

WRITINGS OF ANSTEY H C

by Anstey h c

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Anstey h c, compiled for study and devotional reading.

79 Chapters

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A golden bell and a pomegranate

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A Little Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews

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A Note From an Address

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Your own salvation

S. A Few Scriptues Connected

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"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1); for there is nothing there to condemn. He is glorified (Acts 3:13), and there abides the blessed and changeless sunshine of God's favour always. And in Him that changeless favour beams down upon me. (1 John 4:17; John 17:26.) I awake in the morning, and there it is in all its fulness. He would have me work on, all through the hours of the long day, with the certainty of it. I lie down tired and weary at night, it may be, but it is still there, still true. "Accepted in the Beloved" abides. (Ephesians 1:6.) And truly, since it has pleased God thus to show the "kindness of God" unto me (Titus 3:4; 2 Samuel 9:1; 2 Samuel 9:3) a poor sinner, and since all is "of Him, and through Him, and to Him" (Romans 11:36), I must add, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Psalms 16:6.) To be now "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17), and now to be able to cry, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6), and so to turn to Him in everything - what a portion!

It is best to think little of self and talk less. One thing satisfies the heart, to think much of God and His blessed grace, and to speak of it. We shall know this in heaven. There is little in the best of us worth thinking about, and less worth speaking about. But, oh, to be ransomed, and to know it! oh, to be redeemed, and going through this world in the daily and hourly communion with our own Redeemer! Ah! then we learn what paltry little things seek to occupy us, and fritter time away, and estimate them at their right value. Not to be occupied thus is to lose the blessed privilege which He has died to purchase for us, of bathing our souls all the day long in an ocean of love that is fathomless, but changeless and eternal. H. C. Anstey.

Christianity has its realization in us in a conformity of nature to God, with which God cannot dispense, and without which we cannot enjoy or be in communion with Him. In the normal condition of a Christian he is occupied with Christ.

S. A Little Child

"A Little Child."

It is important in a day of decline - for the day of apostasy advances (Jude 1:14-15), and the saints are in danger of becoming infected with its premonitory symptoms, those of "lukewarmness" (Revelation 3:15-16) - it is of all importance to return to what is the desire of the great Head of the Church for us all. This, if cultivated and sought after, is calculated to preserve from this spirit, which is tinging almost the whole of religious profession. I refer the reader, in illustration of His desire, to the Lord's reply to the question asked in Matthew 18:1 : "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" In the preceding chapter there had been given them a glimpse of the "Son of man coming in His kingdom" - a little foreshadowing of His glories, which, as Son of man, are yet to come. Would one who gazed thereon seek to place any on an equality with Him? No sooner is the proposal on the speaker's lip than the voice of the Father is heard interrupting the vain desire, "This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him. "From the excellent glory He is thus declared beyond compare glorious and beloved, the centre of all, greatest and highest. Thus Peter's voice was hushed; and though there with Him, and the eye-witness of His majesty, as he afterwards declares, yet He is God's Centre, the only One who in Himself has title to be there. In the day of the manifestation of that glory we who believe shall be with Him too, our voices hushed in the contemplation of Him who is God's Centre - a day which will see the fulfilment of His prayer in John 17:1-26 : "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Descending from the glory where they had heard the testimony of the Father as to the Son of His bosom, they ask the question already quoted, whose tenor is, Which of us shall be next to Him? And what a reply comes from those gracious lips - a reply for each heart to weigh the import of then, and a lesson for us to ponder still! Does He deny that there is such a place? Does He assert that we shall be all equal in that day? No, He does neither; but, exposing by contrast their love of self with what will be the true ground of exaltation, personal love, and devotedness to Himself, He replies, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." He does not say, as is (perhaps unintentionally, but commonly) misquoted, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child humbles itself, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." We cannot understand a little child humbling itself, because one who is in the place, who is that, needs not to come down to it; for already he is a little child. The Lord's words are rather, "You must become as this little child, if you desire the highest place in the day of my kingdom glory." This expression of infant helplessness, "a little child" (paidion), is the same as the apostle John delights to use in 1 John 2:1-29, when distinguishing, "Fathers, young men, and babes" (little children). This is the word he uses in 1 John 2:13 and 1 John 2:18. It describes the infant, the youngest in the household.

Such is the attainment, my reader, which the Lord Jesus proposes to each of us to aim at and to reach "a little child." Do we ask why? It is because we are not in heart and spirit, and ways and affection, such; they betrayed it in their question; and do we not betray it in ourselves day by day? May I then draw your attention to two or three things, seen prominently in the model before us, seen in "a little child."

Watch him in the nursery (picture of this world wherein we grow up, and where the child of God now is); not a fear, not an anxiety, not a care has he! Dependent for food, and shelter, and raiment, and every thing he wants or possesses on another; while in himself without plan, or thought, or resources, and with no ability to make his wants known save to One, who alone can understand the baby language that he speaks - such is our model. Is he happy? Let any who doubt it observe him; or let my reader look back at the days of his own infancy, and the reply is at hand. But while his feebleness is thus before us, we must remember that he has a consciousness, young as he is - a consciousness that only deepens and increases with the lapse of years - that consciousness is that he is beloved, beloved by the One we have already mentioned, with a perfect and never-changing love. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.

He that feareth is not made perfect in love. That person who loves fills the whole range of his vision - a person, my reader, not a place. And is it so today? Is it so with each of us? One, as he walked this earth, has borne the marks of it. "One thing I do . . . that I may win Christ, and be found in Him." "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." A Person filled the sphere of his vision. He was beloved, and he knew it. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Reader, do you know it? Can you say it? and has it power over you as it had over him? But the nursery time is passing away with all of us. Let our model, "a little child," be brought then from the nursery into all the light and brilliance of that day of the coming glory for which we wait. Let the assembled company stand back to make way for the approach of a "little child." "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14) Why amidst the brilliant throng wanders his eye timidly from one to another? Is there not enough in the grandeur of all around to engage his attention? No; the place is nought to him, while all the grandeur and all the dignity do but distress him. He seeks for One whose heart's affections are twined around him, and whose love he has learnt and proved in other days, and in other scenes, than these; for that same person, who fully satisfied him then, can only fully satisfy him now; and passing by all else, he hastens to the arms and the bosom of love. And He, whose is all the grandeur and dignity of that day, delights to pillow that timid, trembling head on His own bosom. And thus shall it be in the day of the kingdom glory; and THUS has the "little child" reached the highest place, even the bosom of that. One to whom it shall be confessed in that day, that fast-coming day of His glory, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Revelation 5:12.)

Reader, who will occupy the place of the little child? If you occupy it now He declares you shall occupy it then. Again we would ponder His blessed words, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Oh, may we cultivate day by day, and seek grace to manifest day by day, the simple heart and ways, and the spontaneous affections for Him, our one beloved object, which are seen in "a little

child!" H. C. Anstey.

S. A Little Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews

A Little Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews The blessings of Jewish saints were earthly. The saints addressed in this epistle were once Jews, now Christians. The saints are regarded as the wilderness "companions" of Christ. He is bringing many sons to glory. But what had He when as a man He trod the earth? He said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

All who have accepted His path as theirs are able to count on His sympathy as High Priest. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Priesthood is only for our infirmities, not for our sins. The believer should not sin. "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not." But a saint cannot avoid the infirmities incident to a heavenly man walking the earth. To know how Christ carries you on, you must accept as your own His path as a Man, and to enjoy it you must be walking in it. The Lord's intercession as Priest goes on for all the saints alike, because of their infirmities. We only know the value of it in our souls as we seek His path. He sought nothing on earth. "I receive not honour from man." The Hebrew Christians had declined from the truth of Christianity. They had once given up the attraction of earthly things, now they were again seeking them. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that in heaven ye have a better and an enduring substance." He says, "Call to remembrance the former days." The present blessing of saints is not earthly but heavenly. The substance is there. It is an enduring substance, while all here is a shadow, as the former dispensation also was. As Aaron entered into the holiest once a year, so Christ has gone in for us, regarding our infirmities while in the wilderness. The result is the consciousness (for all who take Christ's path on earth) of His sympathy and His support, and not of weak hands and "feeble knees." And as Melchizedek met the victorious man of faith with bread and wine, so Christ meets us by a supply of what is heavenly. This last is conditional, and depends on whether in faith as a saint I have overcome the world (Sodom) in its friendly character. (It made a great man of Lot.)

What we get then in Hebrews 11:1-40 is the exploits of faith. If faith thus wrought in saints of the past, leading them to give up the present for the future, if it thus wrought in a people whose blessings were earthly, what should it effect in us whose blessings are heavenly, and therefore all of another order? They got God and the future instead of the present. Therefore "God was not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." The saints are solemnly warned. Esau once sought present blessing and lost the future. (Hebrews 12:15-17) We get Christ's present portion (as man) as we give up the present. "As He is so are we in this world." The soul is led into it. The effect is seen in these Hebrews, who sought to return to what they had once given up, as it will also be seen in us. They had returned to "infancy," "and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

They were not going on to perfection; that is, to the knowledge of those things connected with Christ in glory. (See Hebrews 6:1-12) The effect in them was, their hands were "hanging down," and they had "feeble knees." The effect on others (saints as they) was, that "the lame was turned

out of the way." The Lord took the place of suffering here. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin." As having trodden that path, he takes His place with those who are now treading it to lead them and to sing: "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." It is the opposite of hands "hanging down" and of "feeble knees." But if you refuse the sufferings of a godly man here you cannot join in the singing. He sings in His own individual joy, and you join Him if you are of His path. He is out of it, and his companions are in faith out of it with Him. I do not mean that they are out of the wilderness. They are out of all that depresses - out of all the pressure of the wilderness - with Him. The Lord trod the earth as a perfect Son, and also as a perfect servant. Both places in measure are ours. The Father deals with us as with children. (Hebrews 12:1-29) As a servant the Lord's language was, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," and the epistle closes with the exhortation to us, NOT to seek our own will, but "make you perfect in every work to do His will." (Hebrews 13:21) We are going through the wilderness in this epistle supported in all our infirmities, but as Christ was here so we are here to do God's will in the scene, having from above daily heavenly sustainment as we refuse this world. The Lord guide us in this great favour which He has shown us for His name sake. H. C. Anstey.

S. A Meditation.

A Meditation.

1 Timothy 4:15.

Made Sin, Thou bear'st my sins Thou Holy One of God;

Jehovah's sword awoke, Thence flowed Thy precious blood.

Hail! boundless grace which sets me free, Sin judged, my sins too borne by Thee, That blood from judgment shieldeth me. And I am Thine, through death For me, where wrath impelled Its billows all on Thee, And ever was annulled.

Thou liv'st - I live, Thy sorrow o'er; Mine - Thine to share for evermore, The Father's house, heaven's boundless store. Be mine THY lowly path On earth till that blest day;

Nothing the world hath now To give or take away. From all its shadows vain, I flee;

Hail! Prince and Saviour, Lord, with Thee I come to spend eternity!

H. C. Anstey.

S. A Note From an Address

A Note From an Address "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48. The Father is noticing and comprehending all the evil in the world, but He pursues an even course to all; sending His rain for the just and the unjust, giving to the evil a share in all His benefits, yet Himself apart from all evil and ever remaining in His own perfectness. So we, seeing things as they are, are not to be blind to them, yet not to be disturbed, going evenly on, accepting what meets us in the spirit in which the Father bears with things, and then no response to the evil is to be found in our hearts; thus we are perfect according to the pattern shown in the ways of the Father Himself.

"As a Nurse"

1 Thessalonians 2:1-20.

It is very interesting to see that the man who could "withstand to the face" a giant saint, if going astray as to the gospel, could act as a nurse to a babe.

"I was gentle among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children." The nurse has in view one thing; it is the development of the young life of the child. Be it so that among saints the new life is divine, and hence indestructible, yet that growth is dependent I think must be admitted. How dependent we are on the nurse I suppose we shall never fully know in this world. The atmosphere, the food, the clothing, and the present state of the constitution of the child are all careful objects of consideration to the nurse. May we not do well to consider these a little more fully than we have heretofore done? We are, I think, left here to walk for a little while (how little at longest!) among the children of God, God's children - God's family, let me remember - not mine, save as one of them. We are among them to serve Him as nurses of those dear to Him. We serve Him just in so far as we serve them (as Paul did) in what we have learnt of Him as to ourselves; that is, we serve them in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." This is the training of the nurse, and none can serve wisely without it. The first nurses are doubtless the father or mother. The first nurses are not always the wisest, and some of them may want training. Love (human love) is sometimes blind to what is defect in its object which another eye may detect. A trained nurse may also be the first nurse, and then all is well. Paul was not only the spiritual father of the Thessalonians, but he was a trained nurse. "The nurture and admonition of the Lord" was the school wherein he had learnt, and was still learning, the training on which he was acting.

It can only be learnt in God's school, and the discipline therein may be very varied and different with us all. Therein Paul had learnt something of the atmosphere which seeks to enwrap the children of God in its baneful influences. Two things are needed to withstand it - food and clothing. He had learnt the kind of food which had heretofore and was still sustaining him in it; he had learnt what it was to wrap himself around, and hence to wrap all of them around, in the blessed conscious warmth of DIVINE LOVE. Thus he acted the part of a nurse to them in this cold, cold world. The constitution of the saint cannot be better than it is. He has a good constitution, the

constitution for eternity; but the apostle knew, and we know, that food and clothing are both necessities for the young life while it is connected with the earth.

If we all more realised "a good constitution fed and clothed," we should then more act upon our privilege. We are all nurses one of another. It was Cain who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What cheer would then be found among the children of God! Don't limit your usefulness in this way to the few in your own meeting. May we bestir ourselves, and God will give the grace for it, that it may be our joy to serve Him as we serve them all. H. C. Anstey.

S. A golden bell and a pomegranate

"A golden bell and a pomegranate."

H. C. Anstey Christian Friend vol. 18, 1891, p. 153.

"A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about." - Exodus 28:33-34.

We should know something of priestly service as Christians (1 Peter 2:5, Revelation 1:6), and therefore something of priestly attire. Our great High Priest, ever perfect, is now in the presence of God for us, and the sound of the golden bell is heard; for the Holy Ghost has come out consequent on Christ's going in. But there is in Him perfect communion, moreover, in all His service with God's present thoughts of and for His people; this is the pomegranate. The pomegranate was the fruit of the land. (See Deuteronomy 8:8.) Around "the ephod all of blue" (the heavenly colour) and upon the hem of it were these golden bells and pomegranates alternately. The measure of my testimony as a Christian (the sound) is equal to the fruit which I am feeding upon; it is equal to my communion. Never more, never less. Only as I feed upon Christ will Christ be heard, and the sound come from me; only thus can I fulfil my priestly service. I go in to minister. This robe (and its accompaniments, the bells and pomegranates) was appointed to be worn when the high priest went into the holiest. But there the priests now have always access. (Hebrews 10:1-39.) It is their place, and this dress was the suited attire for the place. Every movement of the one thus arrayed would tell, as heard without, that, he was in the holiest. It is not, I think, for us to consider ourselves fittingly clad if otherwise attired; for then either some other sound, or no sound at all, is heard from me. What was heard without, coming from the priest was not separated from the fruit of the land, which in all varied colours also formed part of his dress; and my testimony is irrevocably linked with it. If I give out in the assembly something which is not God's present sound for His people, though it may be the truth, I am separating the golden bell and the pomegranate. It is not what measure of communion I enjoyed in the past that my testimony in the present is based upon. This would also be separating the golden bell and the pomegranate. No, it is the fruit of the land in present enjoyment; to this alone is the golden bell united. "As I hear I judge" gives it us from the lips of the Lord Himself. It is as I hear from communion, it is as I feed upon the heavenly, that heavenly sounds will be heard from me.

H. C. A.

S. Alone with God.

Alone with God.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 160.

Anyone can see that from the moment sin came into the world God has sought a people who should be separate from this vast stream of evil which has rolled over the world like a flood. Separation from is taught first; it is the negative side. Then comes separation to; and this is the positive side. To be right with God, the first only, is not enough, although with us all it comes first to "cease to do evil." We then go on to what is positive, and "learn to do well." (Isaiah 1:16-17)

"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23:9.) Here we have the negative side of the truth of separation. They are not counted among the nations. The world goes on, and so mean are they in its eyes that it ignores their very existence. The Lord's people are people of no reputation - not worthy to be in any way considered. Apart from the rush of human strife, they dwell alone. Oh, to accept this as the Lord's word concerning His people! for it was the Lord who put this word into Balaam's mouth. But further, Israel "shall dwell in safety alone." (Deuteronomy 33:28.) The thought of God is still this same word for His people - "alone." Israel is only safe when he dwells "alone," as to all that surrounds him. He is safe then. No enemy can touch him then; and why - why is this? We must turn to another passage for the answer.

"Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8.) If they are contented to "dwell alone," and contented not to be "reckoned among the nations," God Himself will come and tabernacle among them. What a wonderful word that is, "Judah was His sanctuary!" (Psalms 114:1-8.) Here was a place where the Creator could find an asylum of rest, while the billows of sin rolled over all around. And this is the positive side of separation. His people must now be consistent with a fact that God is present with them. Everything must take its colouring from this fact. "The Lord is there." Then as to every enemy they are safe. Every enemy retreats. "The sea saw it, and fled." "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob." No marriages were to be made with Moab; no intercourse or alliance of any kind with the people of the land. "The people shall dwell alone" (" in safety alone"), and God, "whose name is Jealous," will dwell among them. (Exodus 34:14.) They are alone with God.

Such is the truth, and may we accept it in all its naked simplicity. Nothing can be added to it, or God is not enough. For us it is still, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20.) H. C. Anstey.

* * * The Church is the vessel to hold the glory of the Lamb.

* * * The believer is a vessel for the display of Christ in this world.

S. At the Lord's Table.

At the Lord's Table.

Exodus 33:18-19; Exodus 33:22; Exodus 34:6-7; John 20:17; John 20:20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

There are times and moments in our history when God, in His grace coming very near to us, makes us sensible of His presence and love, and when the redeemed soul tastes for a moment a sip of that eternal future that is awaiting it. In no way is this more distinctly realized on earth than in what we are privileged to be occupied with until the Lord shall come, that which was their delight in the beginning. "The disciples came together to break bread." (Acts 20:7.) Not that we ought ever to lose the sense of His presence with us, and of what grace has done; for He is always with us; and there is the eternal, and therefore changeless, sunshine of His favour always beaming down upon us; and the clouds are not from Him. Still, He does at times allow them to come. Most of us know that there are times when it is not God in the fulness of His grace that is prominently before us, but rather the pressure of other things. It is the hour in our history when we are "perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, and for a season in heaviness through manifold trials;" for such a season God often sees there is a "needs be," as the apostle Peter says. But it is He that lifts up. "God, that comforteth those that are cast down," does this Himself. The manner and way He takes with us in this has been the manner of His grace to all His people from the first. He makes His goodness to pass before us, and we are bowed by the sight of it before Him. Thus was it with Moses in this chapter. He had desired (when crushed, and well-nigh in despair as to the people) to see God's glory, and He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." And for Moses, what was it? What would God do for him that he may not be overpowered thereby? "And I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by." (Exodus 33:22.) "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. . . . And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped." (Exodus 34:6; Exodus 34:8.) The Lord passed by, and His goodness passed by in proclamation before His servant; and what could he say while, as sheltered there, he beheld it and heard it all? He made haste, bowed the head, and worshipped; and thus, beloved, is it always. Thus is it too with us whenever He makes us sensible of His goodness and of His presence; thus was it too with David when he went in and sat before the Lord. Words are wanting or die away in silence, the silence of worship; for he too is contemplating God, who has caused His goodness to pass before His soul. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? . . . What can David speak more to thee for the honour of thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant." (1 Chronicles 17:16; 1 Chronicles 17:18.) This is all he can say. Words and expression both fail while the heart is bowed in worship and thanksgiving; for worship is not of necessity expression or language; often silence marks it. For it is as sheltered that we are called upon to contemplate "all His goodness," not now that into which we cannot look (as was the case with Moses), but sheltered, it is "with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we see Jesus" (who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death) "crowned with glory and

honour." Soon our portion will be to see Him as He is; but the Spirit causes now all His goodness oftentimes to pass before us; for the Spirit is not only the unfolder, discerning "the deep things of God," but the Spirit of sonship too, as He also is the bond of union. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." And now what has God to say to us? It is as sheltered, and also as covered, and, beyond all, as guests invited to listen to the Holy Ghost, and partake of the unfolding of all "God's goodness," that we are gathered together to break bread on each first day of the week. May we know how to value the privilege, and also how decorously to behave ourselves in the midst of such abounding grace as this. Here passes in review before the soul the destruction and overthrow of the enemy, and all His host in the Red Sea, while the ark stands firm in the bed of Jordan - both figures of the death of Christ. His goodness had passed before these poor slaves of Egypt and the desert rung again with a song that has not yet died away, nor ever will, but which is renewed and understood now by those who sing it in a desert (the desert of this world) as barren for us as was that which greeted Israel's eye that day. But it is of the Lord not of the desert. "I will sing unto the Lord; for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." God is satisfied, and I (delivered) am now all that He would have me to be; for I am "accepted in the Beloved." "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation;" and as to conflict in the land, the carrying out of all that His grace has purposed, we add, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." The Lord Jesus, who is with us (Matthew 18:20) the One who has come out of death and judgment, says, "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation." He sings in the midst of the Church, the Leader of the song (Psalms 22:1-31), and claims us as His brethren - "My brethren" (John 20:1-31). God now bears to us the endearing name and relationship of Father - "My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." He has passed (and we are with Him) into the sense of unclouded intimacy; for the work is DONE. God owns it where He has seated Christ. "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Acts 2:34-35.)

How blessed then to be where the Lord condescends Himself to be! "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name." Who would, who could, be absent, if they added, "There Am I," and if there were any possibility of being present? The place whereat He causes all His goodness to pass before us, and sends us out if into a desert as a rejoicing people, with the song of praise and thanksgiving in our mouths: "The LORD is my strength and song." Like the disciples of John 20:1-31, "glad;" for they saw "the Lord" - saw His hands and His side, and heard the blessed accents of His voice proclaiming, as the result of His death, "Peace unto you." Have you done then with the world? It is our testimony. Have we passed into this blessed, this unclouded scene? It is what we declare week by week. Would we change places or be anything other than what God has been pleased to make us in, and through Christ - "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"? Would Israel on the shore of the Red Sea go back again? Would David before the Lord change his circumstances? Would Job, before whom God had in those wonderful chapters (Job 28:1-28, Job 29:1-25, Job 40:1-24, Job 41:1-34) caused all His goodness to pass, do anything but bow? "Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself;" this was, and it still is, the answer to the revelation of God's goodness. And when the disciples have learnt, and when we have learnt, that He claims us as His "brethren," what will the effect be upon us? What will it be, brethren, in each one of us if we are still left here? Will you live for Him, whom the world in its pride still rejects, a filled and worshipping people? May it be so while we are left here to show the Lord's death until He come, and to wait before Him in the blessed anticipation of His speedy coming the second time, "without

sin unto salvation." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

H. C. Anstey. The Christian is a new man, a new creation in Christ, risen into a wholly new place, on the utter rejection and proved insuperable evil of the first man - proved insuperable in the death of Christ. J. N. Darby.

S. Behold, upon the face of the wilderness!

"Behold, upon the face of the wilderness!"

Exodus 16:14; Exodus 16:21. The wilderness to us is the world - the place in which Christians are today. You cannot get away from this fact, although in spirit we are seated "in heavenly places in Christ." And because we are in it there is something there for us - God's own provision for each of His saints in the midst of the barrenness which surrounds us. Think of the tender love which has thus thought of us! "Behold, upon the face of the wilderness . . . a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground."

It is JESUS in His humiliation - the Holy One who once as the Man of sorrows, passed through this desert land. It is He whom the Holy Ghost thus commends to each of us, and to whom He draws attention in that little introductory word "BEHOLD." Yes, believer, "BEHOLD" upon the face of the wilderness at this very moment, spite of all the dearth and the roughness of thy path - behold for thee God's own provision. Stoop, gather it up, and sweet shall it be to thy taste, and strength too shall it supply to thee for all thy desert way! Yes, weak as thou art, beset with sorrow as thou art, or, alas! proud as thou art, it is there awaiting thee, and even whilst thou art reading these lines, "Behold" - "upon the face of the wilderness" - on the top of all the desert difficulties - not covered up, but exposed to view - "a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It is for every saint of God.

Reader, what will you do with it? Will you neglect it? Ah, remember that the desert is no place that you can tread without it! What did the Israelites do? "And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted." May the Lord Himself lead us all to imitate the right actions of His saints. H. C. Anstey.

"God, thine everlasting portion, Feeds thee with the mighty's meat, Price of Egypt's hard extortion, Egypt's food no more to eat."

S. Between Elim and Sinai

"Between Elim and Sinai." A word for Christians.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 51.

It was "between Elim and Sinai" that murmurings sprung up (Exodus 16:12), and the place was called the "wilderness of Sin." Let us note it well, for herein is an excellent lesson for us. God had brought them out of Egypt, and delivered them for ever from the cruelty of Pharaoh and the lash of his task-masters. They had crossed the Red Sea, and seen all their enemies "dead on the sea shore." They had sung with Moses, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." And now in the wilderness, alone with God, in a place where there are no supplies and no path, they find Him not only enough to sweeten all Marah's bitter waters, but to lead them also to Elim, where He had ready for them "twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees," and where He had arranged their first resting-place. He would have us stop in the wilderness journey, to feast upon the tender provision of His hand for us, and to drink of these wells. And who had dug these wells? Did you ever think? And thus far we too have gone; for we know what all these things meant which "happened unto them for types,' and "they are written for our admonition." But what follows?

Nothing but finding fault with God, that He should ever have brought them into such a place - a murmuring for bread. And is it an unknown thing for Christians to find fault with God? Think, has it never been your own case and mine? Have we always said that our wilderness circumstances are entirely satisfactory to us? Health, business, the daily occupation which He has given us - all accepted from His hand without a single murmur? And what are our wilderness circumstances but, first and most blessed of all, God with us, and going before us, and the whole of the wilderness not ours, but His responsibility, who has in grace taken us up? And is this alone not sufficient to hush every murmur? But, remember, there is more. We can also trace His hand feeding and nourishing us every day, and learn that He brings to us the "butter out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock," if He causes us to prove the rocks of the wilderness. The grand lesson taught us in the wilderness with God is "to be content." Let us read the passages Php 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6-9; Ephesians 5:20, and honestly admit either that they do, or that they do not, find their simple answer and illustration in our walk and ways. Are we content? And why has the Spirit of God so carefully written down the name of the locality where the murmuring began? There is a lesson also in this. That it happened "between Elim and Sinai" has a solemn voice in it for us, and no word of God has been written in vain. Elim was God's provision for them. It showed them what He could do, a specimen of what He would do for them, until He brought them unto Himself into "a land flowing with milk and honey." And Sinai was the place where they undertook to do the best they could for themselves - where they gave up the grace that was treasured up in God for them all along ("My grace is sufficient for thee") and put themselves under law. May we ponder the lesson. May we learn that discontent and murmuring will presently land us in Sinai - take us out of the hands of God, and lead us to do the best we can for ourselves. How many a Christian is, in the

experience of his soul, "between Elim and Sinai," and (or there actually) doing the best he can in this wilderness for himself, because God has not satisfied him! But it cuts him off from communion with God. Complaining to God about His doings is not intercourse with Him. Sinai is beset with "blackness, and darkness, and tempest," and no voice of communion with God reaches the soul from thence. (Hebrews 12:18-19.) And now how does God answer the murmurers? And how does He answer us if in their path? Read the whole of Exodus 16:1-36 for the answer. For forty years (the whole time of their wanderings in the wilderness) He gave them "manna." He puts CHRIST before us the whole time of our wilderness journey - the always humbled, dependent, obedient One - the only One who accepted everything in the wilderness path as from God His Father, and without a single murmur; for the manna is Christ in humiliation, seen down here as a dependent Man. That is how God meets your murmuring and mine.

What cling we to, and what covet we in this world, which Christ (God's perfect pattern for us) would have nothing to do with if He were here? How do you meet the exercises in your wilderness path? These are simple questions, but they search us out. Are we feeding daily on the manna - Christ, the only perfect One? He said (and are we saying it?) that His delight was in "the saints, the excellent of the earth;" and though a pilgrim He was no murmurer in the wilderness. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Psalms 16:1-11.) When we arrive "between Elim and Sinai" we shall find the "Manna" there waiting for us. H. C. Anstey.

