger, the cross, the tomb, I have come—

All for the sake of thee!

I am standing and knocking tonight, O soul,

Knocking full loud and long;

I would break that dream so bright, O soul,

That slumber so deep and strong.

Thou know'st not the hand, that is knocking now.

Was bleeding once on the tree;

And its lingering pulses sank faint and slow—

All for the sake of thee!

I am watching and waiting tonight, O soul,

I list for the faintest breath;

But there cometh nor sound nor sight, O soul,

All is still and dark as death.

Thou know'st not, these locks that the damp steeps through

While thy door is closed on me,

Were dyed one night with a heavier dew—

All for the sake of thee!

If thou wilt but hearken tonight, O soul,

I will gladly enter in;
Thou shalt robe thee in bridal white, O soul,
And our festive joy begin;
Thy crystal chalice its depths shall show,
Thou shalt pour out thine all to me;
Though briny and bitter the draft may flow,
I long to exchange with thee.
Oh, I will come in and sup, dear soul,
We will mingle thine and mine,
Thou shalt drink from my heart's full cup, dear soul,
Thou shalt taste of the kingdom wine,
I will bring bright cheer from the board above,
A fellowship blest and free:
A glory of joy, a rapture of love,
And a heaven of song—for thee!
If thou wilt not open tonight, O soul,
In this fleeting hour of fate;
Then woe for thy hapless plight, O soul,
When thou standest at God's shut gate.
If thou wilt not look on my woeful cross,
And mourn because of me,
Mine eye that can fathom a spirit's loss,
Will weep for the sake of thee!
But the step that hath linger'd tonight, O soul,
Will leave its print at thy door;
And its echo thine ear shall smite, lost soul,
Forever and evermore.
Lo! dawn is breaking, serene and clear
From the brow of eternity!

Thou shalt waken to know that I once was near—

Would once have come in to thee. A. R. C.

Waiting!

I was musing on the "Reaper,"
While the spring-time glided past,
With its leaves and buds of promise,
All too fair, too sweet to last.
I was shrinking from the Reaper,
While the summer sun shone bright,
While the sky above was glowing,
And my path was bathed in light.
I was ready for the Reaper,
When the autumn-time came round,
As the leaves of desolation
Fill'd the air, and strew'd the ground.
For the summer sun was scorching,
And the autumn winds were chill;
They have hasten'd on the ripening,
Yet am I left waiting still!
Yes! left waiting for the Reaper,
While He tarries on His way.
Will He linger till the winter?
Will He still prolong His stay?
Oh! I'm waiting for the Reaper,
For the long'd-for harvest "shout."
I am standing in my sandals,
With my loins all girt about.
Yet, though waiting for the Reaper,
My heart's attitude is here

Looking upward—ever upward,
Till my promised Lord appear.
For I know His hast'ning footsteps
Are already on their way;
He may come at any moment,
In the night or in the day.
Thus, I'm waiting for the Reaper,
With the garner full in view—
Till call'd I still am waiting,
For there's winter work to do!
J. T.

The Ways of God in Grace

Amongst the many scenes of the past, over which memory loves to dwell, there are none that awaken such tender recollections, or that have a more permanent place in the mind, than the ways of God in grace with precious souls; and just because they are in grace, their fruit will remain and be enjoyed forever. Some I well remember and love to recall. Death or distance may have separated the chief actors in those scenes, but they will all meet again, and meet to remember the ways of God in grace, and celebrate His praise forever.

We would now record, under this title, a few instances of His rich and marvelous grace, which, we may say, linger before the mind and dwell in the heart; and may they be owned of the Lord for the blessing and the encouraging of many, and for the glory of His own most gracious name. We write from memory and cannot always give the exact words that were used, but they are substantially the same the old man and the young woman.

After preaching, while numbers were still lingering, and little companies in conversation throughout the large hall, a man touched me on the shoulder, and said, "Would you come and speak to a poor old man who is sitting alone there by the side of the wall? He seems in great distress about his soul." On looking round, I saw the man, and said, I will speak to him immediately. But before I could leave those I was talking to, he had come to where I was. He was indeed both old and poor, and bore every mark of both. But the tears that rolled down his deeply furrowed face made all about him interesting. There is something especially touching in the conversion of an old man, and still more in a neglected-looking, helpless old man. He could scarcely speak for emotion. With difficulty he exclaimed in answer to some question I asked him about his soul, "Oh! I feel as if I could fall down on that floor and praise God that I am not in the flames of hell tonight." And do you believe, I said, that He has saved you from these burning flames now? "O yes, O yes, but I never thought I should be saved; O what shall I say? I know now that Jesus died for me, the greatest sinner ever was—and I am saved—but I never thought I should be saved."

