

THINGS NEW AND OLD VOLUME 18

by C.H. Mackintosh

A collection of articles and writings by C.H. Mackintosh from Things New and Old Volume 18, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

55 Chapters

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Things New and Old Volume 18

All My Springs Are in Thee

Thou source divine of joys that grow,
Eternal spring of endless peace,
And surest hope, whose constant flow
Of highest bliss can never cease.
O who among us all can tell
The unfathomed depths of love divine,
That brought Thee here with man to dwell,
And grace and righteousness combine?
From Thee flows forth the living stream
Whose waters gladden every heart,
Which fills the soul with joy supreme,
And heals its wounds and soothes its smart.
From earthly springs we turn away—
No more a broken cistern hew;
With heavenly drafts our souls we stay,
With living water strength renew.
In Thee are all our freshest springs,
Perennial sources never dry;
We long to spread our gladsome wings
And mount to drink celestial joy.
R. B.

Are You Fit to Die?

In the month of September, 1874, C. E. J. wished his fellow-workmen Good night in his usual health. He had not proceeded very far, when he was suddenly seized with profuse hemorrhage of the lungs. As soon as he recovered a little he returned to the shop, and found some of the men still there. After telling what had happened, one of them kindly went home with him, a short distance by rail. He was not able to return to his work for several weeks. He rallied after a time, and went back to his accustomed employment as a cabinet maker, but the very severe cold of November again laid him aside from work, never to return.

The doctor gave very little hope of his recovery, and his soul was not saved. When a boy, he had attended a Sunday school; but unhappily, in after life, he imbibed infidel notions. He read his Bible and the Prayer Book, but it was not to learn about Jesus, the value of His blood, and the greatness of His salvation.

His christian friends were very unhappy about him, knowing he was not saved; and like most skeptics he was irritable and unapproachable in matters about his soul. His relatives saw, with increasing anxiety, he was getting weaker day by day, and without God and without hope in the world. At length, a christian relative broke through restraint and in few words told him very plainly and solemnly the state he was in by nature as an unsaved sinner, and pointed him to Jesus as the only way. He had not a word to say, but skewed great feeling and wept bitterly.

Shortly after another nearer relative spoke to him of his state by nature, and of the joy there was in being safe in Jesus Christ, and then put the plain question to him, "Are you fit to die?" He again evinced great emotion, and only answered by a flood of tears. He confessed afterward that the question made him dumb. He had not a word to say, but could not lose the thought, "Are you fit to die?" He could not get relief; he tried to pray, but could not; he tried to repeat the Lord's prayer, but could not remember it; he was truly miserable. The question remained with him. No doubt God had fixed it there for blessing.

Just about this time he was much worse; hemorrhage of the lungs returned, and it was thought he could not live much longer. But God, who is rich in mercy, spared him a few weeks longer. He did not tell any one the state of his mind. Special prayer was asked for him at a Saturday evening prayer-meeting. He began to break down, and said his friends might say what they liked to him; it was quite right what they said. He read tracts and books sent to him. A volume of God's Glad Tidings for 1874 was greatly blessed to his soul; and after the second Saturday evening of special prayer for him, he found peace through believing in Jesus. He said very little more than that he was saved and happy, and willing to die when it pleased God to take him; but that the anguish of soul he had passed through from the assaults of the enemy could never be described. He was very confident about his salvation, although for some time he said but little. A relative, speaking to him, said, "Now C., we believe you to be Safe in the arms of Jesus;" to which he exclaimed, "Believe! I am sure—I am positive—I am saved!"

His sufferings were very great, but he never was heard to murmur. He was overwhelmed at times at the grace of God to pardon such a sinner as he had been, and he longed very much to be with Jesus in the Lord's own time.

Once after a severe attack of pain, his wife said to him, "You will not be much longer here." He replied, "No; I don't wish to be any longer here; but not my will, but His be done." At another time he was passing through great suffering, and said, "O Lord, take me home out of this state." And with the same breath regretted that such a murmur should have escaped his lips, saying, "What is this to what my Savior suffered for me? or, what is it compared with the joy I shall have in the presence of Jesus?" At another time, seeing his wife weeping because he was suffering, he begged her not to grieve, saying, it will be all rest very soon."

Being asked by a relative if he had any fear of death, he said, "No,—not any; how can a sinner that has been forgiven so much be afraid to die?"

He was a great favorite with his fellow-shopmen. All came to visit him during his illness he spoke very freely to them of their state as sinners, and of Jesus the only Savior; and begged them to think of their souls, and not to put off salvation as he had done.

He spoke of death with the greatest composure. He arranged everything for the funeral, that his wife might not have any confusion in this matter after he was gone home. All was peace; death had lost its sting, and the grave its victory, through the blood of the Lamb.

Just a week before he died the hemorrhage of the lungs returned, and he thought he was going home, and taking leave of a young relative, retaining the grasp of his hand, and with a look of dying anxiety, entreated him not to rest until he knew his soul was safe in Jesus. Speaking of his own life as wasted, he said, "You may possibly not have the time given you at last that I have had."

His next trial was to take leave of his little girl, an interesting little child, four years of age. He told her to think of Jesus and look to Him, and then she would see him in heaven and be with Jesus there; and that she must be a good girl to her mother. He was much overpowered at parting with her. He entreated his wife to look to the Lord, to have faith in Him, and He would provide for her: for He promised to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow. He gave her the book which the Lord used for blessing to his own soul, wishing her to take great care of it, and to it friend that he knew was greatly interested in his conversion, he constantly sent messages of gratitude and assurances of his safety and joy in the Lord, and said prayer for him had not been in vain.

He repeated passages of scripture and hymns that he had learned at the Sunday school when a boy. He felt very deeply the fact of the Lord's goodness in saving him, such a sinner as he had been. Although a strictly moral man, a good, kind husband, and an affectionate father, he never boasted of any goodness of his own, but acknowledged all to be through the grace of God. He suffered very severe pain, but with the greatest possible patience, saying it was but a little time, and he looked to the joy he should shortly have in the presence of Jesus.

The end was very near, the Lord called him home on Lord's day, February 11th. His relatives were standing round his bed. He said, "I am going now;" and to each one he gave a farewell look, and said, "Goodbye. I have done with earth. I am going a long journey, but I am not afraid; the valley is not dark, and I can see a bright lamp, and Christ is my light and my salvation." He calmly fell

asleep in Jesus, on Lord's day, at the age of 28, leaving a widow and two children.

M. B. H

The Bidden Guests

“But they made light of it.”—Matt. 22:1-14

“YE are slighting the King’s command!

Despising His servants’ call!

Has He spread the feast with His royal hand

And ye care not to come at all?

Are ye going your willful ways?

Shall nothing your heart alarm?

Ah me, ‘tis a pitiful crop you’ll raise,

Poor slaves of the mart and farm.

O, come as a wedding guest,

Poor desolate child of sin!

Go quickly, ye servants, and call the rest,

Compel them to enter in!

Their robe shall be pure and fair,

In the blood of the Lamb made white;

The sinner, the outcast is welcome there,

Arrayed in that vesture bright.

Dare ye tarry till it is too late?

The feast must be largely shared—

Oh, hasten ye in at the narrow gate,

The banquet is all prepared.

The return of the Bridegroom’s near,

The trumpet will shortly sound,

The voice of his coming ye soon shall hear

Where, where will ye then be found?

Meditations on Christian Devotedness

While many in the present day are teaching and writing much on the important subjects of consecration, devotedness, and holiness of heart and life; and while many are more or less affected by the general interest which these inquiries are creating; it may be well for thee, my soul, to retire for a little into the sanctuary of thy Lord's presence, and there learn what has been long written on those and kindred subjects. Be assured there is nothing new under the sun. These various aspects of christian character, with the motives and objects by which they are created and sustained, are fully revealed in the word of God. The time ground also on which they rest, thou wilt find there. Oneness with Christ as the last Adam, the exalted Man in the glory, must be thy stand-point, otherwise thou wilt "see men as trees walking"—thou wilt be confounding that which has its roots in nature with that which is of the grace of God in truth.

Know then, and assuredly believe, O my soul, that thou art one with Him who bore thy sins on the cross, who rules on the throne, and who is coming again to take thee up to be with Himself in His home of love and glory. Wrong ground—a mistaken point of view—leads to great confusion and self-contradiction, to the mixing up of law and gospel, faith and experience, self and Christ. No matter how good our eye-sight may be, we cannot see without light. Thou must be in the sunlight of thy Lord's presence to see the true foundation and the divine course of all things. And there, O wondrous truth! O privilege infinite! O blessedness unspeakable, thou art at home—at home, as thou art nowhere else—in the concentrated light of heaven's noon-day brightness. He is thy righteousness, absolute and complete, in the presence of God; He is thy eternal life, thy peace, thy joy, thy rest, thy glory. Thus arrayed in the moral glories of thy Lord, and basking in the beams of His complaisant love, what hast thou to fear? And know also, O my soul, that all this is true now—true to faith, though not to experience, and always true in the sight of God.

In proof of this, take the two highest notes in the New Testament as to the Christian's position; one is sounded by the apostle Paul and the other by the apostle John.

1. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Here pause for a moment and meditate, not only on thy place in Christ, but on the "rich mercy" and the "great love" of God, which set thee there. What can be sweeter to thy thoughts than this precious truth? And there it is, believe it fully.

2. "Herein is our love [or love with us] made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." This is a plain statement and must be received in the simplicity of faith. It surely means, that as He—Christ—is, in God's sight, so are we, though still in this world and encompassed with many infirmities. And this should teach thee never to look to self or experience if thou wouldst know thy place and acceptance in the presence of God; but always to Christ as the measure and expression of thy portion there. There is only one other passage that I will bring before thee at present, and this we will call, the dowry of the bride.

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Here thou wilt see, that by the will and wondrous grace of God, Christ Jesus is made unto the Christian—every Christian—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Surely this is a rich inheritance for the individual Christian, the church of God, the bride of the Lamb! And forget not, I pray thee, that these blessings are thine now in Christ Jesus, head of the new creation, and of the church, which is His body and His bride. Eph. 2:4-6 John 4:17 Cor. 1:30.

We will now turn to our beautiful chapter, where we shall meet with similar truths, though not in the character of a distinct subject, but as the native result of our union with Christ, and of looking to Him as our one and only object in our journey through this world.

Verse 1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. The first lesson here to be learned is a very important one—the apostle’s style of address. How graciously and tenderly he entreats the saints at Rome as brethren! Great apostle as he was, he places them all on the same level with himself. This, of course, is true of all Christians as regards their pardon and acceptance in Christ, however varied their condition may be as to the manifestation of the divine nature. “One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” (Matt. 23:8.) But how endearing is the apostle’s manner, compared with the high, imperious style of many who profess to be his successors, or at least to be ministers of Christ! “I beseech you therefore, brethren;” this is true humility though accompanied with divine authority. Only nearness to the Lord can give both. But what an example for all Christians, for thee, my soul, when having to do with the poorest of the flock! We will now notice the foundation on which the exhortation rests.

“The mercies of God.” True Christian devotedness evidently flows from the devout consideration of the mercies or compassions of God to the poor outcast sinner. The apostle appeals to the hearts of the brethren as being happily acquainted with the riches of divine mercy to lost and ruined souls. The effect of meditating on this aspect of God’s character is transformation to His image, and devotedness to His glory, as our holy, acceptable, and reasonable service. Most blessed, precious privilege! And this holy imitation of the divine character, be it observed, is not the result of our own efforts, but flows naturally from the blessed truth that we are made partakers of the divine nature, as taught more fully by the apostle elsewhere. “Be ye therefore followers of God,” or, literally, imitators of God, “as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” Here pause for a moment and meditate deeply; the subject is vast and most practical. Talking of devotedness, of holiness, of consecration, what is thy standard? Is it thine own possible attainments by unwearied watchings, fastings, diligence, or what? Self in a thousand ways may be thy governing object, but wrong in all. Could God present a lesser or lower object to His children than Himself, as morally displayed in the person and work of His beloved Son? Impossible! “It would dishonor Himself and the grace He has shown us; and it would be the most grievous loss to His children beloved, whom He would train and bless yet more and more even in this scene of evil and sorrow, turning the most adverse circumstances into an occasion of teaching us what He is in the depths of His grace, and filling ourselves with the sense of it, so as to form our hearts and fashion our ways.... Neither law nor even promise ever opened such a field as this. The very call

so to imitate God supposes the perfect grace in which we stand: indeed it would be insupportable otherwise.”

But one word of inspired authority settles the whole question to faith for ever: “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children.” This is thy standard and the measure of thy devotedness. Being the children of God we are partakers of His nature, and ought never to admit a standard lower than the nature of which we are partakers. God was manifested in Christ Jesus, the express image of His Person. It is in Him that we see our new nature presented in all its perfection, and in all its fullness, but in Him as man, and as it ought to be developed in us here below, in the circumstances through which we are passing. It is indeed humbling to think that we have answered so little to the call of God to be imitators of Himself as His children. But He has given us an object in which He manifests Himself that He may lead and attract our hearts to follow Him: and this object we know as the one who loves us and gave Himself for us, and the only object the Christian should ever have. “There is a sense,” says one, “in which God is, morally, the measure of other beings—a consideration which brings out the immense privilege of the child of God. It is the effect of grace, in that being born of Him, and partaking of His nature, the child of God is called to be an imitator of God, to be perfect as his Father is perfect. He makes us partakers of His holiness; consequently we are called to be imitators of God, as His dear children. This shows the immense privilege on grace. It is the love of God in the midst of evil, and which, superior to all evil, walks in holiness, and rejoices, also, together in a divine way, in the unity of the same joys, and the same sentiments.”

We now return for a moment to the subject of mercy after this rather long digression, but the one passage throws much light on the other and gives greater breadth of truth to the mind.

The word “mercies” is here used in the plural, because it signifies, not mercy as an attribute of God simply, but the compassions of God which have been fully developed in the different instances already enumerated. At the same time, it may have a special reference to verse 31 of the previous chapter, where we find Jews as well as Gentiles concluded in unbelief that God may have mercy upon all. “Even so these [the Jews] have now been unbelieving with regard to your mercy [the Gentiles] in order that they should receive mercy.” Thus the Jews having forfeited all right to the promises through unbelief, must be brought in at the end on the ground of mercy. And this God will do when he has brought in the fullness of the Gentiles. But it is the privilege of the Christian to meditate on the mercies of God as displayed in redemption, as well as in His dispensational ways. It was pure mercy that thought of him in the counsels of eternity, that gave him a place in the purposes of God, that wrote his name in the Lamb’s book of life, that watched over him in the days of his unbelief, that called him by Iris gospel, that gave him deliverance from sin and condemnation; that gave him the Holy Spirit, union with Christ, and the hope of His coming; and thereby communion with God the Father, and the enjoyment of all the unspeakable blessings of His grace and love.

“When all Thy mercies,

O my God, My ransomed soul surveys,

Transported with the view, I’m lost

In wonder, love, and praise.”

This is a great subject. Hurry not over it in thy meditations, O my soul. It is highly practical and may go far to form and consolidate thy thoughts of practical Christianity. Strange to say, the interests of religion are supposed by some Christians to be better secured when the soul is under law and occupied with its feelings and doings, than when it is under grace and feeding on the truth of the divine compassions towards it from first to last. But heed not this false alarm, it is the old cry of this world's wisdom, "The grace of the gospel leads to licentiousness;" but what is it that the fleshly mind will no pervert? Even "the mercies of God" are used as a refuge for living in sin. "God is merciful," we hear people say, "and if we do our best, and live a God, moral, sober life, and show kindness to our neighbor, He will not condemn us with the openly wicked." After this style many speak, but it is always the language of those who are careless about their souls, and who have no heart for Jesus.

True, most true, God is indeed merciful and gracious, but the boundless mercies of God are no refuge to the soul apart from the work of Christ. God has shown His mercy to the guilty in giving the precious blood of His own Son as a safe refuge for the chief of sinners. But if this shelter be neglected the whole universe cannot provide another. The testimony of God Himself is, that "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." The blood is the sure token of judgment passed, of holiness, righteousness, and justice satisfied; of the forgiveness, cleansing, and complete salvation of the sinner. But we must now turn to the latter half of our verse.

Meditations on Christian Devotedness

"That ye present your bodies a sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is yogi. reasonable service." The apostle leaves no room here for the liberty of the flesh, or for going back to the law as a rule of life. The believer is to be formed morally by the knowledge of God, and consecrated to Him as his reasonable service. It is of the body, or outer man, that the apostle expressly speaks. "That ye present your bodies. The body is here viewed as the sacrifice, and the believer as presenting it; so that the whole man is to be yielded up as an offering to the Lord.

But if thou wouldst well understand this character of devotedness, thou must study and master chapter 6. There we learn that Christians are, first of all, to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. They are brought into this position by death and resurrection, as set forth in baptism, in virtue of the finished work of Christ. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Baptism is the symbol of Christians having part with Christ in death. He died for sin, they died to sin in His death. This is the grand fundamental truth of entire devotedness and practical holiness. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Such is the reasoning of the Spirit of God. All true Christians believe that Christ died for our sins, but comparatively few believe or enter into the truth that we died to sin in His death.

But the consequences of not apprehending this plain truth, which the youngest confessor of Christ is supposed by the apostle to know, are immense and innumerable. From the first struggles with self in the newly awakened soul, to the highest efforts of the priests and the mystics, the root is the same; it is occupation with self in all. Whether it be the young believer longing after peace with God, or the advanced believer straining after holiness and perfection, they are looking for it within. The eye is turned inwardly in search after feelings, or a consciousness of having arrived at a

higher state of christian life. But this is not all. When death to sin is not seen, there can be no real separation from the world, especially what is called the religious world. Hence we may often be surprised to see godly men mixing with the world and helping on its plans and improvements. But the whole system of self-occupation, of seeking to improve the first Adam condition of man, of seeking to attain to complete sanctification in the flesh, is judged by the simple truth, that the Christian died to sin in Christ's death, and that in his baptism he owns this, and is bound to walk as one already and always dead to sin. In a tone of disappointment the apostle appeals to his brethren at Rome, and asks the question, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death?" As much as to say, Have you forgotten the meaning of your baptism, are you ignorant of so elementary a truth?

In the latter part of the chapter we have this great principle applied in detail, which shows that the body and every member of the body is to be employed in the service of God. It is not enough to say of any one, He is very true at heart, but fails in his personal attendance at the various meetings of his brethren, and otherwise in using his tongue, his hands, or his feet, in the Lord's service, and thinks he may be excused because of circumstances. 'Many too are ready to say, who have found a reason for remaining at home, I was with you in spirit, I was helping by prayer.' While this may be true and good in some cases, in others, we fear, it might be self-delusion. The service of the body is as fairly required of the Lord as the prayer of the heart. It is well to know the Lord's claims on the body—on our personal service and presence. "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments unto God." The idea of a sacrifice is surely that of entire consecration—of body, soul, and spirit. The devoted victim under the law was slain and laid on God's altar. The act was complete—a complete surrender. Christians are to present their own "bodies" as a "living sacrifice," in contrast with the sacrifices of the law which were put to death. It is a self-sacrifice; but "with such sacrifices God is well pleased;" and the only sacrifice that is holy and acceptable to Him now. All others are profane. The sacrifice of the mass, so-called, and the whole system of Ritualism, are a practical denial of the finished work of Christ, and most offensive in the sight of God. "It is finished," was the shout of victory, all was accomplished. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14.

Since the one sacrifice of Christ was offered, sacrificial and ceremonial worship, with the long ritual of the Jews' religion, have passed away. These were types and shadows which came to their end by the coming of the Messiah. "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." God looks for intelligence in His servants according to the true light. The sacrifices of old had no conscience, no intelligence, no self-judgment, but the "living sacrifice" of Christians is called—"your reasonable service."

But some may still be ready to inquire, "In what sense can it be said that we died to sin in Christ's death, for I feel that sin is as really in me now as it was before my conversion?" Most surely it is there, and seeks to rule as formerly; this is just what the apostle refers to and warns against. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." So long as we are in the "mortal body," sin will be there and will seek to reign, but we are to reject its claims and refuse obedience to its desires. Our new place of blessing in Him who died and rose again, takes us far beyond its dominion. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Now mark what follows; all believe this verse to be quite true of the blessed Lord. None believe that He died to the love or the practice of sin, but to sin itself. But what does

verse 11 say? “Likewise reckon,” not, observe, realize, that we could never do, but, “reckon”—account, “ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Surely nothing could possibly be plainer than this in the reckoning of faith. “Likewise”—in like manner, plainly means, that the believer is to reckon himself dead to sin and alive unto God in the same sense that Christ is. He who denies this, does violence to the word, casts an indignity on the work of Christ, and reaps, as the fruit of his unbelief, a harvest of doubts and fears.

Know then, O my soul, and be well assured of this great truth; —that death is thy only deliverer from sin, and resurrection thy only way to the new creation.

We die out of the old state in His death, and rise into the new in His resurrection. This is deliverance! True, happy, heavenly deliverance! Within the gates of glory, in the reckoning of faith, thou mayest breathe freely and sing thy song of victory. No enemy can ever cross the grave of Christ. It is the grand terminus of sin, Satan, death, judgment, the world and the flesh. “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Oh, glorious liberty! Oh, blessed reality! To be within the gates of thy glorious land, O Emmanuel! To know that no enemy can ever invade thy peaceful borders; that no evil can ever enter there; that no serpent will ever lurk in thy Eden—the blooming paradise of God; that no tree of the knowledge of good and evil shall ever grow there; is our unmingled blessedness, our eternal security.

And there we stand with Thee, even now, by faith, O Jesus, Savior and Lord; we only await Thy coming to take us there actually. “A little while,” and faith and hope must give place to the grand reality, the heavenly promise. “And they shall see his face.” Faith’s deepest hold of truth, and hope’s highest expectations, are all fulfilled; we have seen His face. This will be thy heaven of heavens, O my soul; to see Him as He is. But what of thy faith and hope now, tell me? All is well; all is well; every wish is met, every desire is satisfied. I stand with Him who is Head of the new creation. One with Him in whom I died as a child of Adam; one with Him who bore my sins that I might be forgiven and have peace with God. Yes, I say it in the integrity of faith, on the authority of the Lord’s own word—“in Christ Jesus.” And my place and portion there are measured and expressed by Him. This I know, that I am one with Him in life, righteousness, privilege, blessing, glory; and where He is, there I shall be; and what He is, that I shall be forever. John 14, 17; Rom. 8.

Oh, happy soul, richly endowed and blessed, thou needest nothing more, only to feed on what thou hast and delight thyself in Him. But thinkest thou ever of those who have missed their way in this dark world, and know nothing of thy happiness? O seek to win such hapless souls to thy Savior. Every soul that thou winnest, will be as another precious stone in His diadem of glory. This is the happy work of the lover of souls—to gather precious stones from the rubbish of this world for His crown; they can be found nowhere else. And are there not many lost souls around thee to whom thou mayest speak, if thou canst not take a public place in testimony? Jesus says “Come,” to the weary and heavy laden; and thou mayest say, “Come;” and even to the chief of sinners Jesus said, “Make haste, and Come.” O wondrous words of purest grace, from the living lips of the blessed Jesus! “Make haste, and Come.” This could not mean to-morrow, but just at once. A child knows what “make haste” means, and why should sinners doubt and linger?

Nearest thou these encouraging words, my dear reader? Wilt thou come—come just now? Happily, for Zacchaeus, he made haste and came. And what did he receive? Salvation! But suppose for a moment he had lingered, doubted, reasoned, delayed, until it was too late, as many did then, and do now? What would the consequences have been? Salvation lost, the soul lost, Christ lost, heaven lost, and all the blessedness we have been describing. But what would be the sharpest sting of the undying worm? —self-reproach. The awful sentence would recall the past, justify the judge, and fill the condemned soul with speechless agony. “Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when darkness and anguish cometh upon you.” Pro. 1:24-27.

Oh, then, my dear reader, as thou wouldst not have this fearful sentence read to thee, with heaven’s gates closed and hell’s gates open, —come now to Jesus, “make haste and come.” Nothing could more express the Lord’s earnestness with lost sinners; nothing could more ensure thy sweet welcome to Him: but alas, alas, nothing could more deepen thy agonies, nothing could inure fill thee with unmitigated misery, if thou refusest, than thy reflections on that gracious word, “make haste and come.” The work of redemption is finished, all is done, thou hast only to yield thy heart to His love, believe His word, and trust the blood that can make thee whiter than snow. But on no consideration delay. O haste thee, haste thee, while the door is open, tomorrow may be too late, the door may be shut, and thy precious soul lost, lost forever and forever. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.

Having so far cleared the ground, and shown the foundations of Christian devotedness in service, we will now go on with verse 2.

Meditations on Christian Devotedness

Verse 2. “And he not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” the connection between the first and second verses is manifest and beautiful. We have the body in the one and the mind in the other; the whole man is brought in we are also reminded thereby, that mere bodily exercise, though consisting in the diligent observance of rites and ceremonies, would profit nothing without the renewal of the mind. The inner as well as the outer man must be formed morally for god, and his service. Hence the one grand end for the christian to gain is the discernment of the will of god; and the highest expression of christian life in this world, is the life that is most perfectly subject to the divine will. We have to prove—though we may be long in doing so—that this and this only is good, acceptable, perfect, and well pleasing in his sight

This then is thy life lesson, O my soul; and thou wilt do well to study these two verses carefully and together. Meditate deeply on each member of each verse, they are peculiarly full of the most practical truth for the Christian. Obedience, devotedness, subjection to the Master’s will, are the truest features of the life of Christ in thee. This is to be thy one grand object—thy constant care—to be like Him! Lord grant a growing transformation to Thine own image both within and without! And now, observe, that the first thing thou hast to learn is how to guard against the evil course of this world.

“And be not conformed to this world,” This is a hard lesson to learn. To be personally in a place where the habits and opinions of men rule, and yet to be outside of it morally—in heart and spirit—where the will of God rules, is thy lesson. Nothing but the grace of God and a close walk with Him could make thee triumph here. Imagine for a moment, a young Christian fresh in his first love and in the bloom of his new eternal life, actively engaged from morning till night in the city of Loudon, where gold is worshipped, and where everything, else is sacrificed to the idol. Nevertheless, non-conformity to the spirits around him must be maintained; and when the hour of closing comes, non-conformity to their ways. Evenings reveal whose we are and whom we love and serve. The happy Christian is ready, with all his heart, for the prayer, the worship, or the instruction meeting. And many such there are, the Lord be praised.

The secret of their strength is the knowledge of Christ and the heart’s occupation with Him. We learn to say in such circumstances, Christ is this to me, Christ is that to me, Christ is everything to me, thus it is all and only Christ. And no better school can there be to teach us watchfulness and dependence on him. The experience is good, we learn our own weakness and folly in the midst of those who would rejoice in the smallest compromise, and become more and more cast upon Christ, and learn more and more of the depths of his grace, the value of His word, and the glory of His Person. Or, as the Apostle John puts it, “I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” 1 John 2:14.

THE CAUSE OF WEAKNESS: THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

There are some Christians who think it very humble to be doubting at times their own salvation; but such are always weak Christians, and constantly in danger of being conformed to the spirit, the conduct, and the customs of this present evil age. So long as there is uncertainty as to our own salvation, there will be occupation with self in place of Christ. This is ruinous as to testimony and consistency. When we are looking to ourselves—our feelings, doings, experience—the old nature is active. When we are looking to Christ—His love, His finished work, His place in the glory—the new nature is active. And this makes all the difference between the two Christians. The former is fighting with his own heart that loves the things he is to strive against, but his difficulties increase, and because there is no joy, there is no strength. The latter being set free from self, and looking to Jesus, finds in Him a positive power for conflict and service. When the eye is fixed on Him all other objects are shut out. The new nature and the new object acting thus upon each other, our joy abounds, our strength increases; all useless weights are laid aside and the sin that easily besets us, and we run with patience the race that is set before us. This is the only true principle of the transformation here spoken of.

“But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” We have briefly glanced at the negative side of the second verse—non-conformity to the world, separateness from its maxims and its ways.

We now come to the positive side—the renewing of the mind. This is all-important. It is the renewal of the whole inner man; the deep springs of the heart which only the eye of God can see. He looks for the renewal of the understanding, affections, and will. Our old ideas which ruled the mind before we knew God and His Christ must all be given up, and new thoughts, new motives, new objects, new feelings, new intentions, as springing from our one new object—Christ in the glory—must have full sway over all the faculties of the mind, as well as over all the members of the

body. There must be a complete transformation within and without, by the renewing of the mind. The Christian is a new man in Christ, "which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. 1:10.

Most mysterious, but blessed indeed is the Christian's position as here viewed! He must live, and think, and judge, in his new nature, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. At the same time he knows that the old nature is encompassing the new on every side, and which, though dead in the reckoning of faith, and according to the judgment of God on the cross, is still alive in fact, and will never fail to strive for its old seat of government in the mind and ways of the believer. This keeps him on his watch tower; from thence he discovers the movements of his enemies, and the mode of their attack. But he remembers the word, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." He is no longer in the flesh—though the flesh be in him—but in Christ as risen and exalted, and he knows it. This is the strong tower into which the righteous run and are safe. Thy strength, remember, O my soul, lies not in the number of thy privileges and blessings, but in the Person of thy Lord. Could the enemy beguile thee to count up thy many blessings as a believer, and meditate on these as thy riches apart from the Person of Christ, thou wouldst be little better than David when he numbered his men; or like John and James who were thinking about a good place in the kingdom. Paul desired Christ—"That I may win him." Oh! think of Himself—the blessed Lord! think of the place he has in the favor of God; oh! think with what perfect complacency the Father's eye rests on His well-beloved! and then think of thy place in Him, thy acceptance in Him, thy home, thy rest, thy peace, thy happy welcome in Him, forever and forever. This sums up all blessedness and sets the heart at rest forever—oneness with Christ.

"Jesus, my all in all Thou art,
My rest in toil, my case in pain;
The medicine of my broken heart;
'Mid storms, my peace; in loss, my gain;
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown;
In shame, my glory and my crown."

We must now return for a moment to the practical working of this great principle in every-day life. Without the inward renewal which the apostle here insists upon, there could be no discernment of the mind of God, and no real separation from the world. The outward difference between the believer and the man of the world, must flow from the condition of the mind as renewed and strengthened by grace. Otherwise, it would be the merest formality. The path of separation is too narrow for the natural eye to discern. No broad lines are laid down in the word of God to mark the Christian's way through this world; the spiritual eye alone can see the way out of it. "There is a path," says Job, "which no fowl knoweth, and which no vulture's eye hath seen." Chapter 28:7.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.

The calling and responsibility of the Christian, then, is to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." This is to be his one grand object as to the whole path of his service in this world. But how, it may be asked, is this end to be gained? The truest answer would

be—like-mindedness to Christ. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” And again, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” Paul says positively, “But we have the mind of Christ.” And if we are to walk so as to please God, we must walk even as Christ walked. And this, according to John, is what we ought to do. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” Phil. 2:5; Heb. 10:6; 1 Cor. 2:16 John 2:6.

The measure of the soul’s obedience to the will of God is Christ; He must be the alone object before the mind. But to prove that will practically, we must be whole-hearted for Him, and be strengthened by the power of His grace acting on the renewed mind. The Holy Spirit, who only can show us the mind of God, must be ungrieved. We must be continually on the watch against the inroads of the world—the spirit of the age—and gradually growing in grace and in the knowledge of the divine will in all things.

Christian devotedness is thus complete in truth; the whole man is consecrated to the Lord, and laid upon His altar. The body is yielded up, the mind is transformed, and the will of God discerned; the man as a whole is devoted to God. Elsewhere the apostle prays for the complete sanctification of the entire man, which we must just glance at in passing. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In this remarkable passage, it is the expressed will of God, that those who have been saved through grace, and brought into relationship with Himself, should be entirely consecrated to Him. This, surely, is devotedness without limit. It is the will of our God, that the Christian, in every part of his being, should be wholly sanctified, or consecrated, to Himself as “the very God of peace. What grace, what love, what goodness, thou mayest well exclaim, O my soul! It is overwhelming! As water rises to its level, so God would have thee, in every thought of thy mind, in every part of thy being, rise to Himself as thy proper object, resource, and rest.

The soul is usually spoken of as the individual; as, “The souls that came with Jacob into Egypt.” The body is the instrument of the soul’s expression and action; and the spirit, of its capacity and power. John the Baptist came in “the spirit and power of Elias,” not in the soul of Elias. Such is man in all the parts of his being; and the apostle prays that each part may “be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He does not say, observe, unto the day of death, but, “unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” This may show thee what an important place the coming of the Lord had in the mind of the apostle, or rather in the mind of the Holy Spirit, and what an important place it ought to have in the minds of all Christians. It is an essential, or at least, a most influential part of christian life. Its place in this passage is perfectly beautiful. The believer, who is now but in part sanctified, shall be wholly then, and in every part of his being—body, soul, and spirit. What a wonderful thought this gives us of what we may now call, poor humanity. Then it will be perfected in each part, ennobled by grace, conformed to the glorious image of Christ Himself, who is the Head and Source of this new life in the glory.

Who would not heave a sigh and drop a tear over the blind indifference of those who are pursuing a course that must lead to the utter ruin, and the eternal degradation of humanity in the depths of hell! How exalted in heaven, how lowered in hell! Stop, dear reader, stop, and think! Where wouldst thou be forever? Hurlled down the deep descent into the fiery gulf of the burning lake, or carried on the wings of love to the bright regions of glory? It must be the one or the other. There is no middle path here, there is no middle place hereafter. What is thy governing object now? Christ

or the world? This determines thy future state. If the world be chosen in place of Christ, and its pleasures preferred to His cross in following Him, thy condemnation will be just, and thy deep debasement but the natural consequence of thy inexcusable folly. But, oh, what a wreck! that fair and stately vessel—humanity—body, soul, and spirit, which might have entered the port of life under the banner of a Savior's love, and amidst the joyous welcomes of many a well-known voice on that shining shore, now lies a hapless wreck on that dark, distant, dreary shore, the lake of fire. Think, oh think, dear reader! Would tears of blood be too much to shed over such a melancholy wreck of our common humanity? But think also, I pray thee, of a resurrection body, characterized by four things—“incorruption, glory, power, spiritual.” This is the noble vessel by which the saint in glory will express himself; the soul, the proper seat of affection, now purified and all its capacities enlarged, what love will it take in and give out! The mind, elevated and dignified by union with Christ, walks above the myriad hosts of shining ones who have never sinned, and in intelligent relationship with God, meditates on His glory. And what must the noble workings of that mind be, when moved, guided, and sustained by the Holy Spirit? This is the sure and happy portion of all who believe in Jesus now, and give their hearts to Him. Blessed privilege, precious opportunity; there is no time like the present! Let Him have thy heart now, my dear reader, thy whole heart, and forever!

Oh! happy Christian, thou mayest well give up the tinselled vanities of time for the glories of eternity. But even now thou knowest thy place in the glory. Christ, in His Person, and in His present position in the presence of God, is the expression of thy place there. Every believer has his place before God in Christ, and in the righteousness of God, which He accomplished in Christ, having glorified Himself in that obedient, blessed One. And now, God would have all who are brought into this relationship with Himself, to have no object before their minds but Christ in the glory, so that we may do His will, and be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Oh! who upon earth can conceive
What in heaven we are called to share!
Or who this dark world would not leave,
And earnestly long to be there!
There Christ is the light and the sun,
His glories unhinderedly shine;
Already our joy is begun,
Our rest is the glory divine.
'Tis good, at His word, to be here,
Yet better by far to be gone,
And there in His presence appear,
And rest where He rests on the throne;

Yet, oh! it will triumph afford

When Him we shall see in the air:

When we enter the joy of the Lord,

Forever abide with him there.”

Meditations on Christian Devotedness

Verse 3. “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.” The Christian’s walk, according to the first two verses, should be characterized by devotedness and obedience; and according to the verse before us, by humility and dependence.

These four graces, watchfully maintained in the presence of God, would certainly produce a very complete Christian; one very like his Lord and Master, who, though entirely devoted to the glory of God, was meek and lowly in heart. We should naturally suppose, that when there is such devotedness to God, both in body and soul, there would also be great sobriety of judgment and lowliness of mind. But, alas! it is not always so. The one is far from being a necessary consequence of the other. On the contrary, there is always a danger of the flesh coming in and availing itself of the power which such devotedness gives, either to assume a tone of superiority and high-mindedness, or to affect a false humility and speak contemptuously of self. This is manifest on every hand at the present hour, and it is written on every page of church history. Of this tendency the apostle was fully aware, and warns against it, as we learn from the peculiar tone and energy of his style in this verse.

The words, For I say, through the grace given unto me, “have more the tone of apostolic authority, than the affectionate entreaties of a brother, as in the first verse, I beseech you therefore, brethren.” But we must not suppose that the style of the one verse is less perfect, less consistent, less affectionate, than the other, but that the character of the exhortation, in the wisdom of God, required a different tone and style! Firmness is perfectly consistent with humility, and faithfulness with the strongest affection.

The apostle stands, as it were, at the center of practical Christianity. He sees its bearings on every side. His mind is filled with the higher principles of entire devotedness to the will of God, and also with the humbler gifts, which were to find their expression in the gracious ministries of love among the saints. He writes with decision and energy to secure both. The former he had faithfully enjoined in the first two verses; and now he is about to expatiate with great minuteness on the latter. The third verse is his stand-point. He clearly sees and feels as one standing in the light of God, that high mindedness would be ruinous to the first, and an effectual hindrance to the second. The will of God being the object of christian service, whether in the higher or humbler sphere, real devotedness must consist in the denial of self, and in humbly waiting on God to know His good and perfect will in all things. The human will must be set aside, if we are to enter into the meaning, importance, and application of this condensed treasury of practical Christianity.

Thou wilt now see, O my soul, a divine reason for the changed style of the great apostle; and thou wilt also see that he is most personal in his application of this weighty truth. He does not merely

address the church as a body, but he appeals to everyone among the saints at Rome; the least as well as the greatest. This will show thee how prone all are to over-value themselves, even in the church of God and in their service to His saints. Oh, what deceitful hearts we have! What need for watchfulness! —for constant communion with the truly humble and blessed Lord, who “loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savor.”

But there is an opposite error into which many fall, and which must be as carefully avoided by the Christian. This is an affectation of humility by speaking of oneself in a depreciating manner. When a man speaks of “his small measure; of being the most unfit person for the important work he has in hand;” we feel that he is either insincere or unwise. God never requires the exercise of a gift which He has not bestowed. This species of false humility must be watched against by all who would walk with God in integrity of heart. God is real and He must have reality in us; He is true and He must have truth in the inward parts. Nevertheless, there are those who honestly, but unduly, depreciate their gift and fail to act for God and His people. This is a false modesty, and also a serious evil, and one which the Lord must judge sooner or later. But now, mark well, my soul, the wisdom of holy scripture. This alone, by God’s grace, can give thee a well-balanced, a well-adjusted mind.

“Think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” The first thing is to find thy true place in the presence of God according to thy faith in Christ, and then thy own place amongst thy fellow-servants. The measure of faith with which each believer is blest, in the sovereign grace of God, becomes the proper limit, within which he is to occupy himself according to the will of God. Surely the man who has the greatest who is a father in Christ, and who knows most of the word of God, will rise to his own level among his fellow Christians, where the Holy Spirit rules. The Lord give us to know the measure and character of our gift, what He has prepared us for; that we may be preserved from all extremes. In this as in all things the Christian’s path is a narrow one, and requires spiritual discernment. Nothing short of constant communion with Him who closed His life of perfect obedience on the cross, will keep us in the place of true humility, obedience, and dependence. O Lord, lead Thy servants over Thine own path, preserve them from the indolence that falls asleep, from the energy of nature that would go too fast, from a false modesty that refuses to do Thy bidding, and from the want of modesty that would yield to the impulse of the natural will. May we never forget, that “unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of Christ.” Eph. 4:7.

I would not work, my soul to save,

That work my Lord hath done

But I would work like any slave

For love to God’s dear Son.

Meditations on Christian Devotedness

Verses 4, 5. “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.” The apostle having laid down the great principles of individual Christian devotedness, now descends to all the forms which the ministry of love assumes in the Christian, “according to the various

positions in which he stands, and to the spirit in which he ought to walk in every relationship.” The theme before thee now, O my soul, is christian service.

Thou wilt do well to pause here for a little, and meditate on the foundation of this service and its peculiar character. It is by no means generally or well understood. Still it is always well to ascertain, when revealed, the divine reason of things, the spring from whence they flow. “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” The Christian’s relation to the body of Christ, and to all other Christians as members of that one body, forms the true basis, and the wide sphere, of Christian duties as detailed in this twelfth chapter. This was an entirely new thing in the ways of God with men. We have nothing corresponding to it in the Old Testament, nor even during the life of the blessed Lord on the earth. There were saints of God from the beginning, souls born of God, but they were never formed into one body till after the cross and ascension of Christ. When He was glorified at God’s right hand in heaven, the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, and united Jew and Gentile into one body on the earth.

The body was then formed in union with the exalted Head. This is the church. It is something more than merely believing, they are members of Christ’s body and of one another on the earth. See especially, 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 2:13-16.

The doctrine of the unity of the church as the body of Christ is most fully unfolded in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. Here it is only referred to in a practical point of view, and that, in connection with the duties of the members individually—duties that flow from their position in the one body, being severally members one of another. This is the new platform laid down by the apostle for the new order of christian ministry, which has its immediate sphere of exercise within the limits of the church as the one body. In illustration of this union and responsibility, he refers to the wonderful structure of the human body. “For we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office.” Every member has its proper place, and its proper function to perform in the human body; and every member is valuable according to its healthful activity and usefulness. Though all the members are not of equal importance, yet none are useless. The smallest and least honorable is necessary to the others, and should be treated with even more consideration, as the apostle elsewhere teaches. “And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor.” The foot may be less comely than the eye, but the eye could not perform the peculiar function of the foot, therefore the eye must honor the foot for the valuable services it renders to the body, though it may be covered with dust by the way.

But enough as to the figure, its completeness will more fully appear as we proceed with our chapter.

In the meantime, let me invite thee, O my soul, to a closer acquaintance with thy Lord, as Head of the church, before looking at the various gifts in the members. They all flow from Him who provides for the spiritual supply of His people’s wants. He is the source of their blessing in virtue of their union with Him. Oh, wondrous truth! Oh, blessed! Oh, happiness complete! Christ as tie exalted Man in the glory, the measure and fullness of thy blessing! Thou art one with Him! Having glorified God on the earth, having blotted out sin, abolished death, vanquished Satan, risen again from the dead, He ascended up on high as the Head of His body the church. He entered heaven, not on the ground of His own essential righteousness, not as God, nor simply as man, but “by His

own blood.” This was His title to the throne; His own shed blood. “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” And this is thy title; He goes in on the ground of His people’s title. We are “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” This is the great truth that goes to the very depths of the heart of faith. Only think, and still think; meditate, and still meditate; until thou art far beyond thy depth in that ocean of love which flows around that cross and around that throne. What seest thou? The Man Christ Jesus on the throne. What is His title to be there? The putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. What, then, is He to thy heart as the Man in the glory? He is the witness that my sins were all put away on the cross; that God’s righteous judgment against my sins has been borne and vindicated; that I am before God in Christ, in the righteousness of God Himself; that Christ, in His person, and in His present position, is the expression of my place and portion there! To know Him, is to know my own place in the glory. But what more can I say? It is an ocean without a shore. And it is true of all believers—of every member of His body, the feeblest as well as the strongest. The apostle John sets his seal to this, “As he is, so are we in this—world.”

But grace has no evil eye. We forget not the Christless soul, the portionless, the godless, the homeless soul. This wealthy portion may be thine, my dear reader, even though thou art the chief of sinners. It was for sinners and for sinners the chief, that Jesus died. All, all, is thine if thou wilt only believe. The gospel is preached to faith. In the finished work of Christ and His exaltation, thou hast a solid ground for the immediate pardon of thy sins, and the complete salvation of thy soul. God has glorified Himself in Christ, and He is waiting to glorify Himself again, in the full remission of all thy sins through faith in His well-beloved Son. This is all; honor the Son; embrace the Son; honor Him as the one that suffered to save thee from everlasting suffering in the lake of fire. Yes, this is all; honor Him with thy faith, thy confidence, thy worshipful adoration. Is it difficult to love one who so loves; to trust one who was faithful unto death; who is God as well as man?

But be assured, if thou art still careless, that great and wonderful as the work of Christ is, it is of no value to thee without faith. But its full value is thine the moment thou hast faith in Him. He has borne the judgment due to sin, He has done all that is needed for the glory of God and for the salvation of the sinner; the work is absolutely complete. He who knew best, said, “It is finished.” Believe it, it is true; believe it now, and thou art saved, saved forever. Oh! turn not, I pray thee, a deaf or a careless ear to the joyful sound. Oh! hear the joyful sound of heaven in that one word, Come! Come! COME! Love waits, love lingers; sin and Satan are also here! The awful judgment of God is hanging over this doomed world; hanging over thee; flee, then, oh! flee, to the only shelter from the impending storm, from wrath to the uttermost, the sure shelter of the Savior’s blood. Rest on this word whatever thy frames and feelings may be, “The blood of Jesus ‘Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

“THE ever-blessed Son of God

Went up to Calvary for me:

There paid my debt, there bore my load,

In His own body on the tree.

Jesus, whose dwelling is the skies,

Went down into the grave for me;
There overcame my enemies,
There won the glorious victory.
In love the whole dark path He trod,
To consecrate a way for me;
Each bitter footstep marked with blood,
From Bethlehem to Calvary.”

Meditations on Christian Ministry

Verse 6. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." The subject of "gifts," as brought before us in 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4, and Rom. 12, is one of the deepest importance to the student of the New Testament, and to all who would understand the constitution of the church of God, and who would be found acting therein according to His mind. But it would be quite out of place to attempt even a brief sketch of so great a subject here; we will merely notice the difference between the gifts in Corinthians and Ephesians, before proceeding with our chapter.

In Corinthians, they may be regarded, for the most part, as the manifestation of divine power, and as signs and wonders for the unbelieving. "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." The Corinthians being unspiritual and fond of display, over-valued the sign-gifts because they were a manifestation of power before the world, and gave themselves a certain importance. It was no doubt thought a very grand thing to be able to speak in tongues without having learned them, and to work miracles. But this vanity is not peculiar to the Corinthians, though eloquence and intellectual attainments had always a great charm for them. The servant of the Lord now, as well as then, has to watch against investing himself with the importance of his gift and thereby attracting attention to his person. And this may be even when there is true devotedness, and when the Lord may be using his gift for blessing to others. Riches, time influence, learning, and natural eloquence, are gifts, in Well its miraculous power to speak in languages not previously learned, and ought to be used for the glory of God and the good of others, remembering that we are accountable to Him for every gift He has bestowed upon us. The servant who misapplies any gift or talent which the master has conferred upon him, is unfaithful to his trust; he may be mispending, or using for own importance and advantage, that which has been entrusted to him for the glory of the Lord and the welfare of His people.

The apostle evidently mourns over the Corinthians because of their failure as to the gifts of God. Their love of display before the world, rather than the enjoyment of God Himself in His word, and the edification of His saints, was a gild to him. He therefore endeavors to convince them of their mistake, by showing them that tongues are one of the lowest forms of the Spirit's operations, and prophesyings one of the highest. After contrasting the two at great length, he half reproachfully says, "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." The refreshment, comfort, uplifting of the heart—the edification of the saints, should be one grand object of the christian teacher. He who, ministers Christ and His work to the soul, out of the fullness of his own heart, is the minister who always edifies and never disappoints. The sign gifts in the early church were for a distinct purpose and ceased when that object was accomplished. "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." Heb. 2:4.