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If I am looking for the coming of Christ, I do not stop to look at my shadow behind, but up to the Lord's return. My only object then is to reach the goal, and, receiving a glorified body, to be with Him for ever.

S. Bread Cast upon the Waters.

Bread Cast upon the Waters.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." - Ecclesiastes 11:1.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 10.

If I am walking with God, I shall know something of this blessed life of a Christian in this world. In John 21:1-25 how different we find it. The disciples there are seeking their food from the waters, not communicating of their own abundance. This is just the opposite to this exhortation in Ecclesiastes 11:1-10. In the one case I am seeking something from this scene for myself, in the other I am seeking to communicate to others from my own abundance. The difference is immense. Man is so constituted that he is always of necessity a giver or a receiver. And if I launch out upon the troubled waters of this life, seeking to get something from them, I must learn, as all of us will have to sooner or later, that John 21:5 has a lesson in it for me. (I am only speaking of Christians.) I shall find that when the Lord asks me, after the dark night of my toil, "Have you any meat?" that I have only one answer to give Him, as they had. And "they answered Him, No." This world - the moral scene through which I am passing - does not contain CHRIST. It had no room for Him when He trod it in grace, and it has no room for Him today. Hence, if I am a Christian, it cannot satisfy me; for it cannot minister Him to me, and nothing can feed the soul that has once tasted of life but the "bread of life." (John 6:1-71) Bread is often referred to in Leviticus as the staff of the natural life (Leviticus 26:26; Psalms 105:1-45); and in like manner Jesus only is the manna that came down from heaven - the spiritual food - the "Bread" for His people today, the Giver of life too to those that have it not. What then has satisfied you, that which you daily find to be enough, learn to distribute to meet the needs of those around you. Christianity is never selfish - it always thinks of others. Whatever the need or the sorrow may be, there is relief. Jesus is the "bread of life." (John 6:33; John 6:48.) "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

It is only the ministry of Christ that will meet and alleviate the sorrows all around you. This will minister to all earthly sorrows, and will lead on the soul to what is eternal and lasting - "Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Give a portion to seven" (the complete number), "and also to eight" (that is, God's grace goes beyond all evil, and thus is without limit), "for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." (Matthew 14:16.) But before you give it, it must be "thy bread;" that is, it must be what you live upon yourself, of which you minister. Nothing else is really yours. If Christ is not your daily portion - the satisfying One for you - how can you speak of Him or minister Him to others? Your words will seem to them but as "idle tales," for the Spirit will not add the unction of His power to words that are not true and real as to yourself. But the privilege and responsibility remain. Christians are directly addressed in the words at the head of this paper; nor do I admit that they have no application to us. If powerless to minister Christ, what then am I living upon day by day,

since it is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"? The Lord Jesus died to give me all I needed, to satisfy me as a poor sinner, and to fill me as a saint. "Children, have ye any meat?" Am I filled, satisfied, fed day by day? If so, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:1-53) So that I may communicate to others. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Is my Christianity then marked by this exercise of it? "Upon the waters" - restful or restless - "bread" is to be cast, reminding one of Revelation 17:1-18, "The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Such then is to be your life and mine; and if we enter into what Christ is, it will be so spontaneously, daily, a life of casting our "bread upon the waters," only doing this in perfect rest and contentment of soul. This marked His life on earth. The people - everybody, the place - everywhere; for we are told, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand" (that is, go on, continue): "for then knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that." May we live day by day in perfect rest of heart; experience what it is to have Christ with us, the only changeless, great, and satisfying reality in this changing scene, brightening and gladdening the house or the business, and therefore ministered in all our footsteps, "until He come." H. C. A.

S. Decline.

Decline.

2 Corinthians 11:2; Galatians 4:19.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 101. The beginning of all decline is the heart getting away from its privilege to be for Christ, and its responsibility to take up everything in connection with Him. Among the early assemblies of Christians, while apostles were still living, decline had come in, both in Corinth, and also in the assemblies of Galatia, and the attention of Christians was directed to this; viz., Christ had not His place among them. This is what we have here, and it is insisted on in both these verses. No doubt there was local recovery, both in Corinth and also in the assemblies of Galatia. Still, what marks the day in which we live is not local declension merely, but the wide-spread departure of professing Christians from what would mark us if Christ had His real place in our hearts. Every Christian must take his and her place here as one who has part in the ruin in which the assembly of God, the Church, is found. The way of recovery is the matter that concerns us now. It is for me to first learn this with God, and practice it as an individual, ere I can in any way minister as His servant in the present condition of the assembly on earth. In the book of Haggai we have a day of weakness before us. The encouragement then was, "I am with you, saith the Lord," and "my Spirit remaineth among you." Everything the remnant took up was to be taken up with direct reference to this encouraging revelation from God Himself to them. Nothing could be of greater cheer to their hearts than this revelation. At the same time it corrected all selfishness in the hearts of those who took it up in faith. It was no longer for them a question as to the comfort of their own "ceiled houses," or of their gains, but of God's house and of His interests, and of what was real gain God-ward. No one who has learnt this but has rejoiced that it delivers from the "BAG WITH HOLES," into which the energies of all that does not set God and Christ first are now being dropped by professing Christians, those who answer now to the Jewish remnant in the days of Haggai.

"I have espoused you to one husband," thus writes the apostle, "that I may present a chaste virgin to Christ." Worldliness was stamped upon the Corinthian Christians whom he addresses. And what is worldliness? It has thousands of forms. It does not come to all of us in the same way, but each of us knows what it is in himself. It may be summed up in few words. It is unfaithfulness to Christ; it does not give Him the first place. That is all, and that is decline. "I have espoused you to one husband" is true of everyone who calls himself or herself a Christian. It is not for you or for me to look at other Christians, to see how they act up to, or fail to act up to, this relationship. Comparing ourselves thus among ourselves the same apostle says is not wise. It is trying to find an excuse for the path of decline upon which we have entered. The heart loves its own ease, and seeks this path for itself where it can hold the "profession" of Christianity, but give to Christ a secondary place. It wants heaven, but refuses to give up earth. The remedy is at hand. May that "jealousy" of the Spirit (who is here for Christ) arouse us from the worldly lethargy into which we

have fallen, whenever and wherever we are not putting the Lord first. Nothing else will deliver us from the worldliness of this present day. I must go forth with the one distinct object before me, that I am here for Christ, for Him whom the world crucified. And this will deliver from it, and will also display itself in the manifestation of the life of Christ in me. No matter what others are doing, I shall "walk as He walked."

If possible, the state of the Galatians was more critical than that of the Corinthians. He has to say, "I stand in doubt of you." Were they really Christians? He says, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." His confidence is in God; for he says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Ah! what is religion (and there was plenty of it in Galatia) without the display of the life of Christ? It is but the path of decline, whatever people may once have known, or however faithfully they once trod, the right path. They are not now in it. If Christ is formed in us, His life must express itself in our lives. Anything less than this, anything other than this, is decline. It is not in law keeping, not in circumcision, nor in obedience to ordinances that Christianity consists. It is in the display of the life of Christ, which can only be found where Christ is put first. The beginning of the Church's decline in Revelation 2:1-29 is, that she had got away from Christ. "Thou hast left thy first love." And the way of recovery for individuals in Revelation 3:1-22 (at the lowest point of the Church's history) is, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;" that is, you must give Christ His place. May the Lord not only open our eyes to see that there is decline, but give us to take individually the way of recovery which He points out to us in these Scriptures. H. C. Anstey.

S. Ecclesiasticism" is Destructive of Light and Love

"Ecclesiasticism" is Destructive of Light and Love No believer but will admit that there are two things necessary for man - light and life - and that they are only found in God. I have no doubt that what is termed "ecclesiasticism" is destructive of both, even after the good of them has been partly laid hold of in the soul. Darkness is man's natural condition Godward (John 1:4-5), and death is his state. Man having lost through sin his unique place toward God, these are the results as to us. All that man ever needed before sin came in was found in God, and all that man needs now that sin has entered is still found in God alone. This last is made known in the gospel. It is "the gospel of the blessed God" which has come to us. In this gospel God Himself is made known, He is made known as supreme, with resources in Himself and resources for and on behalf of man, spite of all that Satan has done.

Light is the revelation of God in this dark scene, and no one can know Him but by the gospel. Were there no gospel, it were a plain proof that Satan had triumphed. God prepares man for the reception of light through giving to him to taste the misery of darkness. Then the light of God is gladly welcomed, and becomes the life of the soul; 1:e., the knowledge of God becomes that in which the soul lives. We have "passed from death unto life." Moreover, God Himself takes up His abode in the believer by the Spirit, to effectuate in him what is of Himself, and so we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God." It is an immense triumph of God that He should find His habitation now in man, when we consider what man was, with all his affections astray and away from God. (Romans 3:9-18.) His presence abides by the Spirit's dwelling in us, and the man who once walked according to "the course of this world," and "according to the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," may be henceforth seen under the control of the Holy Ghost, that is, of God by His Spirit.

Now it is this last, the Spirit, that "ecclesiasticism" robs Christian men of, as to their enjoyment of it in their own souls. Thence (the Spirit ignored) the return again to the regions of darkness and to the gates of death is both easy and rapid, and is or will be the experience of the soul while under the influence of "ecclesiasticism." A word as to what "ecclesiasticism" is. It is that which has shaken hands with the world, and yet assumes to be a collective light here for God, and it is that which does not hear the Spirit's voice. Its history we have in Revelation 2:1-29; Revelation 3:1-22. It is an "ism," tacked on to the ekklesia of God - a parasite - a vampire which surely draws away all the vitality of that on which it feeds. To destroy life is its object, and to keep only the dead form bereft of it. (2 Timothy 3:15.) Not that it triumphs in this, but this is its object. We see how far we have got on the road to it in the address to Sardis: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." It is even that "ecclesiasticism" has found a home on earth (" where Christ found none"), from the address to Pergamos. Where are we? It is His own sideward of reproach, "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." He "who walketh in the midst of the candlesticks" then and now sees the light going, and His word is addressed to him who is of the ekklesia of God in the midst of "ecclesiasticism." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

"Ecclesiasticism" will go on without "hearing." After the Spirit and the bride have gone, having unitedly said "COME," to Him to whom she belongs, and for whom the Spirit is now on earth, it will be spued out of Christ's mouth as no longer having anything in it, save what is utterly repulsive to Him. But for us, with the light of the candlestick well-nigh gone (Revelation 2:1-29; Revelation 3:1-22), with life well-nigh become death, with Christ outside of "ecclesiasticism," for He is outside already morally, can a Christian yet contentedly remain of that which the Spirit here condemns? In "ecclesiasticism" the first man is allowed. Let this be noted, for state will be found consequently: "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Revelation 3:17.) And is it any wonder that this is so where the first man reigns, and where He who should be in the midst is outside? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Reader, is He as far as you are concerned waiting there yet, waiting there to fill your heart? He says, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." The day is well-nigh over - the Spirit's day, the day of known and enjoyed life and light, which were introduced by His coming and ministry. How much of this supping with Him, this supping with Christ, while the shades of night so swiftly descend, do we, do I know? And, oh, if I know anything of it, how empty are all the "isms" then of men!

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8.)

H. C. Anstey.

S. Egypt and Sodom

Egypt and Sodom

Both of these represent the world. Egypt, is the world in its oppression, in which man is treated as the slave of the enemy (Satan), represented by Pharaoh, its prince. Man may groan under it, as he will, when the light shines in, or he may be ignorant of the chains that bind him. In either case, he is but a helpless slave in this world.

Sodom, represents the world more in its friendly aspect. It is thus, not oppression, but patronage. It is that active side of the world's policy, which seeks to make me contented with the order of things here. It made a great man of Lot. Everything which has the tendency to make me satisfied with the present order of things, is Sodom. The opposite of "Egypt," is Canaan, and the opposite of "Sodom," is the Wilderness, the pilgrim character seen in Abraham, in contrast to Lot. That is "going on," and not settling down, in things here.

If I accept Sodom, instead of the wilderness character, I forfeit communion with God. God declined friendly intercourse with Lot, but sought it with Abraham. To lose communion with God, is no small loss. Many Christians are living without present communion. H. C. Anstey. To accept the truth, in the power of the Spirit, that the first man has passed away for ever from the eye of God, under judgment, is the way of deliverance (though to be experimentally learned) from sin, the law, and the world.

S. Faith and Sight

Faith and Sight "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2.

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." John 15:18.

One place on earth Thou givest me, One place in heaven is mine, Yet (such Thy love's deep mystery) Each place, O Lord, is THINE;

Thy place - the OUTCAST - mine must be, Since mine 's th' ACCEPTED place in Thee. From earth hoarse murm'rings come to me "No place 'mongst us for Him" - Now hid in soothing minstrelsy, Now loud with rapturous din, As laughing wave, or billows roar, Each bears this burden to the shore. But other sounds are wafted nigh, Joy's music* strikes my ear, - Luke 15:25.

Faith lists - the Father's house on high Thence the ascription clear:

"Name above every name be Thine Who stooped to death in love divine." And though I see a homeless band, Strangers to earthly joy, 'Gainst whom fierce darts on every hand Fall, fitted to destroy, - Ephesians 6:16; Deuteronomy 8:15.

Around them trackless wilderness, "Great" - "terrible" - in barrenness Yet hosts angelic hover there To soothe each aching brow, - See Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 13:2.

Each proving thus the Father's care Known to them hourly now! And bright faith's vision doth arise - "GOD'S REST" - unseen by mortal eyes. - Hebrews 4:9.

Thus Faith and Sight appeal to me, Eternity and Time!

Faith hears th' eternal symphony Midst this world's varying chime.

Oh, sovereign grace, that mine should be HIS PLACE ON EARTH, who died for me! H. C. Anstey.

*"Music" is a word only once used in the Greek New Testament, as to the joy over the prodigal in the Father's house.

S. Fragment

Fragment. The apostle Paul expects that every individual saint in the little assembly at Thessalonica will register a distinct disapproval of a persistent, disorderly course in one among them by his or her CONDUCT towards such an one. (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.)

It is for the recovery, and therefore surely for the blessing, of the person; it is an individual responsibility as to what is becoming action toward that person, which not one among them dared to ignore or refuse to pay. The offender is not yet looked upon as a "wicked person," and therefore is not put away from among them.

It is action which would have preserved Corinth from the growth of all that terrible moral evil which grew up, was allowed in one among them (1 Corinthians 5:1-13), but finally exposed by the same faithful apostle. Evil which, growing on and for long, bore its bitter fruit among them, and in other and further sorrows than this. (See 1 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Corinthians 3:3-4; 1 Corinthians 4:8; 1 Corinthians 7:6; 1 Corinthians 11:18; 1 Corinthians 14:26, etc.) Sorrows and confusion and evil in which all were more or less involved. Disorderly courses, unfaithfully dealt with or allowed among the saints, will end in wickedness and open sin at last, since "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." And - mark it well, for there is no respect of persons with God - where there is not this upright action of the saints towards such a person (whoever he or she may be) there will sooner or later be demoralisation and trouble and sorrow in that or in any such assembly. H. C. Anstey.

S. Further Thoughts upon the Secret of Power

Further Thoughts upon the Secret of Power. The question considered in a former paper was, What is now, and what has ever been, the secret of spiritual power in any? The attention of the reader was there directed to God's presence in the midst of His redeemed people, and that this apprehended and governing us was and is the secret of spiritual power; 1:e. the Spirit of God in us, and God Himself with us, and for us. I would now seek to direct attention to how far this presence of God with His people may be hindered in its manifestation, and how far spiritual power may consequently be thereby lost.

It is evident, whether we look at Old Testament days or New Testament times, that there was not and cannot be spiritual power in us, save by the action of the Holy Ghost. Then, as now, where spiritual power was manifested in an individual or in a company, He wrought it. We see the first in such a case as that of Samson (Judges 13:25; Judges 14:6; Judges 14:19, etc.), and again in Zechariah 4:6; and the second in that of Israel (already quoted), in Psalms 114:1-8, and Haggai 2:5, etc.

Now two things are true as to the Holy Ghost, since His descent on the day of Pentecost: 1st, He dwells in the individual believer (1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:13; Acts 2:3-4); and 2nd, He dwells in the assembly (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29, etc.). On these two facts, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer, and His presence in the assembly of God, two important exhortations are founded in the New Testament: 1st, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30); and 2nd, "Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19.) "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." (Psalms 62:11.) And it is well for us ever to remember this, lest pride occupy us with the vessel and what is wrought, rather than with its Author. He ever abides the same, whatever be the state of the vessel - whether it be an assembly or an individual. Ah! it is well for poor man, for us, ever to remember this, "Power belongeth unto God." But redemption being wrought out, and Jesus glorified, necessities for the descent and dwelling down here of the Holy Ghost, power came down (see John 7:39; Acts 2:33), He descended (Acts 2:4) to work in testimony in the assembly of God, and in the individual believer, and to "abide for ever." (John 14:16-17; John 15:26-27.) "Power from on high" (Luke 24:1-53) is down here on earth, and will ever abide (Acts 1:8); not a mere influence, but a person - one whose influence is felt. The redeemed of the Lord need a leader, and they need power; and He came to be both, and He is both for us, as was said in an earlier day to Joshua. "As captain of the Lord's host am I now come," and what is this to me? "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." Reader, is it thus with thee and with me? Oh the liberty and joy of such a moment! and the peace of soul that I (though one of the redeemed) can only know, as I learn in His presence that "power belongeth unto God!" "God is greater than man . . . He giveth not account of any of His matters." (Job 33:1-33.) And while it is true that by the Holy Ghost God dwells in, and desires to act in the assembly, and also in the individual believer, His actions are not limited to these, though He is

primarily here to act in these two; and when His action is hindered in either, it is clear that there is something wrong. But, as always, so now, God can act, and does act, as He will, and in whom He will. So in the world outside He used an unconverted Balaam, and spoke when He chose, through a dumb ass. (Numbers 24:2.) And thus, too, He used Saul, the son of Kish, though he was not himself the Lord's. (1 Samuel 10:6; 1 Samuel 10:10; 1 Samuel 16:14, etc.) Again, He can use, in New Testament days, those of whom He will have to say, "I never knew you;" though they themselves may boast, "In thy name we have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works" (Matthew 7:22-23); and to this class, doubtless, Judas Iscariot must belong, who was one of the twelve. (Compare with this last-named Scripture Matthew 10:2; Matthew 10:4; Matthew 10:8.) But besides using an unconverted man, God can also use one who is a believer, but who may not be intelligent as to what the Holy Ghost is bringing out through him. Thus in past ages holy men of God spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost, themselves not always understanding their own utterances. (See 1 Peter 1:10-12; and 2 Peter 1:19-21.) So was it also in 1 Corinthians 14:14, where one using the gift of tongues may possibly pray in the Spirit, while the understanding may remain "unfruitful;" and this the apostle seeks to correct. In the spirit one might, thus speaking, "speak mysteries;" but the apostle would rather speak five words with his understanding in the assembly. He says, "I will pray with the Spirit, but I will pray with the understanding also." In the Old Testament communications, and again when they used the gift of tongues, it did not always happen that the "understanding" of the speaker grasped the import of his message; but now the word of God is complete (Colossians 1:25), His purposes all revealed (Revelation 22:18-19), and the vessel should understand the mind of the Spirit, and should be in perfect harmony with the mind of Him who uses it. "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), so that while to them it was said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive" (Isaiah 64:1-12); to us today it is said, "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:9-12.) It is only "he that is spiritual" that discerneth the "all things" in this passage, or grasps the Spirit's mind.

It has become necessary to draw the attention of believers to these two facts; for they are sometimes challenged: 1st, That God can use even an unconverted man if He so please; and 2nd, That He can also use a converted man, when he who is so used may not understand what the Spirit is communicating through him. Let us remember these things, lest we be found unintentionally guilty in these days of that early sin of the house of Jacob named in Psalms 78:41. They "limited the Holy One of Israel." But we must remember that if the Holy Ghost thus uses one unconverted, or again one who lacks "understanding" though converted, these are now the abnormal actings of the Spirit. He desires rather to use the believer, and he who, being himself of full age, has the understanding developed, so that He can identify the one used with Himself. So likewise He desires to act in, and to identify the assembly with, His actions. (Revelation 22:17.) The Spirit abides on earth for ever, as we have seen, and is "power from on high." And God desires that the believer should be "filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18.) In himself he is an empty vessel, yet he remembers (wondrous truth) that "he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 6:17.) His desire for every believer then is that He may be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." (Ephesians 3:1-21) Was it not manifest in Stephen, a man full of the Holy Ghost, and full of faith and power?" who, being thus "full of the Holy Ghost" (a power not of man, but which filled the poor vessel), could calmly yield to be stoned to death for

Christ's testimony, and by those too who did "always resist the Holy Ghost," yet he in the moments of bodily anguish was enabled, like His Master, to pray for his murderers. Here the power of the Holy Ghost is seen so acting as to identify itself with the vessel, the two being practically one "one Spirit." Now a disregard of the exhortation, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (to which we will now return), hinders the action of the Holy Ghost, and prevents His thus manifesting His power in the vessel to so sustain it - that it is, not sometimes, but daily seen to be sustained (John 4:14) by those who know nothing of the secret. (Psalms 25:14.) While, as of old (for the power abides), if the Spirit guide and direct all that is said and done in the assembly, being ungrieved and unquenched, the power is felt there; it is one voice, and one unbelieving falling down must own it and confess that "God is among you of a truth." (1 Corinthians 14:25; Revelation 22:17 ; - 1st sentence.) And further, and what is of all importance, my own individual enjoyment as a believer, of the ministry of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter (John 14:17; John 14:20; John 14:26; John 16:13, etc.), which is my portion until I am with the Lord, must depend on my not grieving the Holy Ghost; and my present peace and rest of spirit (and the consequent manifestation of them) derived from Him - a power that keeps me superior to surrounding influences - depends on this too; for God is in no way hindered in His communion with a faithful soul, whatever may be the confusion and evil, either among the Lord's people or in the world, of the day in which he may be living. To deny this is to say God is overcome of evil (see Revelation 3:20); while the power for blessing and edification of a gathered company (where manifested) will as surely depend on the unquenched presence and action of the Holy Ghost in their midst; for in both "power belongeth unto God." The source of spiritual power, then, God present by His Spirit, is continuous; the manifestation of it is not necessarily so, but dependent. May we challenge our hearts, as the day darkens, as to these two things: first, What is there in me individually? and, secondly, What is there among us as a company, which hinders the manifestation of spiritual power? And first let us keep continuously in mind that, notwithstanding the point to which, as a Christian, any one of us has attained in past days - and there are attainments (Php 3:16); who among us will boast of them? - there is no such thing as the present enjoyment by me of spiritual power - the ministry of the Holy Ghost - if the Holy Ghost be dwelling in me a "grieved" Spirit. And while this is so there cannot be to others the manifestation of spiritual power in me. When the Holy Spirit is grieved in me, every attempt to go on before others as if nothing had happened does but manifest my weakness to them. And this is true, however useful I may have been to them, as one owned of God for blessing in past days. Like Achan, the thing that weakens has been allowed where I ought to govern. With him it was in the tent; with me it is in myself; and in vain, though a very Samson before, will one who has grieved the Spirit (unless there has been self judgment) go out to shake himself "as at other times." In vain; his strength is gone, and God's Nazarite, now powerless in the presence of the enemy, though once so mighty, is presently seen to be blind - the poor blind captive and sport of the uncircumcised! (Judges 16:1-31) Sad and sorrowful sight! yet is it one by no means uncommon to Him who has spiritual vision. What is it, then, to grieve the Holy Spirit? Where He dwells ungrieved there are manifested "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23.) All these are not human, but divine; and the Spirit must be acting where they are produced. Can it, then, be said that I am lacking any of these, and yet the Holy Spirit is not grieved? Impossible; for the fruits then seen are those of the flesh in the activity of human will, and not the will of God. (Galatians 5:16-21.) There may be recovery, both of an individual (see 1 Corinthians 11:28-31) and of an

assembly (see 2 Corinthians 7:8-11), and this is wrought by self-judgment, so necessary to us all; but without it there surely must be a loss of spiritual power, and nothing but confession and self-judgment will restore it. Everything that is done in an individual or in an assembly, until self-judgment has done its work, is done with an effort - the sure sign of weakness - and, as before said, will but manifest the real condition to those who may have eyes to see. (1 Corinthians 2:15.)

Again, the opponent to the working of the Spirit of God is the spirit of the world - "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." "But," says the apostle, "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Corinthians 2:12.) Hence arises another question, Can I allow in myself that which is of the world (and hence of the spirit of disobedience), and the Holy Spirit yet remain in me ungrieved? In myself I detect the workings of nature - "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; to all of these Satan ministers, in this huge system called "the world." All these are "not of the Father, but are of the world." (1 John 2:15-17.) Can I allow them to work in me? and will the Holy Spirit meantime preserve and manifest in me His own energy? Impossible. Says the apostle James, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.) And I have not to go outside of myself to discover these principles that govern the world. And it is in little things - things scarcely suspected, yet things which, if examined in the light, will be found to be not "of the Father, but of the world," that we are so easily robbed of spiritual strength. Everything that I do as one in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, strikes a thrill for good or for evil through all the saints; for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Corinthians 12:26.) And besides this, my enemies are not "flesh and blood;" they may come to me in that form, but they are not natural but "spiritual." No carnal or natural weapons can overcome them - no conquest and victory can be by spiritual power alone. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12.) But all our power is gone if the Holy Ghost be hindered from manifesting His power in us, since in ourselves without Him we possess none.

Finally, I suppose none will question that one who is "grieving the Spirit" is not the one to minister in an assembly of the saints, however useful he may have been to them in former days. Two evils are committed where such an attempt is made; for the Spirit is not only further grieved in the effort, but is also quenched possibly as to His action by means of another in the assembly. Edification in such a case there is not, but the manifestation of weakness, manifest to all present who have spiritual discernment. Hence the frequency of our "leanness," felt both individually and collectively; for the ministry of the Holy Ghost in both is the secret of spiritual power. Without it there is none, and confusion reigns. The apostle says, "I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Corinthians 14:15.) The instrument understands the mind of him who plays on it, if the Holy Spirit be not grieved or hindered within him; and if in the assembly He acts in such a vessel, the assembly is edified, if the Spirit be not quenched there. The day darkens. We are in danger of seeking to keep up a form of godliness without the power. (2 Timothy 3:5.) May the Lord give us increased energy in these last days. "To them that have no might He increaseth strength." And may all His beloved people seek to maintain the grave importance of not grieving the Holy Spirit of God in themselves, whereby they cut off their own individual supplies of food, which ever come to

us by the Holy Ghost's ministering Christ to us; and as to the assembly, the solemn importance of not quenching the Spirit, and thus depriving the gathered saints of that ministry and sustenance so necessary for the edification and growth of the body. H. C. Anstey.

S. God Known and God Unknown

God Known and God Unknown

God could not be known in Old Testament times. He had not come out, and man could not go in. Now, God is revealed in three Persons, and this could not be true until the Son had come. The Son declares the Father, and the declaration is made good in us by the indwelling of the Spirit. God is known. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Without the three, it is clear that God cannot be known, since He has been pleased to make Himself known in this way. We are shut up to these Three. H. C. Anstey.

S. God and Ruin Alone; and God Triumphant

God and Ruin Alone; and God Triumphant The great fact that stares us in the face on all hands is that God is not known, yet nothing can be clearer to a reader of the Bible than that God desires to be known, and that He has taken infinite pains in order that He may be known. The gospel now is the setting forth of God.

God has from the first of Genesis been making Himself known, and He is now fully declared in Christ. God is first presented to us in the Bible in view of ruin, and what we know of God in that relation is (however it occurred) that He is superior to it!

We see that twice in the record of the Bible God has been, found alone and face to face with ruin. The first occasion was Genesis 1:1-31, when "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

Now the earth was not created in that state. The first verse says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and it would be folly for anyone to suppose that it came from God's hand as we find it in Genesis 1:2. It would deny all that we know of God as a God of order. (1 Corinthians 14:33.) No, it had fallen (how, we do not know) into the state of Genesis 1:2 at some time subsequent to its creation in Genesis 1:1. Chaos was there, but Isaiah says "He created it not in vain," or, as it may be read, "in chaos." (Isaiah 45:18.) A state of ruin then was before God, and God we see was intensely interested in it. "And the Spirit of God moved upon [brooded or hovered over] the face of the waters." We can see why this was so, It was in view of Christ. If all things were created "by Him," all things also were created "for Him." God had Christ before Him.