Believing that God had indeed met the poor old man in the riches of His mercy, I wanted to know a little about him, and why he had thought he never should be saved. He told me that he had been an agricultural laborer, and that he used to be very passionate and swore dreadfully; and that he was very ignorant, and did not understand anything about the Bible, and being such a wicked man, he thought he never could be saved. And what are you doing now? I asked him. He said he was too old and feeble to do a day's work now, and he stood about the streets and was ready to go a message for any one, and got a few coppers in that way. But while I was talking to the poor old man, in rushed, at the front door, a young woman about the age of sixteen. "O," she exclaimed, as if out of breath, "I was half-way home, but I felt so sorry that I had not spoken to you, that I came running back. I wanted to tell you that I have found peace with God tonight, and I am so happy: no doubts or fears now—but I have to be at home by—o'clock and I must run." Stand, I said, stand one moment by the side of this old man, that I may thank the Lord for His rich blessing to you both.

This was a sight never to be forgotten. The old agricultural laborer, withered, worn, leaning on his staff; and the fresh, brisk young maiden; but God's rich, sovereign, marvelous grace had fully, and at the same moment, met both—met the need of both. To the human eye, how wide the difference! Who would care for the old farm laborer now? Nay, rather, who would speak to him? His long, shaggy, gray hair; his unwashed smock-frock; altogether the very picture of old age and want—who would not hurry past him? God only could linger over such an old man and shield him with the covert of His wing; pardon his many sins; cleanse him by the blood of Jesus; make him whiter than snow, and fit him for the brightest scenes of heavenly glory. But who can speak of this grace? What had he done to deserve it? The poor man knew but little, but he knew enough to convince him that he only deserved the flames of hell forever. He was not self-righteous; he knew the end of such a life as his; and I have always found that such characters are more easily convinced of sin, and have fewer difficulties to overcome in receiving the truth of the gospel, than the merely religious, well-to-do, church-going people. Like the publicans and harlots of old, they enter the kingdom of heaven before the self-righteous Pharisees.

How encouraging to the heart and strengthening to the faith of the preacher are such instances of God's sovereign grace! But the precious blood of the slain Lamb has been sprinkled on the mercy seat, God is glorified, and waits to receive all who come in the faith of that blood. The poor, old, ignorant, wicked, worn-out laborer, or the moral maiden, are alike welcome, pardoned, and saved, through faith in the gospel. But what shall be done to those who refuse to believe—who refuse such a free invitation—who despise such rich provision for the soul? The judgment will surely answer to the guilt. God, in righteousness, will estimate the guilt and award the punishment. But why—why not, O careless, Christless soul—why not believe now that Christ bore the judgment of sin in His own body on the tree, and bore it that thou mightest be free—be saved forever? Believe, believe now—receive the truth; rest in Christ; rejoice in Him. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

The Ways of God in Grace: the Fifty and the Five Hundred Pence

How often we are privileged to see, in the riches of God's grace, the most blessed illustrations of the great truths and principles of His own word. He teaches by experience in the light of revelation; indeed, the sure light of His word is shed on the scene around us, when we are walking in communion with Himself. It then becomes a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path. The following simple incident beautifully illustrates the "two debtors," or the "fifty" and the "five hundred pence," in Luke 7. Years have passed away since it occurred, but it is never to be forgotten, and worthy to be noted for the Lord's sake.

Annie was little more than seven years old when the Lord touched her heart and made her anxious about the salvation of her soul. She was at the annual treat of the Sunday School; all were very lively and in high spirits, as is usual on such occasions. We knew nothing of what was passing in little Annie's mind. After tea was over, and the noise of hundreds of little voices speaking to each other was silenced, a hymn was sung. And this, we have often observed, the children enter into as heartily as their own play, when rightly directed. They were then solemnly addressed on the great subject of salvation, and as to whether they had really in their hearts believed in Jesus. The Lord in great mercy gave His blessing. Some were much affected and weeping; and as children are extremely sympathetic, the infection spread, and many all over the place were in tears. But although much of that feeling was nothing more than sympathy, there was also much that was of divine grace, as the fruits afterward proved; but at present we only speak of one.