In Ephesians the character of the gifts is very different. The blessed Lord, as Head of the church at the right hand of God, is seen as the giver. In Corinthians the Holy Spirit is the dispenser of the gifts. This marks the difference; the former is affection, the latter is power, ecclesiastically viewed. Besides, the gifts of Ephesians abide with the church, "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." In Corinthians the gifts may be regarded as spiritual powers; in Ephesians as spiritual persons. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." The two aspects of gifts, however—the power of the Spirit and the affections of Christ—are perfectly harmonious. Power is needed, but a Person, not a power, is the true object of the affections of the church in all ages.

In Romans, the character and application of the gifts are somewhat different to both Ephesians and Corinthians. Here it is more the question of ministry in connection with the membership of the body. Responsibility flows from being members of the body of Christ, and every one members one of another. This is a truth of such vital, practical importance, that I would have thee, O my soul, give it thy best and thy most prayerful attention. The connection is so intimate both with the Head and the many members, that all are affected either favorably or unfavorably by thy service. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." And forget not, I pray thee, that though the outward manifestation of the church's unity be broken up, and in this respect a ruin, thy responsibility is the same. The standard of divine truth remains unchanged, and couldst thou admit a lower standard than the good and perfect will of thy God and Father? The "one body" is not in ruins. None but real Christians have the privilege of membership here; but as all such are members of that body, whether they be externally united in christian fellowship or not, our love ought to be cultivated and cherished towards them, simply on the ground of their union with Christ. This is the only truth that will deliver thee from the strange principle of independence in a unity, and from all sectarian partiality. We ought to add our hearty "amen" to the prayer, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The apostle's comparison of the human body to believers as one body in Christ is beautiful and appropriate, and also illustrates the character of christian ministry within the limits of the known members of that body. This truth, however, be it observed, does not touch the Christian's individuality as a man in Christ, or as a man of God amongst men, or as an evangelist to the regions beyond, or in any way as to his personal responsibility and blessing. We are now speaking of the nature and sphere of christian service as defined in the chapter before us. And here the apostle shows, that it would be as unreasonable for all Christians to have the same gifts, as for all the members of the human body to have the same office; that the diversities of gifts and offices are necessary to the perfection and usefulness of the body of Christ. "There are diversities of gifts," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "but the same Spirit." This weighty truth was much needed at Corinth and everywhere. Like them we are disposed to talk a great deal about the greater gifts, and leave very little room for the exercise of the lesser. But we must remember that although the gifts differ in measure and character, they all come from the same source. And wherever there is such a state of things, either from pre-arrangement, or from strong partialities, as to shut out the lesser gifts, the Spirit is quenched, the assembly loses the benefit of the diversity of

gifts, and ceases to act in accordance with the mind of God.

Hast thou a gift, my soul? Remember then, that the sphere of its exercise is the church of God, without reference to locality; but see that it is a gift—a positive gift of God—not an imitation of others, lest thou shouldst become a troubler of the saints of God, a hinderer, not a help to their worship.

We will now take a brief glance at the various gifts here enumerated by the apostle, and may the Lord give thee spiritual discernment to see which, or how many, are thine.

Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” The general idea of prophesying is the foretelling of future events, though not limited to that office. We accordingly find the term prophet applied in a more general way in the Old Testament. The bearer of the message from God, whether relating to things present or things to come, is called a prophet; and so is the interpreter of the divine message. Of Abraham it is said, “He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee and thou shalt live.” (Gen. 20:7.) Moses, as the great interpreter of the mind of God to the Jews, is frequently spoken of as a prophet.

In the New Testament, those called “prophets,” and classed with apostles, had a perfectly distinct mission from Old Testament prophets, and must carefully be distinguished when studying the word of God. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets.” These were the two classes of workmen whom God especially used at the very beginning, when laying the foundations of the church; hence they are sometimes called “foundation gifts;” but there is no reason to believe that they were long continued to the church, though at different periods in her history there have been men raised up to do something like the work of apostles and prophets; such as the different periods of great revivals, and the Reformation. The apostles were the inspired, infallible, authoritative messengers of Christ; the prophets were only occasionally so, but explained to others with great clearness, what they themselves had learned from the holy scriptures, or from inspired men. “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge....” “He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.” Thus we see they had a special gift for the proper expounding of all scripture, and for the proper application of it to their hearers.

The New Testament prophet was also as the mouth of God, delivering the particular communication he had received, whether designed for instruction or exhortation. No form of ministration gave the hearer such a sense of the immediateness of the divine presence as prophesying, or such a certainty that the mind of God was being expressed. Thus it was the most intimate and direct dealing of God with the soul through man as His messenger. As an illustration of the peculiar power of this gift, nothing can be clearer than the case of the woman of Samaria. “Go, call thy husband,” was the voice of God to her guilty conscience. She felt she was in the searching light of His presence, and at once confessed her sin. All was reality now, she concealed nothing. “The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.” These words brought the conviction home to her heart that she stood revealed before God Himself, and that He who spoke to her was His prophet. “The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” John 4:10-19.

And now, after thy careful and repeated meditations on this precious gift, what are thy thoughts as to its value? Only one deep, earnest, fervent desire to possess it. Lord, give me this power, is my constant, heartfelt prayer. A thousand times I have mourned my feebleness here. Highest in character, and most desirable of all the gifts, as it gives the anxious inquirer to feel that God is speaking to him, not the servant; that it is the voice of God he hears, not man's; that it is the authority of God he must bow to, not the conclusions of the preacher. There may be many teachers and preachers, whose ministrations may be a comfort and blessing to others, but who are strangers to this divine art—this power of putting the soul in direct contact with God Himself, and setting the soul in the light of the divine presence.

Only one other thought, and we pass on. Whatever gift, or gifts, we may have from the Lord, all must be used in subjection to Him and regulated by His word. Even prophecy must be “according to the proportion of faith.” We must never go beyond our measure; if we do, we shall end in the flesh, though we commenced in the spirit. Unless a man's teaching is in full accordance with scripture, he has no right to consider himself entitled to the confidence of others, however great his gift. So says the apostle, “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” This is authoritative and unchangeable. The Lord give us to judge all by His own word; whether speaker or hearer, teacher or taught, we have no other standard.

Meditations on Christian Ministry

Verse 7. “Or ministry, let us wait on our ministry; or he that teacheth, on teaching.” The terms minister and ministry are sometimes employed in reference to the apostles, to teachers, and to all who serve in the gospel; and sometimes in a more restricted sense, as to the office of deacon and the deaconship. The latter seems to be the appropriate application of the word “ministry” here. The deacons were a class of officers who were to attend to the poor and the sick, and the external affairs of the church generally. (See Acts 6:1-3; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.) And if a man's gift lay in ministering thus to the saints, he was to attend to it. “Or ministry, let us wait on our ministry.” This is a real service of love, and one most acceptable to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His poor saints, and he who is thus privileged, will show his wisdom by occupying himself in his own gift, and not be attempting that which he is neither called to nor qualified for. Great wisdom and spiritual discernment are required, in order to “use the office of a deacon well;” and distribute wisely that which may be called one's own money, or money entrusted to us by others. We must look at “the poor of the flock” from the Master's point of view, and love them through His affection.

“Or he that teacheth, on teaching.” The teacher is one who not only knows and enjoys the truth himself, but has the gift of so unfolding it as to lead others to see it, enjoy it, own its weight and importance; at the same time, the teacher must not be confounded with the prophet, nor teaching with prophesying. The apostle is particularly energetic in keeping everyone to his own work in the unity of the body, and from engaging in a service for which he has no divinely given fitness. The first thing, to be ascertained is the character of our gift, and secondly its measure. And he who serves diligently according to its nature and measure, will be recognized and esteemed by his brethren, and owned of God for help and blessing in His assembly: but on the other hand, if a brother is vain of his gift, mistakes its nature, or pushes it beyond its measure, he is not led of the Spirit, he is acting in the flesh, and when this is felt, his ministry must be unacceptable. And what

follows? He complains that his gift is not appreciated—for he has a real gift—whereas, it was the forwardness of nature that was rejected, not the godly exercise of his gift, “ according to the proportion of faith.” This is one of the bitter roots which sometimes spring up and trouble the assembly of God. The Lord give us all to watch against this with a godly jealousy, so that there may be no ungracious criticisms, unworthy partialities, hard judging, on the one hand, or vain assumption on the other. Lord, give us to be only too happy to serve Thee however small our gift, if it be only to hand a hymnbook to a stranger, or conduct him to a seat. The thought, oh! the wondrous thought—Jesus died for we! is enough to gird thee for the humblest work. Never forget this, my soul, and it will always keep thee humble, and always girded to serve.

Teachers, though in some respects resembling the prophets, are expressly distinguished from them. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” The apostles were the inspired communicators of God’s mind to man, and invested with power to govern in the name of the Lord. The prophets were not only occasionally connected with the revelation of truth before unknown, but used of God in the important work of so expounding and applying scripture, as to set the soul in the light of His presence. Teachers are distinguished from apostles and prophets, inasmuch as they were not necessarily inspired, and are classed with the regular and permanent gifts of Christ to His church. The word of God is the standard by which all teachers must be tried, however great their gift or acceptance. And He gave some, “evangelists, pastors, and teachers.” These we have still with us, thank the Lord, and many of them working for Him, notwithstanding the general confusion and outward broken state of the church. Fitness to teach is a gift of the ascended Lord, and which all ought to possess who take the place of teachers. No mere human appointment or education can make a man a minister of Christ. How truly happy to be able to say with the apostle, “Our sufficiency is of God, who bath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” 2 Cor. 3:5, 6.

Verse 8. “Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity. The teacher has chiefly to do with the understanding, the exhorter with the conscience. It requires great grace to be an exhorter, and equally great grace to receive the word of exhortation. The gift is now, are in the church of God. Few have grace to bring the keen edge of the word down upon the conscience, and at the same time make the person feel that love rules, and that his good is the only object in view. Exhortation includes admonition, consolation; urging to practical duties, dissuading from the neglect of duty, pointing out shortcomings, applying the promises or the threatenings of scripture as the case may be. But we need not dwell on the difficulties of the exhorter, and the still greater difficulty of submitting to the exhortation. They must be apparent to all. Personal feelings are apt to arise and false motives to be imputed; still, the apostle presses the exercise of the gift as needed and wholesome for the members of the body of Christ. The Lord grant that in this day of high-mindedness, of in-subjection to the word of God, our lives may be a constant testimony to the will of Christ, and our diligent attention to the things of the Lord both publicly and privately, a constant exhortation to our fellow-Christians. Then it will be not only, Do as I say, but do as I do.

“He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.” The apostle is here speaking of gifts, not of office; and of the manner in which the various duties of Christians, as members of one body, ought to be

performed. He whose gift is riches, and who giveth of his substance for the wants of the poor, or the work of the Lord, is to do it with simplicity. Here pause a moment, my soul; allow thyself to be arrested by this weighty caution. Nothing is more difficult than to distribute money according to this word of the Lord. "Simplicity" here means "singleness of heart, fearing God;" and again, In singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. (Col. 3:24; Eph. 6:5; 2 Cor. 1:12.) now searching is the word of God! it guards against ostentation, love of praise, wrong motives, improper objects; and on the other hand, it warns us against all evasive pretexts such as, not convenient, I have so many calls, I am not able to give. At the same time, the Christian is but a steward, whether he distributes what may be called his own, or the bounty of the church, and he is entitled to look for "simplicity and godly sincerity" in the applicant as well as in himself. There are many plausible appeals made for money, which, when carefully examined, are found to be neither simple nor sincere. He must also watch against the artful pleader putting his soul in bondage, and making him unhappy. There is only one remedy for all the difficulties connected with giving, as for all other things. The giver must walk before the Lord with purity of motive, free from all improper designs, and waiting to do His will with an honest impartial simplicity. When the eye is single, the whole body is full of light; perplexity with darkness flees away, the mind of God is discerned, and the clear light of heaven shines on the steward's way.

Meditations on Christian Ministry

"He that ruleth, with diligence." Those who are called to exercise the gift of ruler or leader in the assembly of God, are required to do so with the closest attention and zeal. Much sorrow, alienation of feeling, coldness, irregularity in attendance, might be prevented by the watchful and faithful discharge of the ruler's duties. Prevention is better than cure; and in nothing more so than in a community of free, intelligent, but sensitive minds and encompassed with many infirmities. He needs a skilful eye to watch the countenance, to mark the movements, and to notice the first change in conduct. One may be observed hurrying off rather quickly at the close of a meeting, so as to avoid speaking, or being spoken to. Why is this? It was not so lately. On inquiry, it is found that offense has been taken from supposed neglect, or the heart has been wounded by the apparent partiality of the ruler himself. Misunderstanding prevails.

Such a state of things calls for immediate, faithful, wise, and tender dealing. There may be faults on both sides; grace must reign; still, that which is right must not be overlooked. But carelessness, indolence, on the part of the ruler at such a moment, might be ruinous to the peace and the prosperity of the assembly. The strong must bear with the weak, and everything like partiality, especially on the part of those who have influence in a meeting, must be carefully avoided. Though we cannot love all alike, we must not manifest our love to some to the grief and wounding of others, Vigilance and fidelity must be the watchword of the ruler, but he must not forget to cherish and manifest the love of Him who died for the flock, and rose again to fold in His everlasting embrace His blood-bought sheep and lambs.

"He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." This is a fine gift, and one much to be coveted by all who visit the poor and the afflicted. We are not only to spew mercy, but to skew it with such a cheerful spirit, as to manifest that, if it be a consolation to them, it is a pleasure to us. The value of any service of love rendered to the children of sorrow, mainly depends on the spirit in which it is done. It should be our watchful study to spare the feelings of the poor in our acts of benevolence,

to soothe the sorrows of the sick, to shed a bright radiance in the chamber of suffering or death, and always to leave behind us the sweet fragrance of the name of Jesus.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE "ONE BODY."

Before passing on to verse 9, may I ask, When, and by what means, we actually become members of the body of Christ? This vital and important truth which has been frequently referred to in the foregoing papers, still lingers in my thoughts, and I should like to master it more fully. Most surely, O my soul, it is well for thee to linger over it, to meditate on that which is not only of present, but of eternal, importance. It is living union with Christ—the expression of thy closest relationship to Him, and to all Christians. Let us begin at the beginning.

The evangelist is first in the field; pastors and teachers follow. His gift is the expression of divine love to the lost. He is to arrest, to awaken, to move souls powerfully by the word preached. He thinks of their state as lost sinners; of their misery, of their danger and distance from God, and his love rises to a burning passion. Their salvation is his one object as a workman. He pleads, he appeals, he warns, he entreats, as if all depended on the words that burn in his heart and on his lips; yet in faith he looks to God alone for blessing. There is a perfect understanding between his heart and the Lord. He walks with Him. The passionless preacher may find fault with his more zealous brother, and suggest that there is too much of the human element, and fears that it will end in the mere excitement of nature. But though this may look wise and prudent, it lacks the true element of success—the love that sends words that burn into the heart of the sinner.

The truth, through grace, is believed. The love of Christ has prevailed; the value of the blood is seen, the sinner bows at Jesus' feet in the meltings of godly sorrow for sin, yet confides in the thrice holy One. "Jesus loved me as I am, and died for me just as I am," is now his confession. This is faith. The blessed work is done; God is glorified as in nothing else here below; and angels sweep their harps with an ecstasy peculiar to the joys of salvation. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Which things the angels desire to look into." Luke 15:10 Pet. 1:12.

Individual blessings are the first that follow faith; corporate blessings come afterward. A man becomes a child of God by faith; he is justified by faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom 5:1, 2.) These may be called the great individual blessings of faith; wherever there is faith in Christ, these must follow. They are the four, grand, immediate consequences of faith—being justified, having peace, standing in grace, waiting for glory. But these are not all. In Eph. 1 the long list of individual blessings, as the children's portion, is given before the church is referred to. The believer's first position, is to be brought to the Father in all the acceptancy of Christ; his second, is to be united to the glorified Man in heaven, and share the blessings and the responsibilities of the membership of the "One body."

When the truth of God is thus believed, and the soul resting on the finished work of Christ, the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit, and thus made a member of the body of Christ. He is brought into union with Christ in heaven, and with all believers throughout the world, in virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as a divine Person, making all one. He who dwells in Christ dwells in

us and thereby makes us “One spirit with the Lord;” and one with all that are the Lord’s. He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” They are joined together by the one Spirit. Many speak and pray about the Holy Spirit as if He were only an “influence.” This is very common, but very suggestive. Wherever this state of mind exists, there can be no proper thoughts of the church as the body of Christ, and very confused thoughts of Christ for He is the formative and sustaining power of the body, and dwells in the Christian. The existence and personality of the Holy Ghost, we know, is not denied; but the all-important truth of His presence in the church, as a divine Person, and as the bond of its unity, is not apprehended. This is the serious mistake, if not error, of nearly all Christendom, and the source of its darkness and confusion. The present period may be called the disposition of the Spirit, and to speak about Him as an “influence” in place of a divine Person, is to misunderstand His mission and His work. “He shall glorify me,” says the blessed Lord, “for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” John 16:14.

But know thou, O my soul, and know in all the verities of faith, that the Holy Ghost does two things—first, He works in the saints of God individually; second, He works in the assembly. Whether it be our individual or our corporate blessing, both are made good to us by the presence of the Holy Ghost. As individuals, He gives us to taste the sweetness of joy and peace in believing, of happy liberty and power in service; and also, of living union with the exalted Head, and with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth. He never took a body like the Lord Jesus, therefore the world knows Him not; He being therefore equally in all the assemblies of God throughout the world, necessarily unites them all into one body. In this way, thou wilt see, that all who believe on the Lord Jesus, of every clinic and every color, are baptized by the Holy Spirit, and made to belong to the “one body.”

It need scarcely be added, that the truth of the Holy Ghost’s presence in the assembly is of much deeper importance than the presence of gifts—of talented servants. Their presence or absence touches not the great truth that the Holy Ghost is there, and that He is still sovereign, and acting as He will to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Surely this should lead us to have greater faith in Him as a divine Person, and less in the presence of gifts great or small. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. 18:20.

We will now very briefly glance at the remainder of our most instructive chapter.

The Christian's Attitude

"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven."

"To serve Him!" Do we think it hard

To hear that word of old,

Which tells us of the place on earth

Our Lord would have us hold?

The place where we can work and serve,

While waiting for Him here,

While rays of glory breaking down

Sustain our hearts from fear.

"To serve Him!" Does it mean some work

That history's page will hold,

And thousand grateful hearts and tongues

Will to the world unfold?

"To serve Him!" Nay, 'tis but to go

To those His heart holds dear;

To soothe the orphan's bitter wail—

To dry the widow's tear!

"To serve Him!" 'Tis within your home

To shed that sunshine round,

Which tells, with louder voice than words,

The treasures you have found!

"To serve Him!" 'Tis the angry word,

Check'd, ere it well began;

It is to make a stream of bliss,

Where once but discord ran!

"To serve' Him!" 'Tis to bow our hearts,

Though He our cup should fill
With deepest sorrow—and, through all,
Have faith to trust Him still!
“To serve Him!” ‘Tis with little deeds
No other eye can see,
But His, whose voice will one day say,
Ye did it unto me!
“To wait!” These hearts too often ask—
How long, O Lord, how long
Must we amid the world’s rude scorn
Do battle with the wrong?
“To wait!” Oh, is it to look on,
Through heavy clouds and gloom,
To that bright light whose rays e’en now
Shine o’er beyond the tomb?
“To wait for Him!” Nay, it is to watch
With faithful hearts and true
For His return, while all around
Grows darker to our view.
“To wait for Him!” ‘Tis just to find
His absence such a loss,
That, pained, we turn from earth’s gay scenes
And gladly clasp his cross!
“To wait!” ‘Tis like some brilliant light
Through darkness shining clear;
The “day-star” rising in our hearts—
The Lord will soon appear.
“To wait!” ‘Tis day by day to cry,
And in our hearts to be

READY to go or stay, dear Lord,
As best may seem to Thee.
Be this our one desire, O Lord,
Whate'er our earthly state;
And sweeter may it prove each day
To serve Thee, and to wait! A. S. O,

Come Unto Me

When life's spring-time has faded, its music died away,

When thy hopes have flutter'd into fears;

When thy clear sky is shaded, for summer will not stay

Oh, who shall wipe away thy tears?

There is One—the best of the weary.

Jesus, Jesus saith, "Come unto Me."

Many days He hath linger'd, in mercy full and free.

O sinner! Jesus waits for thee.

When the day of salvation is drawing to a close,

When thy sins have weigh'd thee to the ground,

When thy heart throbs in terror believe eternal woes,

Oh, where shall deliverance be found?

There is One Resource for the guilty.

Jesus, Jesus saith, "Come unto Me."

Sinner, Mercy's blood-stained lintel thy door of hope may be!

The Lamb was sacrificed for thee.

H. K. B.

The Conscience Touched

IF we consider the value of an immortal soul in the light of scripture, we shall not think any care or anxiety too much for its salvation. Sometimes it may be a great trial to an affectionate heart to disturb the repose of one who is apparently dying, but unprepared for death. A false peace, a false hope, has lulled the soul to sleep on the slippery brink of hell. The delusion of Satan has been successful. But, alas, the question of sin has never been raised, the holiness of God has never been thought of, the conscience has never been exercised, and God, as the judge of sin, is unknown.

When this is apparent, what is to be done? There must, unquestionably, be plain speaking, however tender the affection. It is a question of life and death—of eternal life and eternal death. We must see and bring such an one face to face with God about sin; as the Psalmist expresses it, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.” It is only in such close quarters with God that the sinner can learn God’s thoughts about sin, and about himself as a sinner. But those who have had the experience of such visits to sick chambers, know the difficulties and hindrances attending such work. The sleepy conscience is unwilling to be disturbed, God’s estimate of sin is a most unwelcome sound; fond but foolish friends, flattering the already deceived soul to its eternal ruin; the faithful messenger, if he ventures to say that the loved one is still unsaved, may be considered unkind, uncharitable, unfeeling, if not cruel. This, however, thank God, is not often the case, especially with hoary-headed sinners, like Mr. W. in our last number, or with fast young men who have run their course; but it is not an uncommon thing with daughters. Unlike their brothers, it may be, whose occupation calls them more into the world, they have always been outwardly religious, amiable, and dutiful to their parents, considered good, and their accomplishments have made them many friends. Would it not be considered the height of rudeness to hint to such an one that she was as really on the broad road to destruction as the hoary headed sinner, or the fast young man? Most assuredly it would. And it requires the greatest moral courage, with a favorable opportunity, to suggest the unpalatable truth in the mildest way.

Take one case in point: the circumstances are still fresh in my memory, though in giving details I may leave out some words and add others.

A christian friend asked me to visit her sister who was supposed to be dying of consumption, but unconverted. The widowed mother with whom she lived, was also unconverted, but both very self-righteous, very satisfied with themselves. I was well known to them by name, through the sister, and had a most hearty welcome. So long as the conversation was somewhat general, we were all very happy; but the mother leaving the room gave me an opportunity of speaking, plainly to the daughter about the state of her soul. She was, as some would say, quite happy, she was quiet, and peaceful. Thank the Lord, I said, dear S., and you know now, do you, that your sins are all forgiven—all washed away by the precious blood of Jesus? You do not doubt that now, do you, dear S.? She was now looking very straight into the fire, and evidently troubled, but did not satisfy

me with her answer. In effect, I repeated the same question, looking rather anxiously for an answer. But this was new ground for the young formalist, and I saw she was troubled or nervous at being left alone with me, though I had come on purpose to talk with her about her soul.

After shifting the subject a little, I again returned to the important question of our sins, and asked her if she did not think this was the first great question to be settled between us and God—the forgiveness of sins? That this subject brought before us so many other subjects that I should be delighted to talk to her about, such as the cross, the love of Jesus that brought Him down to die for us, and the power of His blood; but no, she gave me to understand that she did not wish to converse on these subjects, and wished her mother would come in. I assured her that I was only speaking in the truest love for her soul, for we were all alike guilty before God, and unless our sins are all forgiven through faith in the blood of Christ, we could not possibly enter heaven; that one single sin would be enough to shut her out of heaven and to shut her up in hell forever, and nothing but the blood of Christ could cleanse them all away. Here I was interrupted with a loud scream for her mother. The mother came in at once; the daughter, in a whining voice, calling out, “I don’t want Mr. to speak to me in this way, I wish he would not speak to me anymore, he makes me so unhappy.” By this time the mother had her arms around her neck, soothing and patting her peevish child; but her words of consolation are never to be forgotten by me: “You should not be unhappy, my dear, you know you were so happy yesterday when Mr. H. called and read a chapter and prayed with you, were you not? you told me you were quite happy?” “Yes, mother, but Mr.—has made me quite miserable.” “But you must not be miserable, my dear S., perhaps Mr. H. will call to-morrow and see you.”

The rest of our conversation need not be recorded. The mother endeavored to explain to her daughter that I meant it all for good; and to apologize to me for the weakly, nervous state of her daughter. After a few words of solemn warning to both, we parted; I never saw her again.

But, oh 1 how can I speak of the fearful delusion?

How can I sound out from the pages of “Things New and Old” the suitable warning voice? How can I impress on all who have to do with sick chambers and death beds, the importance of plain and faithful dealing with the immortal soul? Graven deeply on my memory were these awful words of false consolation, “You know you were so happy yesterday when Mr. H. called and read a chapter and prayed with you.” “But what,” ten thousand voices in Christendom will ask, “what more, what better, could a minister do than read a chapter to the sick, and offer up a prayer?” In some circumstances, we reply, nothing more, nothing better; and we are free to say, that many in their ministerial calls do much less. But in the case before us it only lulled the conscience into a deeper sleep in sin; she being still unconverted, still “dead in trespasses and sins,” still unawakened as to her real state as a sinner, still ignorant of the character of God, His hatred of sin as shown in the work of Christ, and her need of pardon, just as much as the very chief of sinners. Close dealing with the conscience, in dependence on God, while the soul is in this state, is the visitor’s only mission. Searching conversation and prayer, with texts bearing on this subject, must be his only weapons. No soul is ever serious, ever real, ever true, until it has been brought face to face with the living God, and entered in some measure into His thoughts of sin.

Were it not as a warning voice to all visitors, and for the eternal welfare of immortal souls, we should never think of bringing before the public eye such private scenes. But all false delicacy

must give way when the truth of God, the glory of Christ, and the salvation of the soul are concerned. And we can honestly say, that while we cherish in our hearts nothing but love for all those to whom this paper relates, we cannot but lament over that scene with a loud and bitter lamentation. Who so loved, so trusted, so unsuspected, as a minister, and a mother? The countenance of the invalid brightens up at the sound of his footstep, and so it should be when he is shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. His kindly inquiries, his familiar voice in reading and prayer, how soothing! and rightly so, when Christ is known and loved. But if the same thing be done to the unconverted, the mere formalist, or the young lady who lived in pleasure, how dangerous! But more, alas, how eternally ruinous! The only two, perhaps, in the whole world whose word she would have received without a question, are thus used of Satan to deepen the self-delusion of her never-dying soul. To drop from a mother's arms, and from under the sound of a flattering priestly benediction into the dreary depths of hopeless woe, is so dreadful an end, that it calls for the most faithful, earnest, solemn warning. The truth, however painful, must be told.

But the picture is too awful to contemplate; we cannot pursue it further. The Lord grant that it may be a warning to all mothers, ministers, preachers, pastors, and visitors, of every kind and measure. Let the first inquiry be, Is thy soul saved? All further service must proceed on the ascertained fact. And much spiritual discernment is needed for this blessed work. So many deceive themselves. Numbers will say they are quite happy, just because they have never done anything very bad, and they may have taken pleasure in religious duties, in acts of charity, and in other good works. Such will readily say, that they are quite happy, and would not be afraid to die at any moment, though they have not the slightest idea of their condition as sinners, or that in God's sight they need a Savior just as much as the drunkard or the blasphemer. This is a hard lesson for all to learn, especially for the self-righteous and the morally good; but the word of God says, "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

But what says my reader to all this? Surely thou hast learned in glancing over these pages, that the right way is to come at once, without delay, without hesitation, to Christ Himself, the loving Savior of sinners. This is His own way—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Nothing can be plainer, nothing can be surer, and nothing can be more easily understood. The soul will never be deceived or disappointed that trusts in the blessed Jesus; as we read in Psalm 2, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." But there is no blessing, remember, to any soul under the whole heavens apart from trusting in Him. He, and He alone, is the Rock-foundation of the soul. Thou hast, then, my dear reader, but one question to ask; Is He worthy of thy trust? Thou wilt surely answer, Yes; yes, I see He is fit to be trusted with the whole heart. Then this is faith; being satisfied of this, the heart is at rest; we straightway believe.

Henceforth let me entreat thee to maintain the most direct communion between thy soul and Himself. Read for thyself, examine for thyself, believe for thyself, trust for thyself, hope for thyself. Christianity is an intensely individual thing. All priestly confessors belong to the apostasy. Sacramental grace, or hoping to be saved by attending to the ordinances of the church, is rank popery, a fatal delusion. Trust not thy precious soul to the care of others; it is only safe in Christ's hands. Thou mayest accept of the service of others in so far as that will help thee to Him; but reject everything that would come between thee and Him—that would prove as the lullaby of Satan to sing thy soul to sleep unsaved.

Consider the Lilies

'MIDST all the ruin sin lied brought,
Our blessed Lord in grace
Looked round upon the work God wrought,
And gave it all its place.
He shewed us by that beauteous flower,
The lily, clothed so fair,
That man with all his boasted power
Could naught with it compare.
He fully saw what was of God,
Because He dwelt with Him,
And well He knew, our blessed Lord!
Man's heart so full of sin.
God on His work His seal had set,
But evil entered in.
He judged it by the cross; Christ met
The judgment due to sin.
Lifted above this evil scene,
Our place in Christ up there,
We trace, where God's own has been
And give Him glory here.
Whatever bears the stamp of God
In this poor world, we prize;
We recognize creation's Lord,
And naught of His despise.
His skill is seen express'd in power,
His heart, display'd to save;

We learn, not in the fruit of flower,
But in the One He gave.
With hearts entwined around the Son
We need no idol fear,
Affections flowing o'er will run
To those who love Him here.

Correspondence

“H. C.,” Norwich. We can only praise the Lord, with a full heart, for the tidings conveyed in your most kind and encouraging communication. How gracious of Him to make use of such feeble agency to carry on His work! It was truly kind and thoughtful of you to let us know of those two cases of blessing through our little serial. No doubt, we have to labor on in simple faith and patience, even when we do not see much result; but oh! it is an immense encouragement and refreshment to get such a letter as yours, beloved friend. Accept our warmest thanks, and do remember our work at the throne of grace.

“W. F. G.,” Woolwich. We understand the word “day,” in the first chapter of Genesis, to mean simply our ordinary 24 hours; and we do not consider it scriptural to believe that each of those days may include a long period of time. But we must remember that, between the first verse of Gen. 1 and the commencement of the actual six days’ work, millions of years may have intervened, leaving ample room, most surely, for all the facts of geology. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Then we are told, “the earth”—not the heaven—“was without form and void.” We are not told how the earth fell into this state; but most surely God had not so created it. And then begins the record of the six days of creation. It is not the object of the Bible to teach us geology or astronomy; but we may rest assured that there is not a single sentence in that divine volume which collides with the facts of geology or any other science. We must, however, draw a very broad line of distinction between the facts of science, and the conclusions of scientific men. Facts are facts wherever you find them; but if you follow the conclusions of men, you may find, yourself plunged in the dark and dreadful abyss of universal skepticism.

3. “M. M.” Clapham. We learn, from Matt. 6:34, the precious lesson not to bring the “evil” of tomorrow into today—not to foredate sorrow. We have only to live by the day, and we shall find God’s grace amply sufficient for the need of each day as it arises. But if we attempt to grapple, today, with the anticipated difficulties of to-morrow, we must do so at our own charges, and shall not be able to meet the demand.

Let each day upon its wing, its allotted burden bring;

Load it not, beside, with sorrow that belongeth to tomorrow.

Strength is promised, strength is given, when the heart by God is riven;

But foredate the day of woe, and alone thou bear’st the blow.”

4. “J. S.” York. We may answer your two questions as to the covenants with an affirmative. We have recently referred to the same subject.

5. “W. H.,” Clifton. 1 John 3:9 refers, most distinctly, to the new nature in the believer which is incapable of committing sin. The believer is, alas! capable of sinning, because he has the old nature still in him. It is our privilege so to walk in the power of the Spirit, in the light, that the old thing shall be as though it did not exist. To say that the Christian need not sin, is to state a divine

privilege; to say that he cannot, is a deceit and a delusion. We have sin in us but no sins on us, because Christ who had no sin in Him had our sins on Him when He hung upon the cross, and He has put them away forever. The man who bore our sins on the tree is in heaven without them and we are there in Him. This is the settled ground of our peace. But to speak of our being in a sinless state, or our being incapable of sinning, is the merest delusion.

6. "Whitgift," Croydon. "Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" by W. Kelly will help you. Broom, Paternoster Row, or through any bookseller.

7. "T. J. D.," Halifax, N. S. Your kind letters of the 21st of September, and October 9, 1874, have come duly to hand. Accept our best thanks.

8. "A. O.," London. You will never get peace by dwelling upon your conversion--whether it was good or bad—deep or shallow. Neither can you get peace by looking at your state or your progress. It is very important to judge your state and your walk; but you will never get peace by so doing; nor will you ever make progress by being occupied with yourself—gauging and analyzing your feelings and frames. The true basis of peace is a full Christ for the heart. The true secret of progress is a whole heart for Christ. We trust you and your fellow-servant may be enabled to walk lovingly together, in meekness, forbearance, and tender consideration one for the other. Do not expect anything, but give all you can. This is a grand secret of getting on together. We often expect entirely too much, and give entirely too little.

Correspondence

9. "E. S.," Barnstaple. Most assuredly, every Christian ought to be baptized, if we are to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot conceive how anyone can question this, who bows to the authority of the New Testament. At the same time, there is no need for harsh or strong statements on the subject; and every allowance should be made for weakness, ignorance and confusion of thought. The statement as to free grace is simply absurd. You judge rightly, dear friend, in thinking that grace is free to every creature under heaven; at least if we are to believe Titus 2. What a mercy to have the pure and precious word of God as an answer to all the vain notions of the human mind!

10. "C. J. W." Your lines breathe a sweet spirit, and bespeak a heart waiting for the Bridegroom's return. May that blessed hope burn more brightly in all our souls!

11. "W. G.," Bermondsey. Matt. 22:14 sets forth the grand truth that God is sovereign—a very solemn and wholesome truth for man. Matt. 21:44 refers only to the stone of stumbling. The application to which you refer seems to us quite unwarrantable.

12. "C.," Scripture is clear and definite on the subject of the Lord's Supper. The words are as distinct as possible, "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come." Again, "This do in remembrance of me." We remember Him in death—the basis, center, and spring of everything to us. No doubt, the apostle does call attention to the fact that it was in the same night He was betrayed that our blessed Lord, in His thoughtful, unselfish love for us, instituted the feast; and this is full of touching interest for our hearts. But as to the utterance of the feast itself—its significance—its object—its place—scripture is most precise—"ye do show the Lord's death"—"Do this in remembrance of me." We remember a Christ who was dead; we call

Him to mind in that condition in which, thank God, He no longer is. All this can only be by faith, through the power of the Holy Ghost. There is no need to enter into sensational details; indeed such things are most offensive to all true spiritual feeling. We cannot—in this as in all beside—keep too close to the veritable language of holy scripture.

13. “J. T.,” Norfolk. “The feast “ in 1 Corinthians 5:8, is the antitype of the feast of unleavened bread which, as we learn from Exod. 12 was based upon, and inseparably connected with, the passover. The blood-stained lintel was not to be separated from the unleavened bread—peace and purity—safety and sanctity, must always go together. It would be a strange application of 1 Cor. 5:8—a miserable misapplication, we should rather say—to refer it to the matter of having bread without yeast, or unfermented wine at the Lord’s Supper. We believe, dear friend, the feast refers to the whole of our christian life in this world. It should, from first to last, be a feast of unleavened bread, based on the great fact that “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”—a life of personal holiness flowing out of accomplished redemption, known and applied by the power of the Holy Ghost.

14. “W. F. W.,” Dudbridge. The teaching of Matt. 6:19, 20, is most explicit. To carry it out one must have faith in the living God. We shall send you a little pamphlet which will help you.

15. “S. B.,” Bridgnorth. Your kind letter came duly to hand. We note its contents, and began interest in your prayers.

16. “W. S.,” Illinois. We heartily thank you for your interesting and encouraging communication. We look to the Lord to give distinct guidance and power in the series of letters to which you refer. You will help us by your prayers.

Correspondence

17. “W. G.,” New York. Thanks for your kind note, and the accompanying MS. There is a paper on the same subject in one of our earlier volumes.

18. “E. B.,” Brighton. In volume 16 of “Things Now and Old,” page 1.23, you will find a paper on Mark 9:49. We would render hearty thanks to God for the help and blessing you have received through our little serial: and we earnestly request a continued interest in your prayers.

19. “Perplexity.” The matter is illegal; and scripture teaches us as Christians, to “submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.” The framing or amendment of laws is no part of a Christian’s business. He is called to obey or to suffer. Would that this were better understood!

20. “E. F. P.,” Halifax, Nova Scotia. Your letters, of the 11th of January and 8th of February, have duly come to hand. We are thankful that you have had your difficulty removed, and we deem it most thoughtful and kind of you to write your second letter.

21. “K. K.,” Kingstown. Your kind note and accompanying lines have come to hand.

22. “H. McK.,” Derby. John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:8-6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 3:4; give the divine reply to your inquiry.

23. “Quartus,” Cheltenham. The idea of the souls of believers being asleep when absent from the body, is at once unscriptural and absurd. “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Was this to be

in an unconscious state? Has the soul of the thief been asleep for the last eighteen hundred years? “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Has that spirit been asleep ever since? “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” Is this to be asleep? “Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.” Why not says “Having a desire to be asleep?” Is it far better to asleep, to be unconscious, than to be enjoying Christ, and working for Him here?

Dear friend, we cannot but express our astonishment at any man in his sober senses—to say nothing of a Christian with the Bible in his hands,—putting such a question. We consider the notion a monstrous absurdity. Pray excuse our plainness of speech. It is not easy to measure one’s words when dealing with many of the wild vagaries of the present day.

24. “R M.,” Dublin. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” Does not this passage answer your question? Do angels form part of the body of Christ? Will they form a part of the bride? Will angels reign with Christ? Does not the entire teaching of the New Testament on the subject of the church answer your inquiry? Are angels ever said to be members of Christ’s body, of His flesh, and of his bones? Eph. 5:30.

25. “A Learner.” You have solid reason, dear friend, to doubt the soundness of the teaching to which you refer, on 1 Cor. 11:30: “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” These persons had failed to judge themselves—failed to discern the Lord’s body in the broken bread—they had eaten in an unworthy manner, though they were true Christians, and hence God, in His government of His house, had to chasten them by bodily sickness even unto death, in order that they might not be condemned with the world. How could any intelligent person teach that “the discipline here is not connected with those weak and sickly ones?” We should say it was very closely connected with them. No doubt others were called to learn and take warning from the discipline exercised upon those erring members; but surely no father would think of chastising a good child for the misdemeanor of a bad one.

26. “E. J. G.,” Jersey. We have recently had a series of papers on “Gilgal.”

Correspondence

27. “A Sunday School Teacher,” Bradford. You ask, “If you found a young person who gave you the fullest assurance he was saved, enjoyed peace with God, enjoyed fellowship about the things of Christ, and whose conduct at home showed the power of it—if such an one expressed a desire to come to the Lord’s table, would you receive him? or would you keep him outside for a length of time, if he were only 13 or 14 years old?” Most assuredly, we should gladly receive such an one, and not keep him outside for a single hour. What has the question of years to do with the divine life? How old was Samuel, when he first knew the Lord? or Josiah? or Timothy?

28. “A. G.” We would affectionately suggest to you and the “many others” who feel with you in reference to those habits which you name, whether it would not be better to make them a matter of earnest prayer, than to write about them to the editor of a magazine. Christ is the master of the assembly. Appeal to Him, He never fails. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.” Is not He sufficient? Cannot He keep order? What should I say if one of my sons were to apply to the editor of some periodical, to correct some disorderly conduct at my table? I should feel disposed to say to him, “What! my son, am not I competent to keep order at my own table? Must you needs apply to a stranger to regulate my family?” Do we believe that the Lord

presides in the assembly? If so, we should look to Him to correct all abuses. If this were better understood, it would save a vast amount of trouble—avert a multitude of “cases”—bring much glory to Christ, and yield a rich harvest of blessing to our own souls.

29. “M. B.,” Tetbury. Accept our best thanks for your sweet lines, we like them much. Their tone and spirit are truly excellent.

30. “J. C.,” Gosport. As to whether teaching should precede or follow the Lord’s supper, or whether there should be any teaching at all, seems an open question. Scripture lays down no rule; and the Holy Ghost will, if He gets His right place in the assembly, guide in this as in all beside. We must add, however, that we do not think the Lord’s table is the place for long sermons.

31. “Halifax, N. S.” We do not fool it to be our province to give a judgment in such a matter.

32. “H. M.,” Chelmsford. The course named in the postscript to your letter is the right one. Such matters are hardly in our line.

33. “A Sister,” Hampshire. In volume 4 of “Things New and Old,” page 25, you will find an exposition of Heb. 6:1-10, which may help your friend.

34. “A. M. H.,” Canterbury. If you will send us your full address, we shall be happy to let you have some little books that may help you. May the Lord Himself be your teacher and guide! To Him we commend you.

35. “G. A. S.,” Chelsea. Your question is rather out of our province,

Correspondence

36. “F. N.” Your most kind communication of February 27th would not have remained so long unacknowledged, were it not that I have been laid aside for eight weeks, totally unable to take a pen or a book in my hand. You will kindly excuse the seeming neglect, and accept our warmest acknowledgments.

37. “W. C.,” Yeovil. So far from thinking you have taken a liberty in writing, dear friend, we are deeply touched by your loving sympathy, and heartily thank you for your letter and lines.

38. “R. A.” Eastbourne. Your soothing and comforting letter has proved a real balm to the spirit. The Lord return your love a hundredfold! An immense number of letters have come to hand, during the last two months, which I have not been able even to read. Somehow your lines have gone astray and I cannot lay my hand on them. Pray excuse this. May the Lord bless you abundantly!

39. “An Inquiring One,” London. You may be thoroughly assured of this, dear friend, that you will never get peace by looking at your repentance or your anything. If such a thing could be, it would simply be satisfaction with yourself; and this could never be right. Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. God preaches peace by Jesus Christ. It is not by repentance, though, most surely, we believe in the necessity of repentance! But what would you say, dear friend, to a person if he were to tell you, that he had found peace, because his repentance was of the right kind—because he hated sin as God hated it? Doubtless you would say to him that his peace was a false one. Thanks be to God the believer’s peace rests on no such rotten foundation. The apostle does not say, “Having repented enough, we have peace with God.” No; but Being justified

by faith, we have peace with God. The believer's peace rests on a divine foundation. It is based on the glorious truth that God is not only satisfied as to the entire question of our sins but that He is actually glorified in respect to it. He has reaped a richer harvest in the matter of the putting away of our sins than ever He could have reaped in the fields of an unfallen creation. Nothing has ever glorified God like the death of Christ. The hearty belief of this must give peace to the soul. It is not the work wrought in us, whether repentance or aught else, that gives peace; but the work wrought for us. It is not the work of the Spirit in, precious and essential as it is, that gives peace; but the work of Christ for us. This is a grand and most necessary truth for all anxious inquirers. It is all well and right enough to judge ourselves, our state, our ways—to be humbled because of our shallow repentance, our coldness and indifference; but we shall never get peace by self-judgment. If we have not found peace ere we sit down to the work of self-judgment, we shall find it very dismal work indeed.

It seems to us, dear friend, that you are too much occupied with the thoughts of men. One preacher tells you this; another preacher tells you that; and your own heart tells you something else. Would it not be well to listen to what God says? This is what faith does, and thus finds settled tranquility. The believer's peace can no more be disturbed than Christ can be disturbed from His seat on the throne of God. This seems strong; but it is true; and being true, its strength is part of its moral glory. Let us entreat you to take up the lovely attitude of the soul in Psalm 85, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (not what this or that man will speak) "for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly." May the blessed Spirit lead you into the enjoyment of that peace which Christ has made by the blood of His cross, which God preaches in the gospel of His grace, by Jesus Christ, and which faith finds in the simple testimony of holy scripture.

Correspondence

40. "A. V. M.," Bayswater. We heartily thank you for your letter of sympathy. The accompanying lines we could not recommend you to print.

41. "Anxiety," Inverness. The apostle John, by the Holy Ghost; teaches us that "He that hath the Son, hath life; he that, hath not the Son of God hath not life." Now, the person you describe has not the Son of God. Anyone who denies that Jesus is God, has not the Son of God nay, he is a blasphemer. As for his saying that "God was in Him, more than in any one else on earth," it is a blinding delusion and deceit of the enemy. If Jesus was not God, it is the merest absurdity to speak of His being a good man, or the best man that ever lived, or of God being in Him. For any other than God to speak as Jesus did, would be blasphemy. We must either confess the essential deity of the Man Christ Jesus or deny Him altogether. There is not the breadth of a hair of middle ground. But, blessed be God, scripture is plain, express, and emphatic. It claims for our adorable Savior not merely divinity but essential deity. This is demonstrated in a very singular and forcible manner by the fact that in Rom. 1, where the apostle is speaking of the testimony of creation, he says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, his eternal power and Godhead," &c. And in Col. 2:9, in speaking of the Person of Christ, he says, "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Now, in the original of these two passages we have a different word for "Godhead." In Rom. 1:20 the word is (divinity). In Colossians 2:9 it is (deity). The heathen should have learned that there

was something superhuman, something divine in creation; but the Holy Ghost is not satisfied to claim divinity for the Person of Christ but absolute deity. This is magnificently striking.

We cannot understand you, dear friend, when you speak of a blasphemer of Christ as “a good living person—keeping God’s commandments.” What! “A good living man,” yet denying the Godhead of Jesus! “Keeping God’s commandments,” yet blaspheming the Son of His love! Be not offended, dear friend, by our plain language. We must speak plainly. We have no sympathy with—yea, we utterly loathe and abhor the false liberality of the present day—a liberality which can lavish its compliments upon men, but deny the Christ of God. We would just add, in conclusion, that we hold it to be utterly impossible for anyone who lives and dies in the denial of the deity of Christ to be saved. Such an one has no Savior, unless there be some other way of being saved than by Christ. May God open the eyes of your friend to see his guilt and danger—notwithstanding his “good living” and “keeping God’s commandments”—and to flee by faith to the refuge provided for the lost, in the precious atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We regret having to write in such a strain concerning one who, as you say, “is very near and dear to you;” but we should either write as we have done, or leave your letter wholly, unnoticed. Our Lord Christ is more to us than all the friends in the world.

42. “S. T. H,” Hantsfort, Nova Scotia. We thank you heartily for your kind communication and the pamphlets; also for your loving thoughtfulness in not wishing a reply to your letter. The Lord greatly bless you! May He strengthen you greatly for the blessed path of service and testimony into which He has so manifestly called you! Blessed be His holy Name, He never fails a trusting heart; nay, He delights in being trusted and used. May His peace ever possess your soul! We have read with very deep interest your faithful pamphlet. May God use it to stir the consciences of thousands of His beloved people who are still mixed up with all that terrible evil on which you have been enabled, through grace, to turn your back!

Correspondence

43. H. R. K., Newport. “The earth” in Revelation xiii. indicates the land of Palestine. “The sea,” on the contrary, points to the nations. The second beast will arise in the land of Israel. Accept our hearty thanks for your truly kind letter.