We learn then that God is adequate when ruin is before Him, and nothing else; that is, that ruin does not shut up God. This is how God first comes before me in the Bible. In His presence all the ruin has fled. Consequently out of all that ruin, beauty, and nothing but beauty, came. God's resources are seen to be in Himself, and this I see to be worthy of the Supreme Being. "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." This is the language which closes the first day of ruin. Ruin must succumb to God, and thus God is making Himself known in Genesis 1:1-31.

Now we come to another day of ruin and to another appearance of God on the earth. And again we see that God and the ruin have met, and again the same story is repeated. God came into this world in the person of Christ (John 1:1-10), only to find that there was nothing here agreeable to Him. The whole scene was one heaving, tumultuous chaos, with God shut out. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Man was not created in that state. But if God comes into it - if the Spirit of God broods and hovers over it - it is in view of what God is about to do. And His Spirit is at the beginning of His work here as there, and in every soul. We have before us the dawn of the new creation, and God not frustrated by all that Satan has done to overthrow the first creation, and to bring in moral and physical ruin upon it all. This is the great lesson: God is superior to all the ruin, or He could not be God. Death closes up man's

history, and in the person of Christ on the cross God forsakes man, an utter ruin before Him. But then He takes Christ out of death, "for it was not possible that He should be holden of it," and in Him we have a new creation for God. He is "the beginning of the creation of God." All the ruin and darkness (moral darkness) was there at the cross - all that sin was before Him - and all that Satan had done, and Satan too who did it - ruin, and nothing else, is seen there, and God the active agent in it! The consequence is that ruin must disappear for God, so that beauty, and complacency in it, may remain for Him. And this has come to pass, and it is all stable because it is all of God, and all in Christ. For us individually it is a good thing that we have come to God's estimate of ruin (Romans 3:1-31), nor only this, but that we keep it before us that, in nature's working, chaos and ruin are all that are found in Man 1:1 :e. nothing for God. All that does now, or ever will, delight the heart of God in anyone, God has formed for Himself, and God has produced, "that no flesh should glory in His presence."

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:1-31.)

I add one word more. Who shall estimate the work of God, the saints in the value of the cross of Christ? What human language could attempt to portray it - this new creation - brought home so close to us as it is by this language of the Spirit of God Himself? "But OF HIM are ye in Christ Jesus"! God and the ruin were once alone, and now God only is left. God triumphant! May we live in the daily joy of being now brought to Him.

H. C. Anstey.

S. God's Salvation.

God's Salvation.

Forgiveness of Sins and Deliverance from Sin.

Romans 4:1-25; Romans 5:1-21; Romans 6:1-23.

God's salvation, and the full deliverance which it brings from all the power of Satan, which, being won by the death of Christ, should be the present enjoyed portion of every Christian, is only known to him who has accepted by faith two distinct statements of the word of God concerning it; namely, that as God's salvation surely deals with, and settles the question of my sins, so surely does it also deal with, and settle the question of, myself. "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," indicates the way of the settlement of the one (Romans 4:1-25), that is, our sins; for the Holy Ghost now present (Acts 2:1-47) is now testifying to us (as He will testify to Israel, founded on the work of Christ, in the day of the new covenant), "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." But while this is true, it is His voice also saying we "are dead to sin," "buried with Him by baptism unto death" (Romans 6:1-23) (and therefore are we exhorted to reckon ourselves to be "dead indeed unto sin"); these and similar passages give us the other part of this "great" salvation; 1:e. the end too of ourselves in that death of Christ in God's sight. Both are to be accepted and enjoyed only by faith.

Let us remember that doubts and fears, and a joy often followed by darkness and despair, form no part of God's provision for the poor sinner who comes to Christ. Long enough indeed has he known these, and deeply enough has he proved them, in the long and weary years of unbelief that have passed. Yet in how many cases do we find, alas, that these things are perpetuated, even looked upon as right, and too often encouraged as a proof of humility in the children of God! Some sad misunderstanding of the word "salvation," then, must surely exist in our own day, to produce such fruits, and such Christians, and such teachers, as these. The fault is not in God, nor in the Word - this cannot be; it is alone in ourselves. We have to learn, and often through deep sorrow, what we refuse to accept from God by faith. The exercises of Romans 7:1-25 teach us this. The soul there is wholly occupied with self as alive. When God is first dealing with the soul, I find the Holy Ghost brings home to it, through the conscience, the burden of its sins. The cry is wrung from it, as from the prodigal; "I have sinned." It was thus when Peter was preaching (Acts 2:1-47) to the multitude, and three thousand were pricked in their heart; and Peter's answering word is, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." And so again in Acts 3:1-26, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." In the necessity for real heart work I agree with Bunyan that the soul must feel its burden, though I reject the necessity of passing long years in the Doubting Castle of Giant Despair, wherein he immures Christian for a time, even when far advanced on his journey. And what is it which introduces the soul into liberty as to its sins when feeling the weight of this burden? It is this statement, accepted by faith, that another, even Jesus Christ, has been "delivered for our offences;" One who has also been accepted of God, proved in that He is "raised again for our justification." Very well, then, says the

apostle in his simple argument, if this cannot be denied, and it is all of God, we are justified. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here then I pass at once into unclouded peace with God as to the whole question of my sins, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:1.) But with how many souls is this blessed condition but transient as to their realization of it! How many we meet who look back to the time when they knew this peace, and passed for the first time into the blessed realization of it by faith! But since that time the brightness has become dim, and the clouds have returned again, for they have not gone on to accept with the same unhesitating, unqualified faith the statement of this sixth chapter; namely, that in the same work of Christ, wherein was obtained the forgiveness of my sins, I was "baptized unto His death." "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death." The death and burial of me, the man, is as clearly taught, and as implicitly to be received as a matter of faith,* as that Christ was delivered for my sins.

*This is of the first importance; for until this truth is received by faith, it will never be known experimentally, and souls never enter upon the blessedness of deliverance until they have learnt for themselves what the flesh is, that they are helpless, and that deliverance is found outside of themselves in Christ, according to Romans 7:1-25. - [ED.]

Alas, that souls should stop short of this their full and blessed deliverance, a deliverance perfect because of God, and which He delights to give as the present and enjoyed portion of the believer in Christ! You find many who know and rejoice in the forgiveness of their sins, who do not, and will not, accept the truth that they are "dead" (Colossians 3:3), for it is here the cross comes in, and it, alas! weighs too heavily upon them. The forgiveness of their sins they will have; that is all privilege, all blessing; but the rejection of themselves, this involves the giving up of everything that ministers to man on the earth, and they may live as very good Christians (as the world speaks) without going quite so far as this. And this word death is a solemn word to those who accept it. It is the end of the man who was living in his sins, the end of his affections, of his desires, of his present world-life, and of all his future worldly hopes. What is left for faith is the new man alone, the man "in Christ," a new creation, where "all things are of God." And what does not this involve, as to the way in which that man should henceforth live upon the earth, no longer to himself, but "unto Him who died for him and rose again"? And why is it refused, but because the occupation of the daily life of many will not bear such an examination, and they have no thought that Christianity contains such a self-ignoring standard as this? But is not this the Christianity of the Bible, the Christianity of these three chapters? And can you have the joy of it if you refuse it? My brethren, have you accepted it as God's truth that you are "dead"? Are you following no longer that course of things which once controlled and attracted you when you were alive in the world? "Having food and raiment" here, are you therewith "content"? and still content when you have not these, if it be His blessed will to deprive you of them? Like the apostle Paul, who could say, "I know how to abound, and I know how to suffer loss, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" - "in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." A fool indeed was the world's estimation of such a man; but is there not in him a picture of the Christianity of the Bible before you? And do we not covet to be such men? dead surely, and useless, if "society" and man's day be the subject; but we live in a new life - waiting for the dawning of a new day, the day of Christ, a "morning without clouds." Do not misunderstand my meaning; a Christian may, and ought to, minister to man in his misery and in his sins; for out of his belly should flow "rivers of living

water" (John 7:38); but as to what he can minister to me, what would he add to a dead man? or what can he add to an "heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ"? For as to the world, I am dead - "whereby (the cross of Christ) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Galatians 6:14; Galatians 4:12.)

Now God in this epistle presents to us the forgiveness of sins, and also the death of the sinner in the person of the One who satisfies God as to the question of his sins. This is Paul's gospel (Galatians 1:1-24), wherein, he says, the "righteousness of God" is revealed on the principle of faith. God's righteousness "upon all who believe" (Galatians 3:1-29) when we had none to offer Him (see Galatians 3:1-29), and Christ now before God instead of myself, in whom I am, according to Romans 8:1. This is how the power and grace of God have triumphed. "It" (the gospel) "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And this word salvation, thus brought out in Galatians 1:1-24, is no mean measure; it is what God's heart desires to be proclaimed to every poor sinner "for the obedience of faith." As it was in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:1-44) so it is now, "deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." To accept it is to be "free indeed," no longer a servant, but a son; "and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Galatians 4:1-31) How appropriate the exhortation of the apostle to these law-keeping Galatians: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Yet though we are not Jews, and so not under the law of Moses, how often we make laws for ourselves, not reckoning ourselves dead, not accepting the truth, and thus are landed again under a yoke of bondage, in which case the true Christian liberty is not known. How common is the thought, in respect of worldliness for example, (though the principle applies to other things), "I ought not to be so worldly, nor to do what the world does." This is admitted; but it is the old man you are addressing as if alive; you have allowed yourself to "be" what is inconsistent with a dead man. Had you met the enemy at the outposts with the truth, "I am dead," because you have accepted it by faith, you had not been betrayed into a path and conduct you now sorrow over, a path of servitude, and not of liberty, in which you find yourselves in Romans 7:1-25, and do not know the truth of Romans 8:1-39 as your abiding portion and joy.

We have been looking then at the two parts of this "great" salvation, deliverance from sins and deliverance from self, both of which are contained in it, and to be received by faith. There is one verse in connection with faith in this epistle, and faith both as to my sins and as to myself, which I cannot but bring before you, as bearing on this subject: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23.) If there is faith, it will manifest itself by works. If a soul knows that it has forgiveness of sins, and knows also as to the old man, that he was crucified, dead and buried "with Him," will it not manifest these truths in its life on earth? Let it be, then, in this connection (as it surely is) God's solemn word to us, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" - sin from the bondage of which Christ died to deliver us; for "he that is dead is freed from sin."

Let us remember, then, what Paul's gospel contained; let us remember too the blessed deliverance it brings to all who accept it. Have you faith in God about your sins? and also about yourself? A soul is not established who has not bowed in faith to both these truths which we have had before us. But the apostle prayed for these Romans that they might be thus established, and his concluding words sound to us today as fresh as when he uttered them first: "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel." They come home to us; for we see all around

that souls are not established according to this blessed gospel. Its deliverance is not accepted and acted on, and so its joy cannot be known. May we listen then to his words afresh, and may they be fulfilled in us all: "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." H, C. Anstey.

S. Heavenly Things are not New

Heavenly Things are not New, and the "Present Truth" is of "Heavenly Things."

John 3:31-32.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 203.

These things may be new to us, for there is always a tendency with us to go backward and to grasp at "earthly things" - not the world, but the portion of an earthly people. God has both the earthly and the heavenly company. We read of "things new and old" (Matthew 13:1-58) - the earthly things are the "old" things, the "new" things are the "heavenly things." (John 3:12.) In this last passage we see heavenly things first referred to by the Lord who came to bring them, and to bring into them. They began to be made known eighteen hundred years ago. None could speak of them, none unfold them, save He who came down from heaven. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not [1:e., of the new birth as a necessity - a must be - for the kingdom], how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" "What He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony." "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

Truth to be descriptive of, or edifying to, saints now, MUST BE HEAVENLY; that is, from Christ and of Christ, as the "HEAVENLY ONE" to the "heavenly ones." (1 Corinthians 15:48.) It was all at first in Him, and then made good to men on earth from Him by the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It is a new and satisfying portion. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." It is in us by the Spirit. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." But it is also a continuous communication from the source - Christ. Things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," things which have not "entered into the heart of man" - these God hath "revealed unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:9-10.) These things the apostle communicated, 1:e., "spiritual things by spiritual means," and all these for the saints.

It is not Jacob's well now. No refreshment either for man or for God can come from thence, and the water-pot may well be left empty. It is Christ Himself, and only Christ, and what is heavenly; and all worship now is founded on this. The Father is seeking worshippers, but those whom the Son has filled. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The Spirit was not given until Jesus was glorified. (John 7:1-53.) When He came He testified of Christ, the "Heavenly One" - "He shall testify of Me." He was the power of all divine knowledge in the believer. "At that day [the day of the Spirit's presence on earth] ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." (John 14:1-31.) The Truth is the portion of the saints today, and it is of the heavenly One, and they to be descriptive of it must also be heavenly. We must not only come out in heavenly dress, but from heavenly associations; and we shall do this only when, by the Spirit, we

have our communion "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3.) Thank God,
this is our portion. H. C. A.

S. Hindrances to a Christian Life.

Hindrances to a Christian Life.

Science and Philosophy.

It is well for us to know, on the authority of God, that science is an active opposer of the truth. So also is philosophy. Timothy is told to avoid the "oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith." The Colossians too are exhorted thus: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit."

It is a great lift to the soul (in the way of freeing it from what appeals to us on every hand) when we accept this word of God for ourselves. No doubt there were attractions, and a young man like Timothy would be more attracted by the reasonings of science than some who were older. It is so today. Yet that which is most refined and most attractive in man is exposed here as utterly destructive to the truth of God in souls. No one, I take it, could afford to tamper then with either without suffering, or I do not understand what is thus written for us. The reason is not far to seek. Science is man's knowledge, and is built up, not on faith, but on reason. Philosophy is man's wisdom, independent of and without God. May the saints, and especially the young brethren of our day, be preserved from both. True knowledge comes alone from God, and true wisdom also. H. C. Anstey.

S. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.

"I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star."

Revelation 22:16.

Christian Friend, vol. 18, 1891, p. 152. The Morning Star is shining bright, though clouds my sky may fill. Its gleams I catch, a pilgrim here, at peace with God and still. And soon I know the day must break, yon Star its Herald there Tells of the end of earth's long night and each deceiving snare.

Thou Morning Star! Herald of Day! Lord Jesus, can it be That aught of night can chain the soul that's caught one glimpse of Thee? This night aye filled with groans and woe, with agony and pain, Whose darkest hour records one fact - "The Lord of Life was slain"?

Thou Morning Star! Lord, fix my gaze, nor ever let me be By glittering toys of earth entranced, forgetful, Lord, of Thee.

Amid earth's roar I hear Thy voice, "The night is round thee now, But my day of glory soon shall light thy worn and weary brow." The Morning Star! I have its cheer, yet clearer may it shine - A light to guide me all the way, lit up by love divine.

I lie within Thy bosom, Lord, the one Thy love has blessed;

Darkness may thicken, light is mine to Thine own eternal rest.

"And the spirit and the Bride say, COME." - Revelation 22:17.

H. C. Anstey, 1868.

S. I have somewhat to say unto thee.

"I have somewhat to say unto thee."

Luke 7:40-50.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 16, 1889, p. 1.

We only get blessing from the word of God when we see how its words affect us. Can we not each write our own name in front of the above quotation? If so, we shall gather instruction from it. The Lord Jesus values and looks for our love. His heart is conscious of any and every deficit in the measure of the love which He receives from us. When the creditor had forgiven all to the two unequal debtors, He asks Simon, in this passage, "Which of them will love him most?" Now for the application of it to ourselves as He applied it to Simon.

"I entered into thine house." This He says to each of us. (See Titus 2:11.) In the most absolute grace He has come to us, unattracted by anything that existed in us. How has this wondrous visitor been received? To Simon He says, "Thou gavest me no kiss. Thou gavest me no water for My feet." No welcome, and no refreshment. Ah! is this true of one reader of these lines? No welcome and no refreshment for Jesus when He came. He expects and seeks both. Do you say, "I have welcomed Him, I have refreshed His blessed heart, because I am a Christian," as John 4:33 teaches? Well, there is still more than this to do. Again He says, "I have somewhat to say unto thee;" and again we do well to listen to His voice. "My head with oil thou didst not anoint." Is your service now all done in the power of the Spirit (the oil), and poured out upon CHRIST? There is no lack of service in these days; but oh, the importance of the addition of these two or three little words to what we do "as unto the Lord"! They completely alter the character of your work for Him. Can you say, It was little, but such as it was I poured it all out upon Him, and all in the power of the Spirit of God, and according to His leading and guidance? Did you? Is not this a testing question to each of us?

Observe in this passage this woman's devotion to the person of our Lord. How her love displayed itself - not so much in the amount of the work which she did, as in the fact that she did it all to Him! No secondary motives guided her. He - He alone - was her one only object. Oh, the beautiful independence of this love! It asked no advice, nor copied from what others were doing. It expended its little all upon Him. He noted it. He valued it. The welcome to Him - the kiss. The refreshment, the water for His feet. The ointment with which she anointed His feet, this comfort given to Him, and where does He now seek and expect to find these things? In our houses. "I entered into thine house." Has he found, and does He find them all there, my reader? Is it true of your house and of mine? Or, if we have not a house of our own, is there a corner where He gets from us individually that which He seeks? But we are soon going into His house. What will be there our welcome, our refreshment, our comfort? Will He fail to greet us with every one of these? Well we know that not one will fail. How cold our hearts as to the welcome, the refreshment, the comfort

which He gets from us now! How fully, in that blessed day that is coming (the "presentation day"), will His heart satisfy itself in the pouring out of His own love to us! We are going into the Father's house. (John 14:1-3.) What met the prodigal at his approach there? No questions, only the kiss. It was the first thing, and it was the kiss of love. (See Luke 15:20.) Then as to the delight of His own heart in that day to minister refreshment and comfort to us, what do we read? "Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke 12:37.)

Spite of all our failure and want of love now, what a blessed day is thus drawing nigh. A day in which in joy peculiar to Him we shall be with Him, and He will be with us. The "presentation day" of Ephesians 5:27, when He shall bring the bride into the Father's house, and when His own heart shall delight itself in her. How different our reception and comfort there then, and His here now, who in grace condescends to say to each of us, "I entered into thine house!" Yet He never changes. (Hebrews 13:8.) The day comes when we shall fully know what love is, as it is displayed in Him toward us. Does the prospect gladden us? Do we love His appearing? (2 Timothy 4:8.) Then it will bring out from us in our houses a little more devotedness of heart now to Himself, whatever others may be doing. May He guide us to this, keeping before us His interest in our love as forgiven ones, expressed in these words, "I have somewhat to say unto thee." May you and I condescend to listen; so shall we profit thereby. H. C. A.

S. Jottings

Jottings.

1. Faith.

We must remember that it begins with God, and always he who is walking really in a path of faith brings GOD in, and this is the difference between it and unbelief; unbelief always leaves Him out. Again, faith is the individual soul alone with God, and any intervention of a third party destroys it. Any acting from secondary motives is not faith. It must be God and His word alone before the soul for the act to be an act of faith.

Faith grows. This can be learnt in the history of the children of God, and as detailed in Hebrews 11:1-40. To bring God into everything is the privilege now of His children. There is nothing too small in our daily path for Him to notice who has numbered even the hairs of our head. It is this bringing God into all our matters that produces the walk, the life of faith, and which is the subject of the chapter I have referred to. And it is just this bringing God into our matters that reveals to us the true character of them; for "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Thus this, by becoming the continual habit of the soul, becomes at once a preserving power for it in the midst of all the darkness and unbelief of our natural hearts. The principle for the Christian now is found in the words, "He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." We must see God in everything. In the examples of Hebrews 11:1-40 we see they began with God. This is faith, and this characterizes each one after. In Abel's act God's claim is admitted, and in the sacrifice Abel confesses that he merited death as the sinner. He comes in the provided way, and is accepted, "God testifying of his gifts." So GOD is before Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and the others. This settled everything for each in his day.

It is important just simply to grasp what real faith is, that it begins with God, and continues to have to do with God, and that it is intensely individual. We are glad and thankful to find others in the path of faith with us; but this having always to do with God now individually (which was true of us at first) is the power to sustain us still going on in the path if others fail us, and still produces the works seen in' a life of faith. When a trial comes, if there has not been this individual intercourse with God, it is often found that we have been merely imitators of others. We then, like Ephraim, "being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." (Psalms 78:1-72.) But if we have been in the habit of bringing God in, we shall turn to Him in the day of battle, and turning to Him is not turning our back to the enemy.* "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

*We only really help others when we bring them to have to do with God and His word for themselves. If they act merely on advice, from however godly a brother, they will at last break down; it is not faith. I must be careful that I do not lead saints to act merely on my advice, or they are acting on my faith.

2. "There am I in the midst." Is there in us an adequate sense of the wonderful grace and favour conferred upon us in being allowed to gather together with the Lord's people on earth? Can there be any thing higher than to be thus with Him, and in communion with His own heart as to His people? Think of it. Who is He there in the midst? It is a wonderful place, and but poorly we value it, so little do we know of what its reality is. Faith sees Him there. And then not only to be privileged to gather together thus, but think of the further favour of being of any use there; of being used by Him who loves His people with a perfect love, and whose whole heart goes out for them in their weakness, and in this day of their sorrow and rejection (a day of rejection once gone through before by Himself). It is a heart beating in harmony with His own for them that He can take up to make any of us helpful to them. This is what we want to cultivate. We want to know His thoughts at that very moment for His gathered saints. Without this all is barrenness, all activity painful; with it, even the silent prayer of the simple one - oft incapable of being framed into language - calls down His own blessing upon those who in their weakness are cast upon Him.

It is not more activity we want, as gathered to His name; it is more communion. HE is there; the people are His people. I have to remember that He wills the blessing of His people, and to say, "Who am I, to be in this place?"

3. Self-occupation and Self-judgment.

Many confound self-occupation with self-judgment; and, seeing self-judgment to be right (when we fail), are found asking themselves where the one ends, and where the other begins. And self-occupation they question. A word or two on these may help, if the Lord permit.

Self-occupation is the bane of the soul. Man makes himself the centre, and himself the chief object upon earth. This is self-occupation. It lands him in that place "where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched." To all self-occupation is death.

Self judgment is the work of the Spirit of God. It is not His proper, but it is often, from our want of watchfulness, His necessary work. There is no way of return to the joy of communion without it. Self-judgment, though right in its place, is not communion; on the contrary, it is the confession that communion is lost. But it is the only way back; it is medicine, but not food. For me to live daily with self ignored is the highest Christian condition. Here the Spirit of God is free to carry on His proper work in my soul, to take Christ and put Him before me as my food. Here the soul is free to be occupied by and for Christ alone. It says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It is the only right state for food. And food is the soul's appropriation of Christ, and feeding upon Him as ministered by the Spirit. He alone is the "bread of life that came down from heaven;" as John 6:56 says, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." It is not the having done so once by faith. That is in verse 51, and is of first importance. Food is the daily need of the man, and it is here his daily habit to feed. But how important to see that self-occupation is not food, and that self-judgment is not food; for how can I live or grow without food?

What then is self-occupation? It is a human being, a worm of the earth in God's sight, a particle of dust, forgetting or ignoring the fact of GOD and ETERNITY; one who says, "Let us eat and drink: for tomorrow we die," and to whom God says, "Thou fool!" (1 Corinthians 15:1-58; Luke 12:20.)

What is self-judgment? It is looking at yourself (note it well), not in contrast with other saints, but in contrast with Christ, the perfect, heavenly Man. And what is self-ignored? It is the forgetting that

there is a self, through pre-occupation with the perfect One, with Christ alone. This will be our eternal occupation in heaven, when there will be no "self" to mar our vision, or to call for judgment. But it begins on earth - begins, though harassed on every hand, in a poor earthen vessel, "that the excellency of the power may be" seen to be "of God, and not of us." (2 Corinthians 4:1-18.)

H. C. Anstey.

Principles are not power. If principles occupy the mind, even with the most earnest desire for accuracy, so as to become the object instead of Christ, there will be the absence of spiritual power. The secret of power is not merely having orthodox principles, but exercising faith in God, according to the truth He has graciously revealed. For instance, many accept, as a divinely-given principle of truth, that where two or three are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there He is "in the midst of them." But those only who have faith in the Lord as present will have the power and comfort of it. This is individual. The power and blessing therefore of a company of saints is connected with the individual faith of those gathered. H. H. Snell.

S. Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay

"Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay"; or, The Decision.

Indecision is one great hindrance in the Christian path. So long as a man does not go into the responsibilities of the question before God, "Am I for this world or for that?" so long will Satan amuse him with something or other here, while the Spirit of God alone will satisfy him if he desires to go on in faith. No doubt all Christians say, "Christ for my sins," but you cannot say, "I have Christ for the path," apart from the ministry of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost, I do not doubt, has come down not only to conduct the Bride, the Church, across the desert to Christ, but also to satisfy and fill her heart all along that path. This is foreshadowed for us in Genesis 24:1-67, where we see that the servant comes into Mesopotamia to guide Rebekah through the desert to Isaac. But an important question has to be answered before there can be any start along the path, and it is this that I would consider a little.

Evidently Rebekah might have got a very clear understanding of the grace that had chosen her, and might have spoken of it too, without taking the path which led her on to him whose heart she was called to know, and whose wealth she was called to share. She might have said to any acquaintance, "Have you heard about it? I am the recipient of wonderful tidings from Canaan. Isaac is the heir to all Abraham's wealth, and I am selected to be his bride." All this she might have said without shewing by her actions in everyday-life that (as much as in her lay) she was making this news her own in practical reality. It cannot, I think, be disputed that a soul might say, "I belong to Christ, and some day I am going to heaven," and yet not be taking daily steps in that direction, as seen in their life here. There would be little proof in some that Christ and heaven are the objects of their daily course, had we not the assurance that it is so from their own lips!

Lips without life will not suit Abraham's servant, nor will it suit the Holy Ghost. He is here with one definite object, and whether that object is accomplished in you and in me or not, He will not tarry here. He will commence his journey at once, for He must return to His master. He is here in grace, in the world as it is, but not to sanction it, and surely not to rest in it. No, neither of these; but He is here to lead out of it. The crucial question is the one that was asked when, in solemn conclave, Rebekah was assembled, together with her relatives, in the presence of this Canaan stranger. This is the question then for each of us to face today. It cannot be avoided by anyone calling himself a Christian. "Wilt thou go with this man?" Will you begin your journey this day in the company of the Spirit of God? Remember, you must be chosen first, and know it, and then the journey only begins if we have affirmatively answered this question. There are around us many souls who will doubtless spend their future eternity with the Lord, who are not spending their present time in the enjoyment of the company of the Holy Ghost. They are undecided about this question.

"Peradventure," says the servant, when on the eve of undertaking his all-important mission, "the woman will not be willing to follow me!" Oh, my reader, is this your case? It is, I doubt not, the case of thousands of people who will be in heaven. I do not say that they are not converted. It is no

question of their conversion. No; but they will not "go with" the ministry and leading of the Holy Spirit, and will not allow the home of Mesopotamia with its attractions to give place to the desert sands and those untrodden paths, known only to the Canaan stranger, the Spirit of God! To be under the guidance of the Spirit, and no other, is manifestly to have begun the journey.

Oh, my reader, has this solemn meeting of which I speak ever been held in the history of your soul? You are a Christian, and you know well where and what the terminus of that is. But it is not of the terminus that we speak in this meeting. What is the thesis - the question? It is of the company or path that leads to the Terminus. Better this meeting should be held at once. Let us weigh all that can be said. Call in your business, your friends, your prospects, your pleasures - all that you have ever counted on and lived for in this world. Let us hear what each has to plead, in order that you should not undertake this journey. Then let us hear what the heavenly Stranger has to say to us about Him whose Messenger He is, so that this question being fairly argued out, your soul may go forth from this moment, and from this solemn meeting, unshackled and unimpeded, to commence its heavenward journey in the company of the Spirit of God!

Now, note you, that His business is urgent. You cannot afford to say, "Well, I will think about this matter; I require a little time for consideration." You surely want rest here on earth - rest of soul, and this question decided, in the company and by means of the ministry of the Spirit, you shall get it. Do not be content to say, "There is rest only in heaven." Christ spoke of our finding rest on earth. He says, "Take my yoke upon you, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Many a one finds true rest in heaven, who nevertheless had no rest on earth, because of not going "with this Man."