In the course of the evening, Annie's elder sister came to me and said that she could not pacify her little sister, she was crying as though her heart would break. I found that she had been much affected when we were singing the well-known lines,

"I can believe, I do believe,

That Jesus died for me;

That on the cross He shed His blood,

From sin to set me free."

Her distress was very real; she was exercised about her sins, young as she was. "I cannot sing," she said, "that Jesus died for me, and that He has washed away my sins." After explaining to her the way of pardon through faith in His precious blood, and looking to the Lord for His blessing, I left her, apparently little relieved: there were many others to talk with. But, probably in half an hour, the sister came with the good news that little Annie was now happy. On my return to her I found the tears wiped away, and a happy smile on her countenance. She could now look to Jesus as the One who loved her and died for her, and believed that her sins were all forgiven. The work of grace appeared so genuine in that child's soul, that after saying a few words about it, I said, We will sing the hymn again, that she may sing the chorus with us before parting.

Just as I stood up to read the hymn, a widow, well up in years, crossed the open space, and said to me, with deep feeling, "I could not sing it either when it was sung before, but I too can sing it now." I could only say, Praise the Lord! I asked the widow no questions. Her expression, her age, her words, her tears, her voluntary confession, were enough for the moment. I accepted this as God's work—as the gracious creditor forgiving the "two debtors," according to His own word: "And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both." The hymn was sung—it was a joyous evening to many; but what was our joy compared with the joy of angels in the presence of God. No unbelief there, no cold suspicion to draw a dark cloud over the happy scene. The key-note of their joy is taken from the Father's heart, and choir after choir catching the flying joy, roll round the rapturous hosannas, till the vast regions of glory are filled with one mighty outburst of praise to God.

"Angels rejoice o'er sinners saved,
And heaven with rapture swell,
As tidings rise up to the throne,
That souls are saved from hell.
Not angels only—God beholds
The trophy of His grace;
And radiant, happy smiles beam forth
From Jesus' blessed face."

If we suppose the child to be seven and the widow to be seventy, we have a perfect example of the Lord's own words of purest grace. "And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" Such is the matchless grace of the Lord Jesus to all who own Him as the Savior. When grace is the ground of the Lord's dealings with us, it is no greater stretch of mercy to forgive the sinner of seventy than the child of seven. And mark, dear reader, the word which the Holy Spirit here uses, "He frankly forgave them both." Not grudgingly, or unwillingly, or hesitatingly; but "frankly," readily, immediately, yes, joyfully. Carefully examine that scene of surpassing interest in the house of Simon; like the precious fifteenth of Luke, its bloom never fades.

May the Lord lead thee, my dear reader, to fall down at those blessed feet in the bowings and meltings of worship—to esteem it thy highest privilege, thy greatest honor to bathe them with thy tears, and to fill the place of His presence with the sweet fragrance of thy adoring love: and, oh! to hear Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." The Lord grant that this may be the happy portion of my reader now, henceforth, even for evermore. Amen.

A Special Word to the Reader

Dear Friend,

We do not feel happy in closing our volume for the year 1872 without making a special appeal to thee as to thy condition, thy destiny, and thy present practical career.

We desire ever to bear in mind that we have something more to do than to publish a monthly number and an annual volume of a magazine. We have a solemn duty to discharge to the souls of our readers. We have not merely to supply a certain amount of printed matter, from month to month, and year to year, but we have to deal faithfully with the soul of each one whose eye may scan our pages, from time to time. It is our earnest desire that our little monthly serial may prove a living messenger to the heart and conscience of each individual reader. We feel that our object as contributors, conductors, and publishers will be altogether missed unless the souls of our readers are livingly acted upon by this special branch of our ministry.

We would therefore, at once, put a few very plain questions to the reader, which we entreat him to answer in the immediate presence of the living God.

And, first of all then, we would ask—Art thou saved? Art thou sheltered from the coming judgment, by the blood of the Lamb? Art thou consciously resting on the solid ground of accomplished redemption? Hast thou peace with God? Is the grand question settled between thee and God? Canst thou say, without a shade of reserve, “I have gotten a title without a blot; a prospect without a cloud; and a Friend that never changeth?”