44. “A Little One,” London. Scripture gives us the simple fact that believers ought to be baptized. It says nothing as to whether it should be in public or in private. It does not tell us that it should be, “In a place accessible to the public.” It is left entirely open. Who witnessed the baptism of the eunuch? Where was Paul baptized? or Lydia? or the gaoler? Where, in the New Testament, are we taught to contemplate the public, either in baptism, or the Lord’s supper? No doubt “the unlearned or unbeliever” may come into the place where Christians are assembled; but testimony to the world is not the object when Christians come together for communion or worship. Matt. 10:32 does not refer specially to the act of baptism. Our whole life should be a testimony for Christ. The Christian himself is “the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.”

45. “M.,” Surrey. Eze. 37 refers, unquestionably, to the future restoration and blessing of Israel. The closing chapters shall, most surely, have their accomplishment in the nation’s history. The temple will be rebuilt. The worship restored. The sacrifices, instead of being typical, will be commemorative. Thanks for your devotional lines. We greatly enjoyed their tone and spirit.

46. " T. E. P. M.," Kent. We are truly sorry to have left your kind and interesting letter so long unnoticed. But you will kindly make allowance, on the ground of a long and serious illness. We have a pile of letters lying on the desk unread. We claim the loving forbearance of all our dear correspondents whose communications may remain unacknowledged.

You are perfectly right, beloved friend, in judging that Luke 12:47, 48 leaves wholly untouched the solemn question of eternal punishment--a question so thoroughly and so distinctly settled for all who simply bow to holy scripture. The passage teaches the weighty and wholesome doctrine that responsibility, guilt, and punishment, are, in every case, measured by our privileges.

As to the parable of the unjust steward, the moral is this—use the present with an eye to the future. "The lord commended the unjust steward," not for his honesty surely, but because he had dealt wisely;" and the wisdom consisted simply in providing for the future. This is the point of the parable. The lesson it teaches us is to use this world's riches—which are not what properly belong to us, as Christians—in the service of Christ—to do good—to distribute and communicate—to open our hands wide to every form of human need—to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. Compare with Luke 16:1, 1-12 Tim. 6:17-19.

For the young friend to whom you allude, you might procure " Papers on the Lord's Coming," a reprint from "Things New and Old," to be had of our publisher, Mr. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London, E. C.

47. " S. F. F.," Chester, Delaware Co. Rom. 5:12 contains a direct reply to your question. " By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." No trace of death was to be found in God's fair creation until sin entered.

48. " Q.," Ipswich. There is nothing in scripture to hinder your being a servant of such a company as you name. To be a partner would be an " unequal yoke," which 2 Cor. 6:14 expressly forbids.

Correspondence

49. "A. M.," Blackheath. We fully appreciate your aim and motive; and moreover, we deeply feel the importance of your suggestion. If God permit, we hope, ere long, to write a paper on Rom. 6 We are most thoroughly convinced of the utter unsoundness of the views to which you refer—views indicated by such expressions as, "Holiness by faith"— "Higher Christian life." If as you know, we have always sought to keep the pages of "Things New and Old" free from controversy; not because we do not feel the need of controversy, at times, but because we do not judge it to be the province of our little serial. We would merely add that we do not believe in any such thing as "A higher christian life." Christ is our life and you cannot have anything higher than that. it is altogether a mistake and a delusion to speak of sonic; as having a higher life than others. And as to getting "holiness by faith," when we receive Christ we receive all that is in Him—all that He is, His deity excepted, which is incommunicable. We are in Him. This includes everything. We do not get righteousness in one way, and holiness in sonic other way; we have an in Christ. No doubt, we arc to grow in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, and in conformity to His mind and will; but we are convinced that the entire system, indicated. by the expressions on which we are commenting, is false in principle, and most mischievous in result. Its tendency is to occupy us with our state instead of with Christ; it superinduces self-gratulation, on the one hand, or despair, on the other. In a word, we believe the very foundations of true Christianity are involved.

50. "A Reader of T. N. O.," Manchester. We quite agree with you in saying, "I recognize the voice of Jesus alone in His word." Where else could we hear it? It is upon that blessed word we are cast for everything. It is the solid foundation on which faith reposes. We want nothing else to give us full assurance but His faithful word. No outward evidence, no inward feeling can possibly add to the truth and stability of the word. How do I know I am a sinner? By the word. How do I know that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners? By the word. How do I know that my sins are forgiven? Is it by my feelings? Nay; but by the word. That word tells me that Christ bath once suffered for sins." But how do I know He suffered for my sins? Because the word says, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Now I know I am "unjust" because the word tells me so; and hence Christ suffered for my sins, and I am forgiven, according to the efficacy of Christ's atoning suffering. I am brought to God, now, according to the virtue and value of the Person and work of Christ. "He was delivered for my offenses, and raised again for my justification." Thus "being justified by faith, I have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In a word, then, dear friend, you must lean like a little child, on the word. True, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost we believe in, and feed upon the word; but the word is the solid foundation on which your precious soul must ever rest. May all your doubts and fears vanish, in the pure and precious light of that word which is "settled forever in heaven!"

51. "J. W. P.," Sydenham Hill. Thanks for the lines. There are sonic most precious thoughts, and much solid truth in them; but we fear they are too long for insertion.

52. "T. W.," Matlock Bank. Your most kind and christian letter came duly to hand, and we desire to tender you our sincere thanks for the gracious spirit in which you write. Would that all who feel obliged, in conscience, to differ from us, were led to write in a like spirit and tone.

Correspondence

53. "A Humble Believer." Your kind and truly interesting letter has come to hand, for which please accept our warmest thanks.

54. "R. N." Durham. It is, no doubt, much to be desired that Christians should see eye to eye on every subject; but this can hardly be expected; and, most assuredly, we should not allow our happy fellowship with the members of Christ's body to be hindered, in the smallest degree, by difference of judgment on the question of baptism. So long as a man is true to Christ—His name—His cause—His truth—His glory, I can love Him with all my heart, though I may deem Him mistaken as to his view of baptism. May the Lord bind us all more closely to Himself and to one another, by the precious ministry of the Holy Ghost!

55. "Dumfries." We have received a communication dated June 15, from the above; but we cannot read the name of the writer. The subject referred to, has more than once been handled in our pages.

The testimony of scripture is as distinct as possible. It never speaks of God's being reconciled to us. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." (Rom. 5:10.) It does not say that God was reconciled to us. The death of Christ was essential to the reconciliation; but man was the enemy of God and needed to be reconciled. So we read, in Col. 1:21, "And you that were something alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now high he

reconciled.” The ground of this is stated in the previous verse, to be “The blood of his cross.” So also, in Corinthians 5, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” It does not say “reconciling himself to the world.”

Thus, to anyone who bows to scripture, the truth is as clear as a sunbeam. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” “It pleased Jehovah to bruise him.” It is of the utmost importance to maintain, the true aspect of God’s nature and character in the presentation of the gospel. To say that “Christ died to reconcile the Father to us” is to falsify the divine character as seen in the mission and death of His Son. God was not man’s enemy but his friend. True, sin had to be condemned; God’s truth, holiness and majesty had to be vindicated. All this was done, in a divine way, in the cross, where we read, at once, God’s hatred of sin and His love to the sinner. Atonement is the necessary basis of reconciliation; but it is of the very last importance to see that it is God who reconciles us to Himself. This he does, blessed be His name, at no less a cost than “the death of his Son.” Such was His love to man—His kindness—His goodness—His deep compassion, that, when there was no other way possible, sin being in question, in which man, the guilty enemy and rebel could be reconciled to Him, He gave His on from His bosom, and braised Him on Calvary’s cursed tree. Eternal and universal praise to His name!

56. “J. L.,” Child Okeford. We heartily thank you for your kindness in sending us the encouraging letter from your friend. We beg your remembrance of our work before the throne of grace.

57. “J. C.,” St. Albans. The tabernacle and its furniture were the pattern of heavenly things—the shadows of good things to come. The baptism of fire refers to the judgment yet to come.

58. “W. S.” St Louis de Gonzague. Year interesting letter of July 6 is safely to hand. We most fully enter into all you say, and deeply sympathize with you in your present position. May the blessed Shepherd and Bishop of souls feed, comfort, and strengthen you, by His own direct and powerful ministry!

59. “B. R.” Victoria, Demerara. We have duly received your kind letter of August 6, and tender you our warmest thanks for it. We are truly glad to find that the little books have reached you safely. Our true love to all the dear friends around you. May the Lord greatly bless you, and sustain your heart in the blessed work to which He has called you! Accept 1 Cor. 15:58 as a little motto for yourself and your dear and honored fellow-laborers.

60. “A. T. S.,” Rochdale. Thanks for the little book, “The Narrow Pathway to the Golden Gate.” We have much pleasure in recommending it to all our young friends.

61. “M. B.,” Rockbridge, America. You are wholly cast upon God, dear friend, in the matter to which you refer. He can open up a way for you to meet with His people; and, until He does so, you have but to wait on Him in holy calmness and quietness of spirit.

62. “W. H.,” Grangemouth. We cannot see what 2 Cor. 11, 8 has to do with the subject of “one man ministry,” or how anyone could think of quoting it in defense of such a thing. Paul received help the assembly at Philippi. He did not receive from the assembly at Corinth, because they were not in a good state. This was to their shame and loss. But what has all this to do with a humanly-ordained minister receiving a stipend from a congregation? There is no such thing in the word of God.

63. "An Anxious Inquirer," Aberdeen. It is to God we to confess our sins. No doubt, if we have wronged a brother or a fellow man, we must confess the wrong, and make restitution. As to your second question, we deem it right to cast you simply upon the Lord for guidance. You should just act according to your light, in tire matter.

64. "J. H.," Rochester. In 1 John 5:6 we have expiation and cleansing blood and water flowing from the pierced side of it crucified Savior. But how could we have these save by incarnation? One grand effort of Satan, as seen in Popery and Puseyism, is to set aside expiation and cleansing, through the death of Christ, and lead men to believe that in incarnation Christ took fallen humanity into union with Himself; and further that we are made partakers of the benefits of the incarnation by means of the sacraments of the church—a dark, deadly, soul-destroying delusion!

65. "A. B.," Shropshire. We have, in some of our back numbers, referred to 1 Pet. 3:18-20. We believe the passage simply teaches that the Spirit of Christ, in Noah, preached to those whose spirits are now in prison because they did not believe the preaching.

66. "A Constant Reader," London. We read in 2 John 1:10, "if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." What, think you, would the blessed apostle have said to the elect lady if she were to go, "for three summers" to "partake of the hospitality of a lady who does not believe in the divinity of our Lord Jesus?" We confess we are amazed at your question. We cannot understand how anyone with a spark of loyalty to Christ could think of being the guest of a blasphemer of His Person. You say that "your friend, on each of her visits, has not shunned to exalt, in a very special manner, the Godhead of the Lord Jesus; but with no apparent success." How could she expect success, when her acts contradict her words? Were she faithfully to tell her friend that she could no longer be the guest of one who blasphemes her Lord, she might look for some practical result. Better far to die in some obscure lodging in London, than accept change of air on such miserable terms.

67. "K. B K.," Llanberis. We quite agree with your view of the expression, "the terror of the Lord," and we trust your friend will be led to see the mind of God in the entire context. The believer can never come into judgment. (See John 5:24, where the word is "judgment" and not "condemnation.") Every man's work shall be tested; but when the believer is manifested before the judgment scat of Christ, he will be perfectly conformed to the image of his Lord. In 1 Cor. 6 we are taught that the saints shall judge the world and even angels. They will be associated with Christ in that solemn work. It would be strange if the judges were to be arraigned along with the judged. It is very sad to mark the confusion in people's minds, in reference to a subject so plain and simple. It is, no doubt, the result of legal teaching and bad theology. There is no such thing in the New Testament as a promiscuous resurrection or a general judgment. To maintain such a notion is to deny the very foundations of Christianity. People may not see this; but it is true, nevertheless.

68. "M. B.," Tetbury. Thanks for the lines.

Crucifixion with Christ

AT the time of the late Prussian war, a young man, a husband, and at the same time a father, was called to serve in the ranks, upon which a fellow-countryman of his, who was unmarried, presented himself, saying, that he having no wife or children dependent on him, his life was of less importance than that of the other, and that he was willing to serve in his stead. Such an offer, under the circumstances, was not likely to be rejected, he accordingly took the place of substitute for his friend, went forth into the field, and fell in battle.

After this there was another conscription, and the survivor, through an oversight on the part of the Government, was again required to serve. Now, however, he had a plea in his favor, which at first he had not. How do you suppose he answered the summons? He answered it thus: "I AM DEAD—I HAVE LOST MY LIFE IN SERVING MY COUNTRY, AND SHE HAS NO FURTHER CLAIM UPON ME; and so it actually was, he had died in the person of his substitute, and hence, a living man as he was, he could resign himself to be dead, and therefore exempted from exposing his life in the field.

So it is with us whose hope is in Christ. We reckon ourselves to be dead. And why? Because he, the Son of God, has died in our stead, because the penalty due to us has been borne by our Surety. (See Rom. 6:11.) On the cross He was made sin, forsaken of God; all, all to satisfy the justice of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who required that sin should meet its due punishment. This, and this alone, is our plea. By faith we identify ourselves with Him who first identified Himself with us, so that we realize ourselves to be dead—dead to sin, in two ways, dead to it both judicially and morally, simply because, in the person of our Substitute, we have suffered, and can therefore say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

And now how is this? Has every one a right to speak thus of himself? No, in no way, we answer.

No one can do so but the TRUE BELIEVER, HE WHO WITH THE HEART BELIEVES UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS. He who by faith is united to Christ, who lives because He lives, who is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, he alone can speak of himself as dead, as having the old man crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth he should not serve sin. See Rom. 6:6.

Such is the position of the believer, though often, unhappily, through weakness of faith, he cannot speak of his state with the full confidence that he is entitled to do. lint let him only look away from himself, and. cast his eye upon Christ, and it will be otherwise with him. Let him, as in the case of the young man who gave that remarkable answer, when called to risk his life in the field, simply realize the fact that another has died in his stead, and that consequently he is dead, and he will be perfectly fearless, no judgment, no wrath, he will feel can reach him. Identified as he is in resurrection with him in whom the Father is well pleased, the value of the sufferings of that

infinitely worthy One are imputed to him, as well as His worthiness. This is the ground of his confidence, hence he knows himself to be not only delivered from death, but also entitled to perfect, infinite happiness, in "THAT DAY" when Christ shall reap the reward of His work; of that devotedness which brought Him down from His true home above into the midst of the darkness and desolation of this sorrowful world; which caused Him, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to give his life a ransom for the lost and unworthy. See Rom. 8:1-4.

Deliverance

IT is a fact obvious, of course, to all, that when a Christian dies and goes to heaven he is completely delivered from the power of sin. It is manifestly impossible that sin can have any power or authority over a dead man then it is not so readily seen or admitted that the believer, even now, is as thoroughly delivered from the power of sin as though he were dead and gone to heaven. Sin has no more dominion over a Christian than over a man who is actually dead and buried.

We speak of the power of sin; not of its presence. Let the reader carefully note this. There is as regards the question of sin this material difference between a Christian here and hereafter. Here he is delivered only from the power of sin; hereafter, he will be freed from its presence. In his present condition sin dwells in him; but it is not to reign. By-and-by, it will not even dwell. The reign of sin is over and gone. The reign of grace has begun. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace."

And, be it carefully observed, the apostle is not speaking, in Rom. 6, of the forgiveness of sins. This he treats in chapter iii. Blessed be God, our sins are all forgiven—blotted out—eternally canceled. But, in chapter vi., the theme is not forgiveness of sins, but complete deliverance from sin as a ruling power or principle.

How do we obtain this immense boon? By death. We have died to sin—died in the death of Christ. Is this true of every believer? Yes, of every believer beneath the canopy of heaven. Is it not a matter of attainment? By no means. It belongs to every child of God, every true believer. It is the common standing of all. Blessed, holy standing! All praise to Him who has earned it for us, and brought us into it. We live under the glorious reign of grace—"grace which reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

This enfranchising truth is little understood by the Lord's people. Very few, comparatively, get beyond the forgiveness of sins, if they have even got so far. They do not see their full deliverance from the power of sin. They feel its pressure, and arguing from their painful feeling instead of reckoning themselves to the wind God tells them they are, they are plunged in doubt and fear as to their conversion. They are occupied with their own inward self-consciousness instead of with Christ. They are looking at their State in order to get peace and comfort, and hence they are, and must be, miserable. We shall never get peace if we seek it in our spiritual state or condition. The way to get peace is to believe that we died with Christ, were buried with Him, were raised with Him, are justified in Him, accepted in Him. In short that, "As he is so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17.

This is the solid basis of peace. And not only so, but it is the only divine secret of a holy life. We are dead to sin. We are not called to make ourselves dead. We are so in Christ. A monk, an ascetic, or an ardent striver after sinless perfection, may try to put sin to death by various bodily exercises. What is the inevitable result? Misery. Yes, misery in proportion to the earnestness. How different is Christianity! We start with the blessed knowledge that we are dead to sin; and in the

blessed faith of this, we “mortify” not the body, but its “deeds.”

May the reader enter, by faith, into the power of this “deliverance!”

A Few Gleanings From Mr. Masters' Journal

"Saturday, Nov. 21st.—I sat up with the Doctor again, tonight. He has given instructions, today, about his goods and chattels. During the night, he was frequently wandering in his mind. Sometimes, he was quite rational; and this afforded me an opportunity for spiritual conversation and prayer. He is quite resigned, and very happy. He has expected this for some time. It is rapid consumption which is wasting him away. I could not leave him a minute, until Melley relieved me.

"Sunday, Nov. 22nd.—The Doctor is getting worse.

He has a little cot suspended from the rigging. It gives him the benefit of the fresh air, and takes off the ship's motion.

"Monday, 23rd.—We gathered round his bed, tonight, and sang 'Rock of ages,' and, 'Abide with me.' Then I prayed with him; and left Mr. Falconer sitting up—with him.

"Tuesday, 24th.—Nightingale, who had sat up with the Doctor since 2 o'clock, came running down and awoke me, about 4 o'clock, to say he was dead. He passed away so quietly, they scarcely knew when he died."

Referring to the last sad scene, Mr. Masters says, "The engines had ceased during the service, and all was as quiet as death, except the voice of Mr. Piercy, and the solemn tolling of the ship's bell. Such a solemn time I never experienced. It was just one of those moments in a man's life when worldly hopes and fears are humbled into the dust before thoughts of eternity. We sang that solemn hymn, in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' for the burial of the dead. We buried him in lat. 13 deg. 10 min. N; long. 50 deg. 40 min. E."

We fondly hope for some further memorials of this loved one, either from his own pen, or from someone or other of that dear loving missionary band, who so blessedly soothed him in his last hours. Should such come to hand, we shall certainly communicate them to that much-loved circle for whom this sketch is specially prepared.

I cannot refrain from giving an extract from a letter just received from a gentleman under whose roof our Robert spent a year and eight months as assistant, and who therefore was in a position to judge as to the reality of his christian profession. It is a common and a true remark that you must live with a person in order to know them. "We have only this afternoon heard the most sad news of the death of your dear boy. I cannot tell you how deeply grieved we both are—grieved for the loss of one whom we had learned to love almost as a brother—and grieved, too, for you and dear Mrs. Mackintosh. He will have left a void with you both which only Christ can fill. Dear boy! I never met a young Christian who was in everything so consistent, and true to his holy calling, as your son. And he is now at rest, dear fellow! Safe in the bosom of Jesus. We shall not forget to pray for you. God will, I doubt not, be to you a God of consolation and comfort."

I feel profoundly thankful for this testimony to one who had a perfect horror of all mere wordy profession.

The following lines are from the pen of a very dear friend who has known Robert from his childhood.

Fragment

Mark 10—The monkishness that would condemn everything is not the denial of sin but the denial of nature. God never denies it because He made it. In His own blessed grace, in all the ruin sin has wrought, the Lord can take notice of His own works, “Consider the lilies.” He saw all that was of God, whilst so practically with God, and entirely above the evil, that He saw all that was of man and judged it.

In spirit up there I can look down and see what is of God’s hand in the creation itself. When I get out of it I can look at it; Christ being out of it completely could look at a lily and call attention to its beauty, judging all that was morally corrupt. Where anything had the stamp of God He could admire it; and it is only by judging evil that one can do this.

I look for a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no evil: but because of being brought into a place in Christ superior to the evil, I can look at all that is of God in this world.

If natural affections get too strong and hold the objects of them, they become idols; but to be without them is one of the signs of the last days.

My safety is to get so completely with God as to be able to let my affections flow out more and more to Christians. God has set His seal to all He created; and evil came in. God, having judged it by the cross, lifts us above it. J. N. D.

Fragment

1 Cor. 3:21.—Every possible glory indeed is ours. The blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God and God in us: Relative blessedness, for we are children. Associated blessedness, in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride. Official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests. Human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men, after the image of the second Adam. Corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together. Individual, for we shall have a name given which no one knows but he that receives it; and we shall have the fullness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies; yea, clothed upon by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this. J. N. D.

Yes, all things, Lord, for thou hast giv’n us all,

Blest us with all the blessings thou canst give;

Not one of which Thou ever wilt recall,

Centered they are in Him in whom we live.

Brought nigh to Thee, our Father and our God,

As children, we can Abba Father say,

Bow in obedience to Thy written word,
There learn Thy mind, Thy will, from day to day.
All things are ours, for we are one with Him,
The Man of glory who adorns Thy throne,
The Man of sorrows, once for us made sin,
When on the cross He bore the curse alone.
Alone no more, soon Thou wilt joy to see
Fruit of the travail of His soul, His bride
Purchas'd at such a cost to Him, to Thee,
And Thy delighted heart be satisfied.
All present timings are ours, and things to come;
For we are Christ's, and Christ Himself is Thine:
And in the perfect image of Thy Son,
Soon in effulgence, bright, Thy saints will shine.
The Holy Ghost in fullness then shall dwell
In vessels suited to His power divine;
And we, with hearts enlarged, shall ever tell
The praises of the One who made us Thine. E. M.

Fragment

The great root-principle of Popery and Puseyism is that, in Incarnation, our Lord Christ took human nature in its fallen condition, into union with Himself, and that the benefits of it. Incarnation are extended to us by the sacraments of the church. This is a dark, deadly, soul-destroying delusion. It sets aside the cross and accomplished redemption, and is a flat contradiction to the Christianity of the New Testament.

Fragment

It is always well to remember the great, principle wrapped up in those words of Samuel to Saul, "When thou cast little in thine own eyes." How constantly we see, in the history of God's people, that those who were great in their littleness became little in their greatness. Lord, keep us very lowly!

Going Home

Let me go, let me go!

Jesus, face to face, to know;

For His clasp eternal yearning,

All my soul with love is burning,

Never can I rest below.

Glorious light, glorious; light!

Sun which through the clouds art blight!

Oh, to see the longed-for hour

When unveiled in all Thy power,

Thou shalt burst upon our sight!

Hark, the song, hark, the song!

Which the angel's prolong;

Give me wings to bear me onward,

I would, soaring, ever sunward,

Join, today, the blessed throng.

Heirs of Salvation

Heirs of salvation—chosen of God!

Past condemnation—sheltered by blood.

Even in Egypt, feed we on The Lamb,

Keeping the statutes of God, the I AM!

In the world around, 'tis night,

Where the feast is spread, 'tis bright

Israel's Lord is Israel's light.

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, our Savior from above,

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we love!

Pilgrims and strangers, captives no more!

Wilderness rangers—sing we on shore!

God in His power, parted bath the sea,

Foes all have perished, His people are free!

By the pillar safely led,

By the Manna daily fed,

Now our homeward way we tread.

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, our Shepherd here below,

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we know.

Canaan, possessors safe in the land!

Victors, confessors, banner in hand!

Jordan's deep river evermore behind,

Cares of the desert no longer in mind!

Egypt's stigma rolled away,

Canaan's corn our strength and stay,

Triumph we the livelong day!

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, the Christ of God alone,

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we own.

H. K, B, E,

I Have an Object Now

The difference between looking to feelings within and to an object without, is a subject with which every evangelist is painfully familiar. No matter how long he may have been in the field, how large his experience, or how well acquainted with the subject, he must go over it again and again, with every fresh convert. There is no direct or royal road to peace with God according to the experience of anxious souls. However direct or plain the way may be in scripture, it is made most circuitous through the unbelief of the human heart and the subtlety of Satan. It is a rare thing for a soul to be turned completely away from itself to Christ when first awakened. Hence the unspeakable importance of personal conversation with experienced Christians by all such when first awakened. It might save them years of trouble afterward.

Nearly all newly awakened souls judge of their state before God by their feelings. They cannot understand how they can be different in God's sight to what they feel themselves to be. Hence their faith is governed by their feelings. They believe just what they feel to be true to them—that they are as good or as bad as they feel. Still, thank God, the soul is awakened, it is anxious, and Satan can no longer lull it to sleep as before; it will not be quiet, it is troubled, it wants rest; it wants to be sure of salvation. And the one grand object of the enemy now is to throw the anxious one off the true ground of faith and in upon itself— to be guided by feelings in place of the word of God. And so successful is this snare, that few escape its toils, and multitudes are entangled therein and held in bondage for years, though this ought never to be, surely. Still, it is the Lord, and the Lord only, that can speak peace to a troubled soul and give it to enjoy full deliverance. He only can say, "Loose him and let him go." But this brings me to the following simple incident from real life, which is the occasion of this paper.

On a Lord's day afternoon in a town hall in the country, not long ago, a person was introduced to me by a Christian friend, as anxious about her soul. I found it to be a chronic case of feelings with very little intelligence about Christ, His work, or the word of God, but most sincere and earnest. My point was, that Christ could not be more willing to receive her tomorrow than today, His word could not be truer, or His work more complete; therefore, why not come now, believe and rejoice? The appeal in the afternoon for instant decision for Christ, was founded on these two words, "Come now;" which had greatly interested her, and presented a new line of truth to her mind. Like most of this class, she would be ready to own that all she had heard was true, and that she did not doubt a word of it, but it was not true to her because she did not feel it; she was waiting to experience that change within, which would be her warrant for believing that it was true to her. She acknowledged that she had been waiting for this inward change for years. Hardly anything can be more discouraging or hopeless to an evangelist than this, for the lives of such are generally most blameless; there is conscience enough to make them religious. After pointing out her mistake and assuring her that all her darkness arose from looking to herself in place of Christ, and from trusting to feelings in place of His finished work, we parted. She was back again in the evening, but I did not see her.

The following day her Christian neighbor, who had induced her to come to the preaching, let me know that the woman I had spoken to had found peace with God, and that she would like to see me. With the assistance of a friend I found her humble home. We had scarcely entered when she began to speak of the blessing she had received on Lord's day; but all I will give in her own words is the following. When I awoke on Monday morning, at five o'clock, the thought came into my mind, "I have an object now—I have an object now." And spreading her hand over her breast, she added, "I used to think I must feel it all in here first, but now it's all in Christ; and often today when I was at my work it came into my mind."

From the simplicity of the woman, it was perfectly evident that she had no idea that she was saying anything particular; it was the truthful expression of her new experience. But, nevertheless, these few simple words went straight home to my heart, clothed with light and power. They contain truths of the very deepest and highest practical instruction and value. There is not a troubled conscience in Christendom that would not find peace in looking to that same blessed object; not a doubting heart that would not be settled; not a weary soul that would not find rest; not a lost soul that would not find salvation. True, we react "Look unto me and be ye saved... Come unto Me and I will give you rest... Hear, and your soul shall live... Only believe." But the power—the healing virtue—is not in the looking, the coming, the hearing, the believing; but all in the object—the heavenly Christ, the man in the glory. When the eye rests on Him as its one object, all doubts and darkness flee away. The midnight of the soul is exchanged for the brightness of the noon-day sun. Now the eye is single, having but one object, and the whole body is full of light. "They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." Psalm 34:5.

These are some of the immediate and necessary results of looking to Jesus in place of self. The feelings cease to be the center of importance, and the blessed Lord, the exalted man in the glory, becomes the new object of the eye—the new center of our thoughts, feelings, affections, ways, and worship. All is changed, but the change is deep and all-prevailing. And as we grow in our knowledge of Christ, the results are infinite. By degrees, if the eye is fixed on its heavenly object, we enter into the fullness of Christ as the measure of our own blessing. We know our place in the presence of God according to the acceptance of Christ Himself—we are accepted in the beloved, and have settled peace with God. And now, the feelings, so long looked for and waited for, are come. But how? By making self the center—by some felt change within? Ah no; but by looking to Jesus and believing the word of God. The only thing that can produce the feelings so much desired is the written word—"Thus it is written"—but until the word is believed, the feelings can never be experienced. But now when the eye rests on its new object, the Holy Spirit is free to reveal the grace and truth of Christ to the soul. Light breaks in on the mind, the truth of God fills the heart, and new joy overflows the whole soul.

It is no longer with the anxious one, If I could only feel it I would believe, but, "I see all in Jesus now. When I am looking up to him, so many things come into my mind which move my heart with deep emotion and fill my eyes with tears of joy. How can I think of His wondrous love in coming down from heaven to die for me, without being thus deeply moved? I think of His sufferings on the cross, of His crown of thorns, but chiefly of His love which nothing could turn aside, which carried Him through everything, which only became the stronger as the pressure from all sides increased." Such are the sweet and tender breathings of first love when the blessed Jesus covers the eyes and fills the heart.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

But apart from the varying condition of soul which we meet with in our own day, and the disappointments which we sometimes meet with in the history of young Christians, we have the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles on this point, whose experience has been recorded by the pen of inspiration.

When on his way to Damascus, as we learn from Acts 9, he was arrested by a light from heaven shining round about him above the brightness of the sun. The astonished, persecuting Saul fell to the ground. He had now come to the end of himself; not only as to the sins of the flesh, but as to the righteousness of the flesh with all his advantages, natural and acquired, from birth to that day and hour. This is the true preparation of heart for the right apprehension of a glorified Christ—our heavenly object. When we are down, when we are nothing, when we are no longer looking for holy feelings, a change for the better within, to make us worthy of divine favor; but when with our faces on the ground we are obedient to the heavenly vision, the light of the glory shines into our souls. “And I heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.” Here we have the proper object of the Christian, and that which should form and govern every Christian’s character. Saul learns from Christ Himself in the glory, that He was Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, and that Christians are a part of Himself—one with Himself in the glory. “Why persecutest thou me?.... I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” Who would care to look to their feelings, their own righteousness or religiousness, who had caught a glimpse of this glorified Christ?

This is the grand truth, the grand object for Christians, as we go through this world. Hold it fast, O my soul; think again on the peculiar sweetness and beauty of these words, “Christ Jesus my Lord,” O cherish them in the deepest recesses of thy heart, embrace them with all the fervor and affection of thy soul; think again on each word, and let thine eye and thy heart be ever up to Him as thy heavenly object—Christ Jesus thy Lord. Like Rebekah in the wilderness, tarry not, look not behind thee or around thee, but pursue thy desert path until He comes to close thy weary way, and take thee up to be with Himself, and like Himself, forever and forever.

One thought more presses on my mind for utterance before laying down my pen, namely—What must be the folly of those Christians who allow themselves to be influenced by the world, the theories of men, or to be drawn aside, and so lose sight of this grand transforming object—a glorified Christ? But what must be the wickedness of those who reject this Christ altogether? The former must suffer great loss in their own souls, but the latter, eternal shame and hopeless ruin. Which, let me ask, has a hold of this paper just now? Enough may have been said already to the former; but to the latter, enough can never be said, so long as he continues to reject the Savior. Surely we cannot give thee up; surely we cannot leave thee alone. While there is life we must plead with thee to bow to Jesus as Savior and Lord. What will become of thee if thy knee refuses to bend to Him now? The word has gone forth and can never be recalled, that every knee must bow to Him, and every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

God has ordained it; subjection to the name of Jesus must be universal. In heaven, earth, and hell, every knee must bow, and every tongue must confess to the divine glories of the once lowly Jesus

of Nazareth. The faithful, we know, with loud and joyous hallelujahs will confess Him Savior and Lord; the holy angels will swell the song of the saints on high; but the fallen angels with the lost of every name and age, who are “under the earth,” in the regions of woe, must also confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Yes, my dear reader, willingly or unwillingly, thy knee must bow with the rest, and thy tongue must confess. But how awful the thought, to be compelled, however reluctantly, under the iron rod of judgment, to confess the glories of the Savior in whom thou hast no part, and to bow to Him whom thou didst once reject.

Oh! think, think, of these things now—at once, I pray thee! think of that awful future for all who reject Christ and His great salvation. Couldst thou dwell “under the earth,” in the dark regions of despair, forever and ever? Hast thou any feeling, O my dear fellow-sinner? Couldst thou risk such an awful eternity? Couldst thou throw away such a glorious opportunity as thou hast at this moment? Does it seem hard to bow at the feet of Him who once died amidst shame and cruel mockings, that thou, even thou, mightest be saved? For myself, I know no privilege so great, no honor, no dignity, so transcendent, as to bathe those feet with tears; but what more can I say to thee? Only one thing is right—Let thy heart be decided for Christ on the spot. Bow to Him now, confess Him now, He is still on His throne of grace, He waits for thee in love. As a lost and needy sinner, look up to Him now; pardon, salvation, and everlasting glory are thine, from the first moment of thy surrender to Him. What a prize! How near thy reach! Henceforth let thy motto be, Looking up to Christ in the glory, He “loved me and gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20.

In Memory of R. C. Mackintosh

Thy voyage is o'er, our precious one;
And thou hast safely reached the shore,
Where He was first to welcome thee,
Who passed through death's dark waves before:
Thy spirit, with the Lord above;
Thy body sleeps beneath the wave;
And while His arm enfolds thee there,
His eye rests on thy ocean grave.
Yes, thou hast reached that haven first,
Where soon our longing souls would be;
There will be no more partings there—
No tears—no death—and "No more sea."
Our loving hearts had craved for thee
Recovered health, in distant lands;
But Christ had better things in store,
For "all thy times were in His hands."
Lord Jesus! thou hast loved our child,
E'en with a deeper love than we:
And swiftly steered this fragile barque
Across life's dark tempestuous sea.
"Far better" this, than lengthened years
Of health and strength on earth could be;
Far better" to be safe in port,
For evermore, O Lord, with Thee.
In Thee midst grief and loneliness,
Our hearts their only solace know;

It "touches" Thee, for Thou vast once
A "man of sorrows" here below.
And on that tender heart of Thine,
Where rests our child for evermore,
We, too, can rest, and weep and wait,
Until the "little while" be o'er.
We are not severed, —Lord, in Thee—
We still are one in life and love;
And soon, one family, shall bow
In worship round thy throne above.
Soon—at Thy voice—shall earth and sea
To Thee yield up the precious dead;
And they and we together meet
In glory with our risen Head.

Here, then, for the present I pause. May the Lord graciously deign to use this little memorial of our beloved departed one, in blessing to the soul of the reader. If he be unconverted, may it be used to rouse him thoroughly to a sense of his guilt and danger, so that he may flee from the coming wrath, and find pardon and peace in Jesus. And, then, if he be a true Christian, let me remind him of one of Robert's last utterances— "I AM SORRY I DID NOT LIVE NEARER TO JESUS!"

And may each member of the stricken family circle emerge at heaven's side of these deep waters, with more purity of heart, more singleness of eye, and more firm purpose to tread the path of entire consecration to Christ—His glory and His cause!

"With mercy and with judgment,
My web of time He wove;
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lustered with His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided;
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

Light Out of Darkness

It has been my privilege for some years past to pay a weekly visit to the bedside of a poor woman, blind and paralyzed, but who knows what it is, through grace, to rejoice in the Lord; who knows she has eternal life and forgiveness of sins through faith in the One who has stood in her stead before a God who cannot look at sin, and who forsook the sin-bearer on the cross, that he might never forsake the poor sinner, who believes in Him. And it is indeed a privilege to stand by the bedside of such an one, and see what the knowledge of the grace of God, and of a Savior's love, can do to lighten a path on which all earth's light and joys have closed.

I had paid my visit one day, and had left the little room she lives in, when the sound of children's voices in the next one fell on my ear as I passed the door, and, knocking, I entered. There, were in it two little children, and an old woman, their grandmother. She was employed in reading one of the cheap weekly periodicals which are published in such numbers in the present day, corrupting the minds of old and young; and when (seeing she must be about 70 years of age at least) I spoke to her about the nearness of eternity, she answered in a way which evidently showed she considered my visit an intrusion. I therefore withdrew, saddened at heart to see that one so near the grave had not yet found out the worthlessness of all that this poor world could give, and had not a thought nor a care about her immortal soul. Oh! those solemn words, "If our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:3, 4.) Yes, dear unsaved reader, if such you be, that is the object of Satan now, to blind your mind; and are you willing he should do so, and prefer the wretched rubbish of this world to the "glorious gospel of Christ?" The glad tidings of God tell you of a risen and glorified Savior, who came from the highest place in heaven, to take the lowest place on earth, in death; and more than that, to drink the cup of judgment for sin, which you will have to drink in that place "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched," if you "neglect so great salvation."

The next time I paid my visit I felt somehow I could not pass that door, discouraged though I had been. Something seemed to tell me to go in, so in I went. There she was again reading the same worthless publication, and seemingly quite satisfied with it. So it went on, week after week, and I hardly ever passed that door without going in and leaving a little message about the grace of God for poor lost sinners. But one day when I went in, I found a great change had taken place, and a remarkable one. She, was blind. But a few days before she had been reading the rubbish she delighted in, and now God had dealt with her, and her poor sightless eyes could read no more. Poor creature, how unhappy she was! No more reading now. There she must sit, blind and helpless. But God had thoughts about that poor old woman, and now for the first time she was willing to listen.

Well, it was the old story she listened to; the grace of that God who looked down from His glory into this sin and sorrow-stricken world, and not only looked, but pitied; the love of that Savior who answered so willingly to that look; and, when the moment came, left that glory, and took up the

cause of poor ruined lost sinners, and at such a terrible cost to Himself. For if He were to take up the cause of the lost sinner, He must take the punishment too, death and judgment; and drink to the very dregs, to the very last drop, exhausting it completely, the cup of the wrath of an offended God against sin—that cup which only He who was not only very God but very man, could chink, going down into the deepest depth of our need, and able to sustain the judgment and the wrath and the curse which we could not sustain. For this, dear reader, is the gospel; that while man has done nothing but hate God, and has proved it to the full at the cross of His Son, God has done nothing but love man, for God is love; and He has proved it by giving the best thing in heaven for the worst thing on earth, and that is His Son for a poor wretch like you and me.

Well, she listened to this, and as she listened the tears came into those poor sightless eyes, and she bowed her head, and owned herself a sinner, and a great one too. Before long she was able to understand, through the grace of God, that there was a Savior for the sinner, and that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Rom. 5:20.) “Yes,” she said to me one day, “If God has taken away the light from my eyes, He has given light to my poor dark soul, and I bless Him for it; and if I wish for my eyesight back it is only that I might read my Bible, which I would not read when I could.”

She is still living, resting simply on Christ, having got rid, as she says, of that terrible burden of the sins of nearly 70 years, so heavy to bear, but the punishment for which she now knows that Christ, her Savior, bore for her eighteen hundred years ago.

Dear reader, one word before I close. Have you still got all your sins upon you? and are you content so to live on with death and eternity before you? Are you happy? Are you saved? And if still unsaved, whose fault is it? yours or God's? “Come unto me,” said, and still says, that loving Savior, “all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Have you taken Him at His word, and gone to Him? or are you one of those of whom those gracious lips are still obliged to say, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.”

A Little While

When will “the day break, and the shadows flee away?” Cant 2:17.

“Surely I come quickly.” Rev. 22:20.

“QUICKLY,” beloved! I know thine heart is beating

With deep emotion to behold my face,

But for “a little while,” wilt thou not spread the tidings

Of the sweet message of my love and grace?

Faint not, beloved! Think not of life’s sad burden,

Let the dead past, its own sad memories

Live in the present, now with chastened spirit learning

How blest are they who my commands fulfill.

Fear not, beloved! mine eye is ever watching,

Thy tears are numbered in my deep, deep love,

Thy weary sighs, and all thine heart’s deep yearnings

Are registered by me in heaven above.

Trust, trust, beloved! I know the world frowns coldly,

But this should only drive thee nearer me.

Earth’s broken links make heaven’s affection stronger,

The cross will only make the crown more bright for thee,

Look up, beloved! tread finely on the billows,

Thou canst not sink beneath life’s troubled sea.

Look up! then shalt thou learn the needful lesson meekly;

How mine own hand hath planned thy path for thee.

Rest, rest, beloved! thine head upon my bosom,

Lean on my arm, and tell thy griefs to me.

My heart is thine in all the full perfection

Of sympathy none else could give to thee.

Weep not, beloved, because thou yet in art tarry,
Wilt thou not serve me heart and lewd meanwhile?
Some hearts around thee pine in lonely sorrow,
Couldst thou not give one kindly look or tender mile?
Go forth, beloved! life's ministry is earnest,
Crushed hearts throng round thee, in thy path below,
Fond hopes once cherished, now by death are blighted
Knowest thou not a balm to soothe their woe!
Yes, yes, beloved! I read thine heart's glad answer
Yes, thou wilt do this work of love for me,
Only "a little while," and earth's sad scenes of sorrow
Shall change to glory bright prepared for thee.
Then, then, beloved! heaven's song of joy awaking
Triumphant "Hallelujah" thou shalt raise,
Then shalt thou gaze upon my face, and ever
"Knowing as known" pour forth thine endless praise.

TETBURY

A Lowly Life—Psalm

“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.” Psalm 73:25

All, gone, all gone, for this life gone,
My days of health and strength;
Wearied and worthless, glad were I
To welcome home at length:
And yet, I'm happier far in truth
Than e'er I was in buoyant youth;
For, Jesus, Thou art; more to me
Than health and strength and youth could be.
All gone, all gone, for this life gone,
Dear hopes most fondly nursed;
They glitter'd long around my path,
Till each bright bubble burst.
I wept; but oh! the blest despair
Has led me heaven's own joys to share;
For, Jesus, Thou art more to me
Than Hope's fond dreams fulfilled could be.
All gone, all gone, for this life gone,
My sours elastic spring
Of vigor stripp'd, I shrink aside
A crushed and useless tiling:
Yet this is gain; for thus I prove
Far more His patient, pitying love;
And sweeter, safer this to me
Than self-reliant strength could be.

And going fast, while most are gone,
Loved friends of early days;
The world grows stranger year by year;
I lose, but not replace.
'Tis well! I'm cast the more on One;
Stars scarce are missed while shines the Sun;
And, Jesus, Thou art more to me
Than loved and loving hearts could be.
Dear Lord, I thankfully kiss the hand
That gently stripp'd me bare,
And laid me on Thy tender breast,
To lose my sorrow there:
'Twas anguish when earth's cup was spill'd,
But now with Thee 'tis overfill'd;
For, Jesus, Thou art more to me
Than all earth's brimming cups could be.
What grace! to show a soul so vile
Thy more than mother's care,
And lead through wreck of earth's poor joys
Thy joys with Thee to share.
What grace! that Thou to such halt given
The foretaste now of feast in heaven;
The foretaste even now to me,
More than a thousand worlds could be.

Mackintosh: Further Memorials of R.C

The affectionate interest manifested by the numerous readers of “Things New and Old “ in our little narrative in the March number, leads me to judge that a few further jottings concerning our beloved Robert will not be unwelcome to them.

We have been deeply affected by the number and the contents of the letters which have poured in upon us from all quarters. The profound and tender sympathy, the genuine brotherly love, the affectionate interest manifested in every way, have bowed our hearts in adoring worship, thanksgiving, and praise, before our God. We have been amazed at the touching manner in which hundreds have entered into our sorrow, as also at the depth and intensity of the interest shown in one whom they had never seen. Truly we can speak of “brotherly love,” and we would speak of it, to the praise of Him from whom it all emanates, and to whom it all ascends again in streams of thanksgiving. And is it not worth passing through the deepest sorrow if only it gives occasion for the display of the grace of Christ in His beloved members, that thus His Name should be magnified, as it shall be throughout all ages, world without end?

It has, we may say, formed one of the very sweetest ingredients in our present cup to note the manner in which God has been glorified in the closing hours of our loved departed one. Oh! how well He knows how to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, life out of death! We have made it a matter of earnest prayer that even the very record of those closing scenes might be made a blessing to many precious souls: and we believe He has, even already, answered our cry; and we look to Him to answer yet more abundantly. I think I may assure the reader that nothing could have induced me to pen such a narrative but the hope of bringing glory to the precious name of Jesus, and real, solid profit and blessing to the souls of our readers. These were, in good truth, the primary objects; and, in addition to these, I am free to confess that a father’s wounded heart found a sweet though melancholy solace in erecting a little monument to the memory of a son who was all that a father’s heart could desire—obedient, loving, thoughtful, sensible, pure minded—one who never caused us a moment’s uneasiness save on the ground of his precious bodily health.

This is saying a great deal; and it may be the reader will feel disposed to set it down to the score of a father’s inordinate partiality. But it is not so. I do not think I ever met a young man who was more characterized by an almost scrupulous attention to the smallest wish of his parents. I could furnish abundant evidence of this; but I forbear, and content myself with the statement of the fact.

And truly it is a fact worth recording and pondering, in days like these, when our young people seem so bent on throwing off all thought of subjection to parental authority. The Holy Ghost has told us that the last days should be characterized by a spirit of disobedience to parents; and alas! we see it, on all hands—see it not only amongst the people of the world, but amongst those who make a high profession of christianity. This is most deplorable and humiliating. It is, at once, ungodly and unnatural. Children must be taught to obey—taught from the very cradle—trained in the atmosphere of obedience and reverence. God has put into the parent’s hand the reins of government, and the rod of authority. This should be thoroughly understood by the child. Not that

the parent should be perpetually chucking the reins and brandishing the rod. This is most contemptible. It is the invariable accompaniment of moral weakness. A father's authority and influence should lay the foundation and form the outworks of the whole domestic edifice; and inside this hallowed enclosure there should be the full and beautiful play of parental, filial, and brotherly affection.

Such is the divine idea of a christian household, and we should never be satisfied with anything less. Let none of us content ourselves with the skeptical inquiry, "Where will you find such an idea carried out?" It ought to be carried out in every christian family, if it be the divine idea; and if it be not, what is?

But the sad fact is that many of us, in entering upon the holy relationships of domestic life, think only of our own comfort, our convenience, our interests, our enjoyment. We forget that the divinely appointed privileges of a relationship can only be really enjoyed in immediate connection with the proper discharge of its divinely appointed duties and responsibilities. If I am a husband, have I not certain responsibilities as such! Am I to make a mere convenience of my wife, utterly regardless of her claims upon me? Assuredly not. I am to nourish and cherish her in all things. I am to sustain her in the true dignity of her position as a wife, a mother, and a mistress.

No doubt, the wife, in her place, has, in like manner, to see that she goes thoroughly in for all the sacred duties and responsibilities of her position and relationship. To her belongs, to a very large extent, the internal economy of the household. She stands at the very center of the domestic circle, and her influence is felt by every member of the family. Her tender affections, combined with her husband's authority, will shed a genial light over the whole scene, and tend, marvelously, to adjust matters, and bind the various members of the household together.

Let all heads of christian houses ponder these things. We may depend upon it they demand our most serious attention. We are called upon to carry ourselves, in our relationships, in such wise as to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. It is here we shall find most valuable instruction in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. The blessed apostle sets before us, in these invaluable writings, what we may venture to call the great moral foundations and outworks of christianity, and if these be not maintained in their integrity, it is the height of folly, yea, it is rank antinomianism, to talk of our privileges and blessings as Christians. It is worse than absurd to boast of our standing, as set forth in the doctrine of Christ, if we overlook our practical state, as set forth in the doctrine of God. The two must never be separated. If we talk of our privileges while we neglect our duties, we deceive ourselves, dishonor the Lord, stumble souls, and give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

We need not say that all this applies, in the fullest and most pointed way, to children as well as to parents. The doctrine of God demands that children should obey and respect their parents. But, alas! how little of this is seen, now-a-days! How often have we to mourn over the manners of our young people! What willfulness and waywardness! What rudeness to parents-especially to mothers! What uppishness and insolence! What self-sufficiency and contradictiousness!