"I will go." This is the only right answer from the chosen Bride. Remember the Lord says, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." We are chosen by Him. Have we one and all responded (the matter being fairly argued out), "I will go"? We are all poor failing beings; but in all honesty of purpose are we going "with this Man"? Our hearts only set upon this? And if we are, then all along our course in this world we shall find for our comfort that this reply will come up again and again. Amidst the responsibilities of the household, as well as in the church, the house of God, "I will go" will meet every difficulty which arises. I have His company through the waste, and He has only one Object to speak to me of - the One to whom I belong, and for whom He will of necessity care for me, all along the desert path. I am to share and know all that is the portion of the only Son.

What are all your surroundings WORTH, my reader, that there should be with you, or indeed with any of us, one moment's hesitation about going "with this man"? We hear the question, "Wilt thou go?" I confess to you that my own surroundings appear to me (and may God keep it ever fresh in me) so very small, so very poor, so very contemptible, yea, to be accounted only as so much dung and dross, that I wonder that I could ever have a moment's happiness outside the ministry of the Spirit. It is good to weigh the value of things in the light that God casts upon them. Are you distressed in spirit, cast about, as it were, by the tumultuous sea of this world? Ah! why is it? Have you honestly faced the question which I have here feebly tried to put before you? and have you answered it? To be really happy you must be consciously in the company of Him of whom Abraham's servant was only a type, and it is only therein that you will be happy. He who wants heaven and earth enjoys neither the one nor the other.

"I will go." May this language be truly the utterance of all our hearts. We shall not then require to tell people that we are going to heaven. They will see it. As these desert days come and go one after the other, there will always be a full supply for each, and no looking back. Farther each day from Mesopotamia. But you must make a beginning. It is not conversion, as I have said. Do not be content to think that if you are converted you have said "I will go." It is a great mistake. But if you have said it once, you will by grace be continually saying it. I go forth today, a day that I have never lived in this desert before, a day of whose intricacies I have no knowledge at all; but by grace "I will go" with this man, and He will suffice me. (See John 4:14; John 7:38.) The Spirit is leading the Bride through the desert to Christ. Will He allow her to famish?

We are privileged to weigh the things of time against those of eternity, and this is done always when we "go with" this Man. It is then, How does this look in the light of God? (2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:5.) May the response of the ways, as well as those of the lips, be seen in us, seen and read of all men. "Wilt thou go with this Man? . . . I WILL GO." Amen. H. C. Anstey.

S. Love and Light: Their Relation

Love and Light: Their Relation The only use we can be, as being in a dark world, is to be light in it. It is important to be clear as to this fact. If I am not manifesting light I am of no use here. A soul becomes a vessel of light through the shining into it of light. "Because the God who commanded that out of darkness light should shine has shone in our hearts." (2 Corinthians 4:6, N.T.) He is speaking in this passage of the preaching of the gospel, which is veiled by the god of this world in the thoughts of the unbeliever. It is clear that light comes by the gospel, but then light abides in the receptive vessel and goes out from it, and no one is a contributor to this scene of darkness but one from whom light goes out.

Now light has shone in "for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (N.T.) This was God's object in sending in the light, that there might be a shining out of it. You see many cannot preach, and it is not the preaching of the gospel, it is "the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is GOD who has shone in, and HE shines out, but He can only be known as revealed in Christ. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Christ has maintained THE GLORY OF GOD, where man only seeks the glory of man. The light is "THE GLORY OF GOD." "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Revelation 21:23.) This light begins to shine here, but it shines exclusively and without obstruction there. "Among whom ye appear as lights in the world." (Php 2:1-30.) Here the light is seen coming out. Again, "Once were ye darkness, but now light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Ephesians 5:8.)

Light is the vessel itself, and is also in the vessel here for the glory of God. That is the only vessel of light here. You will understand it better if you ponder the Lord's words. He was the vessel of light for God here, and He says, "He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory, but he that, seeks the glory of Him that sent him, the same is true, and unrighteousness is not in him." (John 7:18, New Trans.) I am here for my own glory, or I am here for God's - which is it? for we have been sent into this scene just as Christ was sent into it. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." (John 20:1-31.)

I think we shall find that the mainspring of light is love. This was seen in God. Love was and is His nature, and God desires that He may be known to man. "God is love," and to make Himself known He must dispel the darkness in which man is as to Him. This He has done most fully on the cross, but in doing it HE becomes known. He approaches man in the gospel by the Spirit (1 Peter 1:12), and then by the Spirit He makes the heart of the receiver of the gospel His own abode. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which He hath given to us." (Romans 5:5.)

If the mainspring of light is, as I think, love, and we have the privilege of being lights here, it is manifest that when love goes light goes. I think that love is the internal principle of light. Light is more what is seen outside, but there must be a sustaining power within. That power, I believe, is love. We are light here just in proportion as we are abiding in love. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16.) No one can thus dwell without

being a light in this dark scene for God, only the love in question is GOD'S LOVE. As I am kept in it, I am, and without effort (for there is no effort in light itself), a light in the world where all is yet dark.

I come now to the proof of my second point, "When love goes light goes," and I think I can show this satisfactorily to you from Scripture. In Matthew 25:1-46 ALL the virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom. It was what marked individual saints, I have no doubt, in the early days of Christianity. Jesus was gone, but HE WAS COMING AGAIN! (Compare 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, etc.) The whole of their conduct took its form from this hope. Then the light shone brightly out from them in this dark scene: "So that we [the apostles] have no need to say anything." (1 Thessalonians 1:8.) So it was also in the early converts at Philippi: "Ye appear as lights in the world," and "We await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour." But the world slept on in its night, and when all around is "sleep," our tendency also is to sleep. The virgins all slept, the watching for Him (which would have kept them awake) declined, and the light in the lamps became very dim, They needed trimming, but there was none to do it until love again resumed its sway. "Behold the Bridegroom" is not a word for the intellect, it is a word for the heart. And it sounded, and is still sounding. It awoke the sleeping, who should have been witnesses. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." Each virgin got up, having a light of her own, to attend to. Herein we read the history of the individual soul, and as love was lost, so light disappeared!

Again, in Revelation 1:12-20 we find that a collective company - the Church - was set on earth as seven golden lamps, to sustain a light here for God. What was the first-mentioned germ of defect which obscured this light? It was this, "Thou hast left thy first love." This is the word to Ephesus in Revelation 2:4. It was no somewhat, this, to Him, it was everything. And what was the Church's first love? It was her love to Him. But there was something which came before her love to Him, and which produced it, and that was HIS LOVE! The source of love is not in man, it is in God, and we only love as we have the consciousness of HIS love. "We love Him, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) The apostle said, "Ye are not straitened in us," and we can say, "We are not straitened in HIM." "He abideth faithful." It is very important to remember this. Do you and do I wish to be a little light for Him amid this dark and heartless world? The way is plain. We must keep ourselves in, and keep in ourselves, the sense of GOD'S LOVE. There is no other way, I think, to manifest light here. "Keep yourselves IN THE LOVE OF GOD, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The sense of God's love is surely the best and only light for this dark day.
H. C. Anstey.

S. Moral Separation Precedes Actual

Moral Separation Precedes Actual

Moral separation to God is, I think, always found where man bows to light from God. This leads to a shrinking from the company of persons in whom there is no response to this light. Thus we reach actual separation, but we cleave to those morally separate.

H. C. Anstey.

S. My Place Taken by Christ

My Place Taken by Christ, Once on Earth in Death, and Now in the Father's House in Heaven.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 51.

"Here have we no continuing city." - Hebrews 13:1-25.

There are only two places in God's account. First, there was my birth place, for I was "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," and as there I was under the judgment of God, from which I could never have extricated myself. I myself was born as man of the family of Adam, as to which see Hebrews 9:27. And then, secondly, there is my "new-birth" place, the place of the prodigal son in the "Father's house." (Luke 15:1-32.)

"The Lord has taken both places for me," a believer can say. His wounds as "the Lamb that was slain" bear witness in heaven of how completely He stood in my place, and bore all the weight of God's judgment against me the sinner. And now He has taken my future place for me, and He holds it until He shall put me into it. "I go to prepare a place for you" "Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." And this latter place faith inhabits even now, and thus it is that faith always says it has "no place here." (See Hebrews 11:14-16.) But there - "There all's unsullied light, Our hearts let in its rays; And heavenly light makes all things bright, Seen in that blissful gaze." The wilderness was no place for God's people. He took them out of one place (Egypt) - "the house of bondage" - to set them down in another place (Canaan) - "a land flowing with milk and honey." The wilderness is all change, a moving, changing pilgrim scene. God's place is marked by no change but rest - He speaks of it as "His rest." (Hebrews 4:1-16.)

There are only two places. He took my place and gives me His. "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." He holds it for me now, and is coming to take me into it; and as surely as He has taken our past place for us, so surely has He also taken our future place for us, the only place that will suit His heart. It is with Himself. As He said to the thief, "With Me"; so now He says of each of us, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." With Him; for since He took the place of judgment (where we could not be with Him) He claims* the full right now to have us with Him. None in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, can dispute that right. (Romans 8:31.) H. C. A.

* John 17:24. "I desire" is, I think, stronger than "I will."

S. My Place.

My Place. No question of worthiness can be associated with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor with Him personally in respect of the place He now occupies. So also no thought of any judicial clearance before perfect holiness can come before the mind with respect to the Lord Jesus Himself; and no thought of His responsibility as obnoxious to God's government.

These things do have their place when man is considered, but not else. The eternal Son of the Father, by whom also "He made the world," in Him was found before the world was, as ever since, God's perfect rest, complacency, delight.

If these questions are rightly raised as to my place, how are they met? The answer is, In Him, if a believer, I stand. In Him, in all the favour of His OWN acceptance, as to which not a thought of worthiness can for one moment be entertained. As His worthiness now and always is far beyond any mere judicial clearance - for He is, as always, the delight of the Father - so also am I, as in Him. Can we measure or explain this affection? It is past our powers of explanation, and outside all merely human comprehension. Reason must flounder here. Yet - who will deny it? - "As He is, so are we in this world." H. C. Anstey.

S. Obedience

Obedience; or, How Victory and Enjoyment are Secured.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 253.

However much man may fail, yet with God there is infallibility, and it is for us. There is one infallible rule, one unfailing principle, which will safely guide the Christian in every exigency and intricacy of his path through this world. Oh, that we all had a more distinct grasp of it in our inmost souls, and, flowing thence, a more distinct manifestation in our walk that we are being guided by its maxims, that so we may enjoy this new life which we possess!

Let no one suppose for a moment that the word "rule" here connected with a Christian savours of legality. The delight and joy of the new nature are to "obey," and our unhappiness is to be traced (may we not say invariably?) to disobedience. Our Lord's path was marked by this very principle of obedience all along His earthly course. At its beginning we read, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!" And as He trod onward in that dark, that solitary path - a path illumined by no earthly light, and cheered by no human sympathy - it was still the path of obedience. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Darker and darker it became, as it led Him onward, down, down to death, yet He never swerved from it, and in perfect obedience even there He still says, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done."

Volumes might be written, and whole addresses and sermons delivered, all devoted to one object; viz., the restoration of the Christian when he has failed or turned aside out of God's path. We may write and we may read no end of such works, and every word written and read may be God's truth for the soul in that condition. But had the principle we are speaking of in this paper been maintained in all its authority in the soul, there had been no need of restoration. The path of obedience bears on it, distinctly and divinely stamped, the word preservation; and if preserved in the path, I do not need to be restored to it. This is God's desire for us, to preserve us, and to feed us, in the place in which His grace has set us; and may the means, the rule, the principle, He uses to this end, occupy more distinctly our souls as we pass along.

It has been remarked that the book of Joshua and the Epistle to the Ephesians correspond in a remarkable way to each other. In the one we see the accomplishment of God's purposes for His earthly, as in the other for the heavenly, people. In each He has them in the place which His own heart designed for them, where He can commune with them, and where He has fitted them to enter into and to enjoy that communion. (Ephesians 1:4; 1 John 1:3.) It is not heaven, but it is a condition which is ours on earth, and which will be fully known and enjoyed in heaven; and it is a condition, a communion, a joy, which God desires us to possess on earth, in the place of conflict and opposition, but which obedience is the sure and only way into. May we ponder it more! May its reality be more distinctly seen, enjoyed, and displayed by us! But though His people are all thus seen in the place God's heart designed for them, the old or evil nature remains, and it will remain

in each of them until they leave this world. We have said that there is a new nature also which delights to obey, but it finds the members of the body (Romans 6:13-22), yea, the whole man, under the influence of Satan, and all our members active in the service of sin, his power in us as the old master. Satan is moreover the enemy that holds possession, not only of our members, but also of the place which God has brought us into; that is, he holds us back from enjoying what is really ours, our own, as the gift to us of God's infinite grace, all secured to us by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is, then, this double power of the enemy - first, holding its; and, second, holding the place that belongs to us. Obedience, simple obedience, can wrest both from his grasp, and enable the Christian to pass into the enjoyment of what is, through grace, his own. There is no other way to dispossess the enemy. He is not readily going to give up possession either of us or of what is ours. It is bit by bit that he yields, a hand to hand struggle, yet it is only obedience on our part that is necessary, and with this he can neither hold us nor it.

If we read Joshua 6:1-27 and Ephesians 6:10-18 the truth is before us. They are simply to obey, to walk round about Jericho, in patience, the complete seven days. Not a blow were they to strike, and the result would be that the walls of Jericho, that which the enemy held in power and in pride against them, would fall down flat, "and the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him." And thus it came to pass. The key to the whole of Joshua 6:1-27 : and Ephesians 6:10-18 is the word obedience.

Let us pause a moment here to enquire if Christians generally are found, through obedience, enjoying what is really theirs - a happiness which this world can neither give nor take away from them, as the calm and settled portion of the soul; daily feeding on the old corn of the land, the grapes (of which Eshcol gave a sample), the pomegranates, the figs; the soul dwelling in that land wherein they "eat bread without scarceness," yea, in the Lord's land, "flowing with milk and honey," on which "the eyes of the Lord rest from the beginning of the year to the end thereof." God "hath blessed us" (all Christians) "with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ." And He would have us to be consciously enjoying them day by day.

If we are not enjoying them, it is because the enemy is still holding us back from the enjoyment. One cannot say for another what the walls of Jericho are to him; for they may differ in each individual instance. I cannot tell what they are for you, nor you for me; yet one principle applies to them all. It is only by walking in obedience that they will fall down. The whole point of the apostle's exhortation (Ephesians 6:10-18) is obedience to the word of God. The first force of the armour is "the loins girt about with truth," and the last is "the sword of the Spirit," which is again the word of God. The power for you and for me to enter into the enjoyment of these heavenly things, which are all ours in title, is found only as we walk in obedience. The power is not in me, and it only connects itself with me as I walk in obedience. The power is in the "man with the drawn sword," in Joshua 5:1-15; so all our strength is in "the Lord and the power of His might," in Ephesians. (Ephesians 6:10.)

Oh, may we remember it! No effort of yours or mine will put us in possession, or drive out the enemy. Obedience will do both. May the words of Samuel to Saul fix themselves indelibly in the heart of every Christian reader of these lines: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity

and idolatry."

It is well to know our weak point, so that not on human, but on the authority of God, we have what is hindering us exposed to us. Who can estimate the mighty power of the church of God, were each member of the body of Christ walking in simple obedience to the written Word? What union together, what grace, what joy, what communion with God would flow thence! But when there is failure in this respect in the company, the individual is called on to hear what the Spirit says to those who have failed" He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Revelation 2:11.) "If any man hear my voice," is the Lord's word to you and to me. My reader, I have done. If anything herein should draw your feet more distinctly and firmly and patiently to tread the path of obedience, I am already rewarded. Sure I am, however feebly I have spoken of it or trodden it, that it is the only path wherein blessing can be found today; and equally sure that you will reap true lasting, yea, eternal joy in it. I close these few remarks with the words of a familiar scripture, which has often cheered and encouraged me (Psalms 81:1-16), commending it also to your solemn consideration. But let me first add one word more. Are you conscious of having left the path of obedience in any one point? If so, let me beseech you in self-judgment immediately to return. Do not hesitate a moment as to consequences; leave all that with your God. Nothing, nothing but trouble and sorrow are before you, as long as you refuse His path for you. "Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured for ever." Then immediately, the enemy being subdued, "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." May my reader know, and infinitely more than the writer, the satisfying power of this heavenly food, through walking in the path of obedience, on earth, and today, for Christ's sake! H. C. A.

* * * The order of God for Christians is, not obedience upon blessing, but blessing on obedience; not to wait for blessing in order to obey, but to act on the command, and the blessing follows. And this is faith; for there would be no faith if the blessing came first.

* * * The Scripture is plain that obedience is the way of blessing; and that we are not to wait for power to obey a command, but to obey it that we may find power. The Lord did not restore the hand that He might stretch it out and show it, but ordered the man to stretch it out, that it might be restored.

S. Obtrusiveness and the Kingdom

Obtrusiveness and the Kingdom Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." A characteristic mark of "the kingdom" is that man, as he is seen on earth today, disappears in it. This seems to be a little overlooked. I will explain what I mean. The thought of the kingdom with regard to man is new birth, and evidently man has no hand in this. This is God's work. (See John 3:3.) But at the end GOD is all in all! The beginning is God's work - "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" - and the end is the delivering up of the kingdom, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:1-58.) That which tends to bring man into prominence in any way cannot be therefore in the line of "the kingdom"! The King is gone out, rejected of this present world. As He went He said, "Now is 'My kingdom not from hence.'" While in it "the world knew Him not," but we also are in it, and we say, "The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not!" The King is gone out, but the kingdom is here - "the kingdom of the Son of His love."

Obtrusiveness is the very opposite of the work of God. Yet how common it is today! The great proof that I am in any way in the good of "the kingdom" is that I am disappearing as to what men see if they look at me with the natural eye, "as unknown, and yet well known." I am disappearing from all that is not "of the Father" but is "of the world." It is of the world because it commends itself to the natural senses. The kingdom, I think, is not to be recognised by any but the spiritual eye. It is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. "Can those who know nothing of these know anything of the kingdom?" It is God's work, and is there anything real or lasting but what God does? I should think not. H. C. Anstey.

S. On Tracing the Actings and Leadings of the Spirit of God.

On Tracing the Actings and Leadings of the Spirit of God.

It is an interesting question, and one that sets a certain other question at rest, Ought we not to distinguish between the actings of the Holy Ghost in the world generally and His actings in the midst of the separated people of God?

I see the Spirit of God testifying to God's thoughts of such a separated company, and acting in them, in Malachi 3:1-18 "They spake often one to another . . . for they feared the Lord, and thought upon HIS NAME." Was not that of the Spirit? However far away Israel might have been as to the knowledge of the mind of God at that moment, there was no mixture among them; they had the same desire and object. There was no stranger among them; they knew each other well, this is evident, and they were in Israel just what Israel should have been as a whole among the nations; viz., "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Such words described this little company, and the Spirit of God tells of God's delight in them as His "jewels."

I see them again, and the Spirit of God drawing attention to them, in Luke 2:1-52. There was Anna, and Simeon, and those that "looked for redemption in Jerusalem." There was distinct action of the Holy Ghost among them. As to Simeon the "Holy Ghost was upon him." "It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost" about the coming One, and again Simeon "came by the Spirit into the temple." And Anna came in at the same moment. There was this special favour of God shown to them, that they were instructed and brought into fellowship with His mind and purposes at that moment, a moment of especial interest with Him as to this world. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. They learnt it from Himself. It was a wondrous moment, one that stands alone in the history of this world, when God was bringing in the second Man the Lord from heaven, and the favour of learning His mind about Him was theirs, and that little company to whom they belonged, "who looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Who can overestimate the wondrous favour of being thus brought at any time into a knowledge of the present thoughts and purposes of God? But while this was the action of the Holy Ghost towards this little separated company, the "poor of the flock," He was at the same time acting elsewhere, and entirely apart from them. John the Baptist was to be the vessel whom the Spirit would use in another work, and John was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." It was not the secrets of the Lord that were to be revealed to him in the same way as to the little remnant; for John had to confess, "I knew Him not." But there was to be a mighty public wave of blessing for Israel, that was to prepare the way of the coming Messiah; and this wondrous wave of blessing, which reached even the throne of the heathen king, was as much the work of the Spirit of God as was the song of praise and thanksgiving raised by old Simeon, when he held in his arms Him whom by revelation he knew as "The Salvation" of Israel - God's SALVATION.

There may be a similar public work of the Spirit just prior to our Lord's second coming. But notice the effect of being thus brought into communion with the present mind of God. It is quietness, contentment, satisfaction. Simeon desired NOTHING MORE; and Anna's work thenceforward was

but to speak "of HIM" wherever a hearing ear was found in Jerusalem. But these quiet, contented, satisfied ones, the feeble few who possessed by special instruction of the Holy Ghost the present "secret of the Lord," are not made the instruments of the public activity of the Holy Ghost in the land; but John is, as we have observed, and it was a wondrous and stirring moment of God's activity: "Then went out to meet him [John] Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Pharisees and Sadducees, publicans and soldiers, the real and the unreal, the "generation of vipers" and those who boasted, "We have Abraham to our father," all were moved; for God was moving among His people, and who could resist Him? But what was the testimony? It was but for them to prepare for Him, whom this little company had already got; John's testimony being the need of the confession of sins, and baptism unto repentance, and of the Coming One, who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. I have no doubt that they bowed to the testimony too, and so far went with Israel in this public movement; but they had already more, even Himself, and the deep, deep satisfaction and contentment and joy that He gave, which Simeon's thanksgiving and Anna's expressed; and did it diminish as He lived and walked before them day by day, God's Christ, revealed to them as such by the Holy Ghost? When drawn to Him, there is ever this in the true heart that contemplates Him, an increased binding of bonds that can never break; and Peter's simple testimony, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," will answer this question as to whether their delight in Him diminished.

I might also have drawn attention to Paul, the "prisoner of the Lord." The especial depository of the mind of God as taught of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13) as this apostle was, he was shut up in a prison at Home, whence we have received those wondrous epistles (the dictates of the Holy Ghost), Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Hebrews. But in the public testimony (save in the palace, I suppose) the apostle had then no share; yet it went on, and he rejoiced that it did: "Nevertheless, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." In it too - 1:e. in the public testimony - at that time Peter and John and others had their share; but to none of them was unfolded the secrets of the mind of God as to Paul, as Peter himself will admit (2 Peter 3:16), and as their own writings prove. It was his wonderful solace to know that the Lord stood with him. Here again then the actings of the Holy Ghost in the world generally, and His actings to a faithful servant, have to be distinguished, and not confounded. In view of what has been here said, I cannot expect any but a separated people or a separated servant to be instructed in the present mind of God, and it appears to me that it has been always so: "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, then thou shalt be as my mouth." God is sovereign, and in a day of ruin like the present (and it is this as to the Church and the truth in the hands of man) He can work, and does, by whom He will. But we must not depart from obedience and the Word. The question set at rest, as I said at the beginning (if these things are so, as to which we must "search the Scriptures"), is, Why does not the Lord use us more in His public testimony in this world? There are new movements of the Spirit of God in the world - salvation armies, gospel armies, and the like. The believer should rejoice that "Christ is preached," and that the Holy Ghost is working in this world in this way. But if in a day of ruin we have not both these actings of the Spirit carried on through us, then I covet, for myself and for others with whom God has been pleased to associate me, to be more distinctly of that separated and satisfied company to whom He has revealed His present mind, rather than to be the more public and apparently more used instrument who is not of that company, but who is as much USED of the Spirit in a public sphere (and one must remember

it, though not in it) as the others are blessed in a private one. H.C.Anstey.

S. On his head were many crowns

"On his head were many crowns."

Revelation 19:12.

There in heaven, for now eighteen hundred years and more, it is blessed to think of the Lord as finding His own delight and joy in caring for that Church whom He has so loved and purchased. (Ephesians 5:26-27.) And here, travelling along the sands of the desert, often stumbling and sometimes weary, how blessed to think of the Holy Ghost never weary of directing her eye to Him, the One there for her in all the exercises of the way! And think, this has all continued now for more than eighteen centuries, and many a pilgrim has proved it all, and been cheered along his path by knowing it; yet there it is in all its truth for you and for me this day, Christ's present love and care, and the Holy Ghost's present ministry, cheering your heart by bringing Him before you. Is the Lord weary of what has been His occupation for eighteen hundred years? or is the Holy Ghost weary of directing the eye upward to Christ? Oh, to rise now above the gloom that has all along been deepening, and to see that blessed One there, and still to be able to say as part of His bride, "He is waiting for me!" And now in this passage which we have read He is coming forth from that place and service of eighteen hundred years, coming forth to reign on the earth with His bride. HE has prepared her for Himself, and His wife "hath made herself ready." And what is the language before us here? How the Holy Ghost delights, as freshly as if for the first time, in drawing our attention to Him. "On HIS HEAD were many crowns." He who first directed her eye to Him as caring for her all along while she trod the desert, now also draws her attention afresh to Him in the day of His glory! How your heart and mine, thus called upon, delight to respond that all this is as it should be. How personal is all this to the soul; and how true it is that true affection is always personal! He wants me to be engaged with Him, and He wants my heart to be now just simply His own, to fill it by and from Himself.

"On His head were many crowns." Will you not respond, "Lord, thou art worthy of them all"? But what do you see in those "many crowns"? To me they have a voice which speaks to my heart. If I see a Christian, I see one stumbling along in the desert, desiring, if ever so feebly, that Christ may be seen in his walk and ways here below. Because the Holy Ghost dwells in him there must be this desire, more or less, according as we give that blessed Spirit His place, and for which He is here; namely, to be the guiding star of our earthly life. And what does He bring out in you? Lowliness? patience? meekness? long-suffering? temperance? goodness? Yes, there are all these toward others, and there is what is more for your own personal enjoyment too - "Love, joy, peace." (Galatians 5:22-23.) Has He brought these things out of us toward others, and to us for our own enjoyment, in any little measure today? Alas! how we all fail in this, the "lowliness." How have they seen it in me today? The "patience," the "meekness," the "long-suffering," the "temperance," the "goodness" - all perfectly displayed in HIM as He once trod the path in which I am called now for a little while, only "a little while," to tread. (Hebrews 10:37.)

Blessed Lord, the only perfect display of the perfection of a man, dependent on God, was seen in Thee, and this is what reaches the heart and touches our affections. On Thy head alone can we place the crown as to each of these, "lowliness," "patience," "meekness," "longsuffering," "temperance," "goodness." Has many a poor saint in his trials displayed some measure of these? Yes; and yet Thou excellest them all. And coming forth in that day of glory, how will our hearts delight to see Him wearing these many crowns, His desert as man, besides all those that are His by title as the gift of the Father! For "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:33.)

Crowns befitting Him as "Lord of lords, and King of kings" will then alone be His, and I shall be called on to behold Him arrayed in them all on that day. But when I think of Him as the lowly Man, walking down here in the midst of all the trials and difficulties that marked His path (and now mine), and see the perfect display of all the graces that surrounded that path, I am humbled at how little they are seen in me, one who has professed to have set out to follow Him in the same path! But we can gaze at one perfect model, poor as we are, and think of His meekness, lowliness, patience, temperance, long-suffering, and His goodness when on earth, and thus we shall become less selfish and more like Him, of whom the Holy Ghost delights to say, "On His head were many crowns." Think of that day you who suffer in this. May our hearts be more and more set, in the midst of whatever path we may be in - blessed it always is (Psalms 16:6), painful it may be - to desire to provoke in one another the display of these things that characterized our blessed Lord as He walked here among men. H. C. Anstey.

S. Our Fellowship": What is it?

"Our Fellowship": What is it?

These words, "our fellowship," are found in 1 John 1:1-10 but as they have been used by some with a very different and limited meaning attached to them from that which, as I understand it, the Spirit of God gives them there, it is before me now to say a passing word on the subject of that fellowship. The basis of fellowship amongst the men of this world is, I think, extremely simple. It is because the world "loves its own," and "as face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man." But there is another fellowship referred to, as I have said, by John, and it is equally simple. Scripture (as it does of everything) gives us the true witness as to this other fellowship, as it does also of the first, but the light of the Spirit is needed to understand both.