Say, dear friend, what answer does thy heart return to these pointed and weighty questions? Do not suppose that we are influenced, in putting them, by an idle curiosity, or a spirit of busy and impertinent intrusiveness. It is not so, as God is our witness. But we are deeply impressed with the unspeakable value of an immortal soul—the awful solemnity of eternity, and the horrors of a soul passing away into endless torment and misery. We cannot bear to think of it. It is too overwhelming. The thought of an endless eternity in the flames of hell is perfectly crushing to the whole moral being.

O reader, we cannot endure the thought of your going down into that dreadful place. It is our heart's desire that you should flee, this moment, from the wrath to come—flee to Jesus the precious Savior who waits, with open arms and loving heart, to receive all who come unto Him. He assures you of a hearty welcome. Hear His own veritable words, “Him that cometh unto me, I will, in no wise, cast out.” Come, therefore, just as thou art, with all thy burden of guilt, misery, and wretchedness, come and rest in Jesus. Put thy whole case into His hands. Believe in Him, and all thy sins shall be forgiven for His Name's sake, thou shalt have everlasting life, thou shalt be counted perfectly righteous before God, even as Christ is righteous.

Do come! We are privileged, as ambassadors for Christ, to beseech thee to come and be reconciled to God. We intensely desire thy soul's salvation. And that is but a small thing to say. It is

but of little moment for us to say— as we surely can say—that had we the universe at our disposal, we would gladly give it for thy precious soul's salvation.

But this is not necessary. Christ has died to save thee. God desires thy salvation. The eternal Spirit is pleading with thee. Why delay? Why halt? Why hesitate? Time is short. Another year is closing. How many of those who saw the opening of 1872 have passed away before its close! What millions of souls have passed into eternity during these twelve months! And how canst thou, dear friend, tell how soon the summons may come for thee?

Oh! do not fling this paper away in disgust and impatience. Do not be weary of our importunity, we beseech thee. We do want thee to think of thy precious soul. If it were a question of thy bodily health, wouldest thou not listen to a man entreating thee to go to some eminent physician, or to go to Matlock or to Malvern, to Harrogate or to Buxton? If it were a question of thy worldly prospects, wouldest thou not listen to a friend entreating thee to insure thy life for the benefit of thy wife and family, or to make some provision for the future? How much more then when a man urges upon thee the momentous question of thy soul's Salvation—a question in comparison with which all questions of bodily health and worldly circumstances are as the small dust of the balance.

But we must cease. We must go our way for this time; but ere we do so, we shall make one earnest request of the reader, namely this, Do not, we entreat thee, push these solemn matters aside; do not go on another hour without seeking a full and final settlement of this great question; do not pause till you are able to say, without one wavering thought, "I am saved."

And, then, if the reader be a true Christian—a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, we would not close our volume without offering one word of earnest loving exhortation to him.

Beloved friend, let us remember the deep solemnity of the moment in which our lot is cast. Let us seek to be thoroughly in earnest. There is an urgent need of earnest, loving, working men. There is a terrible amount of cold indifference, of religious formality, of dead routine. Where is the burning zeal? Where the whole-hearted consecration to Christ? Where the men and women of one idea—and that one idea, Christ—His cause—His glory—His people?

Dear christian reader, do let us rouse ourselves from all indolence and lethargy! Let us seek to get our heart filled with sacred fire; our whole being divinely energized, so that we may go forth with a holy determination to dedicate ourselves, in spirit, soul and body, to the service of Him who gave His precious life to save us from everlasting burnings and make us eternally happy with Himself, in that bright and blessed world above.

Oh! Lord, revive thy work! Send out thy light and thy truth, and gather out to thy name a devoted, consecrated band to carry on thy work, and to wait for thy coming!