It may be that parents have to blame themselves for much of this. Assuredly, it is a parent's fault if a child is suffered to contradict, in anything. We repeat, with emphasis, in anything. Supposing, for example, that a parent makes a statement which is not, scientifically or historically, correct, it is not

a child's place to contradict. A mistake in science or history is a matter of very small moment indeed when compared with the grievous moral wrong of disrespect to a parent?

We would press this upon the attention of our young readers. It often happens that parents toil, and fag, and deny themselves, in order to give their children a better education than they have had themselves, and the only return they receive is insolence and gross disrespect. Surely this is very displeasing to God and ought not to be exhibited by children or tolerated by parents. It is diametrically opposed to "The doctrine which is according to godliness." Young people should ever remember that one of the best evidences of a good education is profound respect for their parents, even though these parents may not be well up in classics or mathematics.

But if children forget their piece and their duty, parents should never forget theirs; and we cannot but think that if the divine principle of training be gently yet firmly carried out, from the very beginning, we should not so often be pained by the unseemly deportment of children toward their parents—a deportment which, we must say, merits the most withering rebuke which can possibly be administered.

The reader will, I trust, pardon this lengthened digression into which I have been drawn by the reference to our beloved Robert's deportment and manner as a son. We can truly thank God upon every remembrance of him. He ever yielded a ready obedience to the wishes of his parents; and as for his mother, she lived in the very deepest and most tender affections of his loving heart.

During the last seven years of his life, he was much away from home, first in London; then in Edinburgh; and finally at Doncaster; and throughout that whole period, he, as a rule, corresponded with his mother. Indeed she has always been "secretary for the home department."

I shall not attempt to give any lengthened extracts from his correspondence, inasmuch as he only wrote for a mother's eye and a mother's heart. But I cannot refrain from giving the reader a fragment from the last letter the darling fellow ever penned. It was evidently written very hastily; for the ship reached Portsaid sooner than was expected. There is nothing, by any means, remarkable in the letter; but there is a melancholy interest attaching to it, owing to the fact of its having been written just twelve days before his death; and yet no one could gather, either from its contents or its tone, that he was seriously ill. Oh! how little did we imagine that ere that letter could reach us, his spirit would be with Jesus, and his body in the depth of the ocean! Approaching Portsaid, "Thursday, 12th Nov., 1874.

"Darling Mother,—What a long time it seems since we parted! And not to hear a word from you all that time, makes it seem longer. However, I hope to get yours of the 5th inst. tomorrow, or next day; perhaps before posting this.

"So far, we have had a most delightful voyage on the whole. Almost all the 'greenhands' amongst the passengers got sea-sick as soon as we got on the swell of the Atlantic; and some of them have been more or less so, up to yesterday. To my astonishment, I did not get even squeamish, though there was really considerable rolling. One night, crossing the Bay of Biscay, I took too many almonds and raisins; and then felt very sick; but was all right again in the morning.

"This little cabin of mine, though small, is wonderfully accommodating. It has a place for everything; and I take care to keep everything in its place. It is very pleasant to have it associated

with the beloved father; and to remember that we sat and prayed together here for a blessing on the voyage. How very, very loving it was of him to come all that long way to see me off, and wave a last adieu as we sailed away. I hope your letter to Portsaid will tell of his safe arrival at home.

We had a magnificent view of Gibraltar, on the 5th; and then there was splendid climate in the Mediterranean till the 8th, when a stiff northerly breeze sprang up; the sea rose, and we all became regularly sick, except the old hands. It soon fell again, however, and since we have had delightful weather.

(After giving some minute directions as to the posting of letters, he continues:) It will be very pleasant to hear from you those three times; but they do seem few for such a long separation.... What a long time it will be till I can hear from you again! And then it will be only news from the middle of the month. I can only hope and trust that all is well with you. You may expect to hear from me again about the 11th of January, 1875. That will be from Singapore.... I had hoped to have written to A., but we have reached Portsaid sooner than I expected. Very much love to father, Henry, Andrew, and George.

“Ever, your very loving son,

“ROBERT.”

I cannot close this brief sketch of the beloved departed one without a few lines in reference to his character and conduct as an elder brother.

All thoughtful and intelligent observers of domestic life are aware how much is involved in this relationship, and how much depends upon the proper discharge of its responsibilities. An elder brother is an immense moral power in a family. Not that he possesses any divinely given authority. So far from this; we believe it always evidences moral derangement when one brother presumes to lord it over another. Any attempt of this kind should instantly be crushed by paternal authority. It is the father's business to see that each member of the domestic circle keeps in his and her proper place; and that each one is maintained in the enjoyment of domestic privileges.

But though an elder brother has no authority, he has great moral influence; and when this influence is thrown into the right scale, it proves an invaluable supplement to parental authority. It is a grand point gained when the eldest son takes the right direction. Younger brothers are powerfully affected by the example of the eldest.

Through the Lord's infinite mercy, I can say that dear Robert acquitted himself, as an elder brother, in such a manner as to meet every desire of our hearts. He was not only a thoroughly safe but an eminently useful companion to his dear young brothers. It was not only that he taught them nothing bad, but he sought to teach them real good. I do not think that one of his brothers ever saw him give an unhallowed look or heard him utter a single impure sentence. He was singularly pure minded; so that, next to the society of their mother, there was no company like that of their beloved Robert's. In the family circle, or in their country walks, he was a most loving and instructive companion. His mind seemed furnished in almost every department of knowledge; and yet there was not the slightest approach to bombast or pedantry—those detestable accomplishments of ill-trained smatterers.

I shall just give the reader a brief extract or two from letters written by Robert's younger brothers when sorrow's deep wave was rolling over them. I do this in sacred confidence. Indeed I may say that nothing could have induced me to prepare this narrative had I not the fullest assurance that the beloved readers of "Things New and Old" would not misunderstand me, or imagine, for a moment; that I desired to hawk myself, my family, or our deep sorrow before the public. I felt I could count on my friends; and, so far, I certainly have not been disappointed.

FROM H. TO HIS MOTHER.

Edinburgh, Jan. 18th, 1875.

"... I wish I could express to you how very much I sympathize and participate with you in this sorrow; but I cannot do it in words. It is an unspeakable comfort to me to think that though we are separated now, yet the time cannot be distant when we shall be reunited. It is indeed a happy thing to have a hope beyond the present; and I do not think I ever felt it rightly until today. The blow would be indeed crushing were it not for the knowledge of this; and also for the assurance of his being so much better off where he now is, freed from all the weakness to which, whilst here, we are subject.

"The memory of the little time we had together at Scarborough, last autumn, is most sweet to me. I do not think I ever knew dear Robert so well before. He was so loving in his own quiet way. I fear that F. will be very much broken down. I have remembered him and your dear self many times today; and asked the Lord to comfort and sustain you both; and I am sure He has done so, and will continue to do so.... I never could think that Robert was very seriously ill; and hence I always looked on his case hopefully. Why, I am sure I cannot say; for he certainly looked ill. I thought it a good sign his not saying anything about his health in his last letter; but the dear fellow's reason is now explained. I cannot write more now, my heart is too full."

FROM A. W. TO TILE SAME.

Edinburgh, Jan. 18th, 1875.

"... I cannot tell you what a blow the unexpected news of dearest Robert's departure was to us. It has left an unutterable blank in my heart. He and I used always to cling to one another in a very special way. We went about together, and used to form plans of how I was to set up in practice with him; and we were to go to Canada together. And now to think he is gone, and that I shall never see his dear face again!

Well, cheer up! precious mother; for, after all, the separation is but as a few days, aye, as a few hours, when looked at in comparison with the eternity which we shall spend in his company, around the throne. How blessed—how inexpressibly blessed to think that it is but a question of a few months or years, and then we shall meet him, and all our dear ones that are gone before, never to be again separated.

'Loved ones are gone before,

Whose pilgrim days are done;

We soon shall greet them on that shore,

Where partings are unknown.’

“Oh! how such a hope, or rather such a blessed certainty as this should bear us up in trial, like the present one. Assuredly we can say, with truth, we sorrow not as others which have no hope.” And besides, we should remember how much—how very much happier it is for the precious fellow himself to be up in that bright joyous world above, than to be still toiling on in this wearisome world of sin and sorrow. So, precious mother, when you feel cast down about dearest Robert’s departure, just think of this, that we shall soon meet him again; and that he is far happier with Jesus than he could ever have been down here.”

FROM G. TO HIS BROTHER A. W.

Scarboro, Jan. 19th., 1875.

“It was indeed a sad and crushing letter which we received on Saturday from the Rev. George Piercy. But for darling Robert it is all joy and happiness. He told one of his friends that his only reason for wishing to live longer, was Matthew he might live closer to Jesus. Now ought not we who still live try to do so? I am deeply thankful for the way mother bore it...”

FROM H. TO HIS MOTHER.

Edinburgh, Feb. 1875.

“As you say, darling mother, everything here reminds us of darling Robert. All the things he so kindly gave us this winter; our subjects of study; our rooms and all our surroundings, directly or indirectly recall him to us. How we do feel his loss!”

FROM A. W. TO THE SAME.

“I do hope precious Robert left some last message in his own dear familiar hand-writing, in his journal. I do so long for the sad pleasure of reading it. I suppose it will return with the Ajax. Oh! how sorrowful it will be to see all his little possessions! Don’t you remember, mother, his showing them all to you and me, on his return from London? I can scarcely keep from tears when I think of the dear, dear fellow. I am sure that his loved sober face will always be imprinted on my memory as long as I live.”

My object in giving the above extracts is not only to spew the place that darling Robert had earned for himself in the hearts of his three young brothers; but also to encourage all elder brothers so to carry themselves that those who are looking up to them may see only that which they may safely imitate. The only way to secure this is to live a life of undivided consecration of heart to Christ. Those last words of dear Robert are ever present to the heart, “I WISH I HAD LIVED NEARER TO JESUS!” May we all deeply ponder them! Surely we need to do so; for if we may speak for others, we all live at too great a distance from that blessed One who would ever detain our vagrant hearts in the moral shelter of His own dear presence.

A FEW MORE JOTTINGS FROM MR. MASTERS’ DIARY Monday, Nov. 23rd.— “The Doctor is worse today. As we sang around his bed, he tried to join in, but no voice came. Then when all was quiet, I stole again to his bed. I found Mrs. Piercy watching him. We knelt down and prayed. All the time his lips were moving; but there was no voice. The night was very still. The moon was shining

brightly upon the smooth surface of the sea, where scarcely a ripple moved. A few gleaming moonbeams shone through the rigging, and fell upon the place where the dying man lay. I looked round; there was no one near; and no sound but the hissing of the steam and the founding of the screw....”

“Wednesday, Nov. 25. (The day after the funeral.) Had some talk with the chief engineer and second mate. The latter is evidently seeking after the truth. The service yesterday, and the death of Dr. Mackintosh has impressed many here with serious questions. I hope they may not be momentary.”

The Lord be praised for this last paragraph! If a single soul has been saved, through the death of our darling boy, we bless God with all our hearts. Though the anguish of heart is the deepest we have ever tasted, we would willingly go through it all, and ten times as much, to save an immortal soul from the flames of an everlasting hell. True, we have shed—are shedding many bitter tears. We confess it. God knows it. But what are these when compared with the weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth in that terrible place to which ALL MUST GO who die in their sin—die out of Christ—die unconverted, unrepentant, unbelieving! Oh! reader, if thou art unconverted, do not rest satisfied with shedding a tear over the death of one so young, so promising, so beloved—the cutting down of a life which, like an opening rose-bud, seemed to promise so much fragrance. Weep not for him; but weep for thyself—for thy precious soul—thy sins, thy guilt, thy danger. And, not only weep, but flee, this very moment, to that blessed Savior, who died the just for the unjust, that He might bring thee, in all His own perfectness and preciousness, to God. If you could only write and tell us that our Robert’s death had proved the means of life to thee, you would afford more consolation to our stricken hearts than could be found in ten thousand letters of condolence.

We have just received from a beloved young friend, now visiting at Edinburgh, the following touching incident connected with our beloved Robert’s University life, for which we offer our hearty thanks to God whose precious grace shines so brightly in it.

“The other day, I went in to see a poor woman in the old town, here—very poor. Almost the first words she said, were, Oh! Miss tell me, it is not true that young Doctor Mackintosh is gone.” Alas! I could not tell her that. I could only tell her how sweet and bright his going home has been; how Jesus had been with him all along, and gently led him into His home. She wept for a long time, while I tried to tell her all I knew; and promised to send her ‘Things New and Old’ to read for herself. She said, ‘He was so good, so kind to me.’ Pointing to a little child, she said, “He attended me when my little Willie was born; and I was so long ill; and he came so often: and was so kind, always bringing me things to try and strengthen me, for I had a very bad time of it; and he spoke of the Lord so beautifully to me; and was so sympathizing. We loved him so much. And when he was going away, he came to say good-bye to us; and we thought so much of it—my husband and me. And out of his great coat pockets he pulled, first a large bottle of Iron for me, because I was but weakly, then a big bottle of God Liver Oil, for my husband, for his chest. He had ordered it for him; but we had not been able to afford to get it!’ It was so touching to hear her tell her tale; and she was so delighted to find I knew him. I thought you would like to hear it.”

Beloved christian reader, does not this little incident tend to “provoke to love and good works?” Truly, these are the things we have to attend to—these precious fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God. How sweet to think of a young university student,

thus entering into the wants and the sorrows of the poor! Not content with doing his duty as a medical student, he goes, again and again, to minister consolation and practical sympathy to that poor distressed family.

No one, we are persuaded, ever heard of this from his lips; and how many similar cases might be recorded, God only knows, for Robert never paraded his doings. But all are faithfully written down in the blessed Master's book, and will be rewarded in that day when every man shall have praise of God. What astonishing revelations will be made in that day! Many a blessed act of ministry, unseen by human eyes, will be recorded and rewarded in the kingdom of Christ. And, on the other hand, many an act which was published and lauded in this world, as something wonderful, will be consigned to eternal oblivion.

Reader, are you a university student? If so, are there many of the poor, and the crushed, and the desolate in the winds and closets of Edinburgh who would shed a tear over your departure, or over the memory of your name? Not, surely, that this should be our object, God forbid. But then, ought not Christians to remember what they are left here for? Ought they not to remember their mission? Should not those words of our departing Lord have more weight with our souls? "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you!" What a mission! what a model! may we study the latter, more profoundly, so that we may fulfill the former more faithfully! We are not left here to be saved; we are saved, thanks be to God. But we are left here to be, as it were, the very hands and feet and eyes and mouth, the affections and tender yearnings of Jesus Christ.

Glorious mission! which can be fulfilled by each, by all, old or young, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, in every walk of life, in every sphere of action.

Those words which we have just quoted from the twentieth chapter of John, were not addressed merely to apostles, but to disciples—the common name surely, for all Christians. Hence, therefore, all Christians are sent into the world by Jesus, as Jesus Himself was sent by the Father. We do not expatiate; but we commend this most practical subject to the attention of the christian reader; and we would ask him how far he is seeking to discharge his high and holy mission.

We cannot close this second part of our narrative without tendering a word of grateful acknowledgment to the many beloved friends who, not only have written letters of sympathy, but also enclosed most soothing pieces of poetry, some of which are peculiarly sweet and touching. We can only give the following in this number.

WEEP NOT.

Hush every murmur, hearts by sorrow riven,
For cherished ones summon'd from earth to heaven;
(God but asserts His right; these gifts were ill;
Not our freeholds, nor held we them on lease,
What the departed were, such are we still,
Waiting the word to quit, tenants at will;

They were but loans, which He who lent had power
At pleasure to recall in any hour.)
Nor mourn the sainted dead, as if remote;
When earth was quit no holy bond was broke;
Nearer they may be than an absent friend,
For spirit cloth with kindred spirit blend;
These last, ocean or mountain may divide,
A veil the first, which may be drawn aside
Ere the next hour. So narrow is the stream
That twixt the dyad and us doth intervene,
So soon it may be crossed; a moment's space
May land us in their quiet resting place.
I low can we call them lost, or o'er them weep
Who do but in another chamber sleep
'Neath the same Father's roof? from their calm slumber
They will awake when th' heavens are rent asunder.
Sleep is not life extinct, the body's powers
Suspended lie through night's long slumber hours,
The mind still soars upon her wondrous flight.
So does the soul live on through death's dark night.
A passage, not a prison, is the tomb,
On this end sin opens a door of gloom,
Grace on the other doth unlock a gate
Of glory; as when a flowing river breaks
Into a mountain's side, and still rolls
On Through the deep hidden cavern dark and long
Buried awhile, but on the other side
To burst forth in a fuller, stronger tide.
The sunlight of to-morrow and to-day

Are one: night does not veil the ray,
It is not quenched by that we call sunset:
What we call death, ends not one life: nor yet
From resurrection doth another date.
Death affects not identity—in the same state
We die, we rise; we wake as we lie down,
Yet stronger; that which was in weakness sown,
Is raised in power, eternal fruit to bear;
Life here in Christ, is life abundant there.
Weep not for those in Christ who live and die
Weep not that heaven's attractions multiply,
They are, and shall be ever with the Lord;
So comfort one another with this word.
As when from some home circle of fond hearts,
One member to the distant chine departs,
Then follow others that our love holds dear,
Until we feel the home is there, not here;
So when our God this earth a desert makes,
And by successive strokes our friends translates;
Let us with eager, chasten'd mind arise,
To plume our eagle-pinions for the skies;
And on bereavement's waves, amid the storm,
Get nearer to the peaceful haven borne.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing, we have received several letters from one of the officers of the "Ajax," accompanied by a package of our loved one's hair, and a pocket handkerchief with which the death dew had been wiped from his brow. We give an extract from one of the letters.

"... I have been twenty-five years at sea, and never saw any one die so full of the grace of God as our Doctor. I have the 6 to 12 watch regularly. He used to come on the bridge with me going down the Mediterranean. The night before he died, as I came off watch at 6 bells, I sat beside him. It was a lovely moonlight night, no sound but the dash of the wave against the ship's side. He said, "Hobson, is it your watch? No, Doctor, I am going below. He was very weak; then he said, Hobson, I am dying." "Do not talk so, you frighten me; no, you will live, and you and I will go down together

to Scarboro.” He smiled sweetly, and prayed for about five minutes, then he took my hand, saying, ‘I am not afraid to die, and you must not be, Jesus died to save you and me.’ He then gave me your address and thanked me for all kindness shown to him. The enclosed handkerchief he held in his hand when he died.” Reader, if you were put in R. C. M’s circumstances with death and eternity staring you in the face, could you calmly, intelligently and deliberately say, I am not afraid to die?

We cannot withhold from our readers the following communication we have had from a dear friend who had read the Sailor’s letter:

“We have all been so melted by the delicate feelings displayed by that dear sailor, but above all by the meek way those dying lips spoke of Jesus. Doubtless the impression made on the dear sailor is not slight, the way in which he tells of that beautiful smile, which spoke so emphatically of the sweet peace within. I do firmly believe many in that day will be to him a crown of rejoicing.”

Mackintosh: Last Days of R.C

The time had arrived when it was absolutely necessary to prepare for our March issue; but just as I was about to address myself to the work, we received the crushing news of the death of our beloved son, Robert, who fell asleep in Jesus on the morning of the 24th of November, 1874, at four o'clock, on board the "S.S. Ajax," and was buried in the Gulf of Aden at eleven o'clock on the same day.

Being thus, for the time, wholly unfitted for the discharge of my duties as an editor, I trust our many kind readers will allow me for this once to indulge my feelings as a father. The fact is, I could not at present use my pen in any other way than to give a few jottings in memory of one who had entwined himself round the heart by a thousand tender ties, the sudden snapping of which has convulsed, for the moment, the entire mental and physical framework.

I quite feel that, in thus merging the editor in the father, I am adopting a very unusual course, and presenting a large draft upon the kind indulgence of the many beloved readers, friends, and correspondents, of "Things New and Old." But, if I am not greatly mistaken, I believe they will lovingly bear with me in this matter, and make allowance for one passing through the very keenest and deepest sorrow he has ever tasted.

Besides, I am persuaded that there are thousands of loving hearts who will welcome this brief record of one who, though they may never have known him personally, has nevertheless occupied a large place in their affectionate thoughts and earliest prayers—for which I would take this opportunity of thanking them with an overflowing heart. The numerous letters, too, which, even in the space of two or three days, have come to hand, filled not only with tender sympathy, but with earnest and loving inquiry for details, would render it almost imperative upon me to send out some printed notice, seeing it would be wholly impossible to give direct replies to all, much as I should like to do so; for I can truly say the tide of love and sympathy which has flowed around us, at this time of ineffable sorrow, has touched the very deepest springs of our hearts; and I would here tender to all our beloved personal friends and correspondents our heartfelt thanks. May the Lord Himself return all their love a hundredfold into their own bosoms! This I feel assured He will do, for He is not unrighteous to forget the work and labor of love bestowed on any who belong to Him.

It is not by any means my intention to give a detailed account of the life of "R. C. M." I can do no more than—as indicated in the heading of this paper—give a very few details of his last days, during which the spiritual life in him developed itself with remarkable force and fragrance. He was converted, as he himself always declared, at the age of seven. He was able to read the Bible in the family at the age of three years and eleven months. Always a particularly quiet, blameless child, and trained from his earliest moments in a christian atmosphere, his conversion did not affect any striking change in his outward conduct; but the hidden spring was there, and the true pulse of divine life could easily be felt by any really skillful hand.

This must in every case be looked for. A blameless life is not enough. A man may lead that, and yet be an enemy and a blasphemer of Christ. Some of the greatest moralists and philanthropists of the age may be found enrolled amongst the number of those who systematically, deliberately, and publicly deny the deity or the eternal Sonship of our adorable Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What will their morality and philanthropy be worth before the judgment-seat of Christ? What are they worth now? They are but the trappings which cover a heart at enmity with God, the deceitful gilding which hides from view the most positive blasphemy against the Son of God, the fatal dust which the devil casts in their own eyes, and in the eyes of those around, lest their true condition and imminent danger should be seen.

A blameless life, a brilliant reputation, will not do. No, nor a Christian training either. "Ye must be born again." There must be the positive, actual, bona fide passage from death to life. We must be renewed in the deepest springs of our moral being. The kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, must be set up in the heart, else we never can have part in Christ or His eternal glory.

Thanks be to God, the beloved subject of this sketch knew the real meaning of all this. I do not mean to say that the work was very deep at the first. I do not believe it was; but it was real, so far as it went: and I am not aware that a shadow of doubt or misgiving ever crossed his dear young mind, from first to last. He knew the gospel, and enjoyed the rich and invaluable privilege of a christian mother's influence and teaching, which he highly prized to the end of his life, and to which, under God, I trace his conversion, and that of his five brothers, two of whom had gone to heaven before him. Governed by divine principle, and the instincts of a true motherly heart, Robert's mother made the training and care of her children her primary business, and she has reaped, so far, a blessed harvest. All praise to Him from whom all grace and blessing flows! He first gives the grace to act, and then rewards the acting.

How much is involved in our nursery influences! How much depends upon the moral character, spirit, tone, temper, and principles of those whom we admit within our nursery walls, or employ in any way in the great business of our children's education! How little do parents reflect upon the awful consequences to soul, mind, and body, of committing their precious little ones to the care, or rather the carelessness, of flirting, flaunting, gossiping maids, who injure their health, defile their minds, and ruin their souls!

I solemnly warn all young christian parents against this most sad evil. Let young mothers devote themselves wholly to the sacred and solemn business of training their children. If the kitchen, the laundry, and the nursery, all stand as candidates for their time and attention, let the last be sure to stand at the head of the poll. Whatever else you neglect, let nothing induce you to neglect those precious immortals whom God himself has most manifestly placed under your care to train for Him. It is a fatal mistake, and a delusion, for a mother to abandon her divinely appointed work, or resign it into the hands of others, while she goes out in what she calls service. We may depend upon it, the christian mother's sphere of work is home. The foundations of character are laid in the nursery, and a mother's hand is the lovely instrument which God delights to use in laying them. Mothers are a great moral power for good or evil—witness the constant recurrence in the historic books of the Bible of the suggestive expression, "His mother's name was" so-and-so. Why not "His father's name?" The father gives the social stapes; the mother imparts the moral tone.

However, Robert, though clear and decided in the confession of his faith, was never demonstrative as to his feelings. He was quiet and reserved; so much so, that superficial observers felt disposed to pronounce him shy. But those who knew him intimately did not think him shy; on the contrary, they found in him a quiet depth of spiritual life, a sound judgment, and a cultivated and well-stored intellect. A man who is all known in a moment is not much worth knowing. We are surrounded on all hands by showy, superficial talkers, whom people of good taste and sound judgment—to say nothing of proper christian feeling—regard with pity or contempt. If there is one thing above another from which we retire with disgust and abhorrence, it is a forward, self-sufficient, talkative young man. While, on the other hand, there is an irresistible charm about one who, while he can take in and measure everybody, lets himself out but to few; and who, underneath a dignified reserve, conceals a large amount of moral power, ready for use when the occasion offers. Would that more of our young men were of this latter stamp!

But I must hasten on, lest I be found, through the weakness of a father's heart, now crushed with bitter grief, lingering over details which can possess no interest even for that beloved circle of friends for whom I write, and whose kind forbearance I claim. The life of a school-boy, of a medical student, or a medical practitioner, cut down at the age of twenty-three, cannot offer much to engage the attention of an ordinary reader. Besides, all these things stand connected with the life which now is—very important, no doubt, in their place, but less, far less, than secondary when compared with that life which is eternal, spiritual, heavenly, and divine. It is this latter we long to cultivate and strengthen in ourselves, and in all with whom we come in contact.

However, there is one fact in our beloved Robert's life, as a student and as a medical practitioner, in reference to which we would offer a word of caution to all whom it may concern. It is this—he overworked himself, and did not pay sufficient attention to sleep and diet. This is a great mistake, and one that must assuredly tell, in the long-run, upon the physical and even the mental frame. Every man has a certain amount of work in him, and to do that, his body, as the instrument for work, must be kept in working order. If nature be overtaxed and neglected—if the proper balance of waste and repair be not duly maintained, we may rest assured she will make very painful reprisals.

It will, perhaps, be said that those medical students who need a word of warning against over-work are few and far between. The vast majority of such, no doubt, are far more regular in their attendance at the theater, the drinking-saloon, and the billiard-table, than they are at the lecture-hall, the hospital, and the dissecting-room; and they spend much more on brandy and cigars than on medical books or surgical instruments. But then these latter often kill themselves by their abominable self-indulgence. Yes, kill their bodies, and plunge their souls into eternal perdition, to gratify their lusts and passions!

Robert belonged not to this last-named class. He never crossed the threshold of a theater in his life—never had a cigar or a pipe in his mouth—had an intense abhorrence of the vile, low, and abominable habits of smoking and drinking. Moreover, he loved his profession, the true secret of success in anything. He had a taste, amounting almost to a passion, for some of its interesting branches. His high testimonials, as well as several prizes, bespeak his progress and efficiency.

But he overworked himself, and did not take sufficient care of his precious health. This remark applies to his life as a medical assistant quite as much as to his four years' residence in the

University of Edinburgh. It is an error into which many earnest students are apt to fall, and I would take this opportunity of offering to all such a word of loving warning. How many have overtaxed their energies in order to take out their degree, and, just as they had gained their object, have had to lie down and die.

There is one other fact as to Robert's university life which I must not omit; and that is, he generally found time to attend the prayer-meeting. He would leave his studies and scientific investigations, and make his way to the place where prayer was wont to be made, and there find strength, comfort, and consolation. This was a most blessed habit, and one which I would earnestly recommend to all christian students. The mercy-seat is the place to gather up strength for study as for all beside; and it cannot be questioned for a moment that the men of effective action and true progress are ever men of prayer.

On leaving the university, Robert spent a short time as a medical assistant at St. Helens, in Lancashire, and then went to Doncaster, where he remained as an assistant for a year and eight months. Here his health completely broke down. It was difficult to induce the dear fellow to give up. He longed to work with his hands the thing which is good, that he might have to give to him that needeth, and that he might not be chargeable to any.

However, he was obliged to succumb; and right glad we were to welcome him to his home, with the fond hope that the bracing air of Scarborough, and a loving mother's tender care and bright companionship, might be used of God to recruit his exhausted strength.

We were truly grieved at his appearance when he arrived from Doncaster. He had all the look of one in consumption—the hectic cheek—the cough—the nightly perspirations, filled us with the gravest apprehension.

And then we perceived such growth in the divine life, such sweetness, such gentleness, such loving thought for others, such kindness to the poor, such a beautiful outshining of the living virtues of Him who had called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. All was morally lovely. There was beautiful grace in every movement. He was utterly unlike the ordinary run of young men. He spent hours in most animated and instructive conversation with his mother, whom he almost adored. And then he would sit down to the harmonium—a very beautiful one, presented by a beloved friend—and play and sing with such deep pathos, as to stir the very deepest depths of the soul. Never can we forget his rendering of hymn 200, in the collection entitled, "Hymns Ancient and Modern."

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,

Nearer to Thee,

E'en though it be a cross

That raiseth me;

Still, all my song shall be,

Nearer, my God, to Thee,

Nearer to Thee.

Though, like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet, in my dreams
I'd be Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
There let my way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
Then, with my waking thoughts,
Bright with Thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee! Amen."

His whole appearance as he sang this affecting hymn—the tones of his fine voice—the touch of his finger—all proved too much for some of his audience, who had to rush out of the room in a flood of tears. This hymn was a great favorite with the darling fellow, but to us it seemed terribly prophetic.

After some weeks of rest at home, Robert felt equal to undertake a fortnight's practice for a medical gentleman in the neighborhood of Manchester. We hardly thought him up to the mark, but he could not bear to be idle, and so he went. This gentleman, on his return from his holiday, being much struck with Robert's delicate appearance, interested himself in his case, and most kindly gave him a letter of introduction to a medical friend in Manchester, who, it seems, has made chest diseases his special study. He was most kind and painstaking in his examination of the case. He said there was mischief in the right lung, and recommended a warmer climate for the winter.

This brought matters to a point. Robert particularly wished to obtain a surgeon on board some steamer; as he shrank from the idea of going out as an invalid passenger. I should have preferred the latter; yet did not wish to move in the case, but leave him free to act as the Lord might guide. Through the kindness of the medical gentleman near Manchester, and a dear friend in London, Robert was appointed surgeon to the "Ajax," one of Holt's steamers, plying between Liverpool and China. It was entirely his own wish to go. It is impossible for human language to convey what it cost his parents to part with such a fondly cherished object; but we consented, with the earnest hope that our God would be graciously pleased to use the voyage for the thorough restoration of his precious health. All his medical advisers—and amongst them our old and bosom friend, beloved Dr. Mackern were unanimous in their opinion as to the necessity of a voyage, and Robert himself was most sanguine, up to the last.

At length the parting moment arrived. It was truly the shadow of death. I accompanied him to Liverpool, on Tuesday, the 27th of October; and, oh, how thankful I am that I did so! I would not for worlds have missed the tender endearments of those last few days. Beloved Robert seemed, as it were, to become more attractive each hour, as we drew near the close of our hallowed and affectionate intercourse.

Will my reader pardon me? I know it is out of place to write in such a strain, if I am to be judged by the standard of editorial propriety. But I have already claimed the sweet privilege of laying aside for the moment all mere literary ceremony, and of pouring out my heart to the reader as to a personal friend. Am I wrong in this? I trust not. I shall have grossly miscalculated, if I be misunderstood by a single reader of "Things New and Old." It is a great thing, in a world like this, to be able to confide in loving hearts.

However, I must endeavor to be calm in my narrative of facts, though it is not easy when those facts cluster round a beloved son, who was bound up in one's very existence.

The "Ajax" sailed on Saturday, the 31st of October, 1874. We had from the outset made it a matter of most earnest prayer that the Lord would so order, that our beloved son might have someone on board with whom he could hold sweet christian fellowship. How marvelously was this prayer answered! It was Robert's privilege to have as fellow-passengers Mr. and Mrs. Piercy, of the Wesleyan mission to Canton, with whom were associated Messrs. Nightingale and Masters, and some others—a happy and devoted band of workers, who were leaving home, and country, and all that the human heart clings to with fond tenacity, in order to dedicate themselves to the blessed work of carrying the gospel to the heathen.

Words fail to convey to the reader the deep consolation it afforded to my heart to find that our "beloved physician" was to have such companions in travel. I took the liberty of introducing myself and Robert to Mr. Masters, a young man of his own standing as to years. Mr. M. kindly introduced us to Mr. Piercy, the head of the mission, who had been out to China twice before, and was quite an experienced traveler. I blessed God with an overflowing heart for the rich mercy of being able to commit my precious one to the care of such loving hearts. What they proved themselves to him in his hour of need the reader will be able to judge from the sequel. May God Himself return their love a thousand-fold into their own loving bosoms! If this should meet the eye of any one of that dear missionary band, especially Mr. Piercy, Mr. Nightingale, or Mr. Masters, I beg to tender them our most grateful thanks for their precious and soothing ministry to our loved one in his closing hours.

We know they did it to Christ in the person of one of His members; but this makes it all the more precious; and we feel assured that He will remember and reward every loving act of service rendered to that beloved sufferer, who was deprived, at such a moment, of all that is wrapped up in that one great, deep, comprehensive, suggestive word, “mother!” How gladly that mother would have been with that son, God only knows. But it was ordered otherwise; and she now joins me in assuring those beloved friends who gathered around the cot of Robert Cornwall Mackintosh, in his last moments, that, while memory holds her seat, we shall cherish the grateful sense of their christian kindness to him.

We would also take this opportunity of thanking the owners, the captain, the officers, and crew of the “Ajax,” for all their kindness shown to our son during his brief connection with them. May God reward them most abundantly!

And now I must let others tell the rest. The last sight I caught of Robert was as he stood on the deck of the “Ajax,” waving his hat in a fond and final farewell. It was a moment as to which both tongue and pen must be silent. The heart’s emotions are too profound for utterance; and utterance is needless for hearts that know how to feel—for other hearts who would think of writing at all?

The following is an extract from Mr. Piercy’s letter to me. I trust he and Mr. Masters will kindly excuse my thus making use of their letters and journals without their permission. The sad circumstances of the case must be my apology.

S. S. ‘Ajax,’ Dec. 7th, 1874.

My dear Sir, “You will recollect my speaking a few words with you, at Liverpool, just before the ‘Ajax’ sailed; and your saying your son was going out in the ship as doctor. I noticed his paleness and feebleness; but did not think him so seriously ill.

You would receive letters written by him at Port Said. In the Canal, he became much worse; his strength seemed suddenly to give way. His cough was troublesome, but not very bad. The heat was great, and we all hoped that getting away from Suez, and especially if he was spared to have the cooler weather of the Indian Ocean his life might be prolonged. However he weakened from day to day. At times he suffered a great deal, and his mind wandered; but, generally, he did not suffer much—just seemed to sink away.”

“On Sunday, the 22nd of November, we passed Perim, at the mouth of the Red Sea; and it was cooler as we passed Aden; but he was sinking fast. He breathed his last on the morning of the 24th of November, at about a quarter past three. Mr. Nightingale, one of my colleagues, was with him at the time. His remains were committed to the deep, about 11 o’clock, the same morning. All the passengers, and many of the ship’s crew were present, and seemed to be deeply impressed. We mourned over him as a brother, for we had learned to love him much.

As Captain Kidd will send you an official account of his death, I will now speak of the things he wished me to say to you, his parents. My colleagues, myself, and the ladies of our party had repeated conversations with him on his spiritual state, his family, and other matters. I offered to write to you anything he wished to say. This he tried to give me as coherently as he could. I will try to give you the general idea.”

“(1) He said, Tell my father that all on board have been very kind to me, and have done all they could for my comfort and welfare. Both the passengers and ship’s officers have watched over me; and I have had all the help I could under the circumstances.”

“(2) Then he said, I have been kept in peace of mind. My Savior has been with me. It is sweet to trust in Him; and all will be well!”

“(3) Give any further account of my illness and end that you think will comfort my parents and family.”

“I trust, dear sir, that you will find some consolation in knowing the above facts, and in having a few more of your dear son’s words which I will try to write down for you.

“One day, he said to me, How sweet it will be to fall asleep in Jesus!” To Miss Taylor, he said, ‘I wish I had lived nearer to Jesus. This is the only reason I wish to live, to be brought nearer to Him.’ She repeated, ‘Jesus, lover of my soul,’ &c. &c. He asked for it again; and also begged her to repeat, ‘Just as I am, without one plea,’ &c. He also said to her, ‘Only one thing gives me hope of recovery; my father has so many kind friends who are praying for me.’ He spoke also to Mrs. Piercy, once, saying, ‘I sometimes think I shall not recover. It will be all right, either way. I am not anxious about it. I only want to live that I may serve Him.’

When passages of scripture or hymns were read or quoted to him, he responded with pleasure, quoting others in return, showing that his mind was stored with divine truth, and that he found in it support and consolation. Once, in looking up to the sky, he said, ‘Beautiful sky where Jesus lives!’ On quoting the opening verses of John 14, he continued, ‘Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you.’

“We all deeply sympathize with you, dear Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh, on this great loss to you of such a son; but our Father’s will is, doubtless, the best; and, in heaven, you will meet your lost one, and never lose him again.

“My wife and colleagues join me in christian love.

I am, yours truly,

“George Piercy.”

Meetness for Heaven

Man in his lost condition is the object of the grace of God. But where does that grace find him? how does it deliver him? what does it do for him? and where does it set him? As the slave of Satan and of darkness it finds him, out of this condition it delivers him, from all his guilt it cleanses him, and sets him in the light and liberty of the free-born children of God. The soul's blessing is complete not by a rule given him to obey, not by long watchings, fastings, prayers, individual or concerted—good as these things may be—but by the grace of God acting in power, and setting him in an entirely new relationship with Himself.

So far does this operation of grace transcend all human thought, that it can only be understood in the simplicity of faith, and by setting aside all present experience as a guide. The word of God reveals it, faith receives it, and maintains it to be true beyond a question. Experience we will have, but it will be the experience of a joy and a happiness answering to the truth believed, and to the grace of God in which we stand. To look within for evidences of our pardon and acceptance is to be filled with darkness and uncertainty.

The believer in his new place—this wondrous place of measureless blessedness—can only worship. He has nothing to ask for as regards the blessing of his soul, he is complete in Christ, though in everything by prayer and supplication he is to let his requests be made known unto God, as to his whole path here below. But his prayers are full of praise; so perfectly at rest, so assured of the changeless favor of God, his heart, like David's cup, overflows. How can it be otherwise? Hear what the apostle says:

Verse 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Here we are arrested, overwhelmed, by the greatness of the grace. No human pen can add to the fullness and blessedness of these words. We do well to pause, and meditate on the vast but gracious thought—made meet to share the portion of the saints in light. Not merely to share the inheritance of saints, or of saints in heaven, but of saints “in light”—in the light of our Father's immediate presence. How absolute is the effect of the work of Christ on the soul—whiter than snow, we stand in the light where holiness and righteousness dwell, and find that we are made meet to enjoy the children's portion there.

But the saints here referred to, some may suppose, must be advanced saints, those who have reached great attainment in the christian life. No, not so; what is said here is said of all who believe in the Lord Jesus, in every period in life, and in all ages and in all countries. The youngest as well as the oldest, the most ignorant and the most learned, who believe, are made meet by the Father for the light in which He dwells—it is the work of God in Christ Jesus, and can never fail. The Christian, from the day of his conversion, is in the light as God is in the light. Practically, we know, both young and old in the divine life may forget this, may not always walk according to the light, may indeed be sometimes in a dark state and unhappy, still, he is always in the light, as to his place and acceptance in Christ; that is now his native place, and can never know any change, but this makes the failure of Christians all the more serious. The grace of God, however, can never

fail, and, blessed be His name, we stand in grace.

The penitent thief on the cross, we are assured, was as fit for Paradise the moment he believed as if he had lived fifty years the most devoted saint on earth. His crown would have been different, but he himself would not have been better fitted for the realms of light and glory. He had Christ and His acceptance in heaven. The prodigal son is another instance of the same kind, a blessed picture, an example—ever fresh, ever refreshing—of every case of conversion. Met by a Father's love, reconciled with a Father's kiss, sealed with a Father's ring; the best of everything in heaven is his. He leaves the husks for the fatted calf—thud was his last meal in the old country, this his first in the new. But could he ever have better—Christ in resurrection? And could he ever lose his robe, his ring, with all his new treasures, in his Father's house? Impossible! The once lost sheep, safely within the gates of glory, no harm can ever reach it there; no evil can ever disturb that scene of love; no enemy can ever invade those peaceful shores—that happy land of pure, unmingled, eternal, changeless blessedness!

All this is true to faith now; ours is always a present meetness. Oh, what rest there is to the heart in grace! We can think and speak of those who have finished their course, not according to the variableness of early piety, but according to the true, unvarying, grace of our God. We read of their fitness, their welcome, their home, their companions, in light, in the words of eternal truth. The shadow of a doubt can never cross the mind as to our dear departed. The messenger of peace may have come at an earlier hour than he was expected, but he could never find him unprepared. No matter where he was, or what the circumstances may have been, his last moments were the happiest in his existence. To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, closes the pilgrim's weary way, and begins his new eternal song, with the saints that have gone before, in the presence of their Lord. Dear and loved ones may surround and smooth the pillow on which the weary head reclines; or he may be alone, far away from a well-known voice, tossed on life's roughest wave; but our God is there, and has ordered everything. We can always trust in Him.

"My bark is wafted from the strand

By breath divine,

And on the helm there rests a hand

Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail,

I have on board;

Above the raging of the gale

I have my Lord.

He holds me when the billows smite:

I shall not fall.

If sharp, 'tis short; if long,

'tis light He tempers all.

Safe to the land! —Safe to the land!

The end is His,

And then with him go hand in hand

Far into bliss.”

But however sure and certain that the separation is only for “a little while,” and that good is the will of the Lord, the poor human heart is bowed down beneath the weight of a sorrow that has cast its dark shade over everything around, and deepens by the tender recollections of a thousand associations day by day. It is not unbelief, it is not murmuring, it is the agony of a bereaved affection. Oh, mysterious agony! Thy voice is groans and sighs; thy repast is tears, yet we would not be withdrawn from thee, we love to feed upon thee, we love to dwell with thee alone. It changes everything here below, but more to some than to others. The paths of the wilderness may be dark and lonely, the poor body may be feeble, the spirit may be crushed, the heart may be bleeding, the shadows of death may so thicken around us in the valley, that we are unable to proceed, and can only say, “Father, take my hand, and through the gloom lead safely home thy child.”

Time alone restores. After a while the sorrow sleeps, but never dies; or it may ebb like the tide, but flows again as deep as ever. Communion with the Lord is the only healing balm for the wounded spirit, and communion with His word the true means of recovering power for service. And nothing will so naturally and sweetly take a sorrowing heart off itself as being interested in the salvation of others for the Lord’s glory.

We can only just glance at the next two verses, though they are of such rare beauty and importance.

Verses 13, 14. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. In whom, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Here we have the character of the work which sets us in the light. This great blessing—made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light—depends upon two things—Deliverance and Forgiveness. Complete deliverance from the power of darkness, from the whole realm and region of the enemy; and not only so, “we are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Both are absolutely complete now in the reckoning of faith. “Who hath”—not who may, or will, but “who hath delivered us.” Redemption and the forgiveness of sins sum up the Father’s blessing to His children, in happy association with the Son of His love, throughout the eternal ages. See also Eph. 1:8-6; 2:4-7.

The Lord grant that all who read this number of “Things New and Old” may be led to inquire, “Am I ready, should the summons come tonight? or am I still the slave of Satan, and in the realm of darkness?” There is no middle place. Everyone who reads this number is either made meet by the Father for the inheritance of the saints in light, or he is still under the power of darkness. But, oh, how great the difference! The bright inheritance on high, or the dark regions of hell below! Which is it to be, my dear reader? Make thy choice now; let thy heart be decided for Jesus now: rest not, sleep not, until thou hast surrendered thy whole heart to Jesus. One look to Him in faith changes everything—changes thy position, changes thy present state of mind, and charges thy destinies

forever. He has died for sinners—He has died for thee; what hast thou done for him? He has paid the ransom price adequate for the redemption of all.

The blessed Lord still waits to receive all who come to Him, and welcomes them as the welcomed the penitent thief and the prodigal son; surely that is encouragement enough. Oh, be at once decided for the Lord; own His claims, bow to His word, believe in His love, and rejoice in all the grace which is thine in Him. And then should the Lord come for His saints before death comes for thee, thou wilt be ready to ascend with them to meet thy Lord in the air. Come, oh come, happy morning, come then shall all tears be dried, and all shadows shall flee away. It is the morning without clouds; it is the morning when our loved departed shall rise again; when we shall be reunited in our bodies of glory, all perfectly conformed to the image of the Lord, and dwell together, an unbroken circle, in the bright, bright beams of His unchanging love, throughout the countless ages of eternity.

“O happy morn! the Lord will come,
And take his waiting people home
Beyond the reach of care;
Where guilt and sin are all unknown:
The Lord will come and claim His own,
And place them with Him on His throne,
The glory bright to share.”

The Morning of Joy

Oh! bright will be the waking—
The resurrection dawn!
The day will soon be breaking,
And Christ, His kingdom taking
Will usher in the morn.
Oh, sweet the rays we borrow
Beforehand from the light!
A few brief hours of sorrow,
“Joy cometh on the morrow,”
Far spent is now the night.
Oh, rich and rare the treasure
Enwrap in Jesus’ name!
Oh, who His love can measure?
Or who describe the pleasure
That faith is bold to claim?
Oh, short the time remaining
For pilgrim-service here;
Then, then no more restraining,
No more a thought of paining
The heart that holds us dear.
Oh, fair anticipation!
Oh, bliss beyond alloy!
Oh, perfected salvation.
When, Lord, Thy “revelation”
O’erfills our cup of joy.

Nicodemus: Part 1

There is a peculiar charm attaching to the way in which truth is presented to us in the Gospels. It is not, of course, a question of the relative value of truth, inasmuch as truth is truth whether we find it in the Gospels or in the Epistles. But then, in the Gospels, the inspired writers present truth in connection with what we may call scenes in actual life. They give us the history of individuals—their exercises, their trials, their difficulties, their questions, their doubts, fears, and mental conflicts.

All this imparts intense interest to the gospel narratives, and tends to rivet the truth upon the heart and understanding. If in the Epistles we have truth didactically unfolded, in the Gospels we have it livingly illustrated.

Now we are all conscious of the charm attaching to a living illustration. It commands the heart and engages the attention. We delight to trace the history of men and women of like passions with ourselves—to be told what they felt and thought and said—to know, upon divine authority, that they had the very same doubts, difficulties, and conflicts that we ourselves have had to encounter—to see how those doubts were removed, those difficulties solved, those conflicts disposed of. Everybody knows how an anecdote, a simple story, a fragment of living history will rivet the attention of an audience which could hardly be kept awake by the unfading of abstract truth.

This may be viewed as a weakness. Be it so; it is a weakness to which the Spirit of God deigns, in infinite grace, to stoop. Scenes from real human life have an ineffable charm for the human heart; and when those scenes are portrayed by the inimitable pen of the Holy Ghost, their interest is intensified to the very highest possible degree. It is perfectly delightful to see how God can mingle and interest Himself in human affairs—how He can, in His matchless grace, enter into all our circumstances, all our thoughts and feelings, all our mental exercises—to see that there is nothing too small for Him to notice—that He can dwell, with marvelous minuteness, upon things which to our mind seem very trivial. All this is eminently calculated to delight and refresh the heart.