All present "fellowship" involves men in relations and associations outside the sphere of this world altogether. We see therein hidden and spiritual agencies at work. Man is no free and independent agent in this world, although he may delight to think and speak of himself as the "lord of creation." In his inmost heart he knows that if he once was, now he is not, nor is he the originator of the present scene of contrariety through which he moves, and wherein he is filling up his little day. At some time or another all of us must have admitted in secret, if not publicly, that we have to do with powers superior to ourselves. These are evidently, for all of us, those of good or of evil. God is at the end of the one, and Satan at the end of the other. Fellowship has reference to these two; that is, it cannot be limited to persons and things, but embraces the sources of both. Hence in it lies present good or present evil, flowing from a source beyond the sphere of time, because the sources of good and evil are not of and cannot be limited to time. The issues of good and evil and of fellowship are stereotyped in eternity. Their future is there. The Father and the world, Christ and Belial, spirit and flesh, the believer and an infidel, light and darkness, life and death, God's living temple (naos) and idols - all these come before us when the question of fellowship is considered. There are thus only two fellowships recognised of God in this world, and as to any likeness of the one to the other - there is none. They are as opposite as light and darkness, and as life and death.

Permanence is about to be given to that condition which is spoken of now as a fellowship, and to the persons and things which belong to and characterise it. It is to be fulfilled to the letter: "Let him that does unrighteously do unrighteously still: and let the filthy make himself filthy still: and let him that is righteous practise righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." (See Revelation 22:1-21 N.T.) This passage I quote to show what is about to be made permanent. That which we seek now, and that which the best of seekers (in the energy of the new nature) only obtains partially, we shall be in the full good of then. (See 1 John 1:3-4.)

I only draw attention here to these things. God, and God alone, can make clear to anyone the momentous issues that lie in the word fellowship, and give everyone to see clearly the end thereof, which surely is an important matter. Our fellowship - how will it end? It is clear that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Good and evil fight for mastery in this world, and because they do there never will be amalgamation. To good or to evil, and to one or the other

fellowship connected with them, but not to both, every person does certainly belong, for God recognises but two. The origin and present basis of the fellowship which is according to God is found in God Himself. Hence its stability. God has been pleased in Christianity to fully reveal Himself. Christianity has displaced for Him Judaism on the earth, wherein He could not be fully known, since He had not revealed Himself in it. Now He has, and He has revealed Himself to man. The man who knows God is thereby brought into the fellowship, because outside it is the sphere where God is not known. This comes before us most clearly in the First Epistle of John, which is the epistle of fellowship. It is the epistle of fellowship because it insists on the fact that God will have sharers now in His own joy and in what suits Him, and that too outside of all that is in this world. Outside this fellowship is "the world," the whole moral scene which is opposed to God, "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." It is very important to keep these distinct. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (or in the wicked one). "We know that the Son of God is come." This last is Christian knowledge. God is revealed. Having spoken in times past to the fathers by the prophets, He has in these last days spoken to us "in [the] Son." God speaks. The basis and constitution of the fellowship is in God Himself. There is progress in the understanding of what it is by those who are brought into it. There are in it "babes, young men, and fathers," but these are all brought into it (and once for all) by the one reception of the truth of the gospel. God is made known, and the fellowship being thus introduced, they grow "in the knowledge of God." But God is made known for the "obedience of faith among all the nations." (Romans 1:1-32.) If in Athens the Athenians of Paul's day erected an altar "to the unknown God," it was the privilege of the apostle to reply, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, HIM declare I unto you." In the reception of the truth people pass from darkness to light. "God is light," says the apostle, and "if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but 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." All who know God then being in the light, no fellowship (so called) which has smaller dimensions than these, or which sets up such dimensions or barriers, can be of God. To know God now is to know Him as He has been pleased to reveal Himself - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There could be no fellowship with God apart from this, and there is no other for God. In past ages no one could know Him in any other way than that in which He was pleased then to make Himself known. To Abraham it was as God Almighty (see Exodus 6:3); to Israel it was as Jehovah; to us it includes both of these, and also the further revelation of Himself as Father, as the Son knows Him. (See John 10:14-15, N.T.) "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." In resurrection He declares the Father's name afresh, and unto His brethren. (John 17:26; Hebrews 2:12.)

I have called the First Epistle of John the "epistle of fellowship." Let me draw attention to a few points which, I think, will make what I mean clear. I would first say that the Spirit in the gospel leads men to Christ, and that then Christ is the Revealer of, and the Conductor to, the Father, and I believe that it is thus that God is known, and that we are brought into this fellowship.

John writes his epistle that we may have fellowship with him, and this fellowship of the apostles was "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." What do we get then in this fellowship?

1. The FATHER and the SON are known in the power of the SPIRIT. "Ye have the unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."
2. LIGHT is walked in and enjoyed, in contrast to the moral darkness which exists all around us.
3. RIGHTEOUSNESS is practised in the midst of a scene of unrighteousness. (1 John 2:22-29, 1 John 3:1-12)
4. LOVE, the display of God's nature, is delighted in and enjoyed. (1 John 3:14-24, 1 John 4:1-21, 1 John 5:1-3)
5. Finally, this fellowship on earth is the sphere of ETERNAL LIFE. (1 John 5:6-21)

I add one word more. The fellowship which exists among men in the world is fully recognised by the apostle. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." John is later than Paul, and he has in view the fellowship which came in in what we call Christianity, and which no breakdown of the Church (as set here in responsibility) can touch. Paul gives us, in 2 Timothy 2:1-26, the way in which the breakdown is met by individuals, who, notwithstanding, remain in the good of what John sets forth later as the fellowship which existed in "the beginning." The Second Epistle of John is written to warn saints about those with whom THEY ARE NOT to have fellowship, and the Third is written to exhort them as to those with whom THEY ARE to have fellowship.

I do not know any portion of the Word so occupied with the question of what I may call divine fellowship, and with what belongs to and is found in it, as the three epistles of John. Its coming into the world in Christianity is involved in the apostle's introductory words of his first epistle: "That which was from the beginning." God is seen there coming forth to establish what suits Him. He is the Originator and Establisher of it in the making known of Himself in Christ. He forms a sphere for man which suits Himself, and two things characterise this sphere. It is exclusive of everyone and of everything that is contrary to Him who is revealed in it; and it is inclusive of all that are born of Him, and of everything, therefore, in this world which is agreeable to Him. It is a condition of blessing for the earth with God as its centre, wherein all is in moral conformity to Him from whom all in it is derived. The first in it being the apostles, they make it known. May the Lord lead us so into the reality of this holy fellowship to which we are called, that as saints we may be very great helpers one of another in it. H. C. Anstey.

S. Our Warfare

Our Warfare.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 244.

What is the difference between the fighting in the wilderness and the fighting in Canaan as applied to us? In the wilderness I say I am going on to rest, to Canaan, or to occupy heavenly ground. Here I have to meet Amalek and Balaam, who seek to stop me in my pilgrim course, the one by active opposition, the other by seduction. In Canaan I say that I "am come" (Deuteronomy 26:3) into the blessing, and I take the ground and character (the armour) of a heavenly man on earth. Then I have to meet all the power of the devil, who will contest this matter with me. I have to meet his wiles or his darts; but then it is as "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." It is not a question of my ability to meet the enemy. The conflict in heavenly places (which we should know now) is between Christ and Satan. I am there for Christ. In the wilderness the struggle is with Satan using the flesh, in the land the flesh is ignored. It does not cross Jordan. H. C. A.

S. Personal - Collective

Personal - Collective

I.

Personal.

If the ways and life of Christ do not come out, then, whatever may be the assumption of Christianity, it is pretty clear that there is not much of Christ within. I enjoy Christ within only just in so far as Christ comes out.

Collective. The only place where I join the company of heaven and breathe on earth its atmosphere is in the "holiest of all." This company is that of the sanctified, and the atmosphere is that of love. (Hebrews 2:1-18.) H. C. Anstey.

II.

Personal.

Christ comes to you now whenever you have time and room for Him. His LOVE draws Him to you. Nothing satisfies LOVE but the company of its object. "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Because you cannot go to Him in heaven, He comes to you on earth. (John 14:23.)

Collective.

Christ comes to the company of those on earth who have closed the door on the first man (that is on themselves). (See John 20:19-26.) God has done with that man, and if we have not, God will not give us the conscious joy of the Man of His delight. "I will not leave you [the company] orphans: I will come to you." (John 14:18.) He comes to that company whenever He can, and whenever they thus make room for Him.

Nothing can separate the Lord from the individual saint, nor from the company of His own. Love breaks through every barrier. (See Song of Solomon 8:6-7.) But it is one thing to know this (as is said "by faith"), and quite another to have the present joy of His presence. The first is totally worthless without the second, just as my life, both as an individual and as one of a company, is worthless without Christ in known presence. Oh, the miserable "FORM" of godliness!" H. C. Anstey.

S. Pleasures for evermore

"Pleasures for evermore."

These are the closing words of Psalms 16:1-11, and they depict the crowning joy of the Lord as the Man who trod the earth in perfect dependence on God. "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The heart ponders what it must be to Him as the perfect and obedient Man to have reached that spot, after the scene of all His earthly toil and rejection was over. And we should remember that we share in His present portion, that is, in all that He has won as man. (John 17:1-26) But how can we be brought in any sense to understand what this is? I have no doubt that it is by the Holy Ghost alone. Hence if "pleasures far evermore" are connected with His session at the right hand of God, I read also of what is connected for us with His exaltation there. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." In order that we might be brought to know what our present portion is, as contained in the closing words of this psalm, it was necessary that the Lord should take His seat as man at the Father's right hand, and that He should thence send down to us the Holy Ghost. He has done both. The Lord trod the earth in perfection in two ways, first as a Son, and secondly as a Servant. The Holy Ghost puts us, as both sons and servants, into Christ's place on earth. He is also the power in us for the enjoyment and carrying out of these two relationships in which we stand. And first as to Sonship. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." I must know first that I am regarded (poor, feeble, as I am, and conscious only of entire weakness in myself) as God regards Christ. I must remember that He said, "And hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me"; and again, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father," putting me thus into His own place on earth and in heaven. Thus I think I am fitted to the highest joy on earth, and to serve Him also until He come. To know how Christ is regarded of the Father as the One who, faithful in all, has reached the top; to know as a son something of what His path ever was as God's SON on the earth; to know something of His path through this scene as the lowly, perfect servant of God, all of which the Holy Ghost is here to lead us into; in a word, to be in all this joy of true Christian liberty before God; these things are to me what He would have His people know, and what is contained in those words (may the Spirit make known to us more of the joy of them!), "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." H. C. Anstey.

S. Responsibility and Life.

Responsibility and Life.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 72. In the garden of Eden were planted two trees - "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:9.) Looked at separately, they bring before us those two of whom we read in 1 Corinthians 15:47 - "The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." From the position in Paradise of the tree of life (for it distinctly states that it grew "in the midst of the garden") we learn that CHRIST has always been God's centre, although the six days of creation, with Adam as its head, were first developed. But along with the tree of life (and in the same place) is found the "tree of knowledge of good and evil;" for Eve says, speaking of this tree, that its place too is "in the midst of the garden." (Genesis 3:3.) As to the "tree of life," it is clear that it could only refer to Christ (Revelation 2:7); and in the fact that both are "in the midst of the garden" we see that both are united in Him. Our responsibility, as of Adam, has been taken up, and met in Him and by Him. He is thus God's centre, and life is His by acquired right. Around Him, as the tree of life in the eternal state, God will group, as He did in type in Eden, "every tree that is pleasant to the eye, and good for food." While for Adam (Christ) himself there will be found one (Eve) of himself too (type of the Church) to enter into, and to share with him in all that he has, as thus set in enjoyment over all things. For it was in the garden, before man fell, that Eve was brought to Adam. The creation in Genesis is God's picture, in type and shadow, of the purpose of His heart concerning CHRIST - a purpose hidden, in the past ages, but existing there from all eternity, long before the foundation of the world, and now made known to faith. (Ephesians 1:9-10; Ephesians 3:9-11.) God will presently act in power to bring out into full display His own original thought; and it is to this He refers when, in the view of all that sin, sorrow, and death have done in the first creation, we read, "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5.) And "for eternity" attaches to all, since all is based, not on the first man, but on the second.

It does not appear that the "tree of life" was forbidden to man before he fell. He was set up in Paradise in life, and with this word, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17.) God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The man lived. As long as he ate of every tree of the garden, save the one forbidden, he continued to live; i.e., in partaking of the tree of life, as well as of the other trees. He continued in that state in which God had at first created him. This does not seem to me to shut out his then eating of the "tree of life." He was responsible to live (and the means to live were around him) in that state in which God had created him; that is, he was to know nothing more, neither good nor evil. It was innocence; for he was not to know anything in addition to that life in which he stood with God. But this was responsibility, and on this ground all was lost. Sin entered, and the law proved it, and only showed how complete the ruin was. Death was upon all. For the first time then after the Fall it

appears the "tree of life" was forbidden to man; a most gracious provision on the part of God. Man had acquired the knowledge of good (and God was its source), without power to act upon it or to please Him. (Romans 7:18.) He had also acquired the knowledge of evil, and along with that a nature always prone to follow it. Now God speaks, and He says, "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." To eat, and by thus eating to live for ever as long as he ate, in that state of innocence in which God had first created him, would have been right and simple obedience; but to eat, and live for ever in the garden, with the knowledge of good and evil (good to which he could never attain, and evil to which he was always prone), in misery therefore, God could not have; "so He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." This was grace, not judgment; the judgment was pronounced before, both on Adam and his wife, and on the serpent too. Life then is distinctly refused to a responsible but a fallen race in that condition. But Jesus, standing in perfect grace in the place of the responsible man at the cross, glorifies God. Tried and tested in every way all through His life, which ended in the cross, all that man should have been for God HE WAS. It is true that all was over for the first man, for all the race of Adam, and that life is refused to every one on that ground. The "flaming sword" is the sword of judgment to any advancing to take of life. But now, with all my responsibilities met, with the first man ended in God's sight (even in the bringing in of a second Man, "the Lord from heaven," who has glorified God), He only - the second Man - now stands before God; and He who in Himself has met all the claims of justice for the responsible man, and who has also as man perfectly met the heart of God, has it as His right to take of the "tree of life" in the midst of the garden. Can the partaking of the "tree of life" (His by this acquired right to it) be withheld from Him who has thus, as Man, perfectly gauged and answered while under it, all the responsibility of the first man? No; and at the solemn moment of yielding up His life on earth, in Psalms 16:1-11, He thus speaks: "Thou wilt show me the path of life;" and again, "I lay down my life that I might take it again." (John 10:17.) Thus we see in this God's one central thought - to establish everything in heaven and earth upon CHRIST. God will have Him as the centre of all His ways of grace to man throughout eternity. All therein is for His enjoyment, and He in perfect grace hands these things to us, associating us with Himself; for Eve was co-sharer with Adam in it all.

Moreover, the duration of the life is, in Christianity, first unfolded as "eternal" (Titus 1:2); for it is the life of Christ Himself as the risen One out of death. Life, if it could have been continuously sustained in Eden by their eating of every tree in the garden (save the one forbidden), would have been endless, and therefore "eternal" in that sense. But it would have depended on man's continuous obedience; it would have been a dependent life. Now we have the obedience (His) absolutely perfect at the beginning, tested as He was in every possible way, and life as the result. (Romans 5:19.) So it will be seen that it must necessarily be "eternal;" for the value of the work done always abides before God. In Psalms 21:1-13 also Jesus is before us as the One who has acquired, as Man, the right to life: "Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of His lips . . . He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever." To this the apostle refers also in Hebrews 5:7. But being heard (as in Psalms 22:1-31) "from the horns of the unicorns," He associates us in all that blessing into which He then enters as Man. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee" - fulfilled in John 20:17. In that song grace has given us the privilege to join;

nor can we fail to do so if we see the perfect way in which all has been done, and the perfect place of rest, before God, into which HE has entered now, along with those for whom He has secured it.

It is a relief to the heart to expand, and thus to turn away from its little self, and to see God working for the glory of His beloved Son, to whom we are necessary, as a part of that glory into which God will bring Him. (Ephesians 3:21.) To see thus everything established on an immutable basis, the first man no longer before God, but the second, to whom the name "The Eternal Life" now attaches in a twofold way; to know that, through grace, we are eternally united to Him, since (as the apostle says) "This is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." " He that hath the Son, hath life." To look back along the dim vista of the ages, and to see this His purpose shining brightly in the "garden of delight," which sin spoilt, and to look forward to what it will yet be, when all shall be in divine order around Him who is, to all eternity, to be the centre in the midst of the "Paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7.) H. C. A.

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There is only one object the world will not have; namely, Christ, and the revelation of God in Him, though it be a revelation of love,

S. Saul's Challenge.

Saul's Challenge.

H. C. Anstey.

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"Whose son art thou, thou young man?" - 1 Samuel 17:58.

What family a man derives from shows his present interests and his future prospects.

1. I find myself within a vast circle, a system built up under Satan, its accepted prince and ruler. I am surrounded by men and women, called by the Spirit of God in His word, "the children of this world." Faith in Christ says, "You do not belong to them."

2. Do I dare to take a step in opposition to this immense vortex which is surging all around me? It must be in open opposition then to him who energises and moves it all. Can I, dare I, expose myself to his wrath? Faith in me says, "I can, I will leave this place."

3. Dare I to take a yet further step, and openly to ally myself with those who say they have no interests here, but have died, and who thus proclaim every link snapped, and that they live in and for another? Faith in me says I can say this, "I am crucified with Christ, yet I live." "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," and I am in Christ.

There are those three steps in the pathway of faith, and they may be easily discerned in the lives of those whom the Lord is leading on today, as they could in past ages, I think, always be discerned. It may be helpful to ask ourselves if we have taken all those. They are illustrated for us in the three actions of Moses. (These are found in Hebrews 11:24; Hebrews 11:27-28.)

First Moses says, "I did not derive from this family. My origin is not from it. I find myself, it is true, in Pharaoh's house. I refuse to own that I am of this family." The child is beginning to walk alone. The soul is waking up to its privileges and its responsibilities. This is of immense and precious moment in its history. I see that I am born of God. (Compare. John 1:12 with 1 John 3:1-2.) And when the soul has reached this point, we have the act of faith. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The second step is, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." I give up the whole place, and because I enjoy another, I turn my back on it all. This is the next act of faith. In the midst of the world ruled by Satan I proclaim that I have done with it. "Then you will have to meet the wrath of the king." Be it so. I see a greater than he, a greater than Pharaoh. He "endured," as seeing "Him who is invisible" to mortal eye. The third step is, I am linked with Christ on the ground of His death. In the midst of a hostile territory, swayed by an adverse power, I rest in peace. They fed on the slain lamb. "By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." I am sheltered by the blood, I am feeding on the Lamb, and the Lord in unsparing judgment is going forth upon all outside.

There is order in all this. 1st. I see my origin - "born of God." 2nd. I see that I have done with this place. 3rd. I see that I am under God's shelter, and given His food - His Lamb, with the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "Egypt's food no more to eat." I am in the Lord's company. Mine is a wondrous deliverance. Salvation is of the Lord, and I am gone in the death of another, even Christ.

One word more. There is a "for" connected with these three steps of faith. As to the first, it might have been thought a great honour that Providence had placed him in the house of Pharaoh. The soul looked higher than this, high as it was. "FOR he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Faith looks forward. As to the second step, he might have connected himself with God's people and stayed in Egypt. He did not, he forsook the land, it had no attraction for him. He did not look at the wrath of the king, he looked higher than that; "FOR he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." And as to the third step, the enemy is only powerless when he has to do with a dead man. "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, LEST [for fear that] he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." This closes Moses' acts of faith, as given to us here. I am only safe from the enemy while on the ground of life by the death of Christ, in which I met my end in judgment. He cannot touch me. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Here is our end, our origin, and also our protection, but I think only here.

Saul's challenge we shall all assuredly hear. I hear it all around me. It is the voice of the man who is here - the natural man - challenging the spiritual man. In Christ we have triumphed over all the power of the enemy. "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." The enemy is overthrown. I see David with the head of Goliath in his hand. It is all done; but remember you will have to be challenged, nay, you are continually challenged, and it is good for you to challenge yourself as to what family you belong to. May the reader be enabled by grace daily to give the reply that Moses gave - he "kept the passover" this one reply - and the Holy Ghost gives us these his three actions, all based upon a living faith in the living God.

H. C. A.

S. Saul, David, and Jonathan

Saul, David, and Jonathan.

1 Samuel. This deeply interesting book gives us an eventful period in the history of Israel. The sad page recorded in the book of Judges had led to a change in the ways of God towards them. After the successive relapses which always followed the deliverances of the judges, God was pleased to raise up Samuel, who commenced the line of prophets by whom God addressed Himself to the conscience of the people, with a view to recall their hearts to Him; and the prophet henceforward superseded the priest as the medium of divine communication, in consequence of the utter failure of the priesthood in the person and family of Eli. Another change, too, takes place ere long in the mode of government of the people; namely, the anointing of a king. Hitherto God had kept the immediate government in His own hands; but the people, restless and dissatisfied - always ready to complain at the ways of divine goodness - ask for a king, that they may be like the nations round. Alas! they had lost the sense of what Jehovah was to them and of their own peculiar calling, or they never would have coveted to be like the surrounding nations. But the Lord, who always answers faith, is pleased at times to answer unbelief as well, as in the case of the quails; and so here He gives them their desire, and sets over them Saul, the son of Kish, the man of their desire, and who was so soon to represent the actual state of their hearts. Raised by God to a position of dignity and honour, Saul sits upon the throne of Israel, the head and representative of the people. But what is his conduct in this place? Object of divine favour, he disobeys the word of the Lord who had thus blessed him, and by disobedience forfeits all. 1 Samuel 15:1-35 records his fall; and Samuel, who had been the instrument of his anointing, is now sent to express God's judgment. "And Samuel said unto Saul . . . Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." But no sooner have we this rejection and judgment of the disobedient man, than we read (1 Samuel 16:1): "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." This shows us that God has counsels, and provisions by which to accomplish them, entirely outside and independent of the fallen and disobedient man. There is one of whom it is written, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will;" and a little lower down in 1 Samuel 16:1-23 we have the anointing of this chosen one, his setting apart for the great mission of fulfilling God's will. In 1 Samuel 17:1-58 the scene is changed. Israel, with its fallen king, stand face to face with the Philistines and their champion, Goliath of Gath; and all the host, from Saul the king to the meanest soldier, are full of fear and trembling, and none dare meet the foe; for God is not with them, and they have no confidence toward Him, as the apostle John speaks, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." No; their heart did condemn them, and moreover God was against them in judgment. The Philistines were His scourge for Israel's unfaithfulness; otherwise none of the inhabitants of the land could have stood before Israel. Who now can be for them, when God, their only Refuge, is against them? Now comes the occasion for unfolding and accomplishing the purposes of His grace. From the solitude

of the sheepfold David is called by God to fulfil the great object for which he was anointed; and, as the obedient one, at his father's bidding, he carries the message to the camp. There he discovers the terrible strait of the people, and, impelled by holy zeal and fearless faith, he voluntarily offers to meet single-handed the dreaded foe. With a fixed heart and a firm step he descends the valley alone to grapple with the power of the enemy, and returns victorious, carrying back the giant's head - witness of his triumph. It is worthy of notice here, that whilst it is God's judgment that lay on the people for their sin and disobedience, it is God alone who can raise up and send the one who could meet that judgment, and deliver the people from under it. Nothing is now left but for Israel to pursue and gather up the spoil. In all this solemn and touching incident we have given us in picture the great elements of the truth of the gospel. If I look at Saul in his first estate I see man raised up and blessed by God as at the beginning; then follows disobedience and the fall, man rejecting the word of the Lord, and the Lord rejecting him, as it is said of Saul, "I have rejected him;" and as the blessed Lord Himself said, when speaking of the cross, "Now is the judgment of this world;" and the apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:1-21, "If one died for all, then were all dead." We have thus in the cross of Christ not only the condemnation of what the sinner has done, but the judgment of what he is; and thus I learn how entirely God has rejected the first man, and closed his history in the death of His Son, who was then bearing all the responsibility of the sinner, both as to guilt and nature. Mark the solemn words, "I have rejected him," or as the New Testament scripture puts it, "Our old man is crucified with Him;" so that my standing and place, and everything, as a man in the flesh, are gone, and if I have any place, as well as any life and nature, it must be in another; and I ask, In whom is it? The precious blood of Christ perfectly meets every question of my guilt, and enables God to be both just and my justifier; the death of Christ, too, is the condemnation of my state and status as a sinner, and is the end before God of all that I was. And now that God has raised Christ up from among the dead, and given Him, as man, the full answer of divine righteousness for all He had accomplished, it follows, in blessed sequence, that those for whom the mighty work was wrought should share in all that God thus gives him, just as Israel after the victory had been accomplished for them by the hand of David. In perfect love Christ entered into our place of condemnation as sinners, and now, by virtue of His work wrought for us, He brings us into His place of light and glory as man, setting us down before God and the Father in holiness and unblameableness in love, even in Himself, the Beloved, giving us His place there as truly as He once, in infinite grace, took ours here. Hence Scripture uniformly thus presents the Christian's present portion by the well-known words, "In Christ." It is vain to say that he is only "in Christ" for nature and life, and not for his position and acceptance; for if such limitation were true, surely Scripture would have so stated it; but the Spirit's words are very plain, written for simple souls who are taught to believe that God means just what He says, when He tells us, again and again, that the believer is in Christ for righteousness, for sanctification, for all. His former position and state have been rejected by God, and in the death of Christ closed for ever. In His sight it has ceased to be; and now, as risen with Christ, the believer has an entirely new and heavenly position according to the value and efficacy of His perfect work, and he too has the Spirit of Christ given to dwell in him for power to walk worthily of the heavenly position in which he has been placed.

One word more as to the type. When David returned from the conquest all Israel celebrated his praise, and then hastened for the spoil; but in 1 Samuel 18:1-30 we have something as instructive as it is beautiful. Another heart and eye had watched with deepest interest the stripling David go forth alone to the conflict. Tremblingly he had marked each step; and when David returns with the

witness of his victory, what characterizes Jonathan is not so much elation at the victory as that his heart is arrested by the person of the one who has achieved it; and as he meditates on him, his affections are drawn out towards David. The thought of one who, unknown and unasked, could step into that terrible breach and face all the power of the enemy for him, so deeply affected him that, it is said, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." This draws him near to David to seek his acquaintance, and the nearer he draws the more his heart is attached, for he finds his love responded to, reciprocated, by his benefactor, and so they make a covenant together. Jonathan feels he would like to unite his interests with those of David; he wished to have nothing separate from him; and if he had anything, as the king's son, which distinguished him in the eyes of others, he stripped it from him to adorn David, "even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." David evidently had not only won a victory over Jonathan's enemy, but also over Jonathan's heart, whose object now is to exalt his benefactor in the eyes of others. If we turn to the Philippians we find a man in a very similar state, for Paul had been so captivated by the glory of the Person of his Saviour, that he drops everything that once distinguished him in the eyes of others (Php 3:1-21), and declares (Php 1:1-30) that his earnest expectation and hope are that Christ may be magnified in his body whether by life or by death. May the Holy Spirit, whose mission it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, so present Him to our hearts that we may be like Jonathan in this first attachment to David, but unlike him when he left his despised and rejected friend and saviour, and preferred the ease and comfort of his palace home, but only to perish with his disobedient father on mount Gilboa. H. C. Anstey. In a day of assumption both of knowledge and of place, it is well to remember that our blessed Lord characterised Himself as the One who was meek and lowly in heart.

Increasing humility is a sure sign of growing conformity to the likeness of Christ.

S. Separation from Evil, and Holiness to the Lord

Separation from Evil, and Holiness to the Lord, in order to testimony - early witnesses to their necessity. A dangerous doctrine is abroad which does not deny the importance of separation from evil, an ever-abiding principle of God, but which does not at once act upon it; this allowed must have the most disastrous effect on the testimony. It presents itself in two forms: it is found, on the one hand, in the palliation of the evil; on the other, it is seen in the pressing and urging of delay. Where the evil is manifest, Scripture shows both the palliation of it, and delay in dealing with it, to be false and mischievous to us; and shows further that unless God in His grace delivers from these, there can be no such thing as a true testimony. There is one only safe way of dealing with evil, and this is separation from it. Evil, whatsoever its form, and whether arising from within or from without, is not of God, but the saints are. (Compare 1 John 4:4, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23.) So that, proceeding as it does from Satan, there must be withdrawal from it in all who desire fellowship with God. The Lord Himself can have nothing to say to it save to condemn it; this He has now fully proved in what He has done at the cross.