Ye Did It Unto Me

A poor wayfaring man of grief
Hath often cross'd me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never answer, Nay.
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came
Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love, I knew not why.
Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered: not a word he spake:
Just perishing for want of bread:
I gave him all; he bless'd it, brake,
And ate; but gave me part again:
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For, while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.
I spied him, where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;
The heedless water mock'd his thirst,
He heard it, saw it hurrying on:
I ran to raise the sufferer up;
Thrice from the stream he drain'd my cup,
Dipt, and return'd it running o'er;
I drank, and never thirsted more.
'Twas night', the floods were out; it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;

I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof.
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the hearth my bed, and seem'd
In Eden's garden while I dream'd.
Stript, wounded, beaten, nigh to death,
I found him by the highway-side!
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
Revived his spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment; he was healed:
I had myself a wound concealed;
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.
In prison I saw him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's death at morn:
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him midst shame and scorn
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked me if I for him would die?
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill;
But the free spirit cried, "I will."
Then in a moment to my view
The Stranger darted from disguise;
The tokens in His hands I knew,
My Savior stood before mine eyes!
He spake; and my poor name He named;
"Of me thou hast not been ashamed!
These deeds shall thy memorial be!

Ye Shall Be Comforted

“As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted.”

“Ye shall be comforted,” although the tears
Of sorrow rise within thy weary eyes,
And trembling hands cling closely unto Christ,
Through the long years; —another morn shall rise.

“Ye shall be comforted,” for He who knows
Our frame, the griefs humanity must bear,
Still sympathizes with us in our woes,
And, on the throne of God, for us doth care.
For, when on earth He trod, He bore our grief,
And “like unto his brethren” was in all,
That every sufferer might find relief,
And not in vain in time of trouble call.

“Ye shall be comforted,” for when the load
Too heavy for our hold has grown, at last
We learn that He who doth uphold the worlds
Will bear each burden that on Him we cast.

“Ye shall be comforted;” the voice divine
Above the winds and waves still speaketh “peace.”
God’s hand shall wipe our tears, and heal our wounds,
“Sorrow and sighing” shall forever cease.

Yes, “comforted,” we take our painful way,
Amid the mists and shadows of the night;
The morning cometh with its cheering ray,
The darkness flees, we enter into light. M. S.

Zacchaeus

(Luke 19:1-10.)

There is one priceless lesson lying on the very surface of the interesting story of the chief publican of Jericho, namely, that it matters not what a man's position or circumstances may be, if he be in earnest about his soul's salvation—in earnest in the pursuit of truth—in earnest in his desire after Christ, he shall, most assuredly, get all that he seeks for, and much more beside. The earnest seeker is sure to become a happy finder.

This, we repeat, is a priceless lesson for the soul, at all times, but especially at a moment like the present, when there is such an amount of cold indifference, heartless profession, and dead religiousness.

Zacchaeus was a rich man—a rich publican. He had grown rich in the exercise of a most odious calling amongst the Jews, even the collection of taxes. Now, our Lord tells us, in the preceding chapter, that “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” “How then,” the enemy might say to Zacchaeus, “can you ever get into the kingdom? How can you possibly be saved? Your circumstances, your calling, your position, all present an insuperable barrier to your soul's salvation.”

The enemy might suggest such reasonings; but faith can take up and use effectively the precious words of Jesus which tell us that “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” God can do much harder things than passing a camel through a needle's eye. He can save publicans and sinners.

But then He makes them in earnest about the grand business of their salvation. Zacchaeus was thoroughly in earnest—so in earnest as to shake himself loose from his circumstances, and rise above his difficulties. True, he lived in Jericho, the city of the curse. Moreover he was rich—a rich publican. But he was an earnest man, and “he sought to see Jesus.” There was reality—that rare, that precious gem, reality. A real soul will surmount all sorts of difficulties: indeed we always find that difficulties only tend to bring out reality where it exists. A slothful careless soul will plead, “There is a lion in the way,” when there is nothing of the kind; but an earnest soul will face a den of lions.

Thus when Zacchaeus “sought to see Jesus,” he was met by two real difficulties—difficulties which would have deterred and driven off ten thousand heartless professors. He “could not for the press, because he was little of stature.” Thousands would have found in these two facts ample grounds for giving up all idea of seeing Jesus. They would have argued thus, “It is evident that I am not called to seek Jesus. It is wholly out of the question. Providence has plainly put a double barrier in my way. It is impossible for so small a man, in such a crowd, to get even a glimpse at Jesus.”

But how perfectly delightful to mark Zacchaeus overcoming his difficulties! Was there a crowd? He could “run before” it. Was he little of stature? He could climb up into a sycamore tree. Yes; and had

there been a thousand difficulties instead of two, this earnest, real, thorough—going man would have surmounted them all in that energy of purpose which grace had wrought in his precious soul. The very difficulties which furnish the careless, the indolent, the half-hearted with excuses, only furnish the earnest, the real, the true-hearted with occasion to manifest their earnestness and reality.