If the reader will open his Bible, and turn to John 3, he will find one of these charming narratives above referred to. In it the inspired penman has recorded for our learning the interesting interview between our Lord and Nicodemus—an interview full of the very deepest and most important instruction. We may truly say, If ever there was a moment in the which the history of Nicodemus claimed special attention, it is just now, in this day of man's proud pretensions, when the utter and hopeless ruin of human nature, and the absolute need of the new birth is so loudly and extensively called in question. The circle is, each day, becoming wider and wider, in it is fashionable to deny with scorn and proud indignation the total depravity of man, and, as a consequence, the indispensable need of redemption and the new birth—the two things stand or fall together.

If man is not a hopeless ruin, he does not need to be born again. If man does not need to be born again, he is not a hopeless ruin. This is self-evident. The two things are inseparable. If human

nature is capable of improvement; if there be one redeeming feature in it; if there be aught in it which can be made available—a single ingredient which God can accept; then verily is there no need for redemption and the new birth—then is there no truth in the words, “Ye must be born again”—no truth in the words, The Son of man “hast be lifted up.”

But we must turn to our chapter, and in doing so, we would remind the reader that, in order to seize the full force and import of the opening words, he must view them in immediate connection with the preceding chapter. There we have man, weighed and found wanting; and that, too, under the most favorable circumstances. “There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, “They have no wine.”

Here human nature is proved to be deficient, at a moment when, if at all, it ought to be able to answer to the demand. “No wine” at the nuptial feast was a striking commentary on man’s state and competency. If there is ever a moment or a scene in man’s history in which he might be expected to yield joy, it is at a marriage feast.

But no; he is found wanting in the presence of Christ. This is the point here. Jesus goes to man’s nuptial feast and finds him incapable of yielding a single particle of joy. “They have no wine.” Such is the humiliating confession. Wine is the symbol of joy; and man has to own that, even amid the festivities of the bridal hour, he has none.

Some may object and say this is all the merest imagination. We reply, It is not an imagination, but a fact; and a fact, moreover, which speaks in impressive accents to all who have ears to hear. Can we cede, for a moment, the idea that the Holy Ghost has recorded the history of the marriage in Cana of Galilee without a specific design? Impossible. There is a marked object in it, and that is to show not only man’s utter deficiency, but further to prove that he must be a debtor to Jesus for every atom of true joy; and finally, that there can be no joy for men, no joy for Israel, no joy in the earth, until the water of purification is turned into the wine of the kingdom.

But we have still farther proof of man’s ruined condition. “The Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” John 2:13-16.

Here we have the wickedness of man’s heart flagrantly displayed. The very temple of God is made a scene of ungodly traffic. The worship of Jehovah is made an occasion of greedy grasping after gain. And doubtless, had those unhallowed traffickers been questioned as to what they were at, they would have pleaded all manner of pious excuses. They were only providing for the convenience of those who had come from a distance to worship the God of their fathers. And had they not divine authority for this? Could they not quote Deut. 14 in defense of what they were doing? “If the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee. Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt bestow that money for

whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: an I thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household." Verse 24-26.

Men are not slow to betake themselves to arguments which have a certain pious ring about them. They can even quote scripture in defense of their covetous practices. But the eye of Christ could penetrate to the very depths of the soul, however those depths might be concealed by the flimsy arguments of a pious plausibility. He was not to be deceived. He discerned the motive-springs in the heart. He detected and unveiled the moral roots which lay concealed from ordinary eyes. He calls things by their right names. That which should have been the house of God, had become, in their hands, a house of merchandise— that which should have been a loved and hallowed retreat for all true worshippers, was turned into a den of thieves. The precincts of the sanctuary were desecrated by the godless traffic, of those who had learned to turn the service and worship of God into a means of "filthy lucre."

How solemn is all this! What searching lessons are here read out in the ears of the professing church! Is Christendom one whit better than Judaism? Are nominal Christians the breadth of a hair in moral advance of nominal Jews? Alas! alas! we must reply in a melancholy and humiliating negative. Nay; it is worse and worse. For, inasmuch as Christianity is in advance of the legal system—inasmuch as the doctrines of the Gospel are in advance of the shadows of the law—so much is Christendom worse than Judaism—so much are nominal Christians more guilty than nominal Jews. The corruption of the best thing is the worst corruption. The higher the privileges, the deeper the guilt that corrupts them. "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." Is not Christendom higher still, in religious advantages and spiritual privileges? Doubtless. What must be her end? No human tongue can tell—no pen portray—no heart conceive. May the awful reality of these things affect all our hearts more deeply! They are indeed awfully real, for as sure as our blessed Lord Christ did, with a scourge of small cords, clear that godless scene in the temple of Jerusalem, so surely will He clear this guilty Christendom with the sword of judgment and the besom of destruction, of all stumbling-blocks and roots of bitterness. Oh! then let us be in earnest in seeking to urge our fellows to flee from the wrath to come. Let us stand in faithful, earnest, zealous testimony against the gross corruptions and hideous abominations which are being carried on under the name of Christianity. Let us purge ourselves from the dishonorable vessels of this great house, and turn away, with firm decision, from all those who having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof. May God give all His true people grace and power so to do, for His Name and glory's sake!

We had not intended to dwell, at such length, on the scenes in the second of John; but we trust it may not prove altogether profitless to the reader. It is well to have a full view of man in every stage of his history—every phase of his moral condition. We cannot ponder too deeply those faithful records penned by the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of setting before us the real truth as to what man is—those vivid and forcible illustrations which He has furnished for our learning; and hence, ere closing this article, we must glance, for a moment, at the last paragraph of our chapter which seems, as it were, to complete the inspired picture of man's hopeless ruin.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he

knew all, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” Verse 23-25.

To an unpracticed eye, it might seem most hopeful to find persons actually professing faith in Christ. Was not this the right thing? Yes verily, if the profession were genuine. But, if spurious, it was only “worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” There is nothing which so hardens the heart and sears the conscience as mere head knowledge—lip profession, nominal faith. To seem to be a Christian, and yet not to be, is the deadliest, delusion possible. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works!” Such is the solemn inquiry of the inspired guardian, of practical godliness—a wholesome word, most surely, for this day of wide-spread and worthless profession—this day in which millions, on every first day of the week, stand up in the presence of Almighty God, and say they believe this, that, and the other,—while, at the same time, every scene and every act of their lives give the lie to the utterance of their lips? What must be the end of all this terrible dishonesty—this heartless-profession—this gross inconsistency? Oh! for a thorough awakening!

But what was the fatal defect in the faith of those persons referred to in John 2:23? It was this—they believed “when they saw the miracles which He did.” Now this was not a divinely wrought faith at all. A faith merely founded on miracles is not saving faith. It is a nominal, notional, bead belief and nothing more. It leaves the soul in greater darkness than that of mere nature. There is no blindness so sad as the blindness of those who profess to see, while as yet their eyes are fast closed by the god of this world, who is never better served than by those who have a name to live while dead.

“But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”

Reader, we would ask thee one question, ere we lay down the pen. It is this—Can Jesus commit Himself to thee?

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

Worship, and homage too, we bring,
With joyous hearts we joyous sing,
To the earth-born heaven-crowned king,
Jesus Christ the Savior—
Worthy of homage and of praise,
Thus we sing our joyous lays.”

Nicodemus: Part 2

From the glance which we have taken at John 2, in our last paper, we are in measure prepared for the opening lines of chapter 3. "Man" cannot be trusted. He has been weighed in the divine balance, and found wanting. He has been tried and tested in every possible way, and proved to be utterly worthless. Man, in his very best estate, is unfit for the kingdom of God. "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

These are conclusive statements. There is no possibility of escaping their force and application. There is no exception to the solemn rule. When the Holy Ghost uses the term "flesh," He means the whole race—the whole human family—the first man and all his posterity. So also when He uses the term "man," He refers to the whole species. It is therefore wholly impossible for anyone—man, woman, or child—belonging to that species, that race, that family, to avoid the application of the solemn sentence—"They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Let the reader see well to it that he really understands the meaning and force of these words. It too often happens that we read, hear, and even quote passages of scripture without understanding their true significance, their spiritual meaning, their proper bearing, their application to ourselves.

What, then, does the Holy Ghost mean when He says, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God?" What is the meaning of being "in the flesh?" Is it the same as being "in the body?" Most certainly not. True Christians, children of God, genuine believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, are in the body; but the Holy Ghost, in Rom. 8:9, expressly tells such that they are not in the flesh." What does this mean? It means that they are no longer viewed by God as connected with the first man--the old Adam—in the old creation. They have entered upon an entirely new footing; they belong to the second Man, the last Adam. They are "in the Spirit," in Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. They are a new creation. They have passed from the old platform of nature on to the new platform of grace. Hence, although they are in the body, as to the fact of their condition, they are not in the flesh as to the ground or principle of their standing before God.

If we mistake not, it will help the reader immensely, in the clear understanding of this weighty subject, to bear in mind that holy scripture speaks of two men, the first and the second. These two men are each presented as the head of a race. As is the head of the race, so is the race of which he is head. Every member of the race stands in the position of the head. There is no difference.

Now, if it be asked, "When did the first man become head of a race?" Was it before or after his fall? After, most surely. When the first Adam became the head of a race, he was driven out of paradise; he had lost his innocence; he was a ruined, outcast, sinful man.

We speak, of course, only of Adam federally. Looked at personally, he was pardoned and saved; but he could not transmit his pardon, his salvation, or his new life to his race, or to any single member thereof. These things are not hereditary. They are the fruit of faith; and a father cannot believe for his son. All that belonged to the first man, personally and naturally, he could, in the way

of nature, transmit to his posterity; but all that which he enjoyed by grace, through faith, was peculiar to himself, because faith is intensely individual.

But it is of the very last possible importance that the reader should thoroughly understand this great foundation truth of headship. When the first man became head of a race, he was a fallen creature. Hence, if we look at Cain and Abel, we shall find in them a simple illustration of the truth, that, as is the head, so are the members. Both these men were born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. There was no difference in their birth, their nature, or their moral condition. The apostle does not say that "By faith Abel was a better man than Cain." No; but "By faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice." No doubt, in their after history, we see the difference in the men, and the difference in their conduct, because Abel was born of God, and Cain was not; and thus it is that John presents the two men, when he says, "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." 1 John 3:11, 12.

Paul, in Heb. 11, presents the principle on which Cain and Abel stood before God. John presents the nature and practice. In each we have the two men as representing the two races. Abel took his true place as a sinner, and found refuge in the blood of the Lamb. Cain refused to do this, and took his stand upon his own doings. Abel, by faith, placed the blood of a spotless victim between his sin and a holy God, thus he was saved, pardoned, accepted, justified. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of"—what? of himself? of his feelings? or even of his faith? By no means. What then? "God testifying of his gifts."

And what was it that distinguished Abel's gift? What marked it off from the offering of his brother? What gave it its value in the judgment of God, and made it the meritorious ground of his pardon and justification? Blood! Yes, reader, all was founded on the blood. Sin having come in, and death by sin, the only way of life, and the only ground of righteousness, is in the blood of the Lamb. To this Cain would not listen, would not submit. He took his own way. He rested on his own doings. He brought a bloodless sacrifice, thus ignoring or denying his guilt. He brought the fruit of a cursed ground, without any blood, to remove the curse. Such was "the way of Cain." Here lay his fatal mistake. He was rejected, not because he was a sinner, but because, being a sinner, he had dared to approach a holy God without blood.

Doubtless, Cain, like thousands in this our day, might reason, and argue, and speculate. He might think it far better, far more suitable, far more rational, far more natural, to bring fruits than blood. But, ah reader, of what possible use can it be to argue, and reason, and speculate? Is it not far better at once to submit to God's way? He must have the upper hand at last; why not let Him have it now? Why not cast aside all our proud reasonings and lofty imaginations, and bow to His eternal word? That word shall judge at the last day, and it shall prevail forever. No power of earth or hell, men or devils, can possibly stand against the word of God; and hence it is the very height of folly and wild madness for anyone to set up his thoughts or his reasonings in opposition to the plain statements of holy scripture; and, on the other hand, it is the beginning and end of all true wisdom to submit in all things to the absolute authority of that word which is settled forever in heaven.

Now, if there is one doctrine above another which shines with special luster, and stands prominently out on the page of inspiration, it is the glorious doctrine of the blood. From Genesis to Revelation it runs like a broad golden line, visible to the most cursory reader. No sooner had sin entered, and man's nakedness become thereby apparent, than the Lord God Himself gave the first great testimony to the indispensable necessity of the blood, in the fact that the coats of skin with which He clothed the naked pair were furnished by the shedding of blood.

What a telling fact! Adam and Eve had sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. But these proved perfectly worthless. They did not even satisfy their own minds. "I was afraid," said Adam, "because I was naked." Yes, naked, though he had the apron on. He actually ignored his own device in the moment of real trial. He felt himself perfectly naked because his covering was a bloodless one.

It may, perhaps, be objected that this was but a mere figure. Yes; but a figure of what? Of a great fact—the first of a series of facts which stud the sacred page from beginning to end—facts demonstrating, beyond all question, that, in a world of sinners, **THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT IS THE ONLY BASIS OF ETERNAL LIFE AND DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

It is full of interest and spiritual instruction to note the moral link between Adam's apron and Cain's offering, on the one hand; and between God's coat and Abel's sacrifice, on the other. In the former, the blood is completely ignored; in the latter, it is divinely established. There is nothing which so completely sets man aside as the doctrine of the blood; and hence it is that his religious mind so entirely rejects it. Man will work, pray, give, suffer, in order to secure the salvation of his soul, because this gives him a place, and makes him somebody. But man will not accept and confide in the blood, because it makes nothing of all his efforts and all his pretensions. If it be true—and it is true, because God says it—that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," then verily is man's religiousness completely swept away, inasmuch as he can only be pardoned and justified by the death of another.

Reader, have you found pardon and peace in the blood of the Lamb?

Nicodemus: Part 3

IT is of importance that we recognize, to the very fullest extent, the various moral and religious advantages attaching to the position and character of Nicodemus; for, just in proportion as we see and weigh them, do we see the utter insufficiency of all such things to give true rest and satisfaction to an immortal soul. If we had before our eyes a grossly wicked person, a scandalous liver, a drunkard, a thief, or an extortioner, we should all of us feel disposed to say, that such a man has just cause to be dissatisfied with himself, and uneasy as to the future, for, without any manner of question, he is plainly on the broad road that leadeth down to everlasting burnings.

But when we look at Nicodemus, “a man of the Pharisees”—“a ruler of the Jews”—“a master of Israel”—a man evidently occupying the very highest position, and enjoying the very highest religious reputation; when we see such a man giving clear proof of dissatisfaction and uneasiness, it should lead us all to consider well our position and prospects. If Nicodemus, surrounded by everything calculated to lull the conscience into repose, and to fill the heart with confidence and self-gratulation—if a man like him had serious misgivings as to his entire position and prospects, then, most assuredly, it becomes all to look well to their foundations and title deeds.

And it may not be amiss to remind the reader that he must not suppose that the term “Pharisee,” in our use of it, presents the same idea as it did in New Testament times. Now-a-days, a man would deem it an insult to be called a Pharisee. But, in the days of Nicodemus, to be a Pharisee was about the most respectable and enviable position that anyone could enjoy. Paul, when he counts up his advantages as a man in the flesh, when he enumerates those things of which he might naturally boast himself, names this amongst the rest, “As touching the law, a Pharisee.” To be a Pharisee, therefore, was something to be proud of, as a man. It was viewed as an advantage of the very highest order.

Now, Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He seems to have had every possible religious advantage; and yet he was ill at ease. He had secret misgivings. He was not sure of his foundations. He was dissatisfied with himself, and with his surroundings.

We shall see presently how much reason he had to be uneasy. We are now as occupied with the fact that he was so. He felt in himself somehow that all was not right, that he lacked something; and that that something was not to be found in the system to which he was attached, and in which he occupied such a high position. His heart was not at rest, and his uneasiness was evidenced by the fact of his coming to Jesus.

Now, there is something uncommonly interesting in the history of a man like Nicodemus; and not only interesting but most instructive. We may here learn in the plainest possible manner, that no system of religion under the sun can ever satisfy the cravings of an awakened conscience, or hush the anxieties of an earnest soul. If any one could find peace in a religious position, or by means of religious observances, Nicodemus might have done so. He was a leader in that system which had been set up by God Himself,—a public teacher and guide of the professed people of God. He sat

actually in Moses' seat, and could, as we say, give chapter and verse for all those institutions with which he stood connected. There is no system now existing, or that ever has existed, call it what you please, Greek church, Latin church, Anglican church, high, low, or broad, no religious organization beneath the canopy of heaven, that can put forth such claims as the Jewish polity, inasmuch as this latter was a divine institution, whereas all the former are of human devising, and cannot stand the test of holy scripture for a single moment; they are not of God, though many of God's beloved people and Christ's honored servants are enrolled as members of them.

But the religious system in which Nicodemus was trained could boast of having its foundation laid by the hand of the Lord God of Israel. We speak now only of the Jewish economy—its ordinances and offices, which was set up of God, for His own wise ends, a shadow, no doubt, of good things to come; but still appointed of God, and as such, possessing more powerful claims upon the heart and conscience, than any other system before or since.

And yet Judaism could not satisfy Nicodemus. No; nor can any ism on the face of this earth satisfy the aspirations of a heart that has been roused, in any measure, to a sense of the reality of eternal things. The wants of the soul are far too deep and manifold to be supplied by the fairest and most imposing appliances of systematized religiousness.

Some, however, may feel disposed to say, "We can understand how drat no merely human system of religion can meet the soul's need; but was not Judaism set up of God? Were not its sacrifices and its priesthood, its laws and its ordinances, of divine appointment? why then could they not moot all the requirements of the soul, and hush the anxieties of the heart?"

If the reader will turn to Heb. 9 and 10 he will find an elaborate answer to this question—an answer penned by the Holy Ghost, for the special benefit of those who had been taught from their earliest days to build upon the resources of the Jewish religion, and who, though, like Nicodemus, they had discovered their utter inadequacy to meet their need, and had been taught to look to something outside and beyond them all, were nevertheless in danger, through the craft of Satan and the egregious folly of the human heart, of being led back again to the unsatisfying shadows of a by-gone ago on which "Ichabod" had been written, in characters deep and broad, by the hand of Jehovah Himself.

We feel that we cannot do better than quote some passages, lest the reader should not have his Bible at hand.

Speaking of the Jewish economy, the inspired apostle says, "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary."

Let us mark this, dear reader, "Ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." Do we not see abundance of this around us in the professing church? May we not observe, on all hands, a sedulous effort to introduce "ordinances" and to set up "worldly sanctuaries?" And all this, not merely in strict accordance with the letter of Old Testament scripture, but according to the commandments, doctrines, and traditions of men, the dictates of the human will, and the wild wanderings of the human imagination. Alas! alas! it is so; and souls in an unconverted state, some utterly careless; some perhaps really serious and anxious, are taught to build upon and make their boast in what can only be regarded as mere consecrated vanities. All this is perfectly appalling to every thoughtful mind.

But let us proceed with our quotation. The apostle informs us that this worldly sanctuary, with all flat appertained to it. "Was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." And again, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." Heb. 9:1, 9, 10; 10:1.

How was it possible for any earnest heart or awakened conscience to find rest in such a system? How could shadows tranquillize a troubled soul? Impossible. We want solid realities—divine substance—eternal verities—accomplished facts.

And yet, though this be so, is it not most deplorable to mark the way in which precious souls are being led astray by the cruel deceiver, and taught to build upon rites and ceremonies which are not even a shadow of good things to come, but a blind to hide from the sinner's view the good things that have come the glorious work that has been accomplished, and the Person of Him who has accomplished it? Is it not perfectly heart-sickening to see our fellow-men bewitched and deceived by the gross absurdities of ritualism, bowing's, scrapings, genuflections, vestments, stained windows, and candles in broad day-light? What folly! what an insult to common sense! Only think of men shutting out the light of heaven by their stained glass, and then lighting candles on what they dare to call the altar of God! And these silly vanities are offered to immortal souls as a basis for their eternal salvation! They are virtually and really, though not professedly, robbed of Christ, His sacrifice, and His priesthood, and instead of Him, they are furnished with the senseless mummeries of a dark and degrading superstition.

We write not to give offense to a single reader of "Things New and Old," but we must write as we feel or else lay down the pen, and resign our Editorship. How can we be silent, when we see the glorious gospel of Christ abandoned, and immortal souls ruined by thousands? We really cannot; we must speak, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. We must sound a warning note in the ears of our fellow-men, and solemnly call upon them to abandon every refuge of lies, to flee from the wrath to come, and find refuge and rest in that one divine and eternal Sacrifice which was offered on the cross eighteen hundred and forty years ago, and is as fresh and as efficacious today, as when it was presented by the eternal. Son, and accepted by the Father. Why will the teachers of Christendom persist in leading souls astray? Why will they continue to give them shadows instead of substance? Why will they not open their eyes to see, and their ears to bear the history of the Jewish system? Why will they not learn from it the utter worthlessness of a religion of shadowy representations? Why was Judaism set aside? Because it could not niche him that did its services perfect, as pertaining to his conscience. By what has Judaism been displaced? By the Person, the Sacrifice, and the Priesthood of the Son of God. But what are the ritualistic doctors of Christendom doing? They are actually displacing the Son of God, His Person, and His work, by shadows of their own devising; by rites and ceremonies for which there is not a shadow of authority within the covers of the volume of God.

And we would ask is it not positively impious as before God, to set up a system of carnal ordinances, when He has abolished forever that system which He Himself set up, because it could not satisfy His claims, or meet the sinner's deep necessities? And is it not absolutely cruel to teach

people to build the salvation of their souls upon ordinances which do not even possess the value or dignity of those which God has for ever set aside by the cross of Christ? The fact is, modern ritualism is neither Christianity nor Judaism, but a mongrel system graven and fashioned by art and man's device, and used of Satan to set aside the glorious Christianity of the Now Testament, to dishonor Christ, and ruin eternally the souls of men.

Christian reader, are we sufficiently awake to the awful condition of things in the church of God? Are we sufficiently in earnest as to the truth of God, and the souls of men? Are we sufficiently alive to the great interests at stake? Are we not sadly deficient in our appreciation of the Person and work of Christ, and the value and authority of the word of God? Are we not terribly cold and indifferent as to the state of souls around us? Do let us weigh these things in the divine presence. Let us wait earnestly upon God and ask Him to stir up our whole moral being in reference to these grand realities. May He graciously deliver us from all cold formality and dead routine; and make us fresh, earnest, deep toned, thoroughly devoted to Christ, and His blessed cause. Time is very short. Souls are perishing. The door of mercy, held open for eighteen long centuries in long-suffering mercy, will soon be closed, closed forever against those who are moving up and down, and in and out before our eyes every day. May God, in His rich grace and abounding mercy, waken us all up to a sense of our responsibility, and lead us forth in calm steady purpose of heart, not in the spasmodic efforts of a fitful zeal, to serve Him in our day and generation!

(To be continued if the Lord will)

Nicodemus: Part 4

How constantly the thoughtful student of scripture is struck by its depth and comprehensiveness! How much, for example, is wrapped up in the following sentence, in reference to Nicodemus, “The same came to Jesus by night!” His coming to Jesus proved beyond question that deep anxieties were awakened in his soul. He felt a want of something. Perhaps he could not have defined his want to any one had he been asked to do so. But still there was a want—a craving—a blank—an anxiety, which nothing within or around him could meet. It might not have been a deep sense of guilt, nor yet a keen dread of danger, but he was dissatisfied, and therefore he came to Jesus.

But then “he came by night.” And this fact is noted three times over by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, Nicodemus is never once named, save in immediate connection with his coming to Jesus by night. See John 7:50; 19:39. This fact is never forgotten. It is inseparably linked with his name, in three distinct statements of the Holy Ghost, recorded on the page of inspiration. “The same came to Jesus by night.”

Now why was this? Why did Nicodemus seek the cover of darkness for his interview with One whom he recognized as a Teacher come from God? Surely, if He were such, there was no reason to be ashamed or afraid to come and hear what He had to say.

Alas! the heart understands too well the reason why this master in Israel should seek the privacy of the night for his visit to the despised and outcast Jesus of Nazareth. Nicodemus was very far indeed from being prepared to break with Judaism—to give up the world, or abandon his position. It was one thing to be uneasy in his position, and quite another to be prepared to give it up. It was one thing to be dissatisfied with Judaism, and another thing altogether to be prepared to turn his back upon it. It was not an easy thing to surrender position, influence, and reputation. These are things which the poor human heart clings to with a fond and earnest tenacity. Even money itself, so much prized by most, will be scattered with a liberal hand, if position and influence can thereby be attained.

True it is, to one whose eyes have been opened to see the true character of everything under the sun—to one who has been taught to look at things in the light of eternity, to weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary; and who, moreover, has found rest and satisfaction for his heart in Christ, and all his springs in the living God—to such an one, all this hankering after position and influence, this jealousy about personal reputation and character, this care as to the thoughts of men, seems perfectly pitiable. He has passed in spirit beyond it all. He lives in a region where such things have no more weight than the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. They have no charm for his heart. He would not give a “thank you” for all the power, influence, grandeur, wealth, position, and popularity, which this world could heap upon him. He reads the stamp of vanity-utter, miserable vanity—upon it all. He knows, and is persuaded, that it is all passing away; that the clods of the valley will soon cover it all, and the dark shadows of an eternal night settle down upon all those who live only for this world.

But more than this. The man whose eyes have been anointed with heavenly eye-salve sees a beauty, and a preciousness, and an excellency in Christ, which flings into the shade all the glory, the grandeur, the pomp, fashion, glitter, and glare of this wretched world, of which the prince of darkness, the enemy of Christ and of God, is the ruler. What does such an one want with wealth or power? He can say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." His heart is satisfied. He is at rest. He has Christ. He lives in the light of eternity. He breathes the very atmosphere of heaven. He is, by faith and in spirit, now, where he shall ere long be in person, and where all the strivings and the graspings, the scrapings and the hoardings, the groveling lusts and passions, the heavings and tossings, the plotting and planning, the scheming and overreaching, of this Godless, Christless, guilty world can have no possible place.

But our friend Nicodemus was very far indeed from this elevated ground when he sought the covert of the night for his interview with Christ. He is not prepared to meet the scorn and derision of those with whom he was socially and religiously associated. Position and reputation were as yet an object to him, and he was not prepared to fling to the winds the thoughts and opinions of men. He was not yet able to count his own righteousness and all his religious advantages as dung and dross, inasmuch as he knew absolutely nothing of "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

But further. The very opening words of his address to our Lord reveal in a remarkable manner his moral and spiritual whereabouts. He says, "Rabbi, WE know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do those miracles that thou doest except God be with him." Here we are admitted to the real secret of his thoughts about Christ—the amount of his apprehension rejecting Him. He viewed Him merely as a teacher, whose divine legation was incontestably proved by the miracles which He did.

Now, it was most assuredly true that our blessed Lord was a teacher come from God, and that His miracles proved Him to be such. But then Nicodemus needed something more than a teacher. He needed a Savior, a Quickener. This he had not yet learned. That he was ill at ease is evident. The fact of his coming to Jesus proves it, as we have said; though his coming by night; proves that he was by no means prepared to break with the world.

But many a one is ill at ease who does not know the full extent of their ruin, misery, and danger. There may be some misgivings, a certain consciousness that all is not right; but they do not see that their entire condition is a wreck, the whole tree, root and branch, corrupt—the whole system in which they stand condemned, from foundation to topstone. It is not a question of some defective points, which a Teacher come from God may set right. The fact is, there is nothing right. It is not only that the conduct is bad, the practical life a mistake, a vanity, and a lie; but the nature, in its very deepest springs, is utterly and hopelessly corrupt.

This is an all-important fact to seize. It must be discovered sooner or later. But, oh! how unspeakably dreadful to find it out when it is too late! How awful to discover my ruin when I am forever beyond the reach of God's remedy! It is simply to "open the eyes in hell!" Alas! alas! how many there are who will only open their eyes in that appalling place! How much better to hearken now! How much wiser to take God's account both of this present evil world, and of our own personal condition, than to find these things out amid the blackness and darkness of eternal perdition!

Reader, have you seriously thought of these things? Have you found out the truth as to the world and as to yourself? Let us not rest satisfied with dwelling on the history of Nicodemus,, with seeing this, that, and the other point in his truly interesting narrative. We must bring things home to ourselves. Say, then, dear friend, have you bowed to the testimony of God as to the world, and as to yourself? You will be compelled to do so some day. Why not now? The whole world, that thing in which you are living, and in which, perhaps, you are trying to find your home, and your portion, and your enjoyment, is all under the curse. The stamp of death is upon it, and the heavy cloud of divine wrath and judgment is hanging over it. It is of no possible use to deny this, or to seek to shut your eyes to it. It is a fact, whether you believe it or not. A man asleep in a house on fire is none the safer for being unconscious of his danger. So with you, if you are unconverted. You are in and of a world that is as surely hastening on to judgment as the sparks fly upward.

And not only so, but you yourself are declared, by the word of Him who cannot lie, to be a ruined, guilty, hell-deserving sinner, for whom, if you die as you are, there is nothing but the anguish and torment of the lake of fire forever, and forever, and forever. The bare reference to it is perfectly overwhelming. What will the realization be? Oh! dear friend, do let us reason with you. Be persuaded, we entreat of you, to think of these weighty matters this very hour. Do not let the enemy of your precious soul any longer lull you into a false and fatal repose—a repose which may be broken in upon at any moment by the arrow of death, and succeeded by the horrors of a never-ending hell. Be assured of it, it is only a question of time—it may be hours, days, or years, when you must face the solemn realities of eternity. There is no possibility of avoiding this. Forget it you may; meet it you must. We want you now to pause, and look this whole question straight in the face. Take no rest until you are assured on God's authority that " the torment and the fire your eyes shall never see," for the most solid and blessed of all reasons, that Jesus bore your heavy burden on the tree; that He endured, on your behalf, the wrath of a sin-hating God, in order that you might draw nigh to God in all the sweet confidence which His perfect love and Christ's perfect work must impart to the soul that believes.

We shall now pursue our narrative. It is intensely interesting; indeed it must ever be so, to trace the progress of the work of God in a soul, to mark the stages by which the soul travels from nature's moral darkness into the full blaze of God's marvelous light.

Nicodemus took the first step in a right direction when he came to Jesus; and although there was a lack of boldness in coming by night, still, it was well to come at all. We must not expect to find the same measure of energy and decision in every case. Some of us are terribly timid and cowardly—sadly under the influence of the fear of man, which bringeth a snare—far too much affected by public opinion. It needs a powerful grasp of divine and eternal things, an intense realization of the value of the soul, and the deep solemnity of our future, to enable us to rise above the thoughts of men, and fling aside all thought of our position, our influence, and our reputation. Although, in our moments of calm reflection, we cannot but see the utter folly and contemptible weakness of such timings, still, there they are, and their effect is to hinder us sadly in a firm purpose to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold upon eternal life.

Hence we can understand, and make large allowance for, Nicodemus. We can easily and fully account for his coming to Jesus by night; and we can heartily bless God that he came at all—that he found his way, even amid the darkness of the night, to One who has said, for the

encouragement of all, “ Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Precious words! living, powerful, attractive words! “ I will in no wise,” on no ground, for no reason whatsoever, “ cast out.” Who can resist the winning, soul-subduing, power of such words as these? They assure every comer, no matter who he is, or what he is, of a hearty and immediate welcome to Jesus. Nothing is allowed to stand in the way. There is no difficulty, no barrier, no obstacle. It matters not how deep the guilt, how many or how great the sins, how cold the heart, how dead, how ungrateful, how barren, how unworthy, how miserable—the word is, “ Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

No doubt, when the blessed Savior has us in His presence, He will make us feel everything according to the truth of what He is. We shall see, and think, and feel, and judge, according to the light which streams in upon us from Himself. But it will be all in His presence. If we look at ourselves, and think of our sinfulness and unworthiness, it will only deepen the sense of His grace, for has He not welcomed us, spite of all that we are, and all that we have done? Have not His own precious, charming words fallen, in all their attractive, encouraging power, upon our hearts, in the moral distance of our condition as dead in trespasses and sins?—“ Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!” Yes, truly. Well, then, when we have come to Him, and, in the light of what He is, made discoveries about ourselves—the state of the heart, the guilt of the life, the magnitude and multitude of our sins, such as we never thought of before we set out, or on our way--will not all these things make some difference? How can they, when He has said, “ I will in no wise cast out?” Impossible. The only difference they can make is to enhance our sense of the matchless grace of Him who is at once glorified and gratified in saving the chief of sinners. As our debt swells, under our enlightened gaze, from fifty pence to ten thousand talents, it will only deepen our apprehension of that princely grace which has “frankly forgiven us all.” Each item in the category of our guilt will but awaken a fresh note to the praise of that grace which has blotted out all our transgressions as a thick cloud. It will but magnify and illustrate the value of that precious blood—which cleanseth us from all sin.

Here we pause for the present. May these golden words on which we have been dwelling, those accents of sweetest, richest grace, fall with power upon the heart of the reader—“ Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Nicodemus: Part 5

The more deeply we ponder the opening words of Nicodemus, the more fully we must see how very far he was from apprehending the glory of the Person of Christ, the object of His mission to this world, or his own real condition, as one dead in trespasses and sins. Our blessed Lord was very much more than “ a teacher come from God.” He was Himself God over all blessed forever; and it is the special object of the Holy Ghost, in this marvelous Gospel of John, to set Him before us in all His personal glory. “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

And then, as to the object of His mission to this world. Was it to teach mankind some new system of doctrine or morals? No; it was to impart life—that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested in the Son. Man was dead, morally, spiritually dead. There was not so much as a single pulsation of spiritual life in man. It was not merely a question of conduct, of what man was doing. As to this, there might be endless shades of difference. The conduct and character of Nicodemus would, no doubt, contrast strongly with that of the woman of Sychar; but there was no more life in him than in her. Their condition was one and the same—they were dead. Neither the one nor the other had the smallest perception of the glory of Christ’s Person, or the object of His mission to this dark and sinful world. True, Nicodemus had a character and a reputation to maintain. The woman of Sychar, on the contrary, felt herself so degraded, that she chose a time for coming to draw water when she might escape the public gaze. Her character was blasted and gone. She stood on the very lowest step of the social ladder. Nicodemus stood on the very highest. Her society would be shunned.; his would be courted by all who had a care for their fair name, or for the good opinion of society.

But, then, when these two, so unlike in outward conduct, stood in the presence of Him who was the light of the world, all distinction vanished, because the deep moral roots of their common nature were revealed in the power of a light which makes everything manifest.

It is of the very last possible importance for the reader to lay hold of this great foundation truth—to see that the real question is not so much what we have been doing, as what we are. No doubt the former has its place and its importance; for, most assuredly, men will be judged according to their works; and the wrath of God cometh upon men for certain deeds; there will also be the few stripes and the many. See Eph. 5:5, 6; Col. 3:5, 6; Rev. 20:12, 13; Luke 12:47, 48.

All this is most clearly established by the word; but it leaves wholly untouched the truth of our common ruin. We have our individual sins, but we are all born in sin; and “ there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the, glory (4. God,” The moment you take “ the glory of God” as the standard by which every ruin must be judged, you can see at once that all distinctions fade away. God can accept nothing short of that which comes up to the perfect standard of His own glory. The apostle does not say, “.All have sinned, and come short of their duty---short, of the

requirements of the law—short of the claims of conscience.” Not any one of these things could furnish the true touchstone or test for man. It is the glory of God, and whatever comes not up to that high and holy standard must be utterly rejected. A man may say that he has tried to do his best—to do his duty—to live according to the dictates of his conscience—to live up to his light. But the question is, “Have you lived up to the glory of God?” Would God be glorified in accepting you on the ground of what you are, or of what you have done? Would it be to His glory to admit you into His presence, on the plea that you have in all things met His claims?

This, we may rest assured, is the only true way to view this great question. It will avail nothing to talk of our duty, nor yet to compare ourselves one with another. If Nicodemus had compared himself with the woman of Sychar, he might have found some plausible ground on which to plume himself; but if he measured himself by the standard of the glory of God, his righteousness would appear as “filthy rags,” and he would have no difficulty whatever in bowing down to that leveling, humbling, sweeping statement, “there is no difference.”

Now this “no difference” doctrine is most unpalatable to all those who pride themselves on their reputation, and are seeking to work out a righteousness for themselves by their good works, their alms-deeds, prayers, religious services, church and chapel going, high-toned morality, benevolence, philanthropy, and such like. Such people cannot bow to the “no difference” principle. They cannot endure the thought or being classed with the very scum of society. They (Mum), believe that all are alike. They will maintain, and contend for it, that there is a difference.

And why is this? Simply because they are measuring themselves by a false standard. This being so, they must reach a false result. If I measure a web of cloth by a false yard-measure, can I possibly get a correct idea of its length? Assuredly not. Nor is it otherwise with all those who refuse to submit to the judgment of God as given in scripture, namely, that “there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” They judge by a false rule. They “measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves;” and in so doing, as the apostle tells us, “are not wise.” No one can form a proper estimate of himself by comparing himself with his fellows. It is only in the divine presence we can get a true view of ourselves. “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for”—what? “I have compared myself with others? I have measured myself by a human standard?” Nothing of the kind; but “mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” Had Isaiah compared himself with others, he might have found ample cause for self-gratulation; but when he saw himself in the light of the glory of God, he had but one thing to say of himself, namely, “I am, undone.” He saw himself and his surroundings to be stamped and stained with ‘uncleanness, because he stood in the full blaze of a light which makes all things manifest.

Now, it was a ray of the same light and of the same glory that fell upon the heart of Nicodemus, when Jesus uttered those words in his hearing, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This was a most marvelous utterance for a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a teacher in Israel. It was brief, no doubt; but, oh, how full! how deep! how pointed! how comprehensive! There was no getting over it, or under it, or out of it. It went down to the very deepest roots of man’s condition, and there applied the sharp ax of God’s eternal truth. It declared, in the very plainest terms, that “there is no difference.” If “man” must be born again, it is perfectly evident that there can be no difference. He does not say that some men

must be born again—men of peculiarly scandalous lives, depraved and demoralized in their thoughts and habits. Had our Lord said this, Nicodemus would at once have understood Him. But no; he speaks of “man,” as such—of the race—of fallen humanity. He states the absolute necessity of a new birth for everyone, not merely for a woman of Sychar, but for a man of the Pharisees.

Here, then, most assuredly, we have the “no difference” principle thoroughly established.. It matters not what a man may possess in the way of human righteousness, moral character, standing, or reputation. If he must be born again, if he must get a new life, a new nature, he possesses no real advantage beyond the very lowest, vilest, and most degraded member of the human race, inasmuch as the one as well as the other must be born again. Were it merely a question of moral reform, a man of good character might plume himself on the ground that he wanted little, if any, improvement. A Pharisee could say, “ God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.” But then, if this Pharisee, as well as the publican, needed to be born again, where lay the difference? If there must be a new life communicated, a new nature imparted, the one was just as far off as the other. The absolute, indispensable, necessity of the new birth, in every case, proves, beyond all possible question, the utter and hopeless ruin of man—of every man—of the writer and the reader of these lines. It is not reformation, in any shape or form, whether for the Pharisee or the publican, but a new birth, a new life, a new nature, a new creation. The most improved, cultivated, polished, and religious man, in nature, is as far from the kingdom of God as the most degraded sinner on the face of the earth.

Reader, do you accept this doctrine? Do you accept it in its application to yourself? It is very humbling. It leaves not the breadth of a hair of standing-ground for man in nature, be he who or what he may. It matters not, in the smallest degree, what a man may have to boast of or glory in, he has nothing which he can carry with him into the kingdom of God; for in that kingdom “ all things are of God.” “ If any man be in Christ he is a new creation.” It is not the old thing improved, but the new thing imparted. It is not a new piece put upon the “ old garment,” whether that piece be moral reform, self-improvement, religiousness, or even the profession of Christianity. It must be an entirely new thing. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” It is of no value whatsoever in the sight of God. “ The flesh profiteth nothing.” “ They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” John 6; Rom. 8

These are most solemn and startling statements. We press them, with much earnestness, upon the attention of the reader. The devil is seeking, in every possible way, to cast dust in people’s eyes, so that they may not see the—full moral force and practical bearing of this great truth upon themselves. The devil has no objection to moral reform or religiousness without Christ; nay, he will most sedulously seek to promote both the one and the other. He likes well to see men trying to improve themselves, and even to see them turning pious, provided they do not turn to Christ.

But this weighty truth respecting the new birth he will not have. He will cushion and quash it by all means in his power. He will give you plenty of religious forms and ceremonies. He will allow you to go in for the very highest type of ritualism. He will permit you to engage largely in the wide range of religious organization. You may spend your fortune, your time, and your energies, in what is called church endowment. Anything and everything, in short, but this—“ You must be born again.”

How needful, then, it is, how deeply important, for each one of us to put the question to his own heart, "Have I been born again?" Everything hangs upon the answer we give to this question. If we have not experienced the new birth—if we have not been "born of water and the Spirit," that is, by the word of God applied to our souls by the power of the Holy Ghost—then are we, in very truth, dead in trespasses and sins, far off from God, on our way to eternal perdition. It matters not in the smallest degree what place we hold in the social circle, or in the religious world. I may be a person of blameless morals, unblemished reputation, high up in the religious world, a preacher, a teacher, a pastor, respected by all—perhaps judged by all to be a true Christian—and yet, if I have not been born again, the Lord Christ declares I cannot see or enter the kingdom of God; and if I am not in the kingdom of God, I am in the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan; and all my moral qualities, social virtues, and religious advantages, are but the trappings by which Satan seeks to blind my eyes to the truth and reality of my present condition and future destiny.

Now, reader, is not all this most solemn? And does it not behoove us to make sure work of it, as to how we stand in respect to this momentous question—"Am I born again?" It does seem perfectly marvelous how anyone can go on for a single hour in a state of uncertainty as to this. Here we are, with an open Bible before us, with all its solemn, weighty, and lucid statements as to the certain doom of all who die out of Christ—all who die under the headship of the first Adam—die in their sins—die without having been born again. Men may seek to reason, and argue, and oppose. They may try to set aside the truth, the awful truth of eternal punishment; but it is of no use; scripture is against them. The word of God declares in manifold places that man is immortal as to his soul—he must live forever. Where is he to live? Where is he to spend eternity? Reader, what say you? 'Where? If you are not born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God; and if outside the kingdom of God, whether it be with all the advantages of a Nicodemus, or in all the degradation and shame of a woman of Sychar, still you are outside that heavenly kingdom—the kingdom of God's dear Son; and, if outside of that, you are inside, and part of, the kingdom of darkness, over which Satan rules as god and prince.

Beloved reader, do let us entreat of you, ere we close this paper, not to put off the settlement of this great question. Do not any longer go on in uncertainty. Rest not until you can say with holy certainty, I have passed from death unto life—"I have turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven"—"I know I have eternal life"—"I am in Christ."

God grant that this may be the language of every reader of "Things New and Old!" May the Holy Spirit clothe His own word with power to the heart and conscience of each one who shall take up the present number! This is our heart's deep and earnest desire, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Nicodemus: Part 6

IT demands a measure of acquaintance with the history of exercised souls to enable us fully to appreciate the difficulties which surrounded Nicodemus, and drew forth from him the oft-quoted question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" We are not to suppose that this was the inquiry of a mere heartless caviler, or of one who raised difficulties merely for the sake of raising them. We believe Nicodemus was thoroughly in earnest. We do not see how this can be called in question. The very fact of one, so high up in the social, moral, and religious sphere, coming to Jesus, proved a measure of real earnestness; and hence we must regard him, not as a curious, but as an anxious, inquirer.

But a hazy mist enwrapped his understanding. He had been trained from his earliest days to look upon the Jewish system as of God; and to consider the Jewish people as the children of Abraham, the special objects of divine favor. What, then, could be the meaning of this new birth? Whence the need of it? And how was it to be accomplished? The divine Teacher had just assured him that this new birth was essential to his entrance into the kingdom of God. According to this, he certainly was not in that kingdom, inasmuch as he had never been born again, nor did he even know the meaning of any such thing. Were it a question of moral reform, of getting rid of certain bad habits, and adopting good ones, he could easily understand that. The very best stand in need of improvement, and the most perfect character will be found, on close inspection, to have some defects.

All this he could easily comprehend. We may safely believe that Nicodemus would at once have entered upon any new line of conduct which the Teacher come from God might suggest to him. But this being born again was entirely beyond him. He could not grasp it. How was it possible for a man to be born when he was old? Could he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? In short, he was completely at sea. The ground on which he had hitherto been resting was giving way. He had no doubt considered himself in the kingdom of God, inasmuch as he was one of Abraham's seed; but now this heavenly Teacher insists upon a new birth as an indispensable pre-requisite for entrance into that new and heavenly kingdom which was being announced. What could this new birth mean? How is it possible for a man to be born again?

Reader, mark the divine reply. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Here we have the entirely divine character of the new birth most pointedly and forcibly set before us. It is perfectly evident that a man can have nothing to do either with his being born, or his being born again. Both the one and the other are independent of himself; and, most assuredly, the latter is not less so than the former. The very idea of a man's having aught to do with his new birth is as irrational as it is unscriptural.

It is wholly and absolutely of God. It is an essentially divine operation in every respect, from first to last. It is wrought by the word of God and by the Spirit of God, and nothing else. It is not of man in any way, but altogether of God.

Does this touch, in the smallest degree, the great question of man's responsibility? Assuredly not. No one truth can ever interfere with another. Each truth occupies its own sphere, and rests upon its own basis. If this be lost sight of, we must, of necessity, be perplexed and bewildered. A moment's calm reflection will enable the reader to see that, in speaking of the subject of the new birth, it must be taken up on its own merits, and viewed entirely apart from the subject of human responsibility. The two things are perfectly distinct; to confound them is to mar the integrity of each, and interfere with its action. When we think of the new birth, we think of something which is quite as independent of man as the creation of the world, or his own entrance, as a creature, into the world. On the other hand, when we think of man's responsibility, we are occupied, not with a divine operation, but with the bounden duty of man as a responsible being. To make use of any one divinely established truth, in order to weaken another, can only be regarded as the fruit of man's folly and Satan's craft. If we are to be taught by holy scripture, if we are to bow down to its authority in all things, then, verily, we must believe, on the one hand, that man is a responsible being, whose duty it is to bow to the testimony of God; and, on the other, that he is dead in trespasses and sins, and needs the mighty action of the word and Spirit of God to quicken him into new and eternal life. Are we to reason about such things? No; we are to believe. If we attempt to reason, we sit in judgment upon God. This will never do. God is wiser than we. He knows what is best. He understands what is fitting for Him to do—what is worthy of Himself. It is of no possible use for men to reason in opposition to divine revelation, for God must have the upper hand. He must judge, and not man.

But we must return to our subject, and seek to understand how a man is born again. Doubtless, hundreds are plunged in as deep a mist as was the master in Israel.

And yet it is all most simple. It is nothing more than receiving into the heart the precious, incorruptible, seed—the word of God, unfolded and applied by the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus we read in Jas. 1, "Of his own will begat he us with, the word of truth." So also, in 1 Peter, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Chapter 1:23-25.

From these most precious passages we learn that the word of God is the grand agency, in the hand of the Holy Ghost, in producing the new birth. The gospel of the grace of God, implanted in the heart by the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit, is the incorruptible seed whereby the soul is quickened into new life. Wherever the glad tidings of salvation come with power to the heart, there the new birth takes place; and there, too, is the clear and most comfortable evidence of the sours election of God, as the apostle says, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in' the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

This makes it all so blessedly simple for the heart. It clears away a thousand difficulties. A person may say, "I would give worlds to know that I am born again." Have you received the glad tidings of

God's salvation into your heart? Do you believe in the love of God, as proved in the gift and the death of His only begotten Son? If so, you are born again; you have gotten new and everlasting life; the word of God is the germ of life planted in your heart by the power of the Holy Ghost; you have passed from death to life; you are a child of God; you have actually entered the kingdom of God; and, blessed be His name, you can never perish.