Now I urge that separation from evil is the divine and first way of dealing with it, and that this separation must be acted on at once, or I become identified with evil in God's sight, defiled by it, and no longer a testimony for Him; and I propose to draw the reader's attention to Scripture in proof of these statements. But how did evil originate? If we turn to Genesis 3:5, we shall read, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." In this suggestion man is brought, for the first time, face to face with evil. By yielding to the suggestion of the enemy, he was to become acquainted not merely with good, but also with evil. And such was the result. Separation from evil was not here acted on as the divine and first way of dealing with it; it was not acted on at once. Man fell, and instead of being a testimony for God, a witness of His goodness as the masterpiece of His works, he has lost all confidence in God - no longer knows Him as the Author of his chief and only good, but distrust, suspicion, fear, and dread of Him, characterize man in place thereof.

Still God is not to be thwarted. God acts in His grace, and enunciates a principle of action not needed until evil was there. He would have man separate from the evil. Death only can remove it, and in man's approach to God this is taught and placed between the evil (ourselves) and Him, in all the offerings that foreshadowed the death of Christ. But not only so, the family of faith, who thus owned its necessity, must be separate, too, in their associations from all the evil in their fellow-men that owned it not. By requiring the death of a victim selected by Him, God taught that He was separate from evil, and required man to be so also if he would have to say to Him. This we see in the offerings of Cain and Abel, the first men of whom we read drawing nigh to Him after sin was in the world. But Abel bringing such a victim, we are distinctly taught in Hebrews 11:1-40 was an act of faith; to neglect it as Cain did was open unbelief. But this led to separation also in association, consequently we find the family of faith, which began in Abel to own the necessity of death, is distinguished in Seth and his descendants from the descendants of Cain. (Genesis 5:1-32) Of this family of faith came Noah, preserved of God when the flood came in and swept away the

unbelieving family of the ungodly. Here we are taught, though God has long patience, that a time must come when He will sweep away evil from His presence, separating for ever between Himself and it, but teaching at the same time that His eye surveys with satisfaction those who, ere that moment comes, seek to walk in separation. In the family of Noah, after the flood, we find it still the same, the children of Shem being distinguished from the descendants of Ham and Japheth. Among these latter are enumerated the enemies of God, the nations of Canaan whom Israel was directed afterwards to "destroy utterly;" and here too are all the Gentiles, "after their families, in their nations." (Genesis 10:5.) It is to Shem, to Abraham of this family, that God distinctly enunciates the principle of separation from evil. Though God had said by Noah, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," it appears that his descendants (for many generations had passed) were sunk in idolatry. Abram dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, was identified with evil there, and served other gods. (Joshua 24:2.) The God of glory appeared to him, and called him thence to walk in threefold separation - from his country, from his kindred, and from his father's house. (Genesis 12:1.) It is recorded of him that he "obeyed; and went forth, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8); for the Holy Ghost delights ever to own all that He can sanction in us; but we learn too that he did not go to Canaan at once, nor leave his kindred (he took Lot with him); nor did he leave his father's house (he took Terah, his father). At first he did not reach God's place for him; he dwelt in Charran until the death of Terah, and Lot was a trouble to him until their separation. (Compare Acts 7:1-60; Genesis 11:31-32, and Genesis 12:1; Genesis 12:4.) God came in to break for him both links and leave His servant free. And this being done, the language of the Lord, as recorded by the Holy Ghost on this occasion, was never so intimate with Abram before. It seems as though His heart had waited for the death of the father, and this moment of his separation from Lot, to pour itself out in unmeasured blessing. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Genesis 13:14-17.) In Lot we learn more than one lesson as to the fundamental necessity with God of separation from evil. Not only is he himself not separate, but, so found, he is powerless in testimony, and his whole household is contaminated. When, as bidden in mercy by the angels, he seeks to bring out his family, he learns where evil has landed them and him. The sneers and reproaches of those from whom he had never separated, greet the ear of him who, aroused by the near approach of God's judgments, is at last courageous enough to teach them the evil of their ways. He has to learn by their contempt the weakness of the testimony of one not himself separate. "This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." (Genesis 19:1-38) "He who came in glad to dwell in Sodom, and to pasture his flocks in its well-watered plains, would now set up to be a judge of our ways." Such inconsistency is manifest even to wicked men, and we learn a further lesson in it; viz., that good mixed with evil does not make all good, but that evil always corrupts what was once fair. Already and, long had the leaven been spreading itself over Lot's house; and links were formed with it which Lot, when fairly aroused, found that he had no power to break. His daughters had married; and when he spake to his sons-in-law, he who had been so long in association with evil seemed to them but "as one that mocked." And Lot learnt, in the loss of his wife, and in the overthrow of his married daughters in the city, how strong were the chains which evil associations had bound around him and his family,

while he himself was dragged out of the range of God's judgments only by the hand of the angel, Such are the solemn and instructive lessons taught us here, which are surely desired of God to have their separating effect upon our ways.

Later we find that Jacob knows and owns the first importance of separation. Though long his conscience had slumbered while in his own family, he was in association with false gods in Padan-aram. When God speaks to him, bidding him "arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there," what is his first thought? "Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." (Genesis 35:1-29) The patriarchs thus dwelling in separation in tents, and moving from place to place, declared that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," in contrast with those who, at rest here where sin was, are found enjoying "the pleasures of sin for a season. Faith always desires present fellowship with God, which must ever be in separation from evil, and as to the future waits for a sphere where, sin banished, the pilgrim and stranger shall find, not merely fellowship with God in separation from evil all around, but a home. God was with them in this desire, and until its fulfilment "God was not ashamed to be called their God." (Hebrews 11:1-40) For ever has He linked His blessed name with those who, whatever their mistakes, sought to walk in separation, as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, saying, in Exodus 3:1-22, "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath sent Me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations."

Separation is distinctly seen in the call of Israel from among the nations of the earth to be "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6.) "And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." (Exodus 6:7.) And when this people failed to maintain separation from evil in the wilderness, on two occasions God's judgment was most emphatically expressed. As it is written, "God shall judge His people." (Hebrews 10:1-39; Deuteronomy 32:26.) So, on their worshipping the golden calf, God removed His dwelling place from their midst to the tabernacle pitched by Moses outside the camp. (Exodus 33:7-10.) How solemn it is thus to see God withdrawing His presence from the defiled camp of Israel, and that because they were His people, and He could not, whatever they may allow, sanction it. Again, when they forgot their separate place, and sought association with the nations of Moab and Midian (Numbers 25:1-18), how swiftly did the judgment of God upon them proclaim, as He had said before, that He was a jealous God who would have them separate to Himself, and "those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand." And again and again in their history do we trace the same teaching in God's dealings with them. A leprous man and leaven, both typical of sin and uncleanness, were to be put, the one outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45-46), in the midst of which God dwelt; the other not only to be put out of every house, but not even to be seen in Israel (Exodus 12:15; Exodus 13:7); that they "defile not My tabernacle that is in the midst of them." And of minor defilements (Leviticus 11:1-47, Leviticus 15:1-33, Leviticus 18:1-30, Leviticus 20:1-27, Leviticus 22:1-33) not one was overlooked. "Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile My tabernacle that is among them." (Leviticus 15:31.)

After this, when having crossed the Jordan they had entered the promised land, their first failure records their forgetfulness of the principle of separation from evil. Achan took of the accursed

thing, and Israel fled before the enemy. God said Israel hath sinned, "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." (Joshua 7:1-26) Here the Lord insists on their separation from the evil as a condition of His being with His people. "Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." Here the first thing the people have to do is to sanctify themselves, and not until the morrow did God reveal to Joshua, when gathered with the assembly, who was the offender, and then judgment was executed upon him. It is worthy of note, that ignorance of the guilt, or of the guilty one, does not lessen it in God's sight; God withdraws from it according to the holiness of His nature, and His people must bear the consequences of His withdrawal, which, as shown here, must be shame and ignominious defeat. Whether, then, we act at once on the principle of separation from evil or not, God in His holiness has already withdrawn from it; a solemn consideration surely is this for us. Self-will may refuse to take God into account. This Achan did; and those in association with him had to learn that it was not to be, and that evil must be always viewed and judged, not as it affects us, but as it affects God. And what are we without Him? And where is the testimony? In the book of Judges eight times we are given the key to all their trouble, repeated like a bitter wail again and again, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord." The result was not merely one battle with the enemy and one defeat, but the most terrible oppression, persecution, and misery extending at times over long periods of years, and only ended by the raising up of some one individual who judged Israel. Now, the one raised up was always raised up of God to deliver, and consequently is found alone with Him in communion first as to the condition of His people. This is true separation. Othniel "judged Israel" before he "went out to war." (Judges 3:10.) Deborah likewise "judged Israel" before she called Barak to deliver them. (Judges 4:4-5.) Gideon built an altar to the Lord, and sacrificed on it to the Lord; he also threw down his father's altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that was by it (Judges 6:1-40), before God used him to deliver his people Israel from the enemy. Samson was to be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. (Judges 13:7.) But these were all used of God to deliver His people. Therefore one lesson taught in this book is not difficult to read; namely, that he who would help his brethren must be himself in fellowship with God; and what does this demand but of necessity the condemnation of all in them that is contrary to Him, nor can I be real in condemning evil unless it lead me into practical separation.

But, however they failed in it, God's people were chosen to be a holy nation. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." (Psalms 93:5.) And when the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 1:1-31) addresses them later, when they were on the eve of "Lo-ammi," "not my people," being written upon them, he says: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity . . . the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." What, then, is the remedy - GOD'S remedy which he proposes? It is separation from evil. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; CEASE TO DO EVIL." (Isaiah 1:16) But all exhortation was in vain. (See 2 Chronicles 36:16.) They "sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel." (2 Kings 17:17-20.) And Lo-ammi, therefore, "not my people," (Hosea 1:1-11) 'Was written upon the nation. But the way they will tread in a future day when, as the ransomed of the Lord, they shall return and come to Zion with songs, bears witness to the never setting aside but final accomplishment of God's first primary purpose for them; viz., their separation from evil, which their sin has only

marred for the time. It is thus that we read of their future: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, for He shall be with them (but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:8-10.) The Christian's Directions as to it.

Now, at the present time, God is forming out of Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14-18) a bride for present association, in testimony to and for a rejected Christ, and to be hereafter manifested in glory with Him. Though the language of Israel has been "We have no king but Caesar," and their prayer "His blood be on us and on our children," His dying prayer has gone up, too, to the Father, and has been answered: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Consequently there is a redeemed people to walk in separation from evil today. For in nowise are God's principles changed. The language first applied to Israel, is applied by the apostle Peter to Christian men and women now, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Peter 2:9.) And again, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." "I pray not," says the Lord, in John 17:1-26, "that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And as to our practical sanctification, we know that we are to be "conformed to the image of His Son." (Romans 8:29); we know that this practical conformity is going on now (2 Corinthians 3:18); and we know that, though we are not fully like Him, yet still that we shall be so in that day. "When He shall appear, we shall be LIKE HIM; for we shall see Him as He is," and the one effect of this is that "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:2-3.) With these exhortations of Peter and John agree the words of the apostle Paul: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Corinthians 7:1.) He had also just said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing;" and his parting exhortations to Timothy are of similar import, in view of the perilous times of the last days. (See 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:20-26; 2 Timothy 3:1-17.) The consequence of not at once acting on the principle of separation is that souls are defiled by association; the conscience loses its tenderness, no longer shrinking from evil; the Holy Ghost is grieved, and separation is presently considered to be either needless or impossible.

It is important that Scripture only should guide us. Let it be consulted if the reader admits the principle of separation from evil to be divine, and of paramount, 1:e. of first importance, in order to be instructed in the way God would have it practically effected. To this I propose now to turn, assuming the above is admitted. Separation from evil, then, begins with self-judgment. Self-judgment is the condemnation by the new nature of the ways and manners of the old, and separation from them. The Christian's body, the body of each believer, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. This Paul insists on in writing to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 6:19.) How this can be Scripture fully explains elsewhere; but he is using it here in order to insist that they shall not do what they will with that which is not their own. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and this Spirit is the Spirit of holiness. (Romans 1:4.) It condemns everything in me that it finds inconsistent with itself. The right way of its manifestation is in a walk such as Christ walked when down here; a reproduction of Christ in the world. (1 John 2:6.) The means the Spirit uses to correct me when I

fail in this is always the Word. In Hebrews it is the provision on earth for the saint going through this wilderness, and is "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 discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12.) It pierces down to and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart - goes down to what is hidden, yet working within, and exposes these hidden things (whence spring my actions) to me. Nor is this all, the Word is the sword of the Spirit against the enemy, who would use these lusts of my own heart, this inherent sin which he finds there, to draw me away from the path of obedience.

Thus I find the Spirit using the Word for two purposes - the one to expose to me that inward working which is not of Him, in order to lead me to judge it and separate from it; and, on the other hand, to defeat the enemy, who seeks to ensnare me by presenting something to these lusts which he finds there. (James 1:14.) And what the Lord uses, as a man, to defeat the enemy is the word of God. There was and could be nothing in Him to respond to what Satan presented, for He was "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); but still He met the tempter as a dependent man (Matthew 4:1-25; Luke 4:1-44), not as Son of God, but gaining the victory as man by never leaving the path of obedience. So the apostle would have the Corinthians remember to "judge themselves" (1 Corinthians 11:1-34); for their failure in self-judgment led to all the open and manifest sin which had become a common report and a scandal to the name of Christ. (1 Corinthians 5:1.) The Word, then, is the instrument, a piercing sword in the hands of the Spirit, to enable us to judge all evil in ourselves, and to walk in obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22.) Nor is the believer's responsibility over, when he is thus seeking to fashion himself and his ways by the light of the Word, though surely to do so is the first and all-important matter, and it is in this sense of its importance that the apostle Paul says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:1-29) - a daily word to us as to separation from evil. But there is a further responsibility devolving upon those who would be true disciples of their rejected Lord. In John 13:1-38, because He loves them all, and is occupied in the activity of His love to the end, He insists that each is to care for his brother: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Wherever I see a spot on another believer, my responsibility at once is to remove it, to separate him from it, and not one is exempt from this responsibility. The means is still the Word; and what is the spot? It is sin; and in seeking to separate my brother from it, I am benefiting him, myself, and all the members of the body, and I am occupied in the same work as Christ Himself is doing. (Ephesians 5:26.)

Here, too, we may fitly say, that "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26.) As to individual trespasses, brother against brother, Matthew 18:15-18, directs us. (See also Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14.) In open sin, unrepented of by one "called a brother," 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 directs the assembly how to act, itself now, instead of Israel, the dwelling-place of God (1 Timothy 3:15), however men may have marred its original simplicity and beauty. Outside the assembly, God deals in judgment still with the offender. "The Lord shall judge His people." He is in the hands of God for judgment, that the chaff may be blown away from the wheat, and "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" for "our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews

12:29.) If we fail in self-judgment, God Himself may come in. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Corinthians 11:1-34) He comes in either by the assembly, or He Himself chastens. The assembly, through lack of spirituality, is not always cognizant when saints are not walking in self-judgment, and when she is, cannot act in putting away save for acts of sin. Such cases clearly belong to the individual care of John 13:1-38. But God is cognizant of it, and oftentimes chastens individuals by sickness and even death, when the assembly is ignorant why He does so. Thus He acted in Corinth, while another case He allowed to go on there to manifest itself in open acts of sin such as are named in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, which the assembly must judge, the word of God being to the assembly (as it is to the individual) the authority to judge and separate from evil. If the leaven is put out, it is well; but it becomes a cause of humiliation then, and after that (on the part of the assembly) that God should have seen it necessary to let it go on to this. (See 2 Corinthians 7:9-11.) But if an assembly will not put away leaven, and thus does not own the necessity of keeping clean the temple of God, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 3:16), the place where Jesus delights to come and manifest Himself (Matthew 18:20; John 20:19; John 20:26), it thereby ignores His presence, and has given up any claim to it, and the responsibility of the individual believer is to separate himself from such a company. For as Scripture teaches me in many places to avoid an individual ostensibly "within" who is going on with evil (see Romans 16:17-19; Php 3:17-19; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:21; 2 Timothy 3:5; 3 John 1:9-12 etc.), so I learn too that Paul avoided an assembly, that of Corinth, for a time, where evil was not judged, for Paul would not tolerate it, and more, if present, he would not spare any who did. "And I call God for a record upon my soul," he says, "that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." (2 Corinthians 1:23.) This necessity is clear, if 2 Timothy 2:15-26 be studied in connection with Peter's language, that "judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Peter 4:17.) Is it not easy to see, in all these directions for our guidance in the word of God, that the one desire of God is to have communion with us, and that the first necessity to this is our separation from evil? Like a golden thread, running through all His ways with us, we trace it in redemption (Titus 2:14); again in the necessity of self-judgment (1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Corinthians 11:31); in the injunction to us that we are to care for each other (John 13:1-38); in the assembly's direction to put out leaven (1 Corinthians 5:1-13); and in the individual faithfulness, which must act if an assembly is unfaithful (2 Timothy 2:21); in all, the same principle is before us again and again.

Objections to it considered.

Now, in view of what has been before us, I gather that if there is one divine way of dealing with evil, viz., separation from it, we are never safe until we have acted on it. God holds us responsible as to association. What, then, is proposed instead of it? Let us examine this a moment. There is first the palliation of evil, when the good intentions of the evil-doer are pleaded, along with the extenuating circumstances that led to it; but no amount of palliation of evil will ever remove the evil, and it is the evil itself I must separate from. (1 Timothy 5:22.) Serious souls must admit that there is not separation from evil, though we act on the most complete and elaborate palliation of it that was ever framed.

Next we find that, instead of acting on God's principle of separation from evil, delay is urged. This is a more specious and subtle method of the enemy, and is often attended with complete success. This Scripture has been quoted, "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16), in order to

give the apparent sanction of the word for delay. But if the reader will turn to Romans 10:11 and 1 Peter 2:6 he will see how the apostles Paul and Peter understood these words of the prophet. One quotes them, "shall not be ashamed," the other, "shall not be confounded."

We may also remember that Lot believed the angel and yet is bidden to "haste" (Genesis 19:22), that Paul the believer was urged by Ananias not to "tarry," but to be baptized (Acts 22:16), and himself writing to the Hebrews (Hebrews 6:18) speaks to them of those who "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (See also Matthew 3:7.) Hence, I must object to the use of this passage when applied to hinder my immediate separation from evil, unhesitatingly affirming that such an interpretation is not of God. With the same desire for delay it has been asked, "Which of us is perfect? Who then is fitted to cast the stone at his brother?" Here again I must object to a manifest perversion of Scripture, and to an entire misapplication of it. The Lord's own words in John 8:1-59, which are here referred to, are, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her," not as is taught and inferred in the question "without sins." There is a great difference in saying "without sin" and "without sins." (Compare 1 John 1:8 with James 3:2.) But the immediate effect of raising a question as to one's own perfection, is to make every humble soul turn away from the evil before him to become hopelessly occupied with himself. That we are not perfect in the sense the questioner means is admitted, but it is totally beside the mark; for does Scripture say anywhere that we must be, before we can judge and separate from evil? Alas! if it did there could be no separation and no judgment of any evil at all. Did the apostle so direct the Corinthians? I fully admit the importance of Matthew 7:3-5; Leviticus 6:26, etc.; but I refuse to dig for supposed (though admitted) imperfections in myself or in others, and thus vainly occupy myself and them, when the evil from which I am commanded to separate is manifest and unjudged. Alas! that delay, urged upon us because we are not perfect in our practical life day by day, which we admit, should so hinder separation from evil, and stumble real godly souls as it does and has done. Bring in anything else - delay by calling for self-judgment, humiliation or whatever may be proposed instead of what God requires, and we are allowing the leaven to work, becoming ourselves defiled, and departing from separation from evil, God's principle for the preservation among His saints of practical holiness, while we have already lost communion with God, who is light; for in Him is "no darkness at all." Nor will any godly soul, I think, be bold enough to deny these inevitable results.

Yet another reason has been pressed in favour of delay, and this is when evil, in the Church or otherwise, is of long standing, or has been sanctioned or committed by one who, himself a Christian, has been of reputation and beloved amongst the saints. Nor is the quotation of Scripture wanting in this connection. I have heard quoted this passage: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." (Psalms 105:15.) Or again, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numbers 12:1-16) As in the other cases so here, I need scarcely say there is a wresting of Scripture. To seek to walk in separation from evil, to seek to exercise conscience as to its existence where manifest, or failing this to separate myself, is not doing harm to any of the Lord's "prophets." It is the very reverse of this, even a blessing to them all. Nor were the words addressed to the Lord's people - another reason for their inapplicability - they were addressed to the nations, as the context will show. As to speaking "against Moses," it is still more manifest that the quotation can have no possible application. Sin or evil is in Scripture every where spoken against by the Lord Himself, nor do we assume equality (as Aaron and Miriam did) with

what we speak against. There was no desire in the heart of either to separate from what they presumed to be evil in Moses, through his marrying an Ethiopian woman; but there was a desire to assume to be what they were not, namely, equal with him of whom the Spirit has recorded that he was "meek above all the men which were upon the earth," and this God rebuked. But if it is that which the Lord condemns, the fact that it is of long standing can be allowed no weight, and if countenanced by one who has held or holds some influence over the minds of the saints, there is all the more reason why there should be no delay, lest the leaven work and they become through his influence deceived and ensnared. But we have Scripture testimony, and no delay was proposed to the mind of the apostle Paul when Peter, himself of reputation and beloved, had been betrayed into error, and Barnabas and others were in danger of becoming leavened by it. (Galatians 2:11-21.) He acted faithfully and at once, painful as it must have been to him to do so. Nor is there the danger that is feared of "endless division if we separate from evil," nor is the outcry to be heeded that "it will destroy all our corporate testimony." The testimony, either individual or corporate, is already gone when we have ceased to act on separation from evil, and the only remedy, the only way of recovery, is its recovery; for separation is at the basis of everything ever owned of God as His testimony. Have we a corporate testimony or an individual one worth retaining if it involves the giving up, of not merely one tittle of the truth of God, but of a great fundamental principle which lies at the very root of all His dealings with us, as it has been laid down by Him as a first necessity with all the faithful that have gone before us? Far be the thought; to give it up is to give Him up. Alas! what are, we now, and what is the testimony? A little remnant always went out from evil associations, and acted professedly on this God taught principle of separation from all evil, maintaining that He demanded it. They found themselves together in our own days in various localities, as two or three gathered together "unto His name," who desired to maintain what is due unto it. Thus, and thus only, they became a testimony by separation, a testimony to failure and departure from God's ways for His people, a testimony nevertheless to His faithfulness (Matthew 18:20; 2 Timothy 2:19.) Is it not humbling that such, if they once knew the blessedness of all this, should now be found fearing to act upon it, or be found advocating or defending delay, or indeed anything else, as God's present instruction for His people? Excuse the evil committed - palliate it in what way you will - call the desire to separate from it division, haste, or by what name soever you may, the godly soul who reading the Word for himself is governed by it, will not be deceived by such expressions. He knows that the judgment of evil and separation from it are of God, and that whatever may be proposed instead, nothing so shakes the power of the enemy. The greatest blow a Christian can inflict on the power of the prince of darkness is to separate himself from evil, and grace is given for it. Blessed be His name that He can and will use now such a feeble folk as we are for this end if we are true to Him! Separation from evil is a sure defence. "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." (Proverbs 30:26.) Let us remember that our wisdom is to act like they do, and having thus acted, our strength is "to sit still." (Isaiah 30:7.)

Reformation has come in instead of separation. No objection is raised to it; and while separation from evil is denominated division, party work, and bigotry, reformation is lauded under such names as philanthropy, or brotherly love, or even charity. We must look deeper than man's praise or condemnation, if we desire to know which is right, and what is the origin of each. Now reformation pre-supposes the existence of evil. But all that God does must of necessity be perfect, to it, therefore, certainly the idea of reformation cannot apply. Reformation had its origin in the proposal

of the serpent to the woman in Eden. "God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5.) The suggestion of the enemy found here in the infancy of our race was, that there was imperfection in God's work, which the woman could amend. This proposal, yielded to, brought in the ruin. We thus see the thought of reformation was the fruit of a corrupt tree. Is it less so today? If it brought sin and death into the world, and separated man from God by giving him entirely false thoughts of God, it perpetuates the ruin when acted on now. Reformation today says that there is something good to be retained. What did it effect in Eden? Not separation from evil, but separation from GOD the only source of good. And what does it effect when acted on today? What can we retain? It effects the same end; for there is nothing to be retained but what is of God, and HE is separate from all evil. There is no way but the cross, and the practical carrying out of what it means day by day, when faith has grasped its meaning. By the cross and faith in Christ what is effected? Man is brought into fellowship with God, to know Him as Father in all the intimate relationships of a child. But it is God in all the unchanged holiness of His nature still, though now, to us, in the relationship of Father. This is never to be forgotten. Thus while we see that reformation brought in ruin, and still perpetuates it, separation was God's remedy, and is still; and that if we desire to get that which is perfect we must return to Him which necessitates it. To what is of God, and to that which was from the beginning (1 John 2:7-8), the far-lauded scheme of reformation does not and cannot apply. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." (Ecclesiastes 3:14.) This is the language of the wisest man that ever lived, and it is the language of faith today. Nothing, then, but the cleaving to and resting in the perfection of that to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, will ever satisfy that shrinking from evil, or lull to rest those heart-yearnings after practical holiness, which, right in themselves for every one born of God, have only been found since sin came into the world.

I have spoken but of the negative side - separation from evil; there is also the positive - holiness to the Lord. We are called from the one unto the other. But the latter is, as to practical holiness, impossible without the former, separation from evil, and therefore I have dwelt more on that side, as of first importance. In Christ, and the results of His work on the cross, we have both; and it is because we have that we are exhorted to both in our daily life. "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." If true to Him, I am leaving the one (evil), I am reaching after the other. "Let us go forth unto Him" (Hebrews 13:13) is the extent and limit of my separation. I am going to be like Christ when He appears, as we see in 1 John 4:1-21. Being not like Him yet, but with this knowledge that I am going to be, I "purify myself" now; and the apostle adds the extent of this, "even as He is pure." Here is the positive side, "as He is pure;" and John knows no cessation of this work, until the day dawns, and the shadows flee away, and he who longed for more likeness to Christ on earth at last finds that he is "like Him." H. C. Anstey.

We are called, as in the position of dear children, to show our Father's ways.

God's first act after man had crucified His Son was to open a way into His presence - the veil was rent.

S. The Abstract

"The Abstract;" or, The need of abstraction in connection with worship.

These words (the 'abstract' and 'abstraction') are only human, and therefore of no importance in themselves, but what they convey is of all importance. God, and the way (at any time). that He has been pleased to reveal Himself, is the basis of our worship. Whether in Old Testament times or now, this is so. Worship is the soul finding its delight in God as revealed. Hence there can only be worship as the soul is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and abstracted thus from things here.

Now a new order of man has come in, and a new Man is before God in Christianity, and the Holy Spirit is in us in order to bring us into present enjoyment of all God's thoughts respecting Him. The subject of the Spirit's testimony, as I understand it, is CHRIST. "He shall glorify Me," the Lord Himself said ere He left this world. As we are by the Spirit filled with God's thoughts respecting Christ, and respecting ourselves as "of Him" - of the heavenly One - ("As is the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones." New Translation), we worship, and then we seek to be in moral conformity to Him here. For worship, abstraction is an absolute necessity. We are desirous of worshipping "in spirit and in truth," because for such worship we are fitted, and it is also what the Father is seeking. (John 4:1-54) But the first man is in every particular the exact opposite and contrast to the Second. I am privileged to turn away from that man. Opposites can only be considered when we separate them, and treat each on its own base and in its own relations. Therefore, as I see it, unless the Spirit work abstraction in the soul there can be no worship. Since we must consider opposites separately, when we are considering the one it must be with us as if the other had no existence. But if I refuse the second Man it is a denial of Christianity. Also, if I reject the first man (and I have my warrant for doing so now since God has rejected him), I am on Christian ground; that is, I am on the only platform on which there can be now this worship of the Father. This is what I understand by "abstraction," and though the word has not (like Trinity) any place in Scripture, the thing is there, and, I think, should be respected and desired as a distinct work of the Spirit.