In point of fact, there is no excuse for anyone. All are welcome. “Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.” Those who make excuses do not want to come; and it would be far more honest to declare plainly that they do not want to have anything to do with God, with Christ, with holiness, with heaven, than to put forth such flimsy excuses, or to plead difficulties which would be esteemed as nothing if they were really bent on an object. “We may set it down as an absolutely settled fact that there is no reason in all this world why the soul should not come to Christ now—no proper excuse, none that will stand good in the light of eternity—no sound argument whatsoever against the immediate salvation of any soul that will only come just as he is, to the Savior. There is no insurmountable difficulty—no circumstance or set of circumstances—no hindrance of any kind presented by God, to prevent the sinner, this moment, coming to Jesus, and finding full salvation in Him. Jesus is as ready now, as He was in the days of Zacchaeus, to save all who come to Him. “Him that cometh unto me, I will, in no wise, cast out.” For no reason, on no ground whatsoever, will the blessed Savior cast out or refuse anyone who simply comes to Him. It is impossible for words to be more simple—for assurance to be more solid and satisfactory. “I will in no wise cast out.”

So Zacchaeus found it in his day. But he was in earnest. He did not fold his arms and plead excuses. He did not say, “If I am to be saved, I shall be saved; there is no use my troubling about the matter. If I am one of the elect I must be saved; if not, I cannot: I can do nothing.” This sort of reasoning could not satisfy Zacchaeus, or any one of his stamp. He had a soul to be saved—an eternity before him in the light of which present things were lighter than the small dust of the balance.

In short, he was in earnest thoroughly, unmistakably, solemnly in earnest, as every man, woman, and child ought to be about the momentous question of the soul’s salvation. Hence, “he sought”—“he ran”—“he climbed.” He was bent upon his object. He was bent upon Jesus, and Jesus was bent upon him. “And when Jesus came to the place he looked up.” Why did He look up? Because there was an earnest seeker amid the branches of that sycamore tree. It was not Adam running to hide; it was Zacchaeus climbing to seek. And “Jesus looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”

What an answer! What a reward for the seeking, and the running, and the climbing! What a moment! Zacchaeus was looking down, in earnest faith, and Jesus was looking up, in infinite grace; their eyes met, and a link was formed which shall endure throughout the countless ages of eternity.

What an occasion! How little did that dear earnest man expect to hear his own very name pronounced by the lips of Incarnate Deity! How little did He anticipate having as a guest at his house, the Son of God, God Himself blessed forever! Could it be true? Was he, a rich man, a publican, to be thus blessed, thus privileged? Could it be possible? Had the camel forced his way through the needle’s eye? Ah! far more than this. An earnest sinner and a loving Savior had met.

Difficulties were removed, barriers swept away. Jesus when He looked up recognized in Zacchaeus one that had been drawn by the Father, and He, as it were, said, "I shall have that man in heaven spite of earth and hell."

"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down and received him joyfully." Not a word about his riches; not a word about his position: no reference whatever to his circumstances: no placing him under conditions; nothing whatever of this sort. A sinner and a Savior had met, and what was this but "salvation?" Yes, salvation full and free. The salvation which Jesus carried with Him was the salvation of God, and therefore was it in every way fitted to meet the need of Zacchaeus. Men might murmur at this. Man's religious mind might rebel against it; but that could not hinder the bright beams of God's salvation from shining upon a poor lost and guilty sinner.

"This day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham." And this not because of half the goods given to the poor, nor because of the fourfold restoration; but because "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It is a present, and a personal, and a perfect salvation, flowing from the very heart of God, in the Person and work of Jesus, brought nigh and pressed upon the acceptance of "whosoever will."

Oh! reader, art thou unsaved? Art thou uncertain? Art thou unsettled? Be in earnest about thy soul's salvation. God beseeches thee to be in earnest. Be not hindered by difficulties. Let nothing, we entreat thee, hinder thee in coming now—just now, just as thou art—to that loving Savior who stands waiting for thee, and who will meet thee, just as He met the publican of Jericho, with a full, a free, and an everlasting salvation.

Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer,
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's right hand shall guide thee there;
Soon shall close thine earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

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