The reader cannot possibly be too simple in his apprehension of this glorious truth. Thousands of earnest souls are sadly perplexed about it. The enemy has spared no pains in surrounding it with all sorts of difficulties, and shrouding it in a thick mist, so that the poor heart is often on the very borders of despair, ardently longing for the new birth, and not knowing the blessed fact that that birth has actually taken place.

Now, it is the sense of all this that leads us to press upon the anxious reader the importance of attending, with simplicity of heart, to the teaching of holy scripture on the subject of the new birth. We shall not occupy his time or our own in combating the ritualistic absurdity of baptismal regeneration—the foolish notion that any soul can get life by water baptism. The scriptures we have quoted prove, beyond all question, that our Lord, in His interview with Nicodemus, refers to the word, under the well-known figure of water. This is an established truth with all spiritual students of scripture, and hence there is no need for us to enter upon any elaborate proof of it in this place. We believe most surely that when our Lord speaks of “being born of water,” He means being born of the word. There is nothing mystical, abstruse, or puzzling, in the matter. Every one, man, woman, or child, who receives into the heart the blessed gospel of the grace of God, has received Christ Himself, and this is life eternal.

As many as received him, to them gave he power [right, authority, or privilege, ἐξουσιαν] to become the sons of God, to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12, 13.

How clear and consolatory is all this for the anxious soul! It is divine. It opens up the entire question of the new birth with wonderful power and fullness, and places it upon a basis entirely independent of man. How am I to know that I am born of God? If I have received into my heart the blessed message of God's free love—if I have believed in the gift of God, His own Son—if the word of the gospel has come with power to my heart, then, verily, I am born of God, I am a child of God, I have entered the kingdom, I am the happy possessor of a life which I can never lose, because it is divine and everlasting. A link has been formed between my soul and God, by means of His word, which no power of earth or hell, men or devils, can ever break. I am in relationship with God, and nothing can ever dissolve it. I have eternal life, as the gift of God, and we know—for scripture tells us—that “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” All praise to His name throughout the everlasting ages!

But how new and strange must all this marvelous truth have appeared to a master of Israel, a ruler of the Jews, a man of the Pharisees! Nicodemus felt the entire platform on which he was standing giving way before the powerful teaching of the Son of God. All his religious advantages, all his privileges as a Jew, all that he had been taught to cling to and lean upon from his earliest days—all was being swept away from him. This new birth left him not so much as a single shred of his own righteousness; it stripped him completely of everything, and placed him on a level with the very vilest and guiltiest of the sons of men. The very worst of men needed nothing more, and the

very best could do with nothing less than this blessed new birth. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh;” and “ the flesh profiteth nothing.” “ They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Do what you will with flesh—with man’s fallen, sinful, guilty nature—and you cannot make it acceptable to God, or fit for His heavenly kingdom. A man may leave off his wicked works; he may give up certain gross forms of worldliness and outward sin; he may turn over a new leaf, and become outwardly moral and religious; he may even become a public preacher and teacher of religion, and yet never have experienced the new birth--never passed from death to life never been born of water and the Spirit.

How deeply solemn is all this! How needful to have it pressed home upon the heart and conscience, in this day of wide-spread profession! Can aught be more sad than to see men and women deceived by the notion that they are all right because they have given up certain forms of outward sin and worldliness, and become zealous sticklers for religious forms, vigorous supporters of christian institutions, and liberal contributors to the various schemes of religion and philanthropy? There may be all this, and yet the soul be unsaved. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Do what you will with flesh—educate it, cultivate it, improve it, elevate it to the very highest possible point of civilization and refinement, and you cannot change it into spirit—you cannot make it fit for the kingdom of God. Religious “ flesh” is no nearer to God than the very grossest and vilest forms in which fallen humanity can clothe itself. “ We must be born again.”

Say, reader, have you been born again? Have you passed from death to life? Have you really come to Jesus, as one utterly and hopelessly lost in yourself, and found in Him salvation? Turn not away, we beseech thee, from this weighty subject. Be not offended with our plain and pointed dealing. Do not fling this paper from thee in disgust and impatience. Say not, „I am sick of this everlasting dunning of religion in my ears. I am weary of this perpetual preaching to me about religion and eternity. I am no worse than my neighbors. I shall take my chance. God is merciful.”

Oh! beloved friend, speak not thus, we earnestly entreat thee. Let nothing induce thee to neglect the great business of thy soul’s salvation. “ What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Do, then, think of thy precious immortal soul! Think of eternity!—think of the unutterable horrors of the lake of fire—the unspeakable joys of the Father’s house; look to Jesus now, and be saved!

Nicodemus: Part 7

IN the course of our Lord's reply to the repeated inquiry of Nicodemus, He unfolds that great foundation truth on which the new birth, together with the whole fabric of Christianity, rests. He speaks of the absolute necessity of the death of "the Son of man." If it was essential that man should be born again—should get new life, it was also essential that the Son of man should die.

Thus the matter stands, according to the clear and emphatic teaching of Him who spake as never man spake. There must be a new life, seeing that the old is utterly irrecoverable. The first man had been tried in every possible way, in order to see if any good could be found in him, or anything could be made of him. But all in vain. He was proved to be absolutely irremediable.

What then remains? A new Adam has entered the scene—the second Man—the Lord from heaven. For what end? To improve the first man? To give him a fresh start? To take the first man in his fallen condition into partnership or union with Himself? No; but to die: to be lifted up on the cross; to close, forever, the history of the first man, and to become, in resurrection, the Head of a new race—the center of a new creation. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believed' in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here, then, we have the cross presented as the only ground on which a new and an everlasting life can be communicated to man. If the word and Spirit of God are the only agency in communicating the life, the cross is the only basis thereof. This is of the very highest possible importance. The first man has been completely set aside. There is not so much as a single spark of spiritual life in him—not one single link with God. He has been weighed in the divine balance and found wanting. He has been declared a hopeless bankrupt, utterly ruined and undone. It is of no possible use for men to argue or reason on the point; inasmuch as no argument or reasoning, be it ever so profound, ever so learned, ever so plausible, can ever overturn the fact so distinctly and so constantly set forth in holy scripture. Man is irrecoverably lost. He is wholly incapable of the very smallest improvement, as to his condition before God. His case is hopeless. He »twit be born again. He must get a new life. He must be regenerated by the word and Spirit of God; and, in order to this, "the Son of man"—the second Adam, had to be lifted up on the cross;—for, in no other way could life flow to the first man. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth" much fruit." There could be no life and no union save on the ground of death—the death of Christ—the true "corn of wheat."

How completely does this grand truth sweep away, once and forever, all man's righteousness, all his doings, all his efforts, all his pretensions! The second Man should have remained alone, had He not, in Him is infinite grace, descended "into the dust of death" for us. Between humanity as seen in us, and humanity as seen in Him, there could be no union, there was no possible point of contact. "The Son of man must be lifted up." The foundation of our union with the second Man was laid in His death. It is on the ground of accomplished redemption, and in that alone, we are

brought into association with Christ, the Head of the new creation. The cross closed, forever, the history of the first man and of the old creation. A risen Christ is the eternal center and glorious Head of the new creation, wherein “ all things are of God “—eternal and universal praise to His name!

But not only is the cross the grand foundation of the new birth and of all that stands connected with it; but we also see, from our Lord's further words to Nicodemus, that the love of God's heart is the blessed source from whence it all emanates. “ God so loved “—not merely the Jewish nation, but—“ the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

Thus we may see how blessedly our Lord seeks to unfold to Nicodemus the deep and precious secret of the heart of God. This is of the very last possible importance, in connection with the subject of the new birth. The fall of man in the garden of Eden was occasioned by his losing confidence in God. The serpent sought, first of all, to undermine the creature's confidence in the goodness and love of God. This must be distinctly seen, if we would understand man's condition. When we recognize the real secret of man's fall, we can understand the necessity of the new birth, and the mode in which it is produced. Man fell by doubting the love of God. The devil persuaded man that God would not let him have a little fruit. Mark God's answer to the devil's lie. He SO loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”

What an answer! It is this that draws the heart back to God in holy confidence; and where the heart is thus drawn to God, there is the new birth; but this new birth is produced by the word and Spirit of God, as it is based upon the cross. “ God so loved that he /Feer;” and not only so, but “ the Son of man must be lifted up.” No life for man now save through a crucified Christ. It is not life through the church, through ordinances, sacraments, offices, ceremonies, prayers, penances, and such like. It is not life through moral reform in any one way. No; no, reader, It is life through death and in no other way. If the Son of man must be lifted up, it proves, beyond all question, that man is ‘utterly and irrecoverably lost. To talk of moral reform, or of man's recovery, is to deny the absolute necessity of the cross—to make Christ a liar—and overthrow the very foundations of the grand edifice of Christianity.

(To be concluded in our next, if God permit)

Nicodemus: Part 8

The closing words of our Lord's discourse were eminently calculated to stir the conscience of His hearer. We observe in them a most exquisite blending of "grace and truth," both of which, as we know, "came by Jesus Christ." "He that believeth on the Son of God is not condemned." Most gracious words! And how blessedly simple! True, the moment had not yet arrived for bringing out all the fullness of Rom. 8:1, "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Ere this great fact could be enunciated, His Son of man had not only to be lifted up on the cross, but to rise from the dead and ascend into the heavens, and send down the Holy Ghost to be the living link between Himself and all true believers.

Still it was a wonderfully glorious thing for Nicodemus to hear, that "He that believeth on the Son of God, is not condemned." It was well fitted to draw his heart to that blessed One who was speaking to him in such sweet accents of grace. There was no reason now why he should be condemned—no reason, so far as God was concerned, seeing He had given His Son. No reason, so far as the Son was concerned, seeing He had come from heaven, to be lifted up, on the cursed tree, in order that Nicodemus might not perish, but have everlasting life; for, most assuredly, Nicodemus was comprehended in that most precious, most consolatory word, "whosoever."

But then there were words of "truth" as well as words of "grace" for this dear and interesting man. "He that believeth not." What of him? What is this condition? "He is condemned already."

Reader, mark this. The unbeliever has not to wait for the day of judgment to learn his condemnation. no sentence is passed already. Not executed, thank God, but passed. He is in the position of a criminal who has been tried, found guilty, and sentenced, and only awaits the day of execution. In that position it is that God's free grace meets him with a full salvation. "God willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Precious words! Words flowing forth from the loving heart of a Savior God. "He that believeth on him the Son] is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Could aught be more just? How else could it possibly be? If, after all the gracious painstaking of divine love, after having tried every possible means, and tried in vain, He nevertheless sent His only begotten Son that the sinner—ruined, guilty, and hell deserving, might not perish. If that blessed One was refused, what remained? What save the righteous condemnation of every unbeliever—his eternal punishment in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone?

Yes, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

It is not now merely a question of having broken the law. He does not say, "This is the condemnation that the law has been given of God and broken by man." No; but God has given His

only begotten Son; and not only given Him from 'His bosom, in perfect love, but bruised Him on Calvary's cursed tree, in perfect righteousness as one standing in our place, in order that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

If then all this marvelous grace and goodness of God be despised—if the Son be rejected—if God's salvation be refused, what, we again ask, remains? Nothing, most surely, but eternal condemnation. "How shall we escape," says the apostle, "if we neglect so great salvation?"

However, it is most grateful to the spirit to know that Nicodemus, through grace, received into a divinely prepared heart the good seed of the kingdom. He passed from death unto life, from darkness to light. He was born again. This is only what we might expect, from such an interview, though the narrative in John 3 does not inform us of his immediate reception of the truth.

His case was markedly different from that of the woman of Sychar—different from first to last. She embraced the truth, at once, and became, forthwith, a glowing witness for her Lord. She was not afraid of losing caste by speaking of the outcast Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed she had no caste to lose; and even though she had, we may safely affirm she would have abandoned it as readily as she abandoned her water-pot in order to fling herself, at once, into the cause of Christ.

But, as we have remarked, in an earlier paper, Nicodemus had a position to maintain—a religious reputation to keep up; and this, as it is ever a serious hindrance to the soul in coming to Christ at the first, so is it a grievous clog and a heavy weight which must be laid aside if we would really follow with firm purpose of heart, a rejected Christ. And oh, how worthless is everything in the shape of character, reputation, and influence, in this world. What is it all worth, if looked at in the presence of hell fire? What is it all worth, if looked at in the light of the glory of Christ, the glory of heaven? In a word, what is it all worth, when viewed in the light of eternity, and weighed in the balances of the sanctuary?

Still, our friend Nicodemus was enabled, in his measure, to make a stand for his Lord. It may be that some would consider his measure small and his pace slow; but he was real, and this is a grand point. It is better to be slow and sure, than to make a hasty plunge into the path of testimony, and retire from it afterward. Nicodemus had a good deal to contend with, and we must take all the difficulties of his position into account, are we undertake to condemn the slowness of his movements or the feebleness of his words. Some of us find a difficulty in dropping a word for Christ in a railway carriage, a saloon, or a coffee room. How should we feel if placed like Nicodemus, in the midst of a company of Pharisees and chief priests, who had just sent officers to arrest the blessed Lord?

Let us turn to the close of John 7

"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law are cursed." This was coming very close to Nicodemus. We can imagine the conflict of his spirit. Doubtless the words of the officers encouraged him. But then the withering question, "Are ye also deceived?" Was he deceived? And again, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" Was not he a ruler and a Pharisee? And did not he believe? Surely he must speak. Yes, he does speak. "Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came

to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?"

Now, we cannot say there was much in this. It was merely asking a question, and a question too which might apply to any one. Nevertheless, it was quite sufficient to indicate the direction in which Nicodemus was moving. It was the stirring of the new life—feeble, it may be, but real; so real that those around him took knowledge of him. We can fancy we see them turning fiercely upon him, with the indignant question, " Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And everyone went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives."

There can be no doubt as to the genuine discipleship of Nicodemus. His question, simple as it was, plainly identified him with the rejected Jesus; and when we turn to the closing scenes of the gospel of John, we have still more powerful evidence of his personal devotedness; for there we find him identified with Joseph of Arimathea in his loving service to the dead body of his Lord. And oh! how he must have felt as he gazed upon that lifeless form—that body pierced with wounds! What an explanation to his heart of those words, " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up!" Well might he exclaim, " All! now, I know the meaning of the lifting up.' My Lord has indeed been lifted up on the cross for me. His death is life to me. Let it be mine, now, henceforth, and forever, to live for Him—to spend in His service and to His glory that life which He has won at such a cost but given to me as a free gift."

Reader, ere we close this series of papers, permit us to put this one question to thee. Mast thou believed on the name of the Son of God? If so, thou art the happy possessor of everlasting life, and may the Lord enable thee to speak and act for him, in the midst of this scene from which He is cast out. May thy whole life be a true and effective testimony for the One who left His Father's bosom and was nailed to the cross to save thee from the flames of an everlasting hell? He alone is worthy. Oh! let us seek to live for Him.

Nothing but the Blood

Were it not for the encouragement and, it may be, the help of those who are engaged in the happy work of leading souls to Christ, there would be no good reason for referring to the last days of Mr. W. Besides, it is often difficult to speak with certainty about death-bed conversions. Real, we know, they may be, from the fact of the conversion of the thief on the cross; but in the near approach of death there is everything to create concern about the soul's salvation, and nothing from the outer world to attract or draw it aside. Willingly or unwillingly it is done with the things of this life, and unless there be great hardness of heart, or great delusion, there is generally a readiness to listen to the story of the Savior's love.

Most of the conversions that we hear of amongst the aged seem to take place in the sick chamber; comparatively few are met with in the preaching room. In the ordinary work of the evangelist, the majority of his converts will be found between the ages of twelve and twenty-five. This is a deeply solemn thought, but the remark has been made by many of great experience in the Lord's work. Still, in the judgment of charity, there are many above that age, in times of affliction and trial, and in the prospect of death, brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His name have all the praise and glory!

The excuses which the Lord refers to in His parable of the "great supper," seem to strengthen this impression. "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." As it is always easy to find a good reason for a bad thing, so here lawful duties are urged as the most unanswerable excuse. But the truth is, the mind was pre-occupied with the cares of this life—they were now on their own responsibility—and there was no room for Christ. Time and thought were entirely absorbed with present things, to the utter neglect of spiritual things.

Mr. W. was one of this class; utterly careless through a long life of commercial activity in London. Well "read up" in politics, in all exciting cases in the law courts, and fond of discussing such subjects. But, alas, the Bible rarely read; seldom in any place of worship, and as for prayer, there could be none. The daily paper, the fresh excitement, unfits the mind for the presence of the living God—the searcher of hearts. Such was the life of Mr. W. for about forty years, and such is the life of thousands and tens of thousands at the present time, and the whirl and the excitement are ever on the increase.

On hearing that one I had known for many years was seriously ill, I called to see him. The change in his appearance was great; he was so reduced and altered that I could scarcely have identified him. Death-stricken, the end, I saw, could not be far off. He expressed the greatest pleasure in seeing the face of an old friend; at least one he could count upon as a friend in his lonely sick chamber.

He knew what I had come for. After a few words about his bodily state, he looked at me anxiously, and said, "I am done for now.... I am dying.... I can never be better." A solemn conversation followed on the great realities of the soul and eternity. The following is substantially, almost exactly, what he said to my inquiry as to the state of his mind; and being very able to express himself, he made rather a long speech. But as it expresses the state of most minds in Christendom, we think it worthy of a place in our magazine.

"I know I am dying, and I have no hope but in the mercy of the Almighty; and I have been paying more attention to my religious duties lately.... I have neglected them too long.... I have been asking the Almighty in prayer to forgive my sins. I know I am a great sinner, but He is merciful, and I trust He will hear my prayers I mean not to forget these things any longer. Last evening after I had spent some time in prayer, I felt great consolation within me...."

That word, "great consolation," exhausted my patience. I felt it was time for me to speak; besides, he was greatly fatigued, being short of breath; but I felt that my work was not to soothe him in his delusion, but to disturb his false dreams of "consolation."

"I am glad," I said, "that you are thinking so seriously about these things, but you will not think me unkind if I say that you have completely overlooked the only remedy for sin." "What is that?" he inquired. "The blood of Christ," I replied. He looked very anxiously at me. "It is a right thing, of course," I said, "to pray, but no amount of prayers or consolation within you, apart from the blood of Christ, will ever remove one single sin from your soul. Unless you are washed in that blood, be assured, you must go down to the place of torment under the guilt of all your sins." Knowing his circumstances and his past career, I spoke plainly and strongly. I pressed this one point—The blood of Christ shed on the cross for the chief of sinners, God's only remedy for sin. That it was either implicit faith in that precious blood, or the flames of hell forever. That the grand truth for him now to seize was this—There is no limit to the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, and that faith in the efficacy of that blood would bring down from heaven the immediate, full, and everlasting forgiveness of all his sins. And now to pray that he might have a deeper sense of his sin, and of the precious blood of Christ.

After giving him some texts to think over, and praying with him, I left. But I could not get him out of my mind. So I wrote to him the same evening and embodied in a letter all I had said about his sins and the blood; and sent him some tracts and books besides. I allowed one week to pass before calling again, when I received a letter from his daughter begging me to call, as her father wished to see me. I went the same day. As I entered the room, he raised his hand, with a glad welcome expressed on his countenance; and when I said, "How is it with you now?" "Nothing but the blood!" was his only reply; "Nothing but the blood." I could scarcely reply for a moment; my heart was so full. "Praise the Lord! praise the Lord!" was nearly all I could add for a little. The Lord had graciously opened his mind and bowed his heart to the great truth about the blood of Christ. I found he had read the tracts and was diligently reading the scriptures. He said that he was happily resting on the truth that Christ had died for him, and that he was saved through faith in Him.

He lived about three weeks after this: I saw him repeatedly, we had free conversation together about the things of the Lord, and he always seemed happy as to his spiritual state; but I would only add, that my last visit is one never to be forgotten. It was the closing scene. There is always a peculiar solemnity and reality in seeing a man die. If he is not right before he dies, he cannot be

put right after, the scene closes for over. All my anxiety seemed to awaken as at first. He could hear, but not speak. I begged him to assure my heart it he were perfectly happy, resting on Jesus and His precious blood, by pressing my hand, which placed in his. He pressed it, moved it to and fro, with his eyes staring on me as if to say, What more can I do? All is peace.

I prayed, as if to help him across the line. But, oh! the parting! His wife and daughter were convulsed in tears and sobs; he was far past such violent emotion. As I had to attend a meeting, I was obliged to leave about an hour before he died. The farewell was almost too much. Pointing to heaven as the place of our next meeting, to which he assented with a slight movement of the head, and a bright speaking expression of the eye, I rushed into the open air to dry my eyes and recover my natural self.

Since his departure I have learned from those who called to see him that he said, speaking of himself as a sinner, “ Yes, I have been a careless sinner, and there is nothing between me and the flames of hell but the blood of Christ; that is all I have to rest upon.” This has been a great comfort to me.

Perhaps my readers will think that I am not very easily satisfied; certainly not with death-bed conversions. I would seek to be doubly sure with such, as there is no world then to attract or ensnare them. Besides, the subtlety of Satan, and the flatteries of friends with the view of soothing them, may be fatal to the immortal soul. The subject of this paper was no doubt well pleased with his religiousness when he felt “ great consolation within him,” on rising from his knees. This was the snare of Satan, intended for the eternal ruin of his soul. And had he passed away under this consolation, his conscience undisturbed, he would have had no bands in his death, and fond friends would have said that he died perfectly happy; that he passed away so peacefully. Whereas, in plain truth, he was only soothed and flattered by the enemy. How many, alas, die under this satanic delusion!

But think not, my dear reader, that my anxiety to see reality in such cases, leads me to be less hopeful or earnest for the conversion of the aged or dying—most assuredly not. It is as easy for divine grace to save the old as the young—to save the drowning mariner when the waters of death are gurgling in his throat, as the man who lies peacefully on his bed and surrounded with praying friends. If the heart cries to God for mercy in the last moment, He will never say, I have no mercy for thee. He Himself has put the cry there—not to disappoint it—but fully and forever to satisfy it. But the uncertainty connected with death-bed conversions, should make us a thousand-fold more anxious for the salvation of those who are in youth, health, and strength. Why delay till there is feebleness of body and mind—till there is distraction from pain and suffering? Why not come to Jesus in early life? Why give the world and Satan the bloom and vigor of youth, and the merest dregs of thy existence here to the blessed Lord? Why not lay thy youthful heart on His altar, as an offering wholly consecrated to His service and glory? “ My son, give me thine heart,” is a fair but most gracious demand.

Forget not, my youthful reader, His just claim upon the entire homage of thy heart. He climbed the bill of Calvary for thee, worn and weary, and knowing all that was before him. There he was bound to the altar of judgment for thee, and wreathed with a crown of thorns; there He suffered, bled, and died, that thou mightest be saved from the flames that will never be quenched, and from the worm that will never die. What hast thou done for Him? What hast thou suffered for Him? What has been

thy gratitude to Him? Wouldst thou be happy to see His face to-day? Is He all thy salvation—all thy desire? Oh think of His love, of His sufferings, of His fair claims; and as thou art crossing the threshold of another New Year, be sure that thou commence it with a heart undivided for Him. We know of no happiness for a new year, or for any day in all the year, but in fullest, sweetest, fellowship with Him. All happiness without Christ is vapid and worthless, and must soon pass away, as time rolls on rapidly, and make way for the endless torments of the lost in hell. Let thy first business then, in the year 1875, be the salvation of thy soul through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That all our readers may have a happy new year, in the richest and truest sense, and one of happy service and communion with the Lord, is our most earnest and fervent prayer.

Now: a Difficulty Wisely and Happily Settled

I do wish,” said a lady, speaking of her daughter to a friend, a man of God, who was visiting her, “you would speak seriously to Caroline. She does not care anything about the salvation of her soul;” and, so saying, she went out of the room, and left them together; upon which he, seeking, as Paul did to the Corinthians, to catch her by guile, and pretending for the moment to take her part, said, “Now, tell me, Miss Caroline, are they not wearying you with this subject?”

“Yes, sir, they are,” she replied, taken quite by surprise at words so unexpected from him; “they keep continually talking to me about it, till I am tired of hearing them.”

So I thought,” he replied. “Let’s see: how old are you?”

“Eighteen, sir.”

“Have you good health?”

Yes, sir.”

“The fact is,” said he, “Christianity is a good thing in itself; but the idea of continually troubling a young creature like you with it!” And then, pausing a moment, he added, as though a new thought had suddenly struck him, “I wonder how long it would do for you to wait before you turn to God?”

That’s just what I have been thinking myself,” said Caroline.

Well,” said he, “suppose you say till you are fifty?”

“No; that will not do. I attended the funeral, the other day, of a lady fifteen years younger than that.” Thirty: how will that do?”

“I am not quite sure that it would do to wait quite so long,” said Caroline.

“No,” he answered, “I do not think so either. Something might happen. Let us see, twenty-five, or even twenty years, if we could be sure that you would live so long. A year from the present time, how would that do?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

Neither do I. The fact is, my dear young lady, the more I think of it, the more am I afraid of your patting it off a moment longer, especially as the Bible says: Now IS THE ACCEPTED TIME, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.’ (2 Cor. 6:2.) It says so, you know, and if it does so, is it not wise to act upon it, to seize upon the present moment, to seek the Lord while He may be found, to call upon Him while He is near? Had we not better kneel down and ask God for mercy?”

The young lady, perfectly overcome by her feelings, knelt down on the spot. In a day or two she was believing in Christ, whose blood had washed out her sins. Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, she was accepted in the Beloved—eternally safe.

Reader, how is it with you? Is this mighty question settled in your case?

“ Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

One Step More

A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps"--Pro. 16:9

What, though before me it is dark,

Too dark for one to see?

I ask but light for one step more

'Tis quite enough for me.

Each little humble step I take,

The gloom clears from the next;

So, though 'tis very dark beyond,

I never am perplex'd.

And if sometimes the mist hangs close,

So close, I fear to stray,

Patient, I wait a little while,

And soon it clears away.

I would not see my further path,

For mercy veils it so;

My present steps might harder be

Did I the future know.

It may be that my path is rough,

Thorny, and hard, and steep;

And knowing this, my strength might fail

Through fear and terror deep.

It may be that it winds along

A smooth and flowery way;

But seeing this, I might despise

The journey of to-day.

Perhaps my path is very short,

My journey nearly done;
And I might tremble at the thought
Of ending it so soon.
Or, if I saw a weary length
Of road that I must wend,
Fainting I'd think " my feeble powers
Will fail me ere the end."
And so I do not wish to see
My journey, or its length:
Assured that, through my Father's love,
Each step will bring its strength.
Thus, step by step, I onward go,
Not looking far before;
Trusting that I shall always have
Light for just " one step more."

To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Sixth Letter

Dearest A,

When I commenced this series of letters to you, I had no idea of its extending into the new year; but somehow, when writing to a friend, thoughts accumulate, and the pen runs on. I told you, at the close of my last, that you should hear from me again, if you did not forbid; and, as I have heard nothing of a veto, I feel at liberty to proceed. And I am glad to do so, inasmuch as the special line of things upon which I entered in my December letter is one so signally adapted to fit us for contemplating and grappling with the present condition of things in the professing church.

It seems to me we are in imminent danger of yielding to the current, and allowing ourselves to be carried down the stream, because it appears so hopeless to think of making a firm stand for Christ and His cause. Against this, my beloved friend, we must jealously watch and vigorously strive. Nothing can ever justify the individual believer in lowering the standard, relaxing his grasp, or yielding the breadth of a hair, in the grand struggle to which he is called. The very fact of the utter ruin of the body corporate, is the urgent reason for personal devotedness. The more chilling and withering the surrounding atmosphere, the greater the demand for personal energy. Even though we could not reckon upon the countenance or support of a single individual, it is our bounden duty and high privilege to plant the foot of faith firmly on divine ground, and there to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. A regiment may be cut down to a man; but if that man be but able to grasp and defend the colors, the dignity of the regiment is maintained. So also if a single individual be enabled to hold up the standard of the name and word of Jesus, he may count on present blessing and a future bright reward. "To him that overcometh will I grant," &c.

But I must proceed with my series of living illustrations drawn from the inspired pages of the volume of God—that peerless, priceless, eternal Revelation, which, we may truly say, teems with evidence in proof of my thesis that, "Whatever be the condition of the public body, it is the happy privilege of the man of God to enjoy the very highest communion, and occupy the very highest ground." This, as you will remember, is my present subject; and it is a subject of deepest interest to me—one in which the heart finds peculiar solace, strength and encouragement.

In my last communication, we were led to contemplate the magnificent conduct of Moses, at the foot of Mount Sinai. I must now ask you to look at the conduct of Elias, on the top of Mount Carmel. Both these honored servants of God are closely linked together on the page of inspiration.

In the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings, we have one of the brightest scenes in the life of Elijah the Tishbite. I am not, you may be sure, going to offer my beloved friend anything like an elaborate exposition of this chapter. I just select one fact out of it for my present purpose, and that is recorded in the thirty-first verse, "And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord."

Here, then, we have faith taking its stand on God's, own ground, acting according to the integrity of divine revelation, and confessing the indissoluble unity of Israel's twelve tribes; and this, too, in the presence of Ahab and Jezebel and eight hundred false prophets; and not only so, but in the presence of a divided nation. Israel's visible unity was gone. The ten tribes were broken off from the two. The entire condition of things was depressing in the extreme.

But Elijah, on the top of Carmel, was enabled to look beyond Israel's practical state, and fix his believing gaze on God's immutable truth. I say, on the top of Cannel, it was thus with this illustrious witness. Elsewhere, alas! it was different. Under the juniper tree, and on Mount Horeb we do not see the same lofty range, for "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are," and as such he sometimes fell far below the moral elevation of the life of faith.

However, it is with Elijah on Mount Carmel that we have to do just now, and with the altar of twelve stones which he was enabled, by faith, there to erect in the face of all the ruin and corruption around him. Had he looked at the things that were seen—had he been governed by Israel's moral condition—had he shaped his way and regulated his conduct by the state of things around him, he could not have dared to build an altar of twelve stones. Unbelieving nature might reason thus, "This is not the time for an altar of twelve stones. The day is gone by for that. It was all very well and very suitable in the days of Joshua the son of Nun, and in the brilliant days of Solomon. But to think of it now, is the height of folly and presumption. You ought to be ashamed to refer to such a thing just now, inasmuch as it only rebukes the condition of your people. how much better—how much more becoming—how much more morally suitable to lower the standard according to your true condition. Why assume such high ground in view of your low estate? Why seek to maintain such lofty principles in the face of such humiliating practice?"

But what, let me ask, is faith's reply to all this worthless reasoning! Simply this--" God's standard or nothing." If the truth of God is to be accommodated to the condition of God's people, there is an end to all true testimony and acceptable service. It is quite true that a certain course of action may be right, at one time, and not at all right at another. This we can perfectly understand; but the truth of God never changes. " Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." We must maintain the eternal stability of the truth of God, even though that truth makes manifest our fallen condition.

I think you will admit, dearest A., that there is something uncommonly fine in the actings of our prophet, on Mount Carmel. It does the heart good, in this day of miserable laxity—this day of playing fast and loose with the truth of God, to see a man unfurling the divine standard in the face of eight hundred false prophets, with Ahab and Jezebel at their back.

If there is one feature of the present moment more deplorable than another, it is the loose way in which the truth of God is held. We see, on all hands, a strong tendency to lower the standard of obedience. It is deemed narrow-minded to contend for the paramount authority of Holy Scripture. The Word of God is fast losing its place in the hearts and minds of professing Christians. That familiar motto, " the Bible, and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," if it ever was true—which I very much doubt—is certainly not true now. There is a most determined effort, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom to eliminate—to get rid altogether of the word of God as a paramount infallible authority.

This may seem a strong, harsh, ultra statement. I may be deemed a stupid narrow-minded bigot for penning such words. I cannot help it, my friend. I am thoroughly convinced of the truth of what I say. I believe if you look closely into the proceedings of the various sections of the professing church—if you examine the public preachings and teachings of the day—if you will give close attention to what emanates from the press, the pulpit, and the platform, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, you will find that I have only too strong and ample ground for my statement.

Thanks be to God, there are here and there some bright exceptions. Occasionally you may hear a voice raised for the truth of God—for the plenary inspiration and absolute authority of holy scripture. But alas I alas! the voices are few, feeble, and far between. Viewed as a whole, the professing church is gliding rapidly down the inclined plane. The progress of infidelity is truly appalling. I remember, in the days of my childhood, how that a feeling of horror was awakened in the heart by the very mention of an infidel, or of anyone who could dare to speak against our adorable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, or deny the inspiration of the word of God in its every line and every sentence.

Alas! alas! how changed is the aspect of things in this our day! I cannot allow myself to go into details in the way of evidence; but I am thoroughly persuaded of this fact that the professing church is hastening on to a fearful moment in her history, in the which she will utterly reject the word, the Christ, and the Spirit of God. Look where you will, and you must be struck with the fact that the ignorance of superstition and the impudence of infidelity are fast gaining sway over the minds of millions.

As to superstition, what has this enlightened age of ours witnessed? What are the fruits which this pernicious tree has produced at the close of the nineteenth century? In the first place, millions of our fellow men have professed their belief in an immaculate woman; and, in the second place, their belief in an infallible man! Only think of this 1 Think of any one in his sober senses giving his assent and consent to two such monstrous absurdities! Does it not look uncommonly like that “strong delusion “ which God will, ere long, send on Christendom, to believe a lie!

And as to infidelity, in its audacious tampering with the word of God, its calling in question the divine integrity of the sacred volume, its scornful rejection of the plenary inspiration of holy scripture, its blasphemous assaults upon the Person of the Son of God who is over all God blessed forever—you have only to look around you, on every side, to see the tributary streams rushing, with terrible vehemence, to swell the tide of evidence in proof of the melancholy fact that infidelity is raising its head, with proud audacity, throughout the length and breadth of the professing church.

It is the deep and settled persuasion of this that makes one prize, all the more, the faith and faithfulness of those worthies of old who stood forth, in the face of a hostile world, and boldly maintained the truth of God, spite of the palpable ruin and failure of the people of God. It is perfectly delightful to contemplate the prophet Elijah the Tishbite, standing by his altar of twelve stones, and offering thereon his sacrifice to the living and true God—the Jehovah of Israel. He was simply standing on the same platform as Moses, in Exod. 33 It is the blessed platform of faith whereon each true believer can take his stand, in calm and holy confidence, and there abide with God.

The standard of God must never be lowered the breadth of a hair. It is, like Himself, unchangeable. It was as much the duty and the privilege of Elijah to act under that standard, as it was of Solomon, David, Joshua, or Moses. Israel might change, but Jehovah or His word never can; and it is with Him and His eternal word that faith has to do, in all ages. Come what may, my much loved friend, you and T are to walk with God, to lean on Him, cling to Him, draw from Him, find all our springs in Him--springs of peace and power—the power of personal communion, of worship, of service and of testimony. He never fails a trusting heart—never has--never will—never can—no, never; blessed, throughout all ages, be His holy Name Let us, therefore, abide in Him and hold fast His word, spite of everything. While seeing and feeling and owning the real condition of things around us, let us never forget that we have individually to do with God and the word of His grace.

Ever, my dearest A.

Your deep affectionately yokefellow.

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To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Seventh Letter

Dearest A,

I cannot attempt to adduce all the evidence which Old Testament scripture affords in proof of my present thesis; but there are two or three cases to which I must call your attention in addition to those which I have already brought before you.

I should greatly like to linger with you over the intensely interesting history of Hezekiah—so full of comfort and encouragement, and affording such a powerful illustration of my subject; but I shall pass on to a later section of the inspired history, and take up the case of Josiah, who ascended the throne of his father's at a moment when the nation had almost reached its very lowest point, and the moral horizon seemed overcast with many a dark and heavy cloud.

I need hardly say, my beloved friend, that I am not going to enter upon anything like an elaborate exposition of the history of the deeply interesting reign of Josiah. This would demand a volume instead of a letter. I merely refer to it now for the purpose of proving my thesis, which, as you will remember, is, "that no matter what may be the condition of the ostensible people of God, at any given time, it is the privilege of the individual believer to tread as lofty a path, and enjoy as high communion as ever was known in the highest and palmiest days of the dispensation."

What, then, was the condition of things when Josiah—a child of eight years old—came to the throne? As gloomy and depressing as it well could be. He was surrounded, we may say, by the accumulated rubbish of ages. He had to grapple with errors and evils introduced by no less a personage than Solomon himself, the very wisest of men.

If anyone desires to have a correct idea of the practical state of things in Josiah's day, let him muse over 2 Kings 23. The record is perfectly appalling. There were vessels made for Baal in the temple of the Lord. There were idolatrous priests, burning incense in the high places, in the cities of Judah, and in Jerusalem—incense to Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the hosts of heaven. There were Sodomites. There were those who made their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech. There were horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun. There were high places which Solomon had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon.

Only conceive, my beloved friend, the man who was used by the Holy Ghost to pen the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, building altars to all these false gods! And these abominations had been allowed to stand amid the reformatory movements of such men as Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat, and to descend, hoary with age, to the days of the youthful Josiah. Indeed we can hardly imagine anything more terribly depressing than the condition of things which surrounded this beloved young monarch. It seemed perfectly hopeless. His spirit might well sink within him, as he beheld such an enormous pile of rubbish, the lamentable and humiliating fruit of many years of gross unfaithfulness and departure from the truth of God. How could it ever be

removed? How could he, a mere youth, grapple with such formidable evils?

Then, again, his heart might suggest the inquiry, "Am I the man for such a work? Is it becoming in me, so young, so inexperienced., so little versed in men and things, to set myself up against such a man as Solomon? Why should I pretend to more wisdom than my father? All these institutions have lived on through the times of men far more devoted and holy than I. Surely the things that Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat have left standing, I have no right to abolish. Besides, the case is hopeless. Judgment is inevitable. The decree has gone forth. Jehovah has signed the death-warrant of the guilty nation. I hear, already, the thunder's roll. It is not possible for a poor feeble creature like me to stem the tide of corruption, or avert the terrible avalanche of divine judgment. There is no hope. Things must take their course. I am not the man, nor is this the time for reformatory action. I can but yield to inevitable destiny, bow my head, and let Jehovah's governmental chariot move on."

Can you not, my dearest A., easily imagine Josiah adopting such a line of reasoning with his own heart? I know I can. It is, I greatly fear, the precise line that I should adopt, were I in his position. But, thanks be to God, His beloved servant was graciously preserved from all such cowering and contemptible unbelief. He was enabled to take his stand upon the immutable truth of God, and to try by that perfect touchstone all those errors and evils which lie found existing around him, and reject them utterly. Josiah felt—and he was divinely right in the feeling—that there was no necessity why he should go on, for a single hour, with aught that was contrary to the mind of Jehovah. It mattered not, the weight of a feather to him—nor should it to any one—who had been the originator of error or evil. It was sufficient for him that it was error and evil. His one business was to reject it all with holy decision and unswerving purpose of heart. It might seem presumptuous in him, so young a man, to lay a disturbing hand upon institutions which had been set on foot by Solomon; but with this he had nothing whatever to do. It was not a question of Josiah versus Solomon; but of truth versus error.

This is a grand point, my beloved friend, for this our own day. We hear a great deal about the Fathers, and learned doctors, and good men, here and there and everywhere. And then again, some talk loudly about the necessity of cultivating largeness of heart, breadth of mind, liberality of spirit, and such like. All this sounds very plausible; and, with a large class of people, it has great weight. But the whole question hangs upon this, Have we got the truth of God, or have we not? Has God revealed His mind to us so that we may know it with all possible certainty? Are we left to human opinion? Have we nothing to go upon or rest in but the ipse dixit of some poor erring mortal like ourselves? Is it a question of human authority? Are learning and antiquity a sufficient guarantee for infallible truth? Can we rest the salvation of our souls, or the guidance of our conscience, or the ordering of our service upon a church, a council, or any body of men under the sun?

I think I can anticipate your reply to these queries. I am most fully persuaded, dearest A., that you regard the opinions and dogmas of men as the small dust of the balance, when it is a question of positive authority. All human writings, ancient, mediaeval or modern, are interesting as references; perfectly worthless as authorities. There is but the one supreme and absolute authority, and that is holy scripture—that peerless, priceless revelation which our God has, in infinite grace, put into our hands, which all may possess if they will, and which possessing, they are rendered blessedly

independent of every human authority, past or present.

And this leads me at once to the special point in Josiah's history which I consider so peculiarly applicable to the present condition of things in the church of God. I refer to the discovery of the Book of the Law. " And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have 'found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan carried the book to the king.... then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes."

Here, then, we have what may justly be viewed as the grand fact in the life of this most interesting man, namely, the discovery or recovery of the book of the law—the letting in of the fall light of divine revelation, first upon Josiah's conscience, and, secondly, upon the entire condition of things around him. It is a very serious thing for any one—man, woman or child—to stand in the searching light of God's word. That word judges everything. It makes no terms with the flesh or the world. It cuts up by the root all within and around us which is not according to God. All this is serious work, and leads to serious results. So Josiah found it in his day, and so all must find it. It is one thing to judge our surroundings by the word, and it is quite another thing to judge ourselves. Now Josiah began with himself. Before ever he called upon others to listen to the weighty utterances of the law, he rent his own clothes, in true self-judgment beneath their searching power.

Now, my beloved friend, I cannot but feel, and, that deeply, that this is precisely what is so much needed, at the present moment, in that which is called the church of God. We want to realize the searching power and to own the commanding authority of the word of God—its searching power in the heart and conscience—its commanding authority in our whole practical career. The two things will ever go together. The more deeply I feel the action of the word of God in my own heart, the more I shall feel and exhibit its formative influence upon my entire course, character, and conduct. The word of God is intensely real and practical. It addresses itself, in living power to the soul, and lets in upon the moral being the very light of God Himself. It applies itself, in divine energy, to all the details of life and conduct—our habits, our associations, our common every-day concerns; and leads us to judge ourselves and our surroundings in the searching light of the throne of God.

All this, my friend, is serious work; and we must go through it, if we are to be used as God's instruments to act upon others. So Josiah felt and proved it in his day. He did not, first of all, rush forth to attack the errors of others. No, he first rent his own clothes, as one thoroughly humbled and self-judged; and then he called his brethren together, that they too, might hearken to the same powerful testimony, and take the same ground of self-judgment and brokenness; for this, he felt, was the only true road to blessing.

It will, perhaps, be objected that there is no analogy between our time and that of king Josiah, inasmuch as the church has had the book of the law in her possession for centuries, whereas to Josiah it was an entirely new thing. There is no force whatever in this objection. What is of moment to us is to see the powerful manner in which the word of God acted on the heart of Josiah and his brethren. True it is that the church has had the scriptures in her possession for ages; but is she governed by them? This is the question. Of what possible use is it to make our boast of having the

Bible, if, as regards our whole practical life, that Bible be but a dead letter? And where, let me ask, throughout Christendom, is the governing power of the word owned? Is there a single religious system under the sun, which can stand the test of holy scripture for one hour? Take any religious body you please, Greek, Latin, Anglican or other, and see if you can find in the New Testament the foundation of its ecclesiastical polity, its clerical orders, or its theological creed.

These may seem bold questions; but we must speak boldly. I ask any upright mind to examine the religious institutions of Christendom in the light of scripture, and see if they can stand the test. Is this asking too much? Is scripture to be our guide or not? Is it a sufficient guide? Does it furnish thoroughly to all good works? The inspired apostle says, " Yes." (2 Tim. 3:16.) What do we say? Are we at liberty to think for ourselves? What is the meaning of that popular phrase, " The right of private judgment?" Is there really such a right? Can we speak of our having any right at all, save indeed a right to the flames of an everlasting hell? It is the height of folly for man to talk of rights. God has a right to rule. It is ours to obey. Doubtless Solomon and many of his successors exercised the right of private judgment when they set up the varied abominations to which I have called your attention. Did Josiah exercise his right in abolishing them? Nay, he acted on the authority of the word of God. This was the secret of his power. It was not a question of man's judgment at all; had it been so, one man, of course, would have had as much right as another. But it was the supreme authority of God's word. This is what I earnestly desire to establish. It is precisely here, I believe, lies the grand deficiency of the day in which our lot is cast. The divine sufficiency and absolute authority of scripture are virtually denied though nominally owned. We have the Bible in our bands; but how little we know of its teaching! And how little are we governed by it! We go on, from week to week, and year to year, with things which have no foundation whatever in its pages—yea, with things utterly opposed to its teaching; and, all the while, we boast of our having the scriptures, just like the Jews of old, who made their boast of having the oracles of God, while those very oracles condemned themselves and their ways, and left them without a single plea.

But I must pause. I shall, if you do not object, return to Josiah in my next, and point out the glorious result of his faithfulness in acting simply and entirely upon the supreme authority of THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

Ever, my much loved friend,

Your deeply affectionate,

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To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Eighth Letter

My beloved friend,

The more deeply I ponder the intensely interesting history of Josiah, king of Judah, the more convinced I am that it has a special voice, and a special lesson for the church of God, in this our day. I refer particularly to the beautiful way in which he bowed to the authority of the word of God. I am well assured that Josiah would have had not one atom of sympathy with the spirit and principles so rife at the present moment, or with the teachings of those whose whole aim and object seem to be to rob us of that inestimable treasure which we possess in the holy scriptures. He felt and owned the power of the word of God, its power upon his heart and conscience, its power over his entire course and conduct. He did not, on the one hand, question whether or not God had spoken; nor yet, on the other, whether or not God could make him understand what He said.

Now, these, as you well know, dearest A., are the two great questions of the day. Infidelity, with bold and impious front, stands before us, and raises the question, "Has God spoken?—Has He given us a revelation of His mind?" Superstition; with an air of piety,—but it is the piety of profound ignorance,—admits that God has spoken, but raises the question, "Can we understand what He says? Can we know it to be the word of God, without human authority?"

These questions, though apparently differing so widely in tone, spirit, and character, meet in one point; indeed they are essentially one in their effect as to the word of God, inasmuch as they both alike completely rob the soul of its power and authority.

The infidel denies altogether a divine revelation. He presumes to tell us that God could not give us a full and perfect revelation of His mind such as we have in the holy scriptures. Infidels, it seems, can tell us—and certainly they do tell us very plainly what is in their minds; but God cannot tell us what is in His. We have no such thing as a book-revelation of the mind of God. We have plenty of book-revelations of the mind of infidels; but God cannot give us anything of the kind.

Such is the monstrous, bare-faced, audacious ground taken by the infidel, the skeptic, and the rationalist. Excuse my strong language, dearest A., but I find it impossible to speak in measured terms of what I must call the impudence of infidelity which presumes to tell us that our God cannot speak to us—cannot communicate to us what is in His heart—cannot do what any mere earthly father can do with his children, or any earthly master with his servants—cannot express His will.

And why not? we may lawfully ask. Because infidels tell us so. And we are to believe what infidels tell us, though we cannot believe what God says. We are to trust the Lucians, the Paynes, the Voltaires, and the thousands of others of the same miserable school; but we must not, cannot, trust God. And what warrant have we for putting our trust in them? What security do they offer for the truth of their statements? What do we gain by rejecting the word of God, and accepting the speculations of infidelity? Have we a more solid ground to rest upon Ah! my friend, the one grand object of infidelity in all its phases, in all its stages, in all its varied shades of thought and

argument, is to shut out from the human soul the blessed light of divine revelation. And I think you will agree with your correspondent in saying that, when once that light is shut out, there is no consistent standing ground short of the pantheism which declares that everything is God, or the atheism which declares there is no God at all.

I confess, my beloved friend, I am deeply impressed with the awful solemnity of all this. People are not aware of what is involved in the very first and faintest shade of skepticism. They do not see that to admit into their hearts a doubt as to the divine authenticity of the Bible, is to get upon the edge of an inclined plane which leads directly down to the blackness and darkness of utter atheism. The only real knowledge we can have of God is contained in the scriptures; and hence, if we are deprived of thorn, we are deprived of God.