How much there is in us which hinders all worship. We are not at all times free in our souls of that which God can never tolerate nor recognise. Yet this is at all times our proper element - what we may call our "native air." We forget that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The "truth" is all out now, as to what God can accept at our hands, and in this "truth" we approach Him, knowing that He is "seeking such." If, through want of watching and praying, the soul is called upon again to condemn itself or others (even Christians) because of the actions of what God no longer owns or tolerates - this is not worship - though mingled in real sorrow with bitter tears and deep reality. No doubt it is the only right road to it, but it is not worship.

Abstraction is not merely mental, though no doubt the mind (or understanding) has a valuable place in it. It is that which is wrought in the soul, and can only be wrought therein, by the Spirit of God. It is only necessary to allow, or to provide for, the first man when we draw nigh to God, as if he had any present existence in God's sight, and our so-called worship becomes offensive to Him.

There is then the dead fly in "the ointment of the apothecary," which not only destroys all the good odour, but is fertile in producing the bad - we have only a "stinking savour." (Ecclesiastes 10:1.)

Oh that as Christians we might ever remember that God has a NEW MAN before Him now, and that as "of Him" we are acceptable. "If the Lord delight in us," was the language of faith in a bygone day, a day of less light than we have, but from a soul that had no doubt of it! Think of God finding His "delight" in you and in me because of what He has made us, as of His new creation! New is not the old covered up - not the old re-doctored to suit this present year 1894. It is wholly new, from the core to the exterior shell. The Spirit would occupy us with this, which is all, every bit of it, in accordance with the mind of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18.) But let us remember that we cannot consider ourselves as of that which God has accepted, and as of that which God has rejected, at the same time. Hence, I believe the little worship, for we are apt to confuse these two things, if not in our meetings yet in our private life. Which is the truth? I ask, for on the ground of that only can we worship. May the Lord by His Spirit not only abstract us, but keep us abstracted. Amen. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Assembly is New Creation

The Assembly is New Creation

Nothing appertaining to the first man and to his order of things enters into the composition or formation of the assembly. It is all divine. "I will build My assembly." Were it possible that anything of the first man could be allowed, it could never be said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." H. C. Anstey.

S. The Believer "Guiding his hands wittingly."

The Believer "Guiding his hands wittingly."

Genesis 48:14. Have you put your hand on the head of the right man? Jacob, though a saint of God, only did so on his death-bed. To put the hand on the head means in Scripture identification. It is to say, "I identify myself with thee." It was done in the case of the burnt-offering. The offerer thus identified himself with the value of the sacrifice, with all therefore that Christ was to God in all the excellencies of His person. (Leviticus 1:4; Leviticus 1:17.) In the sin-offering again, (Leviticus 4:4; Leviticus 4:12; Leviticus 4:15; Leviticus 4:21; Leviticus 4:27; Leviticus 4:29; Leviticus 4:33, etc.) Christ identifies Himself in grace with sin; that is, with all that is in us which is obnoxious to God. It is transferred to Him. The main part of Jacob's life, as we may see, was spent by him in putting his hand on the head of the wrong man. His life was mostly passed in planning, and plotting, and scheming for Jacob's advantage. For even in the Old Testament God continually showed that He could get no fruit from the fallen man; and faith owned it, although the second Man had not yet appeared. Although the full setting aside of the first man was not revealed till the cross, yet faith got God's judgment of it very early. We see this admitted by Job (Job 42:5-6), and also taught to Abraham in type (Genesis 15:8-18) and to others. Fruit was ever only in new birth. Our everyday-life, therefore, as Christians should become in all of us the "life of faith." We should put our hand on the head of the right man. If we do not do this we shall have to do it (as Jacob had to do it) at the close of our earthly history. God WILL have His way. This one act of Jacob's life is the only one recorded in Hebrews 11:1-40 as an act of faith on Jacob's part. "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph: and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." God's thought was made known to him at last, and faith triumphed. He said at the end what we all ought to say at the beginning, "Not this man, the man here, though the eldest born, and the first on the scene, but that Man is the man of God's counsel." Manasseh was the eldest born, but Ephraim, and not Manasseh, is the man of God's choice. (1 Corinthians 15:46-47.) Jacob at last bowed to a truth which in his life he had practically refused. In faith now he guided his hands "wittingly," and laid his right hand on the head of the younger-born, on Ephraim. In faith Jacob is here beyond Joseph. Joseph was still occupied with nature and sight. But his first-born Manasseh (forgetfulness) is only negative, and in the man of God's choice there is God seeking positive delight to His own heart. Ephraim (fruitfulness) is what God desires to find, and He has found it in Christ, when the whole race of the first man was a moral ruin before Him. There is no fruit for God then in the daily path of any soul apart from Christ displayed in him. In one way this final act of Jacob's is sad, although a triumph of God's grace. It is sad to see a saint of God, only when on his death-bed, owning the mistake of a whole lifetime, and such a case I think we have before us in Jacob. A believer now might, like Jacob, have faith in God for his salvation from hell, and yet not in his daily life be identifying himself with Christ and Christ's path through this world. He might be thus laying his hand practically (and not in faith) on the wrong man. On two occasions Jacob reviews his past life and gives us his own judgment of it. One is when he is overtaken by Laban, the other is when he stood before Pharaoh. If we read these two we shall see that, in the one case

he reviews what his life had been when away, through his own self-will, from the place of testimony; in the other he contrasts his past life with the lives of his fathers (Abraham and Isaac), who had been preserved in faithfulness in the land, the true place of testimony. It is all a sad review. And when one asks, Is it the record of a life of faith? one turns from it with a sense of relief to read rather the review of a past life from the lips of another saint - the apostle Paul. He says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." No regrets and no sorrow come into the apostle's contemplation here, and the "henceforth," the future prospect, is all bright. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." How completely does the end answer to the life! It is the record of a man who could say even when he lived here, "For to me to live is Christ." He was not merely a converted man, but he had identified himself on earth with the right MAN - the man of God's choice, and Saul was therefore refused.

How blessed is this knowledge of faith! Jacob "guided his hands wittingly," 1:e. he knew, at last, the mind of God, and acted on it. But Scripture adds an important word to this account of Jacob's act. It tells us, he "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." Where do you read of this word "worship" in any part of Jacob's former history? It is, as to him, an entirely new word. He had built altars, and erected pillars, but in all of them he himself figures largely, and enters into a kind of compact with God (see Genesis 28:20-22; Genesis 33:20; Genesis 35:3-7), and even in the last case (which is the best) this word "worship" is not found. What have we then, beyond them all, in this death-bed scene? I believe we have the paramount and eclipsing act of faith. No matter what you believe (for Jacob was a believer), it is valueless if you do not act upon it. And the actions are expressed in a man's everyday life. This last act of Jacob is therefore beyond every other, because in it he identifies himself with the right Man. Is worship hindered, then, if self intrude and is allowed? Or can anyone truly worship who is not living on earth that "life of faith" which says, "I am identified with Christ here"? Remember that on this occasion "the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see." No! The long day of sight was for ever gone for him, and must now give place to the day of faith. And then it is that we read for the first time that Jacob "worshipped." No doubt "sight" is the opposite of "faith," and belongs to the man that is here (2 Corinthians 4:18; 2 Corinthians 10:7; 2 Corinthians 10:12), while faith closes the human and natural eye, and looks at things with God, having for its object the Man that is there. As I have already remarked, faith says, "Not this man, but THAT MAN;" but faith says this not only at the beginning, but all along the daily path - the "life of faith." (Hebrews 11:1-40.)

It is now, not when we come to our deathbed (if we should have one), that we should be found, as believers. guiding our hands "wittingly." I close, then, these few remarks with the question which was pressed upon me to ask at the beginning, Have you, and have I, put our hands on the head of the right Man? And if so, does not the poor, feeble way in which it comes out in our everyday life humble us to the very dust? May God graciously grant us a reviving of the true testimony, that CHRIST may be seen in us. We are not left on earth to get on in business, or to "make us a name," but to display Christ, which the Spirit of God "forms" in the believer (Galatians 4:19) when he is subject to the Spirit, as clay in the hands of the potter. But I think that Christ must be thus first "formed" in us before He can be seen from us in our daily path. However much we support the man that is here in the activities of human will, God will NEVER change His judgment as to the Man of His counsel. (Php 2:9-11.) And at the last we must, and shall, come to the same judgment

about it as God Himself has expressed. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Bow in the Cloud.

The Bow in the Cloud.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 17, 1890, p. 261.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." Genesis 9:14; Genesis 9:16. In this day of grace there is always a bow in the cloud. We may be, and sometimes are, so occupied with what is most manifest, the cloud, that we do not discern its heavenly accompaniment; but there it is. Bright and lovely, it stretches from heaven to earth. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Yes, all things. This is the bow in the cloud. What a wide expanse this "all things" opens up to us! Even pain is God's servant for good to a believer; and so is an earthquake in the world, or a moral convulsion or heresy in the Church. (1 Corinthians 11:19.) A great and strong wind may "rend the mountains," and "break in pieces the rocks before the Lord." This may be followed by an earthquake, and the earthquake by a fire; but though they are the visible cloud, we must not be wholly occupied with these. (1 Kings 19:1-21.) The question for us is, What has the Lord to say to us in them? The object to Him is His people, and we must listen for the "still small voice." This is the bow in the cloud. If God has swept away man once in the judgment of the flood, the cloud, whatever it be, is afresh declaring His estimate of the first man. If mercy has declared itself, and we are spared, still we must never forget that His estimate of what we are stands recorded, and that very cloud afresh witnesses to it. And the bow in the cloud declares His faithfulness to His promise; for "His mercy endureth for ever." We are on the ground of MERCY and if we forget it, He does not. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of GOD THAT SHEWETH MERCY." Romans 9:16.) We look at the cloud; God looks at the bow. What grace is here! He says, "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it." The bow tells of God's unchangeable faithfulness and mercy when all is over with man. This is the ground we are upon with God.

"I bring a cloud . . . I do set My bow." We may not sever these two, nor look at one apart from the other. If it is good for us to be reminded that man (himself and his works) is only fit for judgment, it is good also to be reminded of what God is, or the soul must be overwhelmed with despair. Let us, then, "cease . . . from man, whose breath is in his nostrils" (Isaiah 2:22), and look at what God is looking at. "I will look upon it." This is the way to get God's thoughts. We see that in spite of the cloud God is "for us." Only we must be reminded of what we are, when we think high thoughts, not to drive us to despair, but to keep us low and to lean ever and only upon Him who has taken us up in grace, knowing all about us, and when there was not in us anything to attract Him. My fellow-believer, in all the exercises of the way God would have us see the bow in the cloud. Think of this in your present trial (all permitted of Him), in that which distresses you most of all, and the existence of which no fellow-Christian perhaps knows of. These words are written for you. Is it trial in the Church, trial in the business, trial in the house, or individually in yourself? "And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." Try to see it.

It will put you right with God, and so cheer your pilgrim way. The cloud may be dark and gloomy, but there is a beauty in it painted by His own hand, and it tells you, spite of all, what He is to you. And, remember, whether you see it or not, IT IS THERE.

God sees a "needs be" (1 Peter 1:6) for the present trial in the Church. We must be with Him to learn it. The whole experience of the wilderness is for us to learn what we are and what God is. The inclination of the natural heart is always to grow proud and independent. God, who knows the heart, saw this. As to the heart of man, "who can know it? I the Lord search the heart." (Jeremiah 17:1-27.) He knows it, exposes us to ourselves, and corrects us, and all for good, "for our profit." May we each be so with Him at this moment, that we learn His mind in this trial; for good comes from God, even when it is in the shape of trial. If the heart departeth from the Lord - and it does when we trust in man - we shall be "like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh." (Jeremiah 17:5-6) We shall look upon the present trial and speak of it as "only another cloud"; and because of it we shall not see the good in the hand which surely is working through it for us, nor that it is "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." The word to us is, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." All is from Him, "that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end." (Deuteronomy 8:16.) Let us remember His word: "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it." "We change; He changes not." H. C. A.

S. The Church on Earth.

The Church on Earth.

Mystery envelopes many minds as to the book of Revelation, and the interpretation (understanding) of what is recorded there. This would be greatly dispelled by our seeing God's division of this book into three parts:

1. The things which thou hast seen.
2. The things which are.
3. The things which shall be after these.

These are God's divisions, and not of man (see Revelation 1:19), therefore are they worthy of all attention.

If John obeyed the instructions given him in this verse, the first matter he wrote of was what he alone had seen. Having thus written, he next proceeded to write of "the things which are," the Church, left on earth awhile to be the responsible light bearer for Christ. And lastly, we should expect to read of "the things which shall be after these." All this, in its exact order, we do find in what the apostle writes. The second writing ends thus: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Note, therefore, "the things that are" can only refer to the Church on earth, and contemplates nothing save it; for whatever body of people may be taken up in grace by God after the Church has passed away from the earth, they are not under consideration here, and could form, therefore, no part of the "things that are" as it existed in John's day, for if they did they must of necessity be of the Church, and part of it. We must not transfer the Laodicean overcomers of Revelation 3:1-22 into Revelation 4:1-11, where alone we first read of what shall be "after these things."

It may be simply enquired, When did Laodicea and Laodicean overcomers cease to be a part of the things "that are," and pass into "the things that shall be hereafter," since they formed part of the "things that are" in John's day?

One other remark may help the simple. The Laodicean overcomer shall "sit with me in my throne," says the Lord. Now, who shall share that throne with Him save the Church, "the Bride, the Lamb's wife"? Mark, it is not merely that they reign "with" Him, but they sit with Him "in" His own peculiar throne. If Revelation 20:4 is quoted, it is not a sufficient answer. Reigning "with" (meta) is not the same as "in (en) my throne." Those who pass through (or are martyred in) the great tribulation form no part of the Church, "the things that are," for they as yet are not. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Comforter; His Objects and His Instruments.

The Comforter; His Objects and His Instruments.

Whatever means may be used to minister comfort to us as we pass along, it is well always to bear in mind that God is its source; and though He takes knowledge of the sorrows of all human kind, and alleviates them as it pleases Him, yet His own people are His chief objects in this ministry, which is His continual desire and delight.

There are three great channels He uses to thus minister comfort to His people which they ought to understand - channels which are entirely outside the comprehension of the natural mind. Nature is always occupied with its own little circle, and the trials or sorrows found therein; for these and from these it seeks deliverance, and without this deliverance it feels no comfort. But it is not so with the believer. Comfort is continually ministered to him in the circumstances of trial and sorrow in which he finds himself here, and oftentimes without their removal. In so far therefore as I am as an individual thus occupied in ministering comfort to His people - comfort which of course I must first myself have received - I am in harmony with this desire and purpose of God respecting them. Let us see what these three channels are which He so uses - the means which God the Holy Ghost, the COMFORTER, has continually employed since the moment of His taking up His abode upon earth on the day of Pentecost until now. In order to this I turn to Isaiah 40:1-31 : "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." God is here found addressing those whom He would use in this blessed service. Then we read three words which are to be spoken by them for His people's comfort. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem" (margin to the heart of Jerusalem, He cares for our affections), "and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Here we have the first testimony of the Holy Ghost, the first drop in the cup of comfort which He administers, the testimony from God Himself that every question is eternally and divinely settled between Himself and them; this to that nation is doubtless future, to us it is present. Every question is set at rest, and those who were once enemies are now at peace with God through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross; of this the Holy Ghost is the witness in many places, as in Acts 2:1-47, also in Hebrews 10:14-17. Here we find that, looking back at it, it is the solid ground of comfort for us now as to Israel by-and-by. The cross, the past of God's ways, is here used for our comfort, and the Holy Ghost administers it.

Secondly, for our comfort we are instructed that the Lord's coming is at hand. Solid comfort is this to the soul which has already so blessedly profited by all that God has wrought in the past; 1:e. in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the future laid under contribution for the present comfort and blessing of God's people. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." This, fulfilled when the Baptist's voice was heard in the desert, and with reference therefore to the Lord's first coming, is still the testimony of the Holy Ghost for the comfort of His people, but now it is His testimony to the Lord's second coming; nearly every part of the New Testament contains it, and with the especial desire of comforting the saints in varied circumstances of trial here. In illustration we think of John 14:1-31,

the chapter to which the saints have in such tried moments invariably turned - blessed words which we have so often read, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." In view also of the temporary separation of believers by death - it is the same thing - "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:18.) Other passages might be quoted - they are numerous - where the Spirit of God uses in the Word the second coming of the Lord for the present comfort of His people.

And, thirdly, and also for our comfort, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost concerning the flesh. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass." Now it is the flesh that "the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon" which troubles the child of God. Either working in himself as an individual, or working in the church of God, what a fertile source of trouble and discomfort is the flesh! And what is the remedy, the comfort found here? To ever hold it in the place of death, and under the judgment which God has here assigned to it. "The Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." And the New Testament in many, many places fully unfolds God's judgment of it.

Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, are YOU profiting by this ministry of the Spirit? You are confided to the care of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, until the return of your Lord and Saviour. Are you enjoying the comfort of His ministrations to you? He testifies to the eternal settlement and blotting out of your sins in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He testifies to the speedy second coming of the Lord, the Accomplisher of that blessed work. He testifies to you of the utter worthlessness and corruption of the flesh, the evil nature for which you are exhorted to "make no provision." His testimony therefore as to the past, as to the present, and as to the future, is all for your comfort. And if you are comforted by the knowledge of these things as you travel along, then go and comfort others with "the same comfort wherewith you yourself are comforted of God," as the blessed apostle did of old. Thus will you be found in fellowship with our God, who is not only "the Father of mercies," but "the God of all comfort" and consolation, and who will thus use you as the minister of blessing to God's people in the power of the Holy Ghost, "the Comforter." May many now thus be found for present blessing to His eternal praise. Amen. H. C. Anstey. The failures of a godly man are the most dangerous of all failures.

S. The Depressed Servant

The Depressed Servant.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 182.

God is not unaffected by this condition. He has His eye upon His servant, and will care for him. One of the lessons of the way is to get hold of how God can stoop, and delights to stoop, to arrange the little things for His servants. Alas! how distrust of the One whom we serve - distrust of the interests of His heart in us and in His people - thrusts its way oftentimes before the soul. Who would have thought of the blessed God preparing a cake, baking it, filling the cruse, and then sending His angel to that poor, weary, depressed servant of His, to tell him of what He had ready for him! Such is the heart of Him whom we serve. And Elijah eats and sleeps, and again is aroused by the angelic watcher to eat yet again. (How God lingers near us, so to speak.) "And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee."

Oh, to be able to detect the "cake baken on the coals." There it is preparing, when the poor weary heart only requests "for himself that he might die." Not yet Elijah, nor at all. The "chariot of fire, and horses of fire," are HIS way for thee.

"The journey is too great for thee." He who cares for us has provided the sustenance. He who alone knows the need of the way meets it. Be assured there is the "cake baken on the coals" and the cruse of water for the depressed servant, and as we partake we gain strength. Cannot the servant who reads this bear witness? And so it ever is. "And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God."

H. C. A.

S. The Eye of a Believer

The Eye of a Believer:

Either opened in faith, or closed in the blindness of Babylon.

Hebrews 2:9; Jeremiah 52:11.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 150. The language of faith is, "We see Jesus." Unless faith is in activity it is not always our language. Some, and doubtless Christians among them, are exhorted, "Anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see," and others are warned against spiritual blindness, thus, "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." (Revelation 3:18; 2 Peter 1:9.) To "see Jesus" according to this language is to have found (while yet here on earth) an object of entrancing worth. The heart then sees nothing here to attract it. Its attractions are found in Him, and where He is. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," and, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." Had anyone asked the apostle Paul, "Paul, what are you looking at day by day, thus going on, and not fainting?" "We see Jesus," would have been the only reply. Since it makes so much difference in our every-day life, since so much is gained by those who can with truth join the apostle in this every-day experience, and since there is a great lack in our hearts* when we cannot, may the Lord, in these few lines, draw afresh our attention to the blessedness of him who, threading his way along here, can, in the deep joy of his soul say, "We see Jesus."

*Nothing that we have down here will ever satisfy the HEART.

First it is necessary to clear the matter, and to see that there are two classes of saints, 1:e. those who are, and with truth, saying this, and those who are not able to do so. Unless we admit this we shall be hardly honest with ourselves. We shall be always misapplying truth, by losing those passages which are applicable to us; while seeking to apply to ourselves those which are not. "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:13-14.) This distinguishes the two classes sufficiently.

If we refer first to God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh, because the things written of them were types of us, and were "written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:11), we see that when once delivered from Egypt and its ruler, they never again fell under the power of that enemy. The word was, "Ye shall see them again no more for ever." Yet as we trace their history we find them in captivity again in Babylon. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." (Psalms 137:1.) What is the difference between Egypt and Babylon?

It is an interesting question to study, but I think the truth of one remark will be admitted by all, 1:e. that the "world" is before us in both. And it appears to me that Egypt represents the enemy in his oppression and our slavery (before redemption is known), and that Babylon is the enemy in the aspect of the ease and comfort of things here after redemption. Both show efforts put forth to detain the people of God outside the region of their own proper blessing. That which first caused trouble to God's people in the land was "the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment." Achan coveted these, and hid them in his tent. Hence the weakness of the people, and their inability to take possession of all that God had brought them unto, and provided for them. Oppression or ease are both used as the instruments of the enemy against God's people, though at different times.

If the language of the heart be not "We see Jesus," it is because the spiritual eyesight is gone. "Having eyes" we "see not." And the first thing the enemy - the devil - seeks to do, when he has captured and brought to Babylon one of the Lord's people, is to put out his eyes. So Samson found, when, having gone down to the world and was captured, his eyes were put out, and he had to "grind in the prison-house of Gaza." One who in the power of the Spirit of God would have been mighty, is only seen as a poor blind prisoner, making sport for the Philistines. And what a sad picture we have also in Zedekiah, a prisoner in Babylon, and blind. And thus, adds the Spirit, he remained "till the day of his death." (Jeremiah 52:10-11.)

God's people Israel were carried away captive to Babylon because of their sins, but the old Babylon is only a picture of the reality, the moral Babylon, which exists now, and goes onward until in its history we reach Revelation 17:1-18 (ecclesiastical) and Revelation 18:1-24 (civil), and in both its final overthrow and judgment from God. "Let us make us a name" (Genesis 11:4), is the key to the understanding of the mystic meaning of Babylon. We find it all through its typical history: man independent of God. Thus Nebuchadnezzar brings before us the same teaching. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" It is all the exaltation of man: "I have built," by my power," "for the honour of my majesty." Now God will exalt Christ. His given name is "above every name." How opposed to the principle of Babylon. "Let us make us a name"; though this is man's effort from the cradle to the grave. Thou "hast kept my word, and hast not denied My NAME." Is that the commendation which we covet? A person, whose language is Genesis 11:4, is morally blind to all God's counsel, and to His one purpose, viz., to exalt Christ. His eyes are put out as completely as though he had none, and they are put out because he is occupied with things seen, for it is either with us all occupation with the first man or with the second, so that if it is not Christ it is self, and I am morally in Babylon, a poor blind prisoner, even if one of God's people. The eye cannot hastily accommodate itself to gaze upon light, if it has for long looked upon darkness, and so it is with those who are captives in Babylon. Put Christ and His interests before them, heavenly things "where Christ sitteth" (Colossians 3:1-25), and they cannot see; put self and self-interest before them, viz., earthly advancement, and there is at once a clear comprehension of all the attractions of the scheme. When the heart is occupied with things here, the spiritual eye is put out.

It does great damage to our souls in divine things if we say "we see Jesus," merely because we know that we should have no other object, and because all orthodox Christians, whom we know, say so. It fosters vanity, and it is only on the surface after all. Is it true of me that I see Jesus? That is the question. If I do, if I see Him at all, He must become the all-absorbing object of my life. It was ever thus with His simple followers - His disciples: "We have found Him . . . come and see," said

Philip. "Come, see a Man," said the woman of Samaria. "This is my beloved Son," said the voice of the Father, "hear Him," and thereafter they "saw no man," save Jesus only. If the Lord is not thus seen I may have life; but can it be ignored that a man may live and yet be blind? If blind, it is the beauties of the HEAVENLY ONE that have no attractions for the soul. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun" (Ecclesiastes 11:7), and to see that the eye is in me, and that the Sun is Christ, is bringing home these things very close to us. In a former dark day of apostacy and ruin (Malachi 4:2), (and on the verge of a similar hour we also stand today), the comfort was that the Sun would arise. "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." Alas! if the eye does not see Him, of what avail is all that we do see? Faith is the telescope which brings the Lord nigh, and the Spirit of God applies that telescope. Gazing upon Him, the language of the heart, and thence of the lip, is, "We see Jesus."

How then does Satan put out the eyes? It is by occupying us wholly with things down here on earth. I do not think for one moment that they are necessarily wrong things. Of course they may be, but a man may be engrossed in what is perfectly lawful, and thus become spiritually blind. An excuse made by one was, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Was he to ignore this relationship, which God had distinctly formed for man's blessing? No; but since Christ has come to bring into heavenly blessings, these earthly ones were not to rob the soul of them (nor were they to be put before them), and this was, and is, their tendency. Hence the Lord says in the same chapter, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." He touches here the greatest earthly blessings, and shows that they may be a real hindrance; for a disciple follows Christ from earth to heaven NOW (and not when he dies merely), and we cannot be truly His disciples here unless we come into this scene from the place whence HE came. "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John 17:18.)

One thing more we find to be true only when the eye is opened in faith. I see that I am in the midst of strength, and I do not therefore count my enemies to be of much worth. If I am not in faith I see only the enemy. When the young man's eyes were opened in 2 Kings 6:17, he saw "horses of fire and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The host of the enemy lay encamped around the man of God, and apparently every avenue of escape was closed. But nearer to him still, and between him and them, was the host of God. Likewise a host is encamped against us. The devil seeks by every artifice to drive us off heavenly ground, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." But having through grace accepted the heavenly position, as the prophet said, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." We are thus "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." The Lord give us earnestly to desire that the eye shall be ever open in faith, and not closed in the blindness of Babylon. H. C. A.

* * * A good conscience is only conscious of what the pure heart should be in the presence of God, having an entire, unclouded, confidence (faith unfeigned) in God "That your faith and hope might be in God." If I fail I fly back to God; if I am weak, I fly back to God with faith unfeigned in Him, as the One who has delivered me, counting upon God, as the One who is for me, to bring me back to my place.

S. The First Man ever under Judgment in God's Account.

The First Man ever under Judgment in God's Account.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 176.

We learn what the cross of the Lord Jesus has effected when we learn that it has eternally settled for God the question of sin and sins. It has settled these two things, and it is most important to see how they have both been settled. We have the forgiveness of our sins in the work of the cross; but the nature which committed them, sin, is never forgiven. It has been eternally placed by God under judgment. As to the forgiveness of our sins, the following passages declare it is effected: 1 John 2:12; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14, Colossians 2:13; Acts 5:31, etc. As to the nature that committed them, it is not forgiven, but the judgment of death is permanently recorded against it. The following passages bring this before us: Joshua 4:9; John 12:31; Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 6:14; Colossians 3:3, etc. In Joshua 4:9, death, not forgiveness, is before us. As to the twelve: Stones placed in the bed of the river, they were a figure of the twelve tribes. Over them roll the waters of judgment continually - those waters through which Israel passed dry-shod. But as to their permanence in the bed of Jordan, the word adds, "And they are there unto this day."

Now in order to make this simple to our understanding, the word of God, in the writings of the apostles, considers the Christian as if he were two men. He is solemnly warned and exhorted never to act like the one, while over and over again he is encouraged to act as the other. When the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ," he is contemplating the judgment of God recorded in the cross as to the first man, and speaking of himself as that man. When he says, "Nevertheless I live," it is the new man, or the power of the life of Christ daily displayed in him, which he is contemplating. The difference is immense. There are two men in question. As to the first, who is controlled always by the evil nature, which Scripture calls "sin" (Romans 7:18-21), that man is under the judgment of God, and never is anywhere else in God's account. As to the new man, "created in righteousness and true holiness," and "created unto good works" (Ephesians 4:24; Ephesians 2:10), to him death and judgment have nothing to say; against him they have no claim. Romans 8:1, as well as our Lord's own words, in John 5:24, both declare this to us. For some it is unnecessary to adduce passages to prove that the Christian is addressed as if he were two persons; for others a passage or two may help. (Why he is so addressed is because he has still the old nature within him, as well as the new, and every action of his life comes from either the one or the other of these.) If then we refer to 1 Corinthians 3:3, we read, "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" To walk "as men" is a reproach, because it is walking according to the old nature. So we read, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk." (Ephesians 4:17.) On the other hand, when we are addressed as having the new nature, we read, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16.) "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought Himself also so to walk even as He walked." (1 John 2:6.)