The infidel may tell us that God is to be known in creation. Did anyone ever find Him out there? No doubt, creation does prove the existence of a Creator, as we read in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, “The invisible things of him from the creation are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” Creation yields a testimony which the heathen were bound to receive, and, had they received it, a higher light would assuredly have shone upon them. But they did not receive it, nay, they actually worshipped the things that were made, instead of the One who made them. Philosophers talk of rising from nature up to nature’s God. But nature is a ruin, and man himself a ruin in the midst of ruin; and instead of rising to nature’s God, he makes a god of nature, and degrades himself below the level of a beast. See Rom. 1:21-32.

The plain fact is, we cannot do without a divine revelation; and that revelation we possess in the holy scriptures. God has given us a book,—all praise and thanks to His name!—which speaks to our hearts with divine power and (dearness. There is no mistaking it, it carries its own credentials with it. It judges us thoroughly, unlocks every chamber of the heart, discloses the deepest moral springs of our being, lays bare every motive, every thought, every feeling, every desire and imagination.. It is, as the inspired apostle tells us, “Quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12.

But not only has He given us a book; but He can make us understand what it says. And here, my beloved friend, you and I join issue—triumphantly and thankfully join issue with the ignorance of superstition. We confront the cool impudence of infidelity, with the calm and firm statement that our God has spoken. We meet the blind ignorance of superstition with the distinct and decided declaration that our God can make us understand what He says.

This, I believe, is the true way to meet both the one and the other of these evil agencies of the devil, in this our day, which, as I have said, do both alike rob the soul of the inestimable boon of holy scripture. It is well that our young people especially should be convinced of the fact that they are as thoroughly deprived of the word of God by superstition as by infidelity. If I must look to man to assure me that scripture is the word of God or to interpret its meaning to my heart, then I maintain that it is not the word of God at all, and my faith does not stand in the power of God, but in the wisdom of man. If God’s word needs man’s guarantee or interpretation, it ceases to be a divine revelation to my soul.

It is not, dearest A., that you or I would undervalue what are called external evidences in proof of the divine authenticity of the Bible; nor yet that we do not prize human ministry in the exposition of scripture. Nothing of the kind. I believe we very highly estimate both the one and the other. But then what I feel is important, just now, is that the word of God should be received in its own divine sufficiency, authority and supremacy. It needs no credentials from man. It is perfect in itself, because it is from God. It could not add a single jot or tittle to the power, value, and authority of holy scripture, to say that all the councils that were ever convened—all the doctors that ever taught—all the fathers that ever wrote—in a word, the voice of the universal church for the last eighteen centuries bore testimony to the authenticity of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. And, on the other hand, it could not, in the smallest degree, touch the integrity of those peerless writings though all these authorities that I have named were to call in question their divine inspiration. If the scriptures be not received on their own authority, if they need human testimony to assure us of their divinity, or if they need human aid to enable us to understand them, then they are not the word of God. But, being the word of God, they are divinely perfect, not only for the salvation and guidance of the individual soul, but also for all the exigencies of the church of God during its entire history in this world.

This, my beloved and valued friend, is the solid ground on which we stand—all praise and thanks to our God for giving us such a ground! We firmly and reverently believe in the divine authority, the all-sufficiency, and the absolute supremacy of holy scripture. The speculations, the reasonings, the learned arguments and fine-drawn theories of all the infidels, skeptics, and rationalists that ever lived or are now living on this earth have no more weight with us than the pattering of rain upon the window. And why? Because we know we have a divine revelation. How do we know it? Ask a man at the back of a mountain how does he know the sun is shining? Tell him that many very learned men have found out by their learning that there is no sun at all; while others declare that though the sun does shine, he cannot enjoy its beams without their assistance. Can we not well imagine his reply? I believe he would say, “ I know nothing and care nothing about learned men, but I know the sun shines, because I have felt the power of his beams.”

Now, I am quite sure that learned infidels would sneer at such a mode of settling the question. But I am very much disposed to think it is about the best mode after all. I do not see that much is gained by arguing with infidels. It is all very well to help souls that are afflicted with honest doubts, or troubled by the suggestions of the infidel mind. But to attempt to argue with infidels about the divine inspiration of the Bible is about as hopeless a task as to discuss the differential calculus with an ignorant crossing-sweeper. The power of the word must be felt in the depths of the soul. Where this is the case, no argument is needed. Where it is not, no argument will avail. “ Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” This was sound reasoning. Yes, and it is equally sound for you and me to say, “ Come, read a book, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the word of God?”

Yes, my beloved friend, I do believe the internal evidences of the word of God are, at once, the most precious and powerful of any that can be produced. If it be true, as one of our own poets has told us, that “ God is His own interpreter” in providence, it is none the less, but very much more true that He is His own interpreter in scripture. If God cannot make me understand what He says, no man can; if He does, no man need. When this solid ground is clearly seen and firmly occupied, we are, through grace, prepared to meet the insolence of infidelity, the ignorance of superstition,

and the feebleness of many of our modern apologies for the written word of God. And, in addition to this, we are in a position to estimate at their proper value all the external evidences that can be produced in proof of the divinity of our precious Bible. Such evidences are of the deepest interest. Who, but the most thoughtless, can fail to be arrested by the very history of the book? Take that one fact of its having been, for over a thousand years, in the custody of a corrupt and apostate church that would, most willingly, have crushed it into annihilation. There lay the peerless volume, buried in the dark cloisters of Rome, chained, like a hated prisoner, in the gloomy vaults of her monasteries. Who watched over it there? Who preserved it? Who warded off the destructive hand? Who but the One whose Spirit penned its every line? Who can fail to see the hand of God in the preservation of the book, just as distinctly as we recognize His Spirit in its inspiration?

Assuredly, we can say, “ It is not that we value external evidences less, but we value internal evidences more.” A man might be intellectually convinced by the marvelous array of facts in the history of the Bible that it is, in very deed, the word of God, and yet never have felt its living, quickening, saving power in his own soul. Whereas the man who has felt this latter, while he prizes the former, is entirely independent of them.

But there is one other fact, dearest A., to which I must call your attention, ere I close this letter, and that is the marked honor and dignity put upon the holy scriptures by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In His conflict with Satan, in the wilderness, His one reply was, “ It is written.” In His conflict with wicked and wily men, His one standard of appeal was the holy scriptures. When equipping His servants for their work, He opens their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. And then, just as He is about to ascend into the heavens, He casts them simply upon the same divine and eternal authority, the holy scripture, “ It is written.”

What an answer is here, both to infidelity and superstition! He gives us the holy scriptures, and He enables us to understand them. What a mercy! What an unspeakable privilege! What a grand reality! We possess, each one for himself, that precious book on which our blessed Lord Himself ever fed, by which He lived, as a man, in this world, by which He shaped His way, by which He silenced every adversary, which He ever used in His public ministry and in His private life—the blessed word of God which He Himself has put into our hands, in order that we may find it to be what our adorable Lord and Master ever found it in the whole of His marvelous life and service.

Will my beloved friend think I have wandered far away from my thesis? I trust not. I believe you will feel with me that the line which I have pursued in this letter bears, most pointedly, upon “ the present condition of things in the church of God.” We may have another glance at Josiah, and, meanwhile, I shall subscribe myself, as ever,

Your deeply affectionate yoke-fellow,
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To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Ninth Letter

My Beloved Friend,

I must ask you still to linger with Inc for a little over the stirring times of Josiah, king of Judah; but it is only for the purpose of looking particularly at one grand effect of his beautiful subjection to the authority of holy scripture. I allude to the celebration of the passover, that great foundation feast of the Jewish economy. If I mistake not, we shall find in this event not only a most striking illustration of our thesis, but also some most valuable and weighty instruction bearing pointedly on “ the present condition of things in the church of God.”

“ Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.” This was acting according to the very highest principles of the institution. Hezekiah kept the passover in the second month, thus availing himself of the provision which grace had made for a defiled condition of things. (See Numb. 9:8; compare with vers. 10, 11,) But Josiah took the very highest ground, as simple faith ever does. God’s grace can meet us in the very lowest condition in which we may be found; but He is ever glorified and gratified when faith plants its foot on the loftiest ground, as presented by divine revelation. Nothing so delights the heart of God as the largest appropriation of an artless faith. Blessed forever be His holy name!

“ And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord. And said unto the Levites ‘that taught all Israel, [not merely Judah] which were holy unto the Lord, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel. And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David any of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy place, according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites. So kill the Passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.’” 2 Chron. 35:1-6.

Here, then, my dearest A., we have an uncommonly fine illustration of the first part of our thesis, namely, that “ whatever may be the condition of the public body, it is the privilege of the individual believer to occupy the very highest possible ground.” We find Josiah, in the above passage, going back to the divine standard in reference to the great central feast of Israel. All must be done “ according to the word of the Lord by Moses.” Nothing less, nothing lower, than this would do. Unbelief might suggest a thousand difficulties. The heart might send up a thousand reasonings. It might seem presumptuous, in the face of the general condition of things, to think of aiming at such a lofty standard. It might seem utterly vain to think of acting according to the word of the Lord by Moses. But Josiah was enabled to plant his foot on the loftiest ground, and to take the widest possible range. He took his stand on the authority of the word of the Lord by Moses; and, as to his range of vision, he took in nothing less than the whole Israel of God.

And Josiah was right. You and I, my beloved and valued friend, are thoroughly persuaded of this. We feel assured that no other line of action would have been according to the integrity of faith, or to the glory of God. True, alas! Israel's condition had sadly changed, but no change had come over "the word of the Lord by Moses." The truth of God is ever the same, and it is by that truth, and nothing else, that faith will ever shape its way. God had not varied His instructions as to the celebration of the passover. There was not one way for Moses, and another way for Josiah, but God's way for both. Josiah felt this, and he acted accordingly.

And mark the glorious result. "So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept." 2 Chron. 35:16-19.

Surely, my dear friend, this is something worth pondering. We have here a striking proof of our statement, that "In darkest days it is the privilege of faith to enjoy as high communion as ever was known in the highest and palmiest moments of the dispensation." Is it not perfectly magnificent to behold in the days of Josiah, when the whole Jewish polity was on the very eve of dissolution, the celebration of a passover exceeding in its blessedness any that had ever been kept from the days of Samuel the prophet? Does it not prove to our poor narrow unbelieving hearts that there is no limit to the grace of God, and no limit to the range of faith?

Assuredly it does. God can never disappoint the expectations of faith. He did not, he would not, He could not tell His servant Josiah that he had made a mistake in taking such high ground, that he had entirely miscalculated, that he ought to have lowered his standard of action to the level of the nation's moral condition. Ah! no, dearest A., this would not have been like our God at all. Such is not his manner, blessed and praised be His glorious name for evermore!

Was it that Josiah did not feel and own the general condition of things, as also his own personal failure? Let his penitential tears and rent garments answer. "As for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard. Because thine heart was tender, and thou, didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord."

Assuredly Josiah felt the ruin, and wept over it. But he could not surrender the truth of God. He could rend his garments, but he could not, and would not, lower God's standard. If all was in ruin around him, that was the very reason why he should keep close, very close, to the word of God. For what else had he to cling to? Where was there a single ray of light, where one atom of authority, where a single hair's-breadth of solid standing ground, save in the imperishable revelation of God? And was not that word for him just as distinctly as it had been for Moses and Joshua, Samuel, and David, and Solomon? Was not he to listen to its voice, and bow down to its holy authority? Were not its priceless lessons as distinctly for him as for all those who had gone

before him?

You and I, my friend, have no difficulty as to the true answer to all these inquiries. But how many there are at the present moment who would fain persuade us that the Bible is not a sufficient guide for us at this stage of the world's history. Such_ changes have taken place, such discoveries have been made in the various fields of scientific investigation, that it is puerile to contend for the all-sufficiency of scripture at this advanced period of the world's history. In fact, they would have us believe that man's mind has got in advance of the mind of God, for this is the real amount of the argument. This is what it means, if it means anything. God has written a book for man's guidance, but that book is now found to be insufficient. A flaw has been discovered in the revelation of God by man's sagacious and powerful intellect!

And what, then, are we to do? Whither are we to turn? Can it be possible that God has left His people to drift about in a wild, watery waste, without compass, rudder, or chart? Has our Lord Christ left His church or His servants without any competent authority or infallible guidance? Ah! no, blessed be His peerless name! He has given us His own perfect revelation—His own most precious word, which contains within its covers all we can possibly want to know, not only for our individual salvation and guidance, but also for all the most minute details of His church's history, from the moment in which it was set up upon this earth until that longed-for moment in which He will take it to heaven.

But I must not pursue this line any further just now, deeply as I feel its immense importance. I have referred to it in a former letter, and I shall now for a moment seek to point out what I consider to be a grand lesson for this our day—a lesson strikingly taught in Josiah's passover.

We invariably find that the heart of every pious Jew—everyone who bowed to the authority of the law of God—turned with a deep, fond, and intense interest to that grand central and foundation feast of the passover, in which, amongst other things, the great truths of redemption and the unity of Israel were strikingly shadowed forth. Every true Israelite, everyone who loved God and loved His word, found delight in the celebration of that most precious institution. It was the impressive memorial of Israel's redemption—the significant expression of Israel's unity. Its strict observance, according to all its divinely appointed rites and ordinances, was an obligation binding upon the whole congregation of Israel. The willful neglecter of it was to be cut off from the congregation. It was neither to be neglected on the one hand, nor tampered with on the other. We could not conceive a faithful Israelite altering a single jot or tittle of the prescribed order of the feast. Neither, as to the time nor the mode of its celebration, was there the slightest margin left for the insertion of human thoughts on the subject. The word of the Lord settled everything. The idea of any one undertaking to alter the time or the manner of keeping the all-important feast would never, we may safely assert, enter the mind of any pious, God-fearing, member of the congregation. If we could conceive anyone having the boldness to say that it was quite the same whether the passover was celebrated once a year, or once in three years; and, further, that it was quite the same whether the paschal lamb was sodden or roast, whether there was unleavened bread or not; in short, that, provided people were sincere, it did not matter how the thing was done. How would such an one have been dealt with? Numb. 9 supplies the answer--a brief, but solemn, answer! He shall be cut off."

Now, my beloved and valued friend, I take it for granted that you agree with your correspondent in thinking that what the feast of the passover was to a faithful Israelite, that the feast of the Lord's supper is to a true Christian. That was the typo, this the memorial, of the death of Christ. This, I presume, will not be called in question by any devout student of scripture.

I am not now going to occupy your tune with an elaborate exposition of the principles of the Lord's supper. I merely call your attention to the weighty facts in connection with it, namely, that in no other way than by eating the Lord's supper do we set forth the great truth of the unity of the body—in no other way do we set forth the death of our Lord. We may speak of these things, hear of them, write about them, read about them, sing about them, profess to hold them as true; but only by eating the Lord's supper according to the word of God do we give expression to them.

As to the first of these most weighty facts, 1 Corinthians x. is conclusive. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one loaf, one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf."

This is most instructive. It teaches us with all possible distinctness that the Lord's supper is preeminently a communion feast. It cuts up by the roots the notion of any one receiving the Lord's supper as a mere individual. Not only is there no meaning, and no value, in such a thing, but it is positively false and mischievous, because antagonistic to holy scripture. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" To make it an individual thing—to set aside the thought of the body—is to mar the integrity of the divine institution, and break the bones of the paschal lamb. It is absolutely essential to the true celebration of the Lord's supper that the unity of the body should be set forth in the one loaf, of which we all partake. If this be set aside or tampered with, we do not keep the feast according to the mind of Christ. The one loaf on the table of our Lord sets forth the one body, and we, by partaking of that one loaf, give expression to our holy fellowship in the unity of that body.

Now, my beloved friend, it seems to me that this is a deeply important aspect of the Lord's table, and one not sufficiently understood or carried out in the professing church. I speak not now of the gross error involved in speaking of the Lord's supper as a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead, or as a sacrament or a covenant between the soul and God. All this would be unhesitatingly rejected by the great majority of true Christians.

But does it not strike you that we are all lamentably deficient in apprehending and expressing the precious truth of the unity of the body in the celebration of the Lord's supper? Is there not a strong tendency in our minds to make that precious feast merely an individual thing between our own souls and the Lord? We think of our own blessing, our own comfort, our own refreshment; or, it may be that many go to the table as a means whereby they may be brought somewhat nearer to Christ, thus placing it on an utterly false basis, and surrounding it with a legal atmosphere.

All this demands our most serious consideration. It behoves all Christians to look well to their foundations as to this matter. We want to come with all humility of mind and teachableness of spirit to the word of God, and bend our attention to its teaching, in this important question. If it be true that partaking of the Lord's supper in the Lord's appointed way is the only act in which we express the unity of the body, should we not examine whether we are, in this matter, acting according to

the mind of Christ? Is it not a very serious thing for Christians to neglect the Lord's table? Must it not grieve the heart of Christ to find any of His beloved members satisfied to go on from week to week, and month to month, without ever keeping the feast? Is it possible that a Christian can be in a right state of soul who habitually absents himself from that feast which alone sets forth a truth so precious to Christ, namely, the unity of His body? or can any true lover of the Lord Jesus be satisfied to go on for weeks and months without ever partaking of that which alone calls his crucified Lord to remembrance? The New Testament teaches us that "on the first day of the week" the Lord's people came together to break bread. "The Lord's supper" and "the Lord's day" are blessedly linked together by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Have we, then, at authority to tamper with this divine order? Are we authorized to alter the time or the mode of keeping the feast? Have we any right to make it once-a month, or once a quarter, or once in six months?

These are plain questions for the heart and conscience of every Christian. I shall leave them to act, and here close this rather long epistle by subscribing myself, as ever,

Dearest A.,

Your deeply affectionate yokefellow,

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To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Tenth Letter

My beloved friend,

It seems a long time since I last addressed you. It has been a very remarkable time to me, as you may judge, when I tell you that for eight weeks I was wholly unable to take a pen or a book in my hand. But, through infinite mercy, though I could not write or read, I could think; and amongst various subjects, one especially has engaged my attention, namely the question of the Lord's supper, viewed as the index of the state of the church—the state of the hearts of professing Christians with reference to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

This has interested me a good deal. I referred to it briefly at the close of my last letter, but, if you will allow me, I shall go a little more fully into it.

I think you will admit that we are perfectly warranted in viewing the history of the Lord's supper as a very remarkable moral indicator of the true practical condition of the church—of the real state of the hearts of Christians toward our Lord Christ. We should, I think, be justified in concluding that, had the church remained true in heart to Christ, the Lord's supper—that inexpressibly precious memorial of Himself, in His death—would always have maintained its own divinely-appointed place, exhibited its own divinely appointed elements, and set forth its own grand and important truths. Instituted, as it was, by our blessed Lord, “ the same night in which he was betrayed”—appointed by Him expressly to be the affecting memorial of Himself in His death—to call Him to mind, in that marvelous scene in which He gave up His life for us, we might surely expect that all who really loved Him, all who had been taught to prize His death as the only, the necessary, and the everlasting foundation of all their blessedness—all who truly loved and revered His precious commandments—would be most jealous in their affectionate maintenance of all the features, facts, and elements of the Lord's supper. He Himself has said, “ If ye love me, keep my commandments.” And again, “ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”

Now, we know that just on the eve of His departure out of this world, when the dark shadows of Gethsemane, and the yet deeper and darker shadows of Calvary, were falling upon His spirit, He expressly appointed the supper as a pledge of His love for His own, and as a memorial of Himself to be observed by His disciples during His absence.

I think you will not object to my bringing under your notice the entire body of scripture evidence on this most interesting question. It is only by having that distinctly before our minds, and in our hearts, that we shall be able to see how soon, how sadly, and how completely, the church departed from the truth as to the supper of the Lord; and, furthermore, how forcibly that departure proves the deplorable state of the church's heart as to Christ. If His own institution has been neglected, it is but the expression of the terrible neglect with which He Himself has been treated. If His supper has been marred, mutilated, and flung aside, it only indicates the moral distance to which the church has traveled from Him. His commandment, in this most weighty matter, has not

been, is not, kept; and what does this prove but that lie is not loved? 'We may talk of loving Airs, but if we do not keep his commandments, the talking is a lie and a sham—a heartless, shameless mockery.

But I turn to the testimony of holy scripture. In Matt. 26 we read, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Verse 26-28.

In Mark 14 we read, "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many." Verse 22-2,1.

The record in Luke is deeply affecting--so tender, so touchingly personal. "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you; I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Chapter 22:14-20.

Now, it may be said that in all the above passages we have no warrant for extending the holy obligation and privilege of the Lord's supper beyond those persons who sat around our blessed Lord on that last solemn occasion. There is not, it may be objected, a single clause admitting others to partake of the precious benefit. Hence, therefore, had we no farther instruction than what is furnished by the three synoptical gospels, the celebration of the Lord's supper would not be binding on believers now; or rather—for I intensely dislike the word "binding," when applied to so delightful and precious a privilege—believers now might deem themselves shut out from what every spiritual mind must regard as the most blessed institution in which the Christian can take part.

Furthermore, it may be said—has been said by a large class of professing Christians—that it is a descent from that higher spirituality to which we are called, and a return to "weak and beggarly elements," to insist upon the ordinance of the Lord's supper. Hence, as you are aware, the institution is wholly set aside by that body to whom I refer.

Happily for us, my beloved friend, both these objections, if they possessed any weight—which I run sure, to you and me, they do not—no, not the weight of a feather—are completely swept away as we pursue the further history of the Lord's supper, as unfolded in the Acts and the epistles.

It is interesting to notice that, as in the gospels, we have the supper instituted; so in the Acts we have it celebrated; and in the epistles we have it expounded. And we may assert, with all possible confidence, that the celebration and the exposition do most completely demolish the objection founded on the institution; and not only so, but they wither up the absurdity of classing the precious supper of our Lord under the head of "beggarly elements," and prove the fatal error of

setting it aside altogether.

For, let me ask, what do we find in the opening of the Acts of the Apostles? Was there any difficulty felt by the many thousands of believers in the city of Jerusalem as to their sweet privilege of sitting down at the table of their Lord? Or, further, let me ask, did the twelve apostles and those happy thousands, filled, taught, and animated by the Holy Ghost, just come down from the risen and glorified Head in the heavens, consider it a descent from a higher spirituality, or a return to “weak and beggarly elements,” to remember their beloved Lord in the breaking of bread, according to His own most gracious appointment? Let us read the answer, in the glowing words of the inspired historian: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house (κατ οίκον), did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.” Acts 2:41-47.

Now, we do not gather from this passage that the breaking of bread was confined exclusively to the Lord’s day, or first day of the week; but we see very distinctly that these early Christians, in the bloom and freshness of their first love, were in the constant habit of breaking bread, in affectionate remembrance of their Lord. They were so filled with the Holy Ghost, that Christ was ever before their hearts, and they delighted to celebrate that precious feast which was, according to His own express word, the affecting memorial of Himself in His death. If anyone had spoken to them about its being a descent from a higher spirituality, or a return to carnal ordinances, thus to break bread in loving memory of their Lord; or if anyone had suggested the idea of having the Lord’s supper once a month, once a quarter, once in six months, or of setting it aside altogether as a beggarly element—we should be marvelously delighted to hear what kind of a reply would emanate from eight thousand loving hearts filled with the Holy Ghost, filled with ardent love to the precious Savior, who, though He had passed through the heavens, and taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty, in the highest, had nevertheless left it as His last request that His people should remember Him in that special act of breaking bread. I think we can have little difficulty in conceiving what that reply would be. We may rest assured those early Christians, with the twelve apostles at their head, would have scouted all such notions with a holy indignation commensurate with their deep personal affection for their Lord.

But let us pass on, In Acts 20 we find the Apostle Paul and his company at Troas, where he tarried seven days, possibly in order to spend the first day of the Week with the brethren there, in order that they might break bread together. If this were so, it would lead us to the conclusion that the first day of the week, or Lord’s day, was pre-eminently the day set apart for the celebration of the Lord’s supper. One thing is evident, even from this scripture, that the apostles and the early disciples were in the habit of coming together on the first day of the week for the express purpose of breaking bread, not for preaching, though Paul did preach, but specially to remember the Lord in His own appointed way. “And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when we [thus the four editors render it] came together to break bread,” &c.

Now, here we find the Apostle Paul proving by his presence at the Lord's supper his appreciation of the holy privilege, and that he at least did not consider it a descent from a higher spirituality, or a return to weak and beggarly elements, to partake of that precious feast. In a word, we learn from our two quotations from the Acts, that, in the days of the church's first love, when all was in lovely freshness and bloom, in the full power of the holy Ghost, in the plenitude of apostolic gift and grace, the whole church, together with the twelve apostles, and the Apostle Paul himself—the greatest teacher the church has ever had—the special minister of the truth of the church—were in the habit of coming together on the first day of the week, the Lord's day, the resurrection day, to break bread.

And, my beloved friend, ere I go further, I would ask you if you do not consider this a fact well worthy of the earnest attention of Christians in this our day? I may be somewhat premature in putting this practical question just now, inasmuch as my object is to unfold, first of all, the truth of scripture on the subject of the Lord's supper, and then to bring that truth to bear upon the present condition of things in the church of God.

But then you will allow me just to press this question. Is it not more than interesting—is it not practically important to notice the fact of the frequent celebration of the Lord's supper by the apostles and the early church? Always on the first day of the week, often more frequently at the first; no such thing as a monthly, quarterly, or half-yearly celebration of the feast; no hint at such a thing. Indeed, I feel persuaded in my own mind—though I would not dogmatize upon it—that no such thing would be thought of,—understood, or tolerated by those beloved early Christians. They loved their Lord too well to admit of their neglecting that most precious and affecting memorial of His love, which he had appointed on the very night in which He was betrayed. And if anyone had hinted at such a thing as setting it aside altogether as a mere carnal ordinance, unsuited to that higher range of spiritual life to which we are called, we can hardly conceive in what terms they would couch their reply.

Ah! no, my friend, we cannot, but see that, just in proportion as people loved Christ, loved His word, were filled with the Holy Ghost, did they delight to flock to His table, to remember Him, and show forth, in happy and holy communion, His death until He come. And if this be so—and who will deny it?—are we not justified in concluding that when professing Christians can go on for weeks and months, and some altogether without ever keeping the blessed feast, their hearts must be cold as to Christ? If I love a friend, a dear absent friend, I shall delight to gaze upon any special memorial which he may have left me. Now, our loving Lord, in appointing the bread and the cup to set forth His body and blood, separated the One from the other, that is His death, as an accomplished fact, made use of these most touching words, "Do this in remembrance of me." Would not, then, every true lover of Christ delight thus to remember Him? Could such an one be satisfied to go on for weeks or months without ever calling Him to mind in this special way?

And be it carefully noted, that it is only by partaking of the Lord's supper that we so remember Christ—that we show His death—that we give expression to the great truth of the unity of the body. I question if this is fully seen by Christians generally. It is to be feared that the Lord's table has lost its true place, lost its true import, lost its solemn interest in the hearts of Christians. The Lord's table has, in many cases, been flung into the shade of the pulpit—the supper has been displaced by the sermon. And when we come to view all this as the index of the state of our hearts

toward Christ, it is calculated to awaken the most solemn reflections. I speak not of it now as a departure from the authority of scripture—which it most surely is—but as the sad and painful evidence of the gross neglect with which our beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is treated by those who profess His name.

If God permit, I shall pursue this subject in my next. Meanwhile allow me to

Subscribe myself, as ever,

Your deeply affectionate yokefellow,

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To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Eleventh Letter

My beloved friend,

When we come to the exposition of the Lord's Supper as given in the first epistle to the Corinthians, we find much additional light poured upon it by the inspired apostle. Had we merely the record of the institution, as given in the Gospels, or of the celebration, as given in the Acts, we should have a very imperfect apprehension of its deep and wondrous significance.

True it is—and this is most precious to the heart—if we had only the gospel narratives, we should have what is of infinite value to every true lover of Christ. In those priceless records, we have Himself and His precious sacrifice set before our hearts, in the most vivid and touching manner. We hear our adorable Lord and Savior saying to us, as He hands us the bread, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you." And again, as He hands us the cup, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." And, further, we have those most affecting, soul-stirring words, "This do in remembrance of me."

All this is of the deepest possible interest to the true Christian. A person may be ignorant of the truth communicated by the risen and glorified Christ to His servant Paul, and unfolded by the latter, in the power of the Holy Ghost, for the guidance of the church in all ages; but, notwithstanding this, he can taste the divine sweetness of that feast which brings his Lord before him, in all the depth, tenderness, and reality of His love—a love which was stronger than death, which many waters could not quench—a love which led Him down to the dust of death for us. Blessed be God, it is not a question of intelligence but of true affection for the Person of Christ. And I doubt not that thousands of precious souls, throughout Christendom, receive the Lord's Supper in connection with a vast amount of error and darkness; but they are not occupied with the error; it may be they have never thought of it—never searched the scriptures in reference to the subject at all. They have just the one thought before their minds; they remember their Lord, and feed upon the precious mystery of His death.

I confess, dear friend, it is an immense relief to the heart to think of such, when one looks forth upon the present dark and confused state of the professing church. The Lord has His hidden loved ones everywhere; and wherever there is a heart that beats true to Christ, that heart will enjoy the Lord's Supper, even though surrounded by a quantity of things which have no foundation whatever in holy scripture.

But then, while we fully admit all this—and you and I joyfully admit and would ever remember it—we should nevertheless, earnestly and lovingly seek to instruct the beloved lambs and sheep of our Lord's flock, and to lead them into the knowledge of their true place and portion in Christ. And it seems to me, dearest A., that the laxity, the error, the confusion, the darkness, and indifference so painfully manifest, on all sides, in reference to the Lord's Supper, affords a sad but most powerful demonstration of the way in which both the Person and word of Christ are flung aside; for I cannot but believe that, Were His blessed Person more the object before the hearts of His

people, and if His word had its proper authority over their consciences, His table would have its right place in their thoughts and in their practice.

However, I must ask you to turn with me to the first epistle to the Corinthians, in which we have the exposition of the table and the supper of our Lord. You have, doubtless, remarked, in your study of chapter x., that the cup is noticed before the bread. This may be owing to the moral condition of the assembly at Corinth which was such that the apostle felt it needful to depart from the usual order of the feast, in order to bring into special prominence before the heart that cup which sets forth the precious blood of Christ—the divine and everlasting basis of our peace and blessing—the most powerful moral lever which could possibly be brought to bear upon the spiritual condition of the church. The Corinthians needed a word of warning to “flee from idolatry;” and how could such a word be more powerfully enforced than by bringing before their hearts the mighty moral mystery of the blood-shedding of Christ by which alone they were brought, as purged worshippers, into the presence of the one living and true God. We can see, at a glance, that the fact of presenting the cup out of its usual order gives it a special emphasis; and the reason for such emphasis is found in the spiritual state of the people addressed.

I shall now quote the passage at length.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf [ἄρτος] which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because we the many are one loaf, one body, for we all partake of that one loaf.”

This, my much-loved friend, you will feel to be a most powerful passage. It gives, as you will perceive, peculiar prominence to the truth of the one body. I, of course, take it for granted that you agree with your correspondent in judging that the word “body” in chapter x. refers to Christ’s body the church; as the word “body” in chapter 11 refers to the body of our Lord—His own literal body given for us, and bruised on the cursed tree as an offering and an atonement for our souls. The “one loaf,” laid on the table, symbolizes the unity of the church. The “loaf” broken and eaten in the Supper, symbolizes the body of our Lord in the which He bare our sins (not ‘up to, but) on the cross.

Now, some may feel led to ask, “How is it that we have nothing in the Gospels, or in the Acts, in reference to this truth of the one body?” Simply because the time had not come and things were not ripe for the unfolding of this great mystery. In what have been called the three synoptical Gospels, as well as in the Acts, the testimony to Israel is maintained. God is seen lingering, in long-suffering mercy, over the blinded nation, if haply they would repent and turn to Him. In the Gospels we have the testimony of the Baptist and of our Lord Himself—righteousness and grace. In the Acts, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost; and then the special mission of the apostle Paul which closes, as to Israel, in the very last chapter, where he shuts the nation up under the judicial sentence uttered, centuries before by the prophet Isaiah.

Thus, we have a marvelous chain of testimony to Israel—John the Baptist—the Messiah—the Holy Ghost—the twelve apostles—the apostle Paul—all rejected, and the nation, as a consequence, given up, for the present—let it not be forgotten, only for a season, only in part—to judicial blindness.

All this, my beloved friend, is perfectly familiar to you. We have often gone over the ground together. But I refer to it now simply to show that, pending the testimony to the nation of Israel, it was not possible that the truth about the one body could be unfolded. But in the ministry of the apostle Paul, we have not only a testimony to Israel, but also the unfolding of the glorious mystery of the church, composed of Jew and Gentile, baptized by one Spirit into one body, associated with the glorified Head at the right hand of God. This is the mystery which was “ hid in Gad, from the beginning of the world “—“ not made known, in other ages, to the sons of men”—“ kept secret since the world began.”

There was absolutely nothing known of the truth of the church until it was revealed to the apostle Paul, and by him unfolded in his epistles. It can be of no possible use for anyone to deny this, or to maintain that the truth of the one body was always known to the people of God; and that the saints of Old Testament times and those of the New are all on one common ground. The word of God is against them. The passages I have just quoted from Rom. 16 and Eph. 3 prove, beyond all question, that the truth of the one body, composed of Jew and Gentile, was “ hid in God”—not hid in Old Testament scriptures; but hid in God, for most assuredly, whatever is contained in the scriptures is no longer hidden but revealed.

But I shall not pursue this line any further, as it would draw me away from my more immediate object, just now. I merely add that, as regards the strong opposition shown, in certain quarters, to the special place and portion of the church of God—the body of Christ, I have found it to be, in very many cases, the sad result of worldliness, prejudice, false theology, and lack of child-like subjection to the authority of holy scripture. Any one, who simply bows to the word of God, must see that the grand doctrine of the church—its special place, portion, and prospect—was never made known to any mortal until the days of the apostle Paul. And it seems to me, dearest A., to be time and labor lost to argue on the subject with anyone who does not submit his whole moral being to the divine authority of scripture. A man who will not yield to the plain statements of the word of God, is not likely to be convinced by the arguments of a man.

However, thanks and praise to our most gracious Lord, we now know and believe the precious truth of the one body; and, according to the teaching of 1 Corinthians x., we can never sit down to the table of our Lord without thinking of every member of that body. We cannot gaze on the “ one loaf” without having our hearts directed to the blessed Head above and to each and all the beloved members on earth.

I repeat the words, “ on earth,” and would invite your special attention to them. Not that I imagine, for a moment, that you have any difficulty or question in reference to them; but one finds a good deal of confusion in the minds of Christians as to whether the body is only presented on earth, or partly on earth, and partly in heaven. Scripture plainly teaches that the place of the body is on earth, for there the Holy Ghost is, there the gifts are. From the day of Pentecost until the moment of the rapture, the place of the body is on the earth. Those that have fallen asleep do not, for the present, count of the body. Some are passing away, and others are being incorporated; but the body is on the earth. Just like a regiment of soldiers; for instance, I knew the 17th Lancers, 40 years ago, and I know it still; but there may not be a single man in the regiment now that was in it 40 years ago; still the regiment exists, has the same colors, the same discipline, is subject to the same code of rules, the same military regulations, it is, in short, the self-same regiment though its

component parts have changed many times.

I was much struck lately with that expression, in 1 Cor. 12:27 “ Now ye are the body of Christ.” An objector might say, “ What! can a single assembly of believers be said to be the body?’ Are there not saints in Philippi, Colosse, Ephesus, and Thessalonica? How, then, can the Christians at Corinth be designated by such a title?”

The answer is blessedly simple. Each assembly, wherever convened; is the local expression of the whole body; and hence what is true of the whole is true of each local expression. There is no such thing as independency in the New Testament—no such thing as being a member of a church—no such thing as joining a congregation. As a poor christian gipsy once said to some friends of his who said they wished “ to join the Brethren.” “ Ah!” said he, “ abut need ye’s be talkin’ of? Sure, if ye’s be converted, all the joinin’ is done!”

How blessedly true! and yet how little understood At the time of our conversion, God joined us, by His Spirit, to the one body, and any other joining after that, is clearly a step in the wrong direction, which must be retraced, if we would “ keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.”

What then is a person to do, when converted? Look about for some scriptural body, church or congregation to join? Nothing of the kind. There really is no such thing within the covers of the Bible. For men to set about forming churches is as unscriptural an assumption as though they were to set about framing a new plan of salvation, or making out a new kind of righteousness. And if it be wrong for men to form churches, it must be wrong for any to join such. in fact, to form the church is God’s work and His only. And as none but God can form the church, so none but He can join any one thereto.

But again I say, “ What is the young convert to do?” Wait on God. in humility of mind for guidance. Prayerfully search the scriptures, and ask the Lord to lead him to His own table where he can remember Him, according to His own appointment, showing forth His death, and giving practical expression to the truth of the one body. In this way he is sure to be guided aright. “!he meek will he teach his way.” And again, “ With the lowly is wisdom.” But if I am full of myself—full of my own notions—full of prejudice and religious pride—unbroken, unsubdued, untouchable, I shall assuredly be left to follow my own devices. It needs a broken will, a teachable spirit, an eye anointed with heavenly eyesalve to discern, in a day of confusion like the present, the table of the Lord. If I am occupied with myself, or looking at people, comparing Christians here with Christians there, I shall, most surely, be perplexed and bewildered—an unhappy stranger to peace and progress. But, on the other hand, if, in singleness of eye, I look to God for guidance, He will guide me as surely as He has saved me. He will cause me to find my place in His assembly and at His table. He will give me such light and authority from His own word, that I shall have no more doubt as to my being in my right place than I have as to my eternal salvation.

It is impossible, my much loved brother, to shut our eyes to the peculiar difficulties of the day in which we live. I often feel deeply for young converts, and for all who really desire to know the way of truth, but are sadly perplexed by conflicting opinions, and opposing sects and parties. But I am increasingly persuaded of this fact, that if a soul will only wait on the Lord, in self-distrust, and ask Him to point out the way—His own blessed way, He will assuredly do so, according to His own sweet promise, “ I will guide thee with mine eye.” It is not cleverness, or long-headedness, or

intellectual power, or logical skill that will avail in the search after truth. Nay, all these things, if not brought under the sentence of death, will prove so many barriers or stumbling-blocks in our way. "A little child" is the model on which we must be formed for entrance into the kingdom; and we may depend upon it, that, unless we cultivate the spirit of a little child, we shall never be able to thread our way through the intricate labyrinth of Christendom.

Blessed be God, " There is a way which the vultures' eye hath not seen, nor the lion's whelp trodden," and in that way it is our happy privilege to be found. It may, if viewed from nature's stand-point, seem rough, narrow, lonely; but oh! dearest A., as you know, it is a way on which the light of our Father's approving countenance ever shines, and in which the companionship of our Lord Christ is ever enjoyed. "And is not this enough?" I know your answer. But I must close.

Ever, most affectionately yours,

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To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Twelfth Letter

My beloved friend, I must still invite you to linger with me over the intensely interesting subject of the Lord's supper, though it may seem to be a digression—and a lengthened one too—from the main line of things proposed in this series of letters. But in reality it is not a digression, inasmuch as it would hardly be possible to write on "the present condition of things in the church of God" without touching upon the important subject of the table and supper of the Lord.

Since penning my last letter to you, I have been dwelling with very much interest on that part of 1 Cor. 11 which bears upon the question of the Lord's supper. It seems to me a very striking and affecting proof of the value and importance attaching to this most precious institution, to find that our Lord Jesus Christ not only instructed the twelve apostles in reference to it, but actually appeared to His servant Paul, in heavenly glory, and gave him a special revelation designed for the church in all ages. This weighty fact furnishes an unanswerable argument against the notion that the Lord's supper partakes of an earthly, or Jewish, character, or that it involves in any way a descent from that higher spirituality to which we as Christians are called. And not only so, but it also speaks in accents of power to all those who, willfully or indolently, absent themselves from the supper of their Lord.

I say "willfully or indolently absent themselves," for, alas! we find the two things operating in the church of God. Some there are who can readily attend a preaching, a lecture, or a soiree, but who rarely present themselves at the table. Others, again, are so indolent as to spiritual things, as not to care much about any meeting.

1 Cor. 11 meets both the one and the other. Let us bend our ears and our hearts to its weighty instruction. "Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together, in assembly [εν εκκλησια—thus the four editors read it,] I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together, therefore, into one place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before his own, supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."

How very marked the distinction between "the Lord's supper" and "his own supper!" Does it not strike you, dear friend, that in the former we have the grand idea of the whole body; while in the latter we have a miserable selfish individuality? We cannot partake with spiritual intelligence of "the Lord's supper," without having before our hearts the blessed truth of the whole body and every precious member thereof. We cannot, if partaking in communion with the heart and mind of Christ, forget a single one of those so dear to Him, and so intimately associated with Him. In short, when we eat "the Lord's supper," we think of Christ and His beloved members. When we eat "our own supper," we are occupied with self and its interests. Miserable occupation! Well might the inspired apostle exclaim, "What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the assembly of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

Has all this no voice for us? Do we thoroughly apprehend the real secret of the apostle's appeal? Are we to pass over this passage of scripture as a reproof administered to a disorderly company of people recently converted from the gross abominations of heathen idolatry, and not yet instructed in the common refinements of Christianity? I cannot think so. I believe there is a holy lesson in this entire scripture for the professing church of this our day.

True, we do not see such a thing as drunkenness at what is called the Lord's supper, but is there not a "despising of the assembly of God?" Are there not heresies and schisms in our midst? And where are these so flagrantly and painfully apparent as in immediate connection with the table and supper of the Lord? If we are to be taught exclusively by holy scripture, we cannot fail to see that the table of the Lord, with its one loaf, sets before us the great truth of the "one body"—a truth so deeply precious to the heart of Christ. Where is this maintained in Christendom?

Where is it thought of? Where is there anything approaching to an expression of it in the celebration of the Lord's supper?

Let us not, my beloved friend, be afraid to look this weighty question straight in the face. Blessed be God, you and your correspondent have no object of our own to seek after. We have no personal interests to serve, no party cause to further. We have both, for many long years, been outside the camp, in that large and wealthy place from whence we can look around us at all that is going on, and test everything by the unerring word of God. We are outside of all the religious organizations of the clay; but for that very reason we are in a position to embrace, as in the very affections of the heart of Christ, all the members of His blessed body, wherever we may find them.

And may I not add, that just in proportion as we recognize that body, and seek to embrace those members, shall we become painfully conscious of the mode in which both the one and the other are lost sight of in the celebration of what is called the Lord's supper. In fact, the assembly of God is despised, and each one eats his own supper. The communion of the one body is ignored, and the precious feast which is intended to set forth that communion is looked upon as a means of grace to the individual communicant.

Nor is this all. I have further to ask you, how is it that Christians of various denominations can meet together during the week for the purpose of carrying out some great scheme of religion or philanthropy; but when the Lord's day comes you will find them within their various denominational enclosures, either without the Lord's supper for weeks together, or, if they have it at all, they do not partake of it on the ground of the one body, but as members of a mere human organization—call it what you please. Why do not Christians all meet on the first day of the week to break bread? How is it that millions of professing Christians only have the communion once a month, and many more only once in six months? How is it that many set it aside altogether? How comes it to pass that in one vast section of the professing church the Lord's supper is called "a sacrifice;" in another "a sacrament," and in another "a covenant?" Suppose the Apostle Paul to arrive in London next week, where could he go to break bread? Where could He find the table and supper of His Lord? Where could he celebrate the precious feast according to the order which he had received from our Lord Christ, and imparted to the church? He might go to one place, and see a man, calling himself a priest, arrayed in vestments, and offering up what he calls "an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead." He might go to another place, and find a man, more simply arrayed, no doubt, but a man in the capacity of a priest, giving the sacrament to a number of

people, without any question as to whether they are converted or not. He might go to other places, and find no table or supper at all; and if he were to inquire what brought them together, he would be told that they assembled, not to break bread, but to hear a sermon.

What would the blessed apostle do? What would he say? Could he sanction such a state of things? Could he countenance such a palpable and gross departure from the teaching of his Lord—such an ignoring of the “one body”—such neglect of the Head?

You know, my dearest A., that I do not write thus to wound the feelings of the very feeblest lamb in all the flock of Christ. As God is my witness, I would lay down my pen forever rather than do so. But I must deal with the facts—the plain, palpable, facts actually displayed in the present condition of the professing church of God. I cannot see any object in writing at all, if I am to cushion the plain truth; and if the statement of truth wounds any one, I cannot help that. I would ask the thoughtful reader to look around him, and see where is the Lord’s supper celebrated according to the teaching of holy scripture. Where will he find the Lord’s people gathered in assembly on the Lord’s day, the first day of the week, to break bread, as set forth in the New Testament? I would ask such an one if he himself is in the habit of meeting for this grand object. There is nothing in the entire range of the church’s history of higher importance, nothing of deeper interest to the heart of Christ, nothing more precious, nothing more solemn and significant, nothing more binding upon the hearts and consciences of all Christians, than the Lord’s supper. If this be so—and who can deny it?—does it not become us all to look well to it that we are not sanctioning in any way the neglect of the Lord’s supper, or any infringement whatever of the divine principle set forth in its celebration according to scripture. I maintain that every true lover of Christ is bound to protest solemnly against any departure from the due order of this most precious institution. Can we suppose for a moment that the blessed Apostle Paul would be found in any place where the supper was set aside, or interfered with in the smallest degree? Would he be satisfied to go on for several Lord’s days without the feast at all, or to see it, where professedly celebrated, marred, mutilated, or tampered with, in any way? I do not, and cannot, believe it. I cannot conceive the writer of 1 Cor. 10 and 11 giving the sanction of his presence to aught but God’s due order in this matter.

Will anyone say, “It makes no matter how we celebrate the Lord’s supper; provided we have it at all, and are sincere in our observance of it?” I ask, are the Lord’s table and the Lord’s supper to be observed according to the Lord’s word, or according to our own notions? Is it true that the Lord’s supper, as presented in His word, is designed to set forth the unity of His body, to show out His death, and to recall Him to remembrance in the way of His own special appointment? Nay, more, is it true that the Lord’s supper is the only way in which the church can truly give expression to these grand realities? I confess I do not see how this can be called in question. Well, then, can we with impunity neglect or tamper with the holy institution? Why, my beloved friend, when it was merely a question of a woman having her head covered or uncovered, the inspired apostle is so peremptory on the point, that he closes all discussion by the authoritative and withering statement, “If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God!” What would he say to any interference with the time or mode of celebrating the holy supper of the Lord?

But I must draw this letter to a close, and shall do so by quoting the remainder of the Spirit’s teaching on the great subject which has been engaging our attention. From it we shall learn the lofty source from whence the inspired apostle derived his knowledge of the truth respecting the

supper of His Lord; and we shall also be able to form a judgment as to the weight, importance, interest, significance, and value attaching to that institution in the mind of God.

“ For I have received of the Lord [not merely from the twelve] that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed [how sweetly touching! how deeply affecting!] took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily [in an unworthy manner], shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body [that is, His own literal body given, and bruised for us on the cross]. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. [They were judged in their own persons, and visited with bodily sickness and death, because of their neglect of the Lord's supper.] For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” 1 Cor. 11:23-32.

Now, my much-loved friend, is it asking too much of any Christian, after presenting such a body of scripture evidence on the subject of the Lord's supper, if we entreat him to judge, in the light of such evidence, the present condition of things in the church of God, in reference to the celebration of the Lord's supper? I think I anticipate your reply. For my own part, as I compare scripture with facts around me, I can only exclaim, what has the professing church done with the Lord's table? What has she done with the Lord's word? What has she done with the Lord's Christ?

Ever most affectionately yours,

To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Thirteenth Letter

My beloved friend,

When I commenced this series of letters, I had no idea of its extending to such a number as that which I have just penned. But so many subjects have crowded in upon the mind, and the space for each letter has been, of necessity, so limited, that I almost fear I have wearied you. And yet there is much in my mind to say to you—many things about which I long to pour out my heart to one with whom I feel such entire sympathy. But this “paper and ink” work is so terribly tedious that I often find the chariot wheels driving very heavily.

However, there is one special subject to which I must refer, ere I close this series of letters—a subject which could not possibly be overlooked by one professing to treat of “the present condition of things in the church of God.”

It is now close upon half a century since a very remarkable movement commenced in Great Britain and Ireland. At that time many of the Lord’s beloved people were led to see that there was something radically wrong in the various religious organizations of the day. Some, it may be, felt the death and desolation, the dearth, darkness and poverty of all around. They longed for something which the existing religious machinery failed to supply. There was a thirsting for christian fellowship, and a longing for a higher range of truth than was to be found either in the National Establishment or in the various dissenting bodies.

Others, again, were led to search the scriptures, and to compare what they found in these precious writings with the existing condition of things around them in the entire professing church, and they were not only led, but forced to the conclusion that the whole professing church was in a condition of utter and hopeless ruin—that there was not a single ecclesiastical polity, not a single clerical order, not a single theological creed, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, that could stand the test of holy scripture—that there was no such thing to be found as a faithful expression of the church of God as seen in the New Testament—no expression of the one body, no such thing as an assembly of believers gathered simply to the name of Jesus, and practically owning the presence, power, rule, and authority of the Holy G host.

Further, as regards the grand question of ministry, they looked in vain, throughout the various religious systems, for anything approaching to the truth as taught in the New Testament. Whether they examined the Greek, Latin, Anglican or Scotch Establishments, or, on the other hand, the various popular bodies of the day, they found that whether under the title of Bishop, Priest, Deacon, or Minister, human authority was absolutely essential to the exercise of every branch of ministry, so called. If a man possessed all the gifts of the apostle Paul himself, he dared not teach or preach Jesus Christ, unless he was licensed or authorized by man; whereas, on the contrary, though destitute altogether of spiritual gifts, nay, even of spiritual life itself, yet, if authorized, ordained, licensed or approved by man, he might teach and preach in that which professed to be the church of God. Man’s authority, without Christ’s gift, was quite sufficient. Christ’s gift without

man's authority was not.

All this they found was diametrically opposed to the word of God. When they turned, for example, to such a scripture as Eph. 4, they found, that ministry, in all its branches, had its source in a risen and glorified Head in the heavens. "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Not a syllable about human authority or human ordination, in any shape or form—not a sound of such a thing, or of anything approaching to it, but the very reverse. It is simply "the gift of Christ" or nothing at all. "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."

Here, then, they found the only source of ministry. All the ministerial gifts, all the gifts for edification flow down direct from a risen and glorified Christ. There is no human medium through which they can come—no human channel through which they are to flow—no human authority necessary to render them available—no human addition whatsoever. The gifts come down in all their divine integrity from the Head to the members. Man can add nothing to them. He cannot improve upon them. Those who receive them are responsible to exercise them—to wait upon their gift—to cultivate and develop it, with all diligence and faithfulness; but as to any human authority, license, sanction, or ordination, in order to make the precious gifts of Christ available for His body, the church, not only is there no such thing, but it is absolutely and completely opposed to the word of God. and to the mind of Christ.

Many earnest Christians, in various places, feeling deeply the state of the professing church, were led to separate from the different denominations of the day. Very few, if any of them, knew exactly what they were going to do; but they felt it impossible to go on any longer with what was so palpably opposed to the word of God. The old proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together" had its illustration in the history of those early brethren. They were all dissatisfied with what they saw around them; and it may be truly said of many of them, "They went out, not knowing whither they went." They could not continue in connection with plain and palpable error. They were sick of the worldliness and death of the professing church; they longed for something better; they came out, one from this, another from that, another from something else; they met outside and they saw no reason why they could not go on together, or why they might not break bread together as the early Christians did, counting on the Lord to be with them and to enable them to edify one another as He might bestow the needed gift and grace.

Amongst those who thus separated from the various organizations were some men of considerable gift, moral weight, intellectual power, and intelligence—clergymen, barristers, solicitors, military and naval officers, physicians, and men of high position and property. Their secession, as you may suppose, caused a very considerable stir and drew forth much opposition. Many a link of friendship was snapped; many a fondly cherished companionship was broken up; many sacrifices were made; much trial and sorrow was encountered; much reproach, obloquy, and persecution, had to be endured. I cannot attempt to enter into details, nor have I any desire to do so. It could serve no useful end, and the record could but give needless pain. All who will live godly—all who are determined to follow the Lord—all who will keep a good conscience—all who, with firm purpose of heart, will act on the authority of holy scripture, must make up their minds to endure trial and persecution. Our Lord Christ has told us that He came not to send peace but a

sword. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." And again, He tells us that "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

All this was fully realized in those times to which I am now referring; and not only was there this domestic opposition and persecution, but public prejudice in various shapes and forms, entailing much trial, sorrow, and loss.

Still the work went on. The Brethren gave themselves devotedly and energetically to the blessed work of evangelization and teaching. Books and tracts were written and circulated. The gospel was preached with a clearness, fullness, depth, and power, unknown since the apostolic times. The grand doctrines of the church as the body of Christ; the unity of the body; the presence and action of the Holy Ghost, in the individual believer and in the assembly; together with the blessed hope of the coming of Christ, first for His people, and then with them—all these glorious truths which had been almost wholly lost sight of for eighteen centuries, were brought out with great power, unction, and freshness, to the joy and blessing of hundreds of precious souls.

Moreover, the important distinction between preaching the gospel to the unconverted and teaching the Lord's people—so little understood or acted upon even now—began to be forcibly illustrated, and with the most blessed results. The evangelist and the teacher waited, each upon his own proper work—souls were converted, and believers were built up on their most holy faith. Worship, too, and "the communion of saints," began to be understood. The Lord's people met, on the first day of the week, to break bread, and found the presence of Jesus to be a divine reality in their midst. Of course, none were admitted to the table save such as were believed to be true Christians, sound in faith, and godly in walk.

All this, dearest A., attracted much attention. Many wondered whereunto it would grow. Some prophesied that it would all soon come to nothing. It was but a bubble on the stream of time, which would speedily burst. It was deemed utterly impossible that a number of people, without any ecclesiastical framework, any palpable organization, any clerical order, any visible head, any confession of faith, could ever get on together. How, it was asked, can your meetings go on? Who is to preside? Who is to keep order? You will have people popping up in all directions to speak, or pray, or give out hymns. It must prove a perfect Babel.

Such were the dark suggestions of many unfriendly and unbelieving prognosticators; but they did not prove true. People who attended the meetings were mightily struck by the fact—if scores or hundreds of people assembled, without priest, parson, or president, and yet no disorder, no confusion, no jar, no hitch. The Lord Himself was there. He was allowed His proper place as President, and He took it and filled it to the joy, comfort, blessing, and edification of His beloved people, who preferred Him to any human device.

I need hardly say, dear friend, that, here and there, mistakes were made. The weakness and folly of mere nature occasionally displayed themselves in the meetings. Just as, in the life of the individual Christian, notwithstanding the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, there are mistakes, evil, failure and infirmity, so in the assemblies of Brethren, as we can easily understand, there would be the exhibition of that which was not of the Spirit, although, in the main, the Spirit's presence and rule were owned and felt. The enemy, we may be sure, would take special pains to introduce

confusion into the assembly, in order to bring discredit on the ground which the assembly occupied.

Still, I can say, on looking back over an experience of 35 years, the order and power of the meetings were wonderful; while as to the mistakes and failures, I found a thousand-fold worse in the organizations around, and that, too, not mourned over as failure but viewed as the legitimate fruit of human arrangement. The Brethren had no human order or arrangement, yet the solemnity and order of their meetings were most striking. Many of those who attended their meetings as spectators, could not be persuaded but that there was, after all, some pre-arrangement, some recognized order; but I can solemnly declare to you, my friend, there was HE such thing. We never could tell, when we entered the meeting, what its order, tone, or character, was to be. I speak only of the meetings of the assembly for worship and communion. As to those meetings which were convened on individual responsibility, for preaching or teaching, the case was wholly different. The order of such meetings was always pretty much the same. It was entirely a matter of individual responsibility.

But I must draw this letter to a close. If the Lord will, I shall continue the subject in my next. I have given you but a very hasty and meager sketch of an intensely interesting movement in the church of God. I have referred to the rise of those called "Brethren." In my next I shall speak of their further history and its lessons.

Ever affectionately yours,

To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Fourteenth Letter

My beloved friend,

It need not surprise us if that interesting movement referred to in my last should be found to partake of the moral features presented in Matt. 13—to exhibit the moral tendencies set forth in the parable of the tares, the leaven, and the mustard-tree. In its early stages there was much that was profoundly interesting—great freshness, great simplicity, much genuine devotedness, and separation from the world. Many of those who at first came out had very undefined thoughts, and very imperfect apprehensions of truth. But they flocked together, and tasted, in a way they had never done before, the sweetness and power of the communion of saints.

Moreover, as they gave themselves to the free and prayerful study of the word of God, apart from all their preconceived theological views, they very soon began to find the Bible a new book. Deep, precious, and long-lost truth began to pour its living light upon their understandings. The grand doctrine of the church—its place, portion, and prospect; the operations of the Spirit of God; the proper hope of the church, namely, the coming of the Bridegroom, the bright and morning star, as distinct from the destiny of Israel and the earth—all this came forth with great clearness, vividness, and power, and attracted a large measure of attention in the various sections of Christian profession. In short, it was a most distinct, powerful, and blessed action of the Holy Ghost, the influence of which was felt to the ends of the earth. Of course, there was intense opposition, specially on the part of the clergy and ministers of all denominations. “The Brethren” (so-called) were designated spiritual Ishmaelites, whose hand was against every man, and every man’s hand against them. They were looked upon as the most bitter, the most bigoted, the most intolerant, sect in Christendom; and this while protesting loudly against sectarianism. Various nicknames were bestowed upon them, such as “Plymouthists,” “Darbyites,” “New Lights,” and various other names, derived from certain prominent individuals in different localities. But all this was a mere effort of the enemy to neutralize the influence of the ground occupied by the Brethren, which was felt to be, and really was, a standing testimony against the state and practice of the various religious bodies of the day—a positive declaration of the utter and hopeless ruin of the professing church, and the folly of attempting to form churches, and ordain ministers, without so much as a shadow of authority or power to do so.

However, my beloved friend, it was not the opposition and persecution from without that Brethren had most to dread. These rather tended to strengthen their hands, and draw them together. Times of persecution have always been healthful times for God’s people. So these early Brethren found it. There was much love and practical sympathy amongst them, very little formality, very little of what we may call “red tape and routine,” very little “Brethrenism;” but much real love and care for one another, great simplicity, beautiful freshness, and true devotedness to Christ and His cause.

But the arch-enemy had his eye upon them, and marvelously soon the bitter fruit of his subtle wiles began to appear. Almost from the outset he commenced, in the very midst of the Brethren themselves, a deep work, the manifest design of which was to undermine and set aside those

grand truths which, as I most fully believe, the Lord was bringing out by the ministry of the Brethren, namely, the unity of the body of Christ; the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, as distinct from His presence in the individual believer; and the special hope of the church, the coming of the Bridegroom for His people, as distinct from His appearing in judgment upon the world.

Then, in 1. Corinthians vi. 19, we read, “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.” Here we have the presence of the holy Ghost in the individual believer; and the practical exhortation founded on this we find in Eph. 4:30, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed—unto the day of redemption.”

How perfect is scripture! How profound its teaching! How precise its distinctions! The Holy Ghost dwells in the assembly—quench Him not! he dwells in your body—grieve Him not!

Against these most precious and glorious truths the enemy raised up an intense opposition, and that, strange to say, in the very place from whence the Brethren had received their special nickname.

Now, my dearest A., you need not fear that I am going to drag you through our Plymouth and Bethesda troubles. Far be the thought! My desire would be to forget them forever. It would be utterly impossible for me to convey to you the bitter memories and sad associations that linger round these two words, “Plymouth” and “Bethesda.” But this I must tell you, that, although that humiliating history caused me the deepest sorrow I had ever tasted, yet I really reaped a golden harvest from it, for which I shall have to bless God throughout eternity.

I had not the honor of being among the first of those who planted their feet on the blessed ground occupied by Brethren. I left the Establishment about the year 1889, and took my place at the table in Dublin, where dear Mr. Bellett was ministering with great acceptance. As a young man, I, of course, walked in retirement, having no thought of coming forward in public ministry of any kind. Indeed, I may say to you, beloved friend, that nothing but the most solemn sense of responsibility could ever have induced me to stand up in public. I never could, nor can I now, understand the excessive forwardness of some young men, who seem ever ready to thrust themselves before the assembly of God’s people, even in the presence of gray heads and gifted vessels. To me this sort of thing has ever been supremely offensive.

But this is only by the way.

I was not long on the ground, when it became painfully manifest that the enemy was making a deadly effort to quash altogether the testimony of Brethren. I shall not mention any names—it could serve no useful end to do so. It is with facts and principles we have to do. I may just say that Plymouth became the special sphere for the display of the enemy’s power. Numbers increased rapidly there, and there was a most diligent and determined effort to make Plymouth a kind of center, from which an influence was to go forth through Devonshire and Somersetshire. But, alas! it became the center and so; tree of mischief and sorrow. There were, I believe, between eight hundred and nine hundred in communion. It looked very imposing to such as were not behind the scenes, or could not see beneath the surface. But, for my own part, I have no doubt that the stamp of death and the power of Satan might have been discerned by a spiritual observer, almost from

the very outset.

The presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly was practically denied. Human authority, human management, and human influence took the place of simple, earnest, holy dependence upon the rule and guidance of the Spirit of God. Certain gifted leaders held the reins in their own hands. If any, not approved by the or by their admirers, attempted to minister, they were put down, and that, too, often by means which I should blush to name. In short, it was clerical authority over again, only in a much more odious form, inasmuch as it was positively dishonest. If we are going to have human authority at all, let us go back at once to the authority of the Pope; for I must candidly declare, I know not any consistent standing-ground between the Pope in the chair of St. Peter, and the Holy Ghost in the assembly. In this latter I do, thank God, most deeply and reverently believe—yea, so heartily and thoroughly do I believe in it, that, by the grace of God, I should not remain for an hour in any place where it was denied in principle or in practice. Human order, power, and arrangement, be they ever so imposing, are a poor miserable substitute for the blessed presence and living ministry of God the Holy Ghost, who has come down to dwell, not merely in individuals, but in the assembly; and not merely in Pentecostal gifts, but as the blessed Comforter, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, to feed us with all His fullness and preciousness, and, blessed be God, to abide with us forever.

It was this latter that was practically denied at Ebrington Street, Plymouth, and in its place there was most manifestly man's iron grasp to keep things in order.

I cannot attempt to go into detail; I can merely deal with the salient facts; and I do so simply for the purpose of illustrating and enforcing these great truths, of which the devil sought to deprive us, and which, through the goodness and faithfulness of God, have come forth from the terrible debris of Plymouthism, in greater brightness, fullness, freshness, and power, than ever; so that, as I said, we have positively reaped a golden harvest from this most sad and humiliating history. I am quite sure, my beloved friend, you have no desire to go and grope amid the debris; were you to do so, you would find a quantity of the most wretched and defiling rubbish that could possibly engage your attention. Eat we shall draw the curtain of silence over it, and thank God that in this, as in all beside, the eater has yielded meat, and the strong sweetness. Ebrington Street fell, and buried many in its ruins--buried them, I mean, as regards conscience, walk, and public testimony. But its fall has been fruitful in blessing to thousands. Had it been allowed to go on, we should have been left without a true Christ, and without the Holy Ghost; for, most assuredly, a false Christ was preached at Plymouth, and the presence of the Holy Ghost was denied. And what had we left? Darkness, death, and desolation. I do most solemnly declare to you, my friend, that in the annals of the church of God, I know of no more marked and determined effort of Satan to upset the very foundations of Christianity, and swamp us all in the blasphemous depths of a dark and abominable Socinianism. This is the calm and deliberate judgment of your correspondent, after having waded through it all, and looking back at it all, after an interval of thirty years.

But God had mercy upon us; and when the enemy came in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord raised up a standard against him. The very remembrance of the noble stand that was made for the truth of God, from the year 1845 to 1848, fills the heart at this moment with deep praise and thankfulness. The Land of the Lord was with His people. It may be all very well for superficial observers, who know nothing really about the facts of the case, to talk about failure in manner,

temper, spirit, style, and such like. To me it is all the most vapid and worthless verbiage. Even supposing men did lose their temper, can we wonder at it, when we remember that they had to deal, not infrequently, with shameful lies, trickery, and, above all, with blasphemous doctrines? Shall we think for a moment of comparing mere infirmity of temper—even granting that such was manifested—with positive blasphemy against Christ, or cold indifference thereto? Supposing a man loses his temper in proving that two and three make five, I am sorry he lost his temper, but two and three make five all the same.

Some, however, may condemn me for raking up old sores. They may deem it better to screen the Brethren. I reply, I have nothing to screen. I am not dealing with Brethren, but with the manifest wiles of Satan. Should I screen them? Nay, but expose them, and raise a warning note in the ear of the church of God. It is neither a question of screening nor exposing Brethren, but of simply reading their history, and profiting by its solemn and striking lessons. Has all that happened at Plymouth or Bristol touched the ground which Brethren occupy? Not in the smallest degree. Nay, it has brought out the truth with greater clearness and force than ever. It has caused us to see with far greater distinctness the grand reality of what was involved. I am persuaded there are hundreds amongst us who never really understood the true ground of the church of God—its standing, its privileges, and its hopes, until they were called to pass through the terrible sorrow of Plymouth and Bethesda. Numbers had come upon the ground without understanding it. They were attracted by the preaching and teaching. They found at the meetings of Brethren what they could not find anywhere else. Hundreds of precious souls, who had been for years in darkness and bondage, groping their way amid the hazy mists of Christendom, were relieved, charmed, and blessed, by the full and free gospel of the grace of God, and by the unfolding of the precious truth contained in many portions of the word of God, which had till then been a dead letter to them. Moreover, many were attracted by the love and fellowship which they found amongst Brethren, and were led to cast in their lot amongst them, with very little, if any, intelligence as to the great underlying principles. The consequence was, that, when the struggle came, they were not prepared for it, and many were stumbled, and turned aside. They were put to the test, as all are sure to be sooner or later, and many gave way, and returned to what they had come out of, thus “building again the things which they destroyed, and making themselves transgressors.” For if the things were right, why had they left them? If wrong, why go back to them? In either case they made themselves transgressors.

But I must close this letter. If God permit, I shall conclude this series in my next. It has already extended itself far beyond my original thought, and yet I have much that I long to say to you. The Lord's own peace be with you!

Ever, My dearest A.,

Your deeply affectionate

To a Friend on the Present Condition of Things: Fifteenth Letter

My beloved friend,

The year 1848 was a testing time for all who professed to occupy the ground of Brethren. In the summer of that year, a question was raised as to whether we were really gathered on the ground of the unity of the body, or merely as independent or fragmentary congregations, having a measure of acquaintance and sympathy, but no common ground of responsibility in fellowship and testimony as those who were members one of another, united to the living Head in heaven, and to one another, by the Holy Ghost. It was at Bristol that this profoundly interesting question was raised; and from thence it extended to every place, on the face of the earth, where there happened to be an assembly of Brethren.

As you are doubtless aware, there was a congregation of Baptists who met for worship at a chapel called "Bethesda," in Bristol. There was an associated body meeting at "Salem" chapel; but I shall speak of both under the one name of Bethesda, and further I shall do so as briefly as possible, inasmuch as my sole object is to bring out the great principle at stake, and not, by any means, to dwell on persons or places which can only possess an ephemeral interest.

Well, then, some years previous to the time above referred to, this Baptist congregation was received into fellowship with Brethren—received as a body. The whole assembly, professedly and ostensibly, took the ground occupied by Brethren. I do not mention names or descend into minute details; I merely give the great leading fact, because it illustrates a most important principle.

It has been my conviction, for many years, that this reception of a congregation was a fatal mistake on the part of Brethren. Even admitting, as I most heartily do, that all the members and ministers may have been most excellent people taken; yet I am persuaded that it is a mistake, in any case, to receive a whole body as such. There is no such thing as a corporate conscience. Conscience is an individual thing; and unless we act individually before God, there will be no stability in our course. A whole body of people, led by their teachers, may profess to take certain ground, and to adopt certain principles; but what security is there that each member of that body is acting in the energy of personal faith, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and on the authority of the word of God? It is of the very last importance that, in every step we take, we should act in simple faith, in communion with God, and with an exercised conscience. Indeed I cannot but believe that one special cause of weakness in the various assemblies of Brethren is that numbers have come on the ground who are not in the power of the truth in their own souls, and they act as a dead weight and a hindrance. But, most clearly, it is a grave mistake to receive a whole body of people into communion where there is no opportunity of testing the spiritual state of the individuals composing that body.

We had a very striking illustration of this in London, in the year 1853. A congregation of Baptists desired to take the ground occupied by Brethren; and they did so. But hardly had they taken the step, when the brother who had built the chapel and gathered, by his preaching, the congregation,

perceived the mistake. He immediately called the assembly together, and told them that both he and they must act on their individual responsibility before the Lord. In pursuance of this statement, on the following Lord's day, the chapel was locked, and the people were compelled individually to consider their ground and their proper course of action.

Now, some would pronounce this a very bold step; but it was a noble step; and the sequel proved it to be a right step—the only right step. In the course of a few weeks--weeks, no doubt, of profound exercise of soul and deep and painful searchings of heart—that whole congregation---with two or three exceptions, and those, I believe, of a doubtful character---not in a body, but individually applied for fellowship, at the various assemblies of Brethren, and each case was taken up on its own merits, and tested by the word of God. Then the brother to whom the chapel belonged, kindly lent it as a convenient meeting place for Brethren. Of course, he had, during the time the place was closed on Lord's day morning, carried on his individual work of preaching and teaching, as he does to this day; and, blessed be God, since that time, that dear spot has been made the birth-place of hundreds of souls, and a blessed feeding-place for the lambs and sheep of the beloved flock of Christ.: May it continue to be so till He comes!

How very different was the case of Bethesda! A testing time came. Deadly error was taught at Plymouth—error touching the position and relations of our Lord Jesus Christ—error which placed Him (I shrink from penning the words) under the curse and wrath of God all His days and that not vicariously, but in virtue of His association with Israel and the human family.

I cannot bear to go further into the terrible doctrine taught at Plymouth, or to transfer to this page the expressions in which that doctrine was presented. I have no desire to use strong or stern language in reference to individuals; but I must say to you, my beloved friend, that I consider the doctrine quite as bad as Socinianism itself; at least the former as well as the latter leaves us without the Christ of God. It is useless to talk of distinctions, for if we have not the Christ of the New Testament, we have no Christ, DO Savior at all. Arius or Socinus may deny the deity of our adorable Lord and Savior; Irving may deny His pure and sinless humanity; a Plymouth teacher may present Him in a position and in a relationship which would make Him need a Savior for Himself—may God pardon the very penning of the lines! May I-Te pardon the man who taught such horrible doctrine!—They all deny the Christ of God.

They blaspheme His person and His name. Their doctrines are to be held in utter abhorrence by every true lover of Jesus.

Well then, dearest A., this deadly error was taught at Plymouth; and, moreover, the holders and teachers of this error were received at Bethesda. A few faithful members remonstrated, protested, and entreated that such doctrine should be judged, and its teachers put out of communion. It was all in vain. Ten of the leaders wrote a letter—the well-known “ Letter of the Ten”—well known, I mean, to those of us who were called to wade through those deep waters. In this letter, which was adopted by the great bulk of the congregation at Bethesda, they refused to judge the doctrine. They said, “ What have we at Bristol to do with doctrines taught at Plymouth?” In a word, they committed themselves, plainly and palpably, to the ground of neutrality and indifference, as regards our blessed Head; and independency, as regards His beloved body.

Such was the ground set forth in “ The Letter of the Ten”—a document prepared by ten intelligent men, adopted by some hundreds of christian people, and which, I believe, remains, to this day, unrepealed and unrepented of. It is true that, after the sad mischief was done, and fifty or sixty of the Lord’s people had left Bethesda rather than sanction such a wretched principle or ground of fellowship, the leaders held what they called seven church meetings for the purpose of examining the tracts in which the error was taught, and one of the leaders said that “ according to that doctrine, Christ would need a Savior for Himself.” But the “ Letter” was never withdrawn—never repented of; and hence it remains to this day, as the studied and deliberate statement of the real ground of Bethesda fellowship, which is, to my mind, simply indifference, as to Christ, and independency, as to His body the church.

I purposely refrain from giving the names of persons, and from entering into any details as to the conduct, manner, or spirit of individuals. As regards all these things, we can believe there were faults on all sides. I must confess I have no taste for dwelling upon such things. And further, I may assure you, my friend, that I am not conscious of a single atom of bitter feeling toward any individual. I am writing after an interval of 27 years, and I desire to confine myself to the great principle involved in the whole case of Plymouth and Bethesda. I have not depended upon hearsay in the matter. We all know how things may be colored and exaggerated in the heat of discussion. But there can be no question of coloring, exaggeration, or heated discussion, in reading the Plymouth tracts which contain what I must designate abominable doctrine, or in reading the “ Letter of the Ten” which sets forth the miserable principles of neutrality, indifference, and independency.

The fact is, Bethesda ought never to have been acknowledged as an assembly gathered on divine ground; and this was proved by the fact that, when called to act on the truth of the unity of the body, it completely broke down. And not this only; but had the members of the congregation been more animated by true loyalty to Christ they would have risen as one man to expel from their borders every trace of the doctrine which blasphemed their Lord. I am quite prepared to believe that numbers were totally ignorant of what they were about; that they meant well, and had no true apprehension of what was involved. But if an ignorant pilot is urging the vessel upon the rocks, it is poor consolation to those on board to be told that he is a most blameless well-meaning man.

Such, then, dearest A., is a very brief and condensed statement of the real ground of what is called “ The Bethesda Question.” Of course, Brethren everywhere had to face it. There was no getting out of it. It had to be looked at straight in the face. To many it proved a terrible stumblingblock. They never could see their way through it. For my own part, I felt I had just the one thing to do, namely, to take my eye off completely from persons and their influence, and fix it steadily upon Christ. Then all was as clear as a sunbeam and as simple as the very elements of truth itself. I have never had a shadow of a doubt or hesitation, as to the course adopted in the main, or as to the great underlying principles; but I can quite understand and make allowance for the difficulties of souls just setting out on their course, when called upon to encounter the Bethesda question, particularly when I remember how hard it is, generally speaking, to get a thoroughly dispassionate and unprejudiced view of it. But this I must say, as the result of a good deal of experience and observation, I have invariably found that where a person was enabled to look at the matter simply in reference to Christ and His glory, all difficulty vanished. But, on the other hand, if personal feeling, affection for individuals, anything merely natural, be allowed to

operate, the spiritual vision is sure to be clouded, and a divine conclusion will not be reached.

There is one thing which seems to act as a terrible bugbear to many, and that is the cry of "Exclusivism" raised against those who, as I believe, seek to maintain the truth of God at all cost. A moment's calm reflection, in the light of scripture, will be sufficient to show that we must either go thoroughly in for the principle of exclusivism, or admit that, on no ground, for no reason whatsoever, should we ever exclude from the Lord's table one who may really be a member of the body of Christ. If anyone will maintain this latter, he is plainly at issue with the apostle in 1 Cor. 5 In that chapter, the assembly at Corinth was distinctly taught, by the inspired apostle, to be an "exclusive" assembly. They were commanded to exclude from their midst and from the table of their Lord, one who, notwithstanding his grievous sin, was a member of the body of Christ.

Now, is not this the very heart's core of the principle of exclusivism? Unquestionably. And, further, my friend, let me ask, must not the assembly of God, of necessity, be exclusive? Is it not responsible—solemnly responsible to judge the doctrine and the morals of all who present themselves for communion? Is it not solemnly humid to put away any one who, in doctrine or walk, dishonors the Lord and defiles the assembly? Will any one question this? Well, then, this is "exclusivism"—that terrific word!

The fact is very many confound two things which are quite distinct in scripture, the house of God and the body of Christ. Hence, if anyone is refused a place at the table, or put away from it, they speak of "rending the body of Christ," or "cutting off members of Christ."

Was the body rent, or a member cut off, when the sinning one was put away from the assembly at Corinth? Clearly not. Neither is it in any such case. Thanks be to God, no one can rend the body of Christ or cut off its very feeblest member. God has taken care that "there shall be no schism in the body." The strictest discipline of the house of God can never touch, in the most remote way, the unity of the body of Christ. That unity is absolutely indissoluble. A clear understanding of this would answer a thousand questions and solve a thousand difficulties.

But then it is often said, when a person is put away or refused, "Do you not consider him a child of God?" I answer, No such question is raised. "The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." We are not called upon to pronounce as to a man's secret relations with God, but simply as to his public walk before men. If an assembly denies its responsibility to judge the doctrine and walk of those "within," it is not an assembly of God at all, and all who would be true to Christ should leave it, at once.

Hence, therefore, my beloved and valued friend, we can see that "exclusivism," so far from being a dreaded bugbear, is the bounden duty of every assembly gathered on the ground of the church of God; and those who deny it prove themselves to be simply ignorant of the true character of the house of God, and of the immensely important distinction between the discipline of the house and the unity of the body.

And here you will allow me just to answer a question which is not infrequently put; it is this, "Do the Brethren consider themselves the church of God?" They do nothing of the kind. They are not the church of God. There are thousands of the beloved members of Christ scattered throughout the various denominations of the day. I am prepared to recognize, in the person of a Roman Catholic priest, a member of the body of Christ and a gifted vessel of the Holy Ghost. I may marvel

how he can stay where he is, for I believe the Romish system to be a dark and dreadful apostasy. But then I do not believe in any one of the religious systems in Christendom. Not one of them can stand the test of holy scripture. Not one of them is the church of God. No; nor is one of them on the ground of the church of God.

And here, my friend, is just the difference. I do not believe that the Brethren are the church of God; but they are on the ground of the church of God, else I should not be amongst them for one hour. They occupy a position which ought to command every saint of God in Christendom. What should prevent all Christians from coming together on the first day of the week to break bread, in the unity of the body of Christ, and in dependence upon the guidance and power of the Holy Ghost? Is not this what we find in the New Testament? And, if so, why should we not follow it? Do I want to see the church restored to its pentecostal glory? By no means. This was the delusion of poor Edward Irving. I never expect to see the church restored; but I long to see Christians departing from error and iniquity, and walking in obedience to the precious word of God. Is this expecting too much? Nay, I can never be satisfied with anything less.

And do not imagine, dearest A., that I want to puff off "The Brethren." Nothing is further from my thoughts. I believe the ground they occupy is divine, else I should not be on it. But as to our conduct on the ground, we can only put our faces in the dust. The position is divine; but as to our condition, we have ever to humble ourselves before our God. A friend once said to me, "Do you know that the Revelation Mr.—is delivering a course of lectures against the Brethren?" "Tell him," I said, "with my kind regards, that I am doing the very same, just now. But there is this immense difference between us, that he is lecturing against their principles, while I am lecturing against their practices. He is attacking the ground; I, the conduct on the ground."

And yet, it is not that I consider the Brethren any worse than their neighbors; but, when I consider the high ground they take, the conduct and character ought to be correspondingly high. This alas! is not the case. Our spiritual tone, both in private life and in our public reunions, is sorrowfully low. There is a sad lack of depth and power in our assemblies. There is excessive feebleness in worship and ministry.

I cannot, nor do I want to, go into details in the way of proof or illustration. I content myself with the statement of the broad fact, in order that our souls may be exercised as to the real cause of all this. I fear there are many contributing causes. I believe the vast increase in our numbers, within the last twenty years, is, by no means, an index of an increase of power. Quite the reverse. No doubt, we have to be thankful for the increase—thankful for every soul brought into what we believe to be a right position. But then we need to be watchful. The enemy is vigilant, and he will seek to introduce spurious materials into our midst in order to bring discredit on the ground, and cast dishonor on the Lord. In the various denominations around us the inconsistencies of individuals are in a measure hidden behind the bulwarks of the system. But Brethren stand fully exposed, and their failures are used as an argument against their ground. The grand point for us all is to be humble and lowly, dependent and watchful. Let us remember those precious words to the church of Philadelphia, "Thou hast little strength, and hast kept my word, and not denied my name," Yes, dear friend, this is it, "My word"—"My name." May we remember it! May we be kept very little in our own eyes, clinging to Christ, confessing His name, keeping His word, serving His cause, waiting for His coming!

Here I must close my letter, and my series of letters. I only hope I have not wearied you. I certainly have run on much further than I intended when I began. But then you never told me to stop, so that if I have overtaxed you, you must, in measure, blame yourself.

The Lord bless you, beloved brother, most abundantly, and make you a blessing! So prays, Your deeply affectionate C. H. M.

The Saviour's Appeal

“ Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” flow direct, how pointed, how personal is the Lord's appeal to the heart in these words. Not, do we, or they, but Post thou? The answer too, must be direct and personal. A Yes, or a No. Hesitation, indecision, silence, means no, so far, at least as man is concerned. “ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10) The righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ is for God; the confession of the mouth is for man. Christ is preached for the simplest to believe on Him with the heart, and to confess Him with the mouth. “ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hall raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Here confession is put first; not because it is the more important, for without the heart it would be good for nothing, but because it leads both angels and men to celebrate the praise of Jesus. How often the evangelist turns away with a heavy heart from closed. lips—from sullen silence, which alas, too often bespeak an inward lighting against the truth; but how bright his praise, when with a beaming countenance Jesus is confessed as Savior and Lord.

Again, dear reader, we would press as a parting word at the close of another year, this deeply solemn question, “ Post thou,” for thyself, of thyself, believe on the Son of God?” Thy eternal interests--the joys of heaven, or the miseries of hell, hang on thy yes or no. Thou must answer for thyself, and answer to the Savior. Surely there is wondrous love in this appeal. The blessed Jesus, as it were, looks straight in thy face, stands before thee, reveals Himself to thee, and says, “ Post thou believe on Me? Wilt thou give thine heart to Me? Wilt thou take up thy cross and follow Me?” What then, dear reader, wilt thou say, or hast thou said? Canst thou adopt the language of the man to whom Christ had given sight? “ Lord, I believe;” and so saying, fell at his feet, and worshipped Him? The Lord in mercy grant that this may be thy happy place, thy blessed portion, thy eternal joy. How simple it all is! only believe and praise the Lord; and still praise Him. But thou knowest the direful consequences of unbelief—no Savior, no salvation, no heaven, no happiness, but banishment from the presence of God and the Lamb, from the holy and the good, and doomed to dwell in the depths of despair, within the barred gates of hell forever and forever. May the Holy Spirit now lead thee from the heart to say, “ Lord I believe; and worship Jesus as Savior and Lord.” John 9:38.

School Life

I sat in the school of sorrow,
The Master was teaching there;
But my eyes were dim with weeping,
And my heart was full of care.
Instead of looking upward,
And seeing His face divine,
So full of the tenderest pity
For weary hearts like mine
I only thought of the burden,
The cross that before me lay;
So hard, and heavy to carry,
That it darkened the light of day.
So I could not learn my lesson,
And say, "Thy will be done!"
And the Master came not near me,
As the weary hours went on.
At last, in my heavy sorrow,
I looked from the cross above;
And I saw the Master watching,
With a glance of tender love.
He turned to the cross before me,
And I thought I heard Him say,
" My child, thou must bear thy burden
And learn thy task today.
" I may not tell the reason,
'Tis enough for thee to know

That I, the Master, am teaching,
And give this cup of woe.”
So I stooped to that weary sorrow;
One look at that face divine
Had given me power to trust Him,
And say, “ Thy will, not mine.”
And thus I learned my lesson,
Taught by the Master alone;
He only knows the tears I shed,
For He has wept His own.
But from them came a brightness,
Straight from the home above,
When the school life will be ended,
And the cross will show the love.
Clifton. E. A. G.

Seven Grand Facts About the Blood

I.-IT MAKES ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.

“ FOR the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for • your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” Lev. 17:11.

Let us specially note that God, blessed be His holy name, has graciously given us the blood of His own beloved Son to make an atonement for our guilty souls, so that, instead of our sins being before Him, He has that precious blood which has put them all away forever. “ Hallelujah !”

II.-FORMS THE BASIS OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD TO THE WORLD, AND OF ITS APPLICATION TO THE BELIEVER.

“Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Rom. 3:24-26.

How precious is this for the poor guilty sin-burdened soul! God can righteously forgive us all our sins, and count us perfectly righteous, if we simply believe in Jesus. Such is the efficacy of the blood of Christ! Such the virtue of His peerless name! May we not again exclaim, “ Hallelujah!”

III.-IS THE MERITORIOUS GROUND OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.

“ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” Rom. 5:8, 9.

IV.-THROUGH IT WE HAVE REDEMPTION.

“ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he bath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we hare redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Eph. 1:5-7; Col. 1:14.

V.-BY IT WE HAVE A PERFECTLY PURGED CONSCIENCE.

“ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Heb. 9:13, 14.

What a priceless treasure is here! The guilty, agonized conscience perfectly purged, divinely tranquillized!

VI.-BY IT WE HAVE ACCESS INTO THE HOLIEST OF ALL.

“ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

We come into the presence of God in all the efficacy and value of the blood of His own Son; and He welcomes us as He welcomes the One in whose name we come.

VII.-BY IT WE ARE CLEANSED TO WALK IN THE LIGHT AS GOD IS IN THE LIGHT.

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

The light of the divine presence makes manifest that there is not a speck or a stain of sin upon the person of the believer. The blood of Jesus makes us as clean as the throne of God can demand.

Reader, what say you to these seven grand facts about the blood? Do you know them for the peace and blessing, rest and comfort, of your own soul? We are not going to preach you a long sermon; we have merely quoted for you the veritable words of the Holy Ghost; and we leave you with this solemn question—Are these things mixed with faith in your precious soul?

Special Notice to Our Readers

We beg to remind our readers that, should they have any old books, pamphlets, periodicals or tracts, lying past, they might make good use of them by sending them to “ Mr. W. R. Hartridge, 106, Grosvenor Road, Highbury New Park, Islington, London, N.”

We who live in highly favored England have very little idea of the delight, comfort and edification which might be imparted to the beloved people of God, in distant lands, by the very books and tracts which he unused in our drawers and on our bookshelves. May all the Lord's people be stirred up to think of these things!

The dear friend above named is only too happy to serve as a channel of communication in this good work, and we trust that the reader will at once look out all his superfluous odd numbers of periodicals, and all such tracts and pamphlets as he may be able to dispense with, and forward them to our friend Mr. H.

December, 1874.

Sweetly He Rests

Sweetly he rests--while others sigh,
Treading this vale of tears;
Softly his peaceful head doth lie
Forgetful of their cares.
Affection's tear may flow awhile—
Weak nature's tribute due:
Some grief is sacred—Jesus wept—
These tears are sacred too.
Yet linger not, fond Parent, here;
Nor bow the weeping head:
No sepulcher entombs the soul—
It knows no earthly bed.
Nor doth oblivion's endless night
His sleeping spirit shroud:
Far in the heaven of God's own light
He dwells without a cloud.
Ah! who would mar his glory now,
Or bid him bring again
The cup he fills at God's own fount,
To viler founts of men?
Let grief, then, cast no sullen shade,
And shed no bitter tear;
Joy that your son a saint is made,
And weep that you are here.
Sweetly he rests—while others sigh
With care and grief opprest;

Softly his blissful head doth lie
Upon his Savior's breast.
From the pearly gates beyond the stare
Two angels came that day,
And, as ye caught the last fond smile,
They wafted him away.
Oh! to have heard the burst of song,
Through heaven's arches rolled,
As they bore him in through the shining throng—
A lamb to the Savior's fold.
Yet will affection mourn him lost
To home and life, and love!
Nay—hush the thought—and say, oh, say,
What bath he found above?
A home, and life, and love he hath:
The home he longed to see—
Life more abundant, without death—
Love in immensity.

To Him That Loves Us

“ To Him that loves us”—Ah, those words!

And shall such words meet no reply

The full heart swelleth, but its chords

Are silent; not only through the eye

The rapt soul findeth utterance; evermore

She bends in silent ecstasy her Lord and

Savior to adore.

“To Him that loves us!” can we speak

When bowed beneath that weight of love?

The human tongue is all too weak;

And even in the choirs above,

Though angels hymn His everlasting praise

They know not, cannot know, the love

Which He to us displays.

For He hath washed us in His blood!

O let us then His grace adore!

“ And made us kings and priests to God,”

To Him be glory evermore;

“ His God and Father,” on the heavenly throne,

Our God and Father too, for we are one with

Him, His own.

Behold He cometh in the cloud,

And every eye shall see Him then,

And they which pierced Him, weep aloud

And every tribe and race of men

“ Shall wail because of Him” who sits in judgment then;—

Lord, this Thy righteousness requireth-

Even so, Amen.”

They spit upon Thee when on earth,

In mockery crown'd Thee with the thorn,

They trampled on Thy lowly birth,

Thy “ grace and truth” they laugh'd to scorn;

They cast them out, who still Thy holy name adored—

But Thy God bath exalted Thee, and they

Shall own that Thou art Lord.

Thou art the First—thou art the Last,

Thou art the ever living One;

The Father's joy, in ages past,

His only, well beloved Son;

In Thee He bath been glorified—and now

He hath decreed “ that at the name of

Jesus, every knee shall bow.”

The Voice of My Beloved

Sol. 8:13, 14.

Mine own Beloved's voice!

'Tis this I wait to hear!

No earthborn music half so choice,

No other tones so dear.

He soon will come again!

I shall His glory see!

He came long since, in grief and pain,

To seek and ransom me.

He left His royal throne

To free the captive slave;

He found me—mark'd me for His own;

Oh, what a price He gave!

The costly price of blood

Deliver'd me from hell;

And made my title clear and good

With Him on high to dwell—

His love as death is strong,

No floods can drown its tide;

And loving Him, I pant and long

To shelter at His side.

Far more His heart doth yearn

To call His exile borne;

A few short hours, He will return,

And I no more shall roam.

Within His garden fair

The milk white lilies grow;

“ A little while” He tarries where

You living waters flow.

Make haste, Beloved, make haste,

Desire my spirit thrills:

Apart from Thee, the world's a waste;

Come quickly o'er the hills!

A Word to Our Readers: the Authority of the Scriptures

Dearly beloved in the Lord, Ere closing our volume for the year 1875, we desire to offer you a few earnest words on a subject which we deem to be of commanding interest and importance; it is this: The divine sufficiency and supreme authority of holy scripture; and the urgent need of submitting ourselves absolutely to its guidance in all things.

And, in thus stating our thesis, we would not have you to suppose, for a moment, that we undervalue human writings, in their proper place. Nothing is further from our thoughts. Indeed it would ill become us, as the conductors of a monthly magazine, to speak disparagingly of a branch of christian ministry so largely used of God in all ages of His church's history, and specially in this our own day.

No, beloved, we prize human writings more than we can attempt to say. We receive them as streams from the fountain head. And, further, we would add that we have rarely met anyone who affected to despise christian writings, on the pica of reading nothing but the Bible, that was not crude, shallow, and contracted. We might just as well say that we would not listen to a brother speaking to us in the assembly, as refuse to read what God had given him to write, provided we had time to do so. How often has a book or tract been made a rich blessing to the soul, either in bringing one to Christ, or building up or helping on in Him! How often may we have read some passage of scripture and seen nothing in it until the Lord had used some paragraph in a human writing to unlock its treasures to our hearts! We are, none of us, self-sufficient. We are dependent one on another. We grow by that which every joint supplieth. We need all the "helps" which God has set in the body for our common profit and blessing.

But having said thus much to guard against misunderstanding, and to put human writings in their right place, we return to our special object in this brief address.

There is but one supreme and paramount authority, and that is the word of God. All human writings are interesting as references, valuable as aids, but they are worthless, yea mischievous as authority. Scripture is all-sufficient. We want absolutely nothing, in the way of guidance and authority, beyond what we possess in the sacred canon of scripture. No doubt, it is only by the Holy Ghost we can understand, appreciate, or be guided by scripture; and, moreover, God may use a human voice or a human pen to help us; but scripture is divinely sufficient. It can make a child wise unto salvation; and it can make a man perfect unto all good works. See 2 Tim. 3:15--17.

Now, having such a guide, such an authority, what becomes us as Christians—as children of God and servants of Christ? Why, clearly, to submit ourselves absolutely and unreservedly to its teaching, in all things, We are bound, by every argument and every motive which can possibly sway the heart, to test everything in which we are engaged, or with which we stand associated, by the holy standard of the word of God; and, if we find aught, no matter what, which will not stand that test, to abandon it at once and forever.

And it is precisely here that we feel there is such serious failure in the professing church. As a rule, we do not find the conscience under the immediate action and government of the word. Human opinions bear sway. Human creeds and confessions of faith govern the heart and form the religious character. Human traditions and habits of thought are allowed a formative influence over the soul. If it be merely a question of personal salvation, profit, or blessing, scripture will be listened to. People are glad and thankful to her how they can be saved and blessed. Everything that bears upon the individual condition and destiny will meet a welcome.

But the moment it becomes a question of Christ's authority over us, in spirit, soul, and body; when the word of God is brought to bear upon our entire practical career, upon our personal habits, our domestic arrangements, our commercial pursuits, our religious associations, our ecclesiastical position, then, alas! it becomes apparent how completely the authority of holy scripture is virtually thrown overboard. In point of fact, the enemy seems to succeed as completely in robbing professing Christians of the real value, power, and authority of the word of God, as when, during that long and dreary period of the middle ages, it was wrapped in the shroud of a dead language, and buried in the dark cloisters of Rome. It is perfectly appalling, when one comes in contact with the actual condition of things amongst professing Christians, to observe the ignorance of scripture and the carelessness about it. Nor can any thoughtful person doubt that the latter is the producing cause of the former. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." But if the word of God be neglected and practically ignored, as an authority, need we marvel when we find people ignorant of its precious contents?

We have been much struck, of late, in our intercourse with Christian professors, in noticing the little moral weight which scripture seems to possess. You will rarely meet with anyone who is prepared to start with this one grand point, that the voice of the Holy Ghost in scripture is absolutely conclusive, that it admits of no appeal, that it closes all discussion. We speak not now of man's interpretation of scripture—of anything in which it can be said, "That is your opinion." We speak only of the written word of God which we possess, and to which we are individually responsible to submit ourselves, in all things. God has put His word into our hands, and He has put His Spirit into our hearts, and by that Spirit we can understand the word; and we are solemnly bound to be guided and governed by that word, in all the details of our practical career.

It is this we feel imperatively called upon to press home upon the hearts and consciences of our readers, in this our closing address. We have been earnestly waiting upon the Lord for a message, as we feel bound to do at all times. Indeed our constant cry is, "Lord, when the magazine ceases to be Thy messenger, let it cease to be altogether. Let it never outlive its freshness and usefulness." In looking then to Him for the very theme, we got this answer, "Press upon your readers, the sufficiency and authority of holy scripture; and the necessity of absolute subjection to it in all things." This we have sought to do, according to our poor ability; and now we leave it with our readers to consider as before the Lord, their personal responsibility in this weighty matter. We would entreat them, as they love the Lord Jesus Christ, to examine, in the light of scripture, their entire position and path; and, by the grace of God, and for His glory, to abandon, at once and forever, all that is not in perfect accordance with that holy standard. Thus shall their path be as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Oh! may the true language of all our hearts be, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" God grant it, for Christ's sake.

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