Timothy is exhorted to "preach the Word," because the time would come when men would not endure "sound doctrine" (the Word). We hear from the WORD that our sins are forgiven; but that the old nature, the man that committed them, is not forgiven, but is placed under judgment. Is this "sound doctrine"? Is it to be practised, or only theorized about? Is it Christianity? And is the setting up (or trying to do so) again on the earth of the man under judgment a denial of Christianity or not? To own in our daily life that the cross of Christ has put away sins, and has also definitely placed the old man under judgment, I hold to be fundamental doctrine, without which there cannot be any true progress in the divine life. It is the second part of this truth which cuts at the root of all that is not of Christ, but, thank God, which separates me definitely from the world, to walk like Christ in it. We much more readily accept that in the cross we have the forgiveness of sins, than that in the cross we have also the judgment of sin - the nature of the first man. Both are true, and both together constitute what one called "a Christian" professes to believe, however short he or she may come as to the manifestation of the judgment of the first man practically. A word or two on this head. Who is the man that God has definitely recorded His judgment against? It is the man who is what is called "trying to get on" in the world, trying to make his rest here, where sin defiles all around. It matters not to him who goes down; his only effort is to get up, trample upon whom he may. It is Genesis 11:4 reproduced every day among us. Now God has determined never to set that man up again. Strive as he may - and (if walking with this object) we may come nearer home, and say, "Strive as I may I have God against me, as to setting up that man again on earth In doing it, am I, or am I not, fighting against God?" Honours, dignities, riches, popularity, we naturally cling to them. We desire them to make something of us. But, my reader, do you in life and ways accept the judgment of God as to the man that covets them? Can you "endure sound doctrine?" or are you one of those, by no means uncommon, who say, "What do you want more than forgiveness of sins?" The desires ("their own lusts") of the natural heart still unbridled; for that is the condition of those who have "itching ears."

What is the sum of the matter, but that "having food and raiment, let us be therewith content"? I may not have what people call a "home;" I may have "food and raiment." "No certain dwelling-place." This the apostle could speak of; and if it is ours, it is but a portion of His path who had "not where to lay His head" when, in faithfulness to God, He trod this earth. Let me remember it, let it control me, that His path is my path if I walk like Him. As to the second man, God will set him up here in power and glory over everything. (Ephesians 1:9-10.) He may go to the wall today, and take cheerfully the spoiling of his goods "without resisting; for such is God's will for him who takes Christ's path." "The offscouring of all things" may register the world's opinion of him who is willing to be even accounted a fool for Christ's sake (1 Corinthians 3:18); yet "the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." (Proverbs 19:21.) We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus (who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels) crowned with glory and honour, a proof of what God will yet accomplish for Him. And as to the world, "the world passeth away, and the lust [desire] thereof." May the Spirit instruct us yet more and more in the great defect of the Christianity around us; and in the fact that the old nature, the first man, is in the cross definitely placed under the judgment of God, and never delivered from it. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Holy Ghost on Earth

The Holy Ghost on Earth The Holy Ghost is as really present on earth today as Christ Himself was. And we must remember that He is here for two distinct objects.

First, He is here to bring men into all the good of what appertains to Christ in glory, and which is commonly called Christianity.

Second, He is here for the proper maintenance of those earthly relationships which were formed of God, and which have never been set aside. These I think are three.

First, man as a creature in relation to God.

Second, the earthly relations of the family Godward and to one another.

Third, God's government of the world.

I think that the Spirit of God maintains in us the proper balance and line of conduct suited to all these last three, which I think are all summed up in one word - "responsibility"; and that He also is here to lead us into all the good of our heavenly relation, which may be also all summed up in one word - "privilege," and there could not be the slightest friction between the two. Ephesians 1:1-23; Ephesians 2:1-22; Ephesians 3:1-21; Ephesians 4:1-32; Ephesians 5:1-33; Ephesians 6:1-24 gives them all. H. C. Anstey.

"It is a time to be entirely heavenly, for the earth is far from God, and daily its darkness closes in; but we belong to the light, and await another day,"

S. The Holy One of Israel.

The Holy One of Israel. Not only, as we have seen in former papers, do the Scriptures set forth the sovereign grace of God, the way He saves the sinner, and the holy relationship in which He sets him as saved; they also show the manner in which grace is received into the heart; and they furnish too a perfect expression for the joy that follows upon the reception of grace, so that the saved sinner can worship God in a manner suited to the thoughts of the God who has saved him. We have examples of this in the varied hymns of praise to be found in the Old and New Testament. God has registered them there for our instruction and comfort. There we find the blessed experiences of a soul who has learned in the presence of God that he is for it in grace, instead of being against it in righteous judgment, and whose joy finds vent for itself in praise to God, the fruit of childlike faith in that which God has said. Faith finds true the words of Elizabeth: "Blessed is she that has believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things spoken to her from the Lord." And the Lord Jesus said Himself to Thomas, "Blessed they who have not seen, and have believed." (John 20:29.) The apostle Paul writes thus to his children in the faith at Thessalonica: "For this cause we also give thanks to God unceasingly that, having received the word of the report of God by us, ye accepted, not men's word, but even as it is truly, God's word, which also works in you who believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13.) "So faith then is by a report, but the report by God's word." (Romans 10:17.) It is faith, simple faith, which establishes the soul in this happy relationship with God; and faith is itself produced by His all-powerful word. All is of Him. What blessing to know Him as Saviour! For thus it is that He has been pleased to reveal Himself in Christ.

We may remark that, in the songs of praise to which we have referred above, the soul that has found rest in the presence of God is filled with the sense of His absolute holiness. But instead of this being an occasion for distance or fear, it is linked with overflowing joy. This alone would testify to the possession of a perfectly clear conscience; that is, one freed from the burden of its sins, for these have been wholly and entirely blotted out in a way suited to the nature of a holy and a righteous God. God only could have wrought such a deliverance; and the delivered soul recognizes in Him its Saviour, and finds at the same time in Him the source of all its joy, and so can celebrate His perfect holiness as an integral part of its own joy.

We may consider the song of Mary. (Luke 1:1-80) She says, "The Mighty One has done to me great things, and HOLY is His name; and His mercy is to generations of generations to them that fear Him." Again, Zacharias says that the God of Israel had visited and wrought redemption for His people, to remember His holy covenant, to give us, that we should serve Him without fear in piety and righteousness before Him all our days. In the same way the song of the redeemed, in Revelation 1:5-6, celebrates the efficacy of the work of redemption which has made them fit for the presence of God: "To Him who loves us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the strength to the ages of ages. Amen." The first song that we find in Scripture is that which Moses and the children of Israel sang after the wonderful passage of the Red Sea. It is striking to see there how their hearts are

occupied with the holiness of God, and that not as an abstract dogma, but as a present reality for their souls. "He was glorious in holiness, and He had guided His people unto His holy habitation." That was for them the result of having known deliverance by the direct intervention of the Lord Himself. (Exodus 15:11-13.) The second song is that of Hannah. (1 Samuel 1:11.) A very remarkable one from a prophetic point of view; for there, for the first time, the Messiah is mentioned - the Lord's "anointed." Here again the holiness of God is the source of joy for the soul that has been delivered and blessed: "There is none holy as the Lord; neither is there any rock like our God." The Spirit of Christ, in Psalms 22:1-31, gives expression to the same thought, and that in a moment of the deepest anguish: "Thou art HOLY, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel; our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." After this, in many passages, especially in Isaiah, we meet with this special name of the Lord, "THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL."

We find it three times in the Psalms, and all three in the third book (Psalms 71:22; Psalms 78:41; Psalms 89:18). Psalms 71:1-24 is a practical application to the life of the saint of the truth uttered by the Lord in Psalms 22:1-31, and especially true of Him, showing what was the resource of His soul even upon the cross. Israel's national resurrection (Psalms 22:20) is a result of the Lord's having been heard from the horns of the unicorn. (Psalms 22:21; compare, too, Isaiah 26:19.) In this Psalm, then, we find again God's righteousness and truth the source of the soul's joy that finds its rest in the Holy One of Israel. Psalms 78:1-72 is the recital of the people's history, bringing into contrast their rebellious ways and God's faithful goodness. It was the Holy One of Israel that they limited. Psalms 89:1-52, which closes the third book of Psalms, the book which treats especially of Israel as a nation, not merely the remnant of the Jews, takes up the story of God's grace at the point Psalms 78:1-72 left it, and shows how the Holy One of Israel is their shield and resource. Here we find added, and much developed, His purpose as to His "anointed," which was merely mentioned in Hannah's song. The King is about to take His place in the midst of the chosen people, and they can say, "The Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our King." This name, so full of blessing for the chosen seed of Abraham, not only reminds us of the inviolable character of God, but also of His settled purpose to bless the people in spite of all their rebellion. God cannot lightly pass over sin, but He righteously takes it away by means of a perfect sacrifice, and in such a manner as that in righteousness He can give free course to His love in favour of the objects of His grace - poor, lost sinners! He shows this in His word by the history of His ways with the people of Israel. In spite of all the goodness of God displayed on their behalf, from the moment of their coming out of Egypt, the Israelites never remained faithful to Him. On the first favourable opportunity they turned aside from the Lord to plunge afresh into idolatry. If for a moment God brought them back to Himself by the powerful testimony of one of His servants, whether judge or prophet, at the same time delivering them from their enemies, no sooner was the deliverer dead than they again fell into the old sin. (See Judges 2:10-23.) The same thing took place under the kings. (2 Kings 17:7-23.) Moses had said at the beginning of their history, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." Their sad history is summed up in few words in the first verses of Isaiah: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." (Isaiah 1:2-4.) The parable of the vine shows again the same

truth. (Psalms 80:1-19; Isaiah 5:1-30) And so further on: "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (Jeremiah 2:21.) Do not think, dear reader, that all this is only written as the history of a peculiarly corrupt people. Oh, no; by it God wants to show us what the heart of man is - my heart, your heart - even when God has lavished upon us all His care. The human heart is utterly corrupt; good does not exist in it; and thus it is impossible to get any good out of it. As long as God acted on the principle of law, seeking fruit from responsible man, the same sad result could not fail to be produced. The trial has been made with the people of Israel once for all. But God will not leave His people in this deplorable condition. After having proved their incapacity to bring forth good fruit, He reveals Himself as their Redeemer. He charges Himself with the work of taking away their iniquity, and gives them a new heart inclined to obey Him. Such are the terms of the new covenant which He makes with them in contrast with the old covenant made at Mount Sinai. (Jeremiah 31:31-34.) The old covenant proposed obedience as the condition of blessing. (Exodus 19:4-5); the new covenant has no "if," it is entirely of grace; God does all Himself, thus fulfilling His promise made to Abraham: "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed." For this reason the prophet says: "For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." (Jeremiah 51:5.) The new covenant will have its accomplishment for the people of Israel during the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth, a reign which will last for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:16.)

Meanwhile God brings out the contrast between the principles of law and grace, and shows us in what way He can now receive us, and make us to rejoice in His grace, because the work of redemption is accomplished; the Lord Jesus having already suffered for our sins. But since God has put man to the test under law, by means of the people of Israel, it is equally in favour of this people that He shows the resources of His grace. It is this side of the truth which is developed so forcibly and with such detail by the prophet Isaiah in connection with this name of grace - "The Holy One of ISRAEL." God reveals Himself thus in spite of all the rebellion of the people. Israel has been against Him; but He is for Israel. But in order to be this He must first be their Redeemer, and then the source of all the good which is to be produced in them. Isaiah 40:1-31, Isaiah 41:1-29, Isaiah 42:1-25, Isaiah 43:1-28, Isaiah 44:1-28, Isaiah 45:1-25, Isaiah 46:1-13, Isaiah 47:1-15, Isaiah 48:1-22, Isaiah 49:1-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 51:1-23, Isaiah 52:1-15, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 54:1-17, Isaiah 55:1-13, Isaiah 56:1-12, Isaiah 57:1-21 are full of this marvellous revelation. One quotation will suffice as an example. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. . . . For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." (Isaiah 43:1-3.) God takes away their sins. He says, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isaiah 43:25; Isaiah 44:22.) At the same time He reveals (Isaiah 53:1-12) the holy victim who should bear them, the Lord Jesus, on whom "the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all." (Acts 8:35; 1 Peter 2:24-25.) The same prophet speaks of a faithful remnant of the people who will cleave to the Holy One of Israel, believing His word and profiting by His grace. (Chap. 11:20; Isaiah 17:7) This will be an individual work; whosoever believeth on the Lord shall not be ashamed. "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 29:19) The great principle of grace comes out here, as in the precious words of the Lord Jesus: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3.)

Dear reader, are you one of these "poor in spirit"? Have you taken this place before God as a convicted sinner, powerless for good, and accepted His grace which is offered to us in Christ? The blessing cannot fail; for God reveals Himself as the redeemer, and comes into the midst of His people, as the Holy One, to bless them. So we read again, as in Isaiah 12:6 : "Cry out and shout aloud, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (Compare Ezekiel 39:7; Hosea 11:9; and Isaiah 29:22-24.) You will say that there the people of Israel were still in question. This is true; but God is showing the principle upon which He acts in His grace - the way in which He blesses according to His holy nature - and for us the sole means of receiving blessing from Him. His word can never fail nor ever pass away. It is His word which is preached unto us, and by which too we are born again. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." (1 Peter 1:25.) May the Lord open our ears and hearts to receive it in its fulness. W. J. Lowe.

Something less than the truth means something less than Christ, for He is the truth. There is more danger therefore in frittering away the truth than in an open attack upon it.

I may have a clear knowledge of all the truth of Christianity, I may be able to expatiate with distinctness on the past and future dispensations of God's ways; but the testing question is, Do I BENEFIT in the daily experiences of my own soul, as I pass through the varied experiences of this life, by the sense of my own personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Father, and to God? This experience, and the sense of this relationship (but not the mere knowledge of truth), will give real rest and comfort to the heart; for nothing can ever alter the place of favour revealed to us here. H. C. Anstey.

Every believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 6:19.) I ought to say therefore, when I rise in the morning, The Holy Spirit, dwelling in me, will reproduce in me this day the walk and ways, the temper and deportment, of Christ, if I do not hinder Him by the allowance of the flesh. The opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil are nothing to Him, if I am contented to be a broken vessel for Him to use. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Intercession of Christ.

The Intercession of Christ.

Since Christ is now on high, communion with Him is as to His things there. Communion of our souls in heavenly things is continually liable to disturbance and interruption while we are on earth. The intercession of Christ is God's gracious provision for its continuance, or, if lost, for its restoration. It is always going on as priesthood or as advocacy. It comes before us in John 13:1-38 under the figure the Lord uses of washing the disciples' feet. It is exercised either for actual sin, or for our infirmities. In the one case it is advocacy (1 John 2:1-29), in the other (Hebrews) it is priesthood. When the Lord's intercession is for me in my infirmities (not sins) down here, the way it works in me is that I am kept unconscious of them, and thus able to enter into heavenly things. And the way in which intercession (advocacy for some actual sin committed) works in me is, that by the Spirit I am made conscious of it (the sin), and by the Spirit I am also led to judge and confess it. The next step is, I am made conscious that it is forgiven.

Intercession is the generic term, but it may be either advocacy, or priesthood. Its object in both cases is to make communion with the Lord as to heavenly things the abiding enjoyment of the soul. How great is this grace! H. C. Anstey.

S. The Man of Faith and the Devil

The Man of Faith and the Devil: Their First Encounter.

Matthew 4:1-11; Genesis 12:10.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 174.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." Here we have in few words the opposition which we have to meet. No sooner have you started in the path of faith than you have to meet Satan with all the attractions of sight. You become an object of importance to the enemy, who knows that there is only that scene of faith and this scene of sight for man, and of this latter he is the "prince." I do not think that we can too much insist on this fact with young Christians, nor that older ones would suffer much by reminding one another more often than they do of the same thing. You will have to face the devil if you have started on the path of faith, and the devil, remember, with all the power and attractions of the world at his back. To illustrate it we will take the two greatest examples of faith contained in the word of God, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ ("God over all, blessed for ever," yet a man of faith walking down here), and Abraham, the "father of the faithful" - the friend of God. In both cases (as I believe in all cases) the world is presented to each in order to destroy the testimony of a man of faith, 1:e. of one whose path is opposed to sight, and to all its attractions.

We should remember that Satan's object, if we have fairly started on the path of faith, is to silence us as living witnesses of the sufficiency of God in every exigency of the path, and also (that others may not be delivered) to weaken us. This is his object. He cannot touch the fact that we are the Lord's; he can, however, spoil us as to our testimony and enjoyment of this fact. He does not deny that we are men of faith; he will seek, however, that we shall not walk by faith. The enemy's object is always to frustrate God's purpose. It is directed against Christ, who is the object of that purpose, and as a part of that purpose (for what is there on earth that is for Christ but Christians?) you have to meet it. When the Lord was on earth He had to meet this enemy armed with all the power and attractions of the world, before He entered on His public ministry; and I think we shall find that we too have to meet him. That is, Christ had first to "bind the strong man" before He could "spoil his goods." We find the same enemy in the history of Abram. Abram is called as a man of faith to take up his abode on new ground - God's witness on the earth. The devil says, "I will spoil all that." A famine arises in Canaan, and Abram goes down to Egypt; he turns to a human resource, and Egypt is only and always a type of this world.

Now let us glance a moment at the results in each case. In the case of our blessed Lord it was a triumph over all that the enemy presented to allure Him out of the path of dependence on God. Thus He was set for God in this world, and it was true of Him onward, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." (Psalms 16:1-11.) In Abram's case, as we know, he was overcome. He yielded to the attack of the enemy, but as to both it was

the same. The attack was, "Provide for the necessities of the body, 1:e. for yourself in this scene, and don't say that you are not of it." And why should we look at all this and the results in each case? It is because we must meet this enemy, as every man of faith has had to meet him, and, yielding to him, our usefulness as God's witnesses is gone. Oh may we seek to impress it upon each other, that it is how we acquit ourselves in this first encounter that will stamp us' Unless there is recovery I shall bear the impress of defeat ever after as I go through this scene. Through grace there was recovery in the case of Abram. (See Genesis 13:1.) But look at the lost time. There was no communion with the Lord - no altar in Egypt - and this is just what Satan wants; for you may say what you will - claim that you are a man of faith, and know and teach that Canaan is the right place - so long as you give up heavenly ground, and are not found occupying it for God yourself. The Lord hungered, and Abram hungered, and the devil was at hand with all the resources of the world for each, and apparently just at the moment of need. But remember there are two scenes, two regions, and only two, and you even, as to the needs of your body here (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), belong to the region of faith, and not to that of sight. As to this world it is a moral wreck, but natural things remain. Thus it comes before us in John's Gospel and Epistles. The devil has full control of it. He was constituted and accepted as the "prince of this world" on the rejection of Christ. The world then, this moral ruin, Satan presides over, using it all to defeat, if he can, God's purposes for the saints. It is to them he approaches, and as a friend. He offers to bestow upon the saints anything that they will accept here, and he holds it all in his hand. He uses the outward to affect the inward, 1:e. the state of the soul. But let us look behind the offered bait. What is his object? As you receive from the hands of Satan anything here, you lose morally. You lose your ability to be here for God. It is written - and with this may we defeat him - "A gift doth blind the eyes of the wise" (Deuteronomy 16:1-22), and he that "will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4). With a threefold effort Satan pomes. (1 John 2:16.) He comes with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes," or "the pride of life," and the object he has in thus coming to every saint who enters on the path of faith is to nullify his testimony. But he must be met before you can go through this world, where he reigns, and rob him of his prey. His attractions must be overcome by me first, ere I can be useful in delivering others from the snare. A man of faith must refuse the devil's supplies, or he ceases to walk by faith. He must refuse the world's honours - "I will promote thee to great honour" (see Numbers 22:17) - if he would have the "honour that cometh from God only." (John 5:44.)

It is not difficult to account for the weakness which exists, and the inability to deliver from worldliness which is found in the ministry of some who have the truth, and are real children of God themselves. If I have fallen, and am living in the attractions or honours or supplies of Satan myself, how can I deliver others? How can my walk then be characterized, as so many have been in the past, as the steady, onward, triumphant walk through an adverse scene of a "man of faith"? Never having overcome Satan individually when he comes with all the power of the world, explains why the power and ministry of so many is practically NIL. It is not that they are not Christians. I am not in any doubt of that; but what is manifest is that as to the world - this moral scene of evil - they are not conquerors, and are not clear of it. Hence the Spirit of God does not support their testimony, and there is little result. Many a Christian labourer would not only leave his mark for God in this world, but would also leave it on the Church of God, where now there is nothing of note in his testimony, had he not gone down to Egypt when Satan met him. He responded to the attractions presented, and his usefulness to others on God's behalf was, and is, practically at an end. But

while we can heartily thank God that recovery from this state is possible, before we speak of it, I would dwell a little on another thing.

Very often there is great activity among those who have not overcome the worldly attractions and snares of Satan. They are active in preaching the gospel. They preach, and it might be argued that God blesses their preaching by conversions. But note this - their converts as a class do not overcome the world. They are like their fathers, and the work bears the stamp of the workman. But all this is below the mark. The full Gospel, 1:e. "CHRIST, is preached," and the new man does not tolerate this evil moral system called the world. The Son delivers from it (John 8:36), and the evangelist connects souls with HEAVEN. "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." (Colossians 1:5.) This is clear; the gospel does not improve the man to leave him morally in this scene, though he may be an improved citizen, or husband, or father while in it. The gospel starts him to walk through it as only a delivered man can walk through it - to walk a conqueror unmoved by the empty and paltry follies of Satan, which he sees all around him. As to this see 2 Corinthians 2:14. Such was the path of a man of faith down here.

I now turn to the fact that recovery from Egypt is possible. "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had." (Genesis 13:1.) This was a second great day in the history of Abram. The first was when he went forth from Ur of the Chaldees. He was not made by this second act a man of faith. He was a man of faith before, but Satan was refused and overcome thereby, and Abram was constituted afresh God's witness on the earth. He was again a witness that a man of faith could give up "his country, his kindred, and his father's house," and now more, even all the supplies of Egypt, to walk by faith with God. This is an honour much to be desired for every believer; it was not a little thing. Earthly ties counted nothing - the country counted nothing - no fresh country do his feet yet tread - a pilgrim and stranger on the earth, with God as his all-sufficient and only resource; such was Abram.

It is to such, viz., to those who have given up Egypt, and not to the general company of believers, that God reveals His mind. Lot is a picture of the general company, yet a true believer without doubt. (2 Peter 2:7-8.) Concerning all His purposes with respect to the promised SEED (Isaac, - as a type of Christ) God instructs not Lot but Abram, now. (See Genesis 13:14-16) This is what we want. We want to know more of communion with the Father, as to all His purposes for and concerning the SON. Typically, Abram got it, and then when afterward Lot accepts the world and is captured by it Abram is, as the recovered man, in the place where God can use him to deliver his brother from the toils of the enemy. "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot." Here is an instance of what we ought to know more about. Sodom was just as much a picture of the world as Egypt. It was the honour of the place, not a famine, that had caught Lot and made him a resident there. What we should covet is, to so let faith control us that we can be used of God to deliver our brethren from such associations, through having overcome the enemy in these very things ourselves. Abram, while yet in Egypt had given up pilgrimage and could not have delivered Lot from this trouble into which he had got by also giving it up, and that he had proved by his association with the king of Sodom. But another thing must be said. Lot is rescued, but though again in the place of testimony (and manifestly God had started him afresh) yet he clung to the world still. He is in marked contrast thus to Abraham. Abram learnt by his failure and overcame, Lot did not, and though not involved in the judgment of the world (Sodom), Lot had, so

to speak, to be dragged out of it. He was saved" so as by fire." And though a "righteous" man, and (when the truth of the awfulness of the time came) one who went out in testimony to others about it, what was his testimony worth? What effect had it on his own household? "He seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." Such was the little effect produced by the testimony of a "righteous man" who was not separated from the principles and walk and ways of the world, and we have not far to go to find a testimony which produces a similar effect - a "righteous soul vexed from day to day" - and his testimony ineffectual because unsupported by God's power. The Lord give to us now to face this matter calmly, and since it is for God, boldly. I may be a Christian, but do I love the world? It is the "young men" 1:e., those who have advanced in the divine life and who are no longer babes, that are warned against the world, because Satan is using it against them. The love of the Father is contrasted with the love of the world. Don't say it is impossible for those who are "of God" and real to love it. "Demas hath forsaken me," said Paul, "having loved this present world." Was there no danger of it in those whom John addressed? Was Lot not real and were not John's "young men" real? We are all "unprofitable servants" no doubt, but what hinders its in our testimony today if it is not the world? May the Lord give us, with Him and in prayer for light, to face this grave defect for His name's sake. Amen. H C. A.

S. The Man of the Old Testament and the Man of the New

The Man of the Old Testament and the Man of the New The early history of God's people only goes so far as the refusal of the man' that was there - the first man. Abraham was called out from that man, and from his place; and so onward in all the history of the Old Testament we always get as far as this, that man as he is, and the place in which he is, will not do for God. In the New Testament we are on another line. We have from the outset the Man that will do for God, and in whom He has found "all His delight." We have also the place to which in resurrection He has already reached; that is, we have the Man and His place, and they both suit God. As you are walking in the good of the Old Testament testimony you will be led into the New. People want to jump over the Old Testament testimony and to get into the New, and they never will. I think Hebrews 11:1-40 brings before us men that were true to their light, and I think that they put to shame many a so-called Christian today.

H. C. Anstey.

S. The Manna.

The Manna. The provision for this, another day in the wilderness.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 18, 1891, p. 19. The blessed Lord was ever God's delight, perfect in all His ways as Man down here. The manna, "the bread that came down from heaven," always doing the business of the Father - ever pleasing God and doing His will - such was His path in the midst of all that characterizes man naturally; namely, the pleasing of ourselves. And we Christians have to "gather up" the manna. God has given it to us as our supply for the wilderness - Himself in His perfect path and service. God has given us that blessed, humbled One as Man down here. There is Christ for us all. Every morning there the manna lay in the wilderness, round about the camp of God's people, "a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It is not doctrine, but Christ; a plentiful supply for all, and for strength in wilderness need. It might be trampled upon, but they had to "gather it up"; and so have we, and this needs diligence and earnestness, and a refusal of "myself," and my "things." (Php 2:21.) Do you want God to see in your life and actions anything different from what He saw in Christ? "Ah! no," you say; "but I have the flesh in me, and He had not." And it is just because you are not perfect that God has given you Christ, the perfect One, for every detail of your path. You must gather up the manna, "every man according to his eating." You and I want Christ for every occasion, because the flesh (Galatians 2:17) is always desirous to obtrude itself. The flesh does not assert itself in us all in a similar way, or come out with the same provocation. No, every Christian requires the manna, and must gather it up "according to his eating." Christ "gathered" meets the need of every occasion. That blessed walk of thirty-three years on this earth for God! Did not God delight in it? He did, He does still; for the pot of manna was "laid up before the Lord, to be kept." God will never forget it. Do I want to please God? I must keep it ever before me. I must gather it up daily, and I must feed upon it whenever I hunger (the hunger is the need of the wilderness). Would not God have Christ, in all His separation from the course of this world, in all that lonely path of obedience and REST, reproduced in every one of us? Is not a Christian GOD'S workmanship, an "epistle of Christ," "known and read of all men"? How much of this very day have I been occupied in gathering up my soul's food - in gathering up the manna? "Oh for more knowledge myself of what the manna is!" Surely every believer will say "Amen" to this - more gathering of it - more feeding upon it. After another night's sleep in the wilderness what was the first thing that greeted an Israelite going out of his tent door? It was God's provision for him for that day. Christ for me for this day, and Christ for God. Nothing else fully satisfies Him.

"Nothing but Christ, as on we tread."

"I am among you as he that serveth." "I receive not honour from men." True honour comes from God only. (John 5:41; John 5:44.) If I know something of gathering up the manna, Christ's friends (mark it well) will be my friends. His path will be mine, His joy mine, His interests mine. The meekness and gentleness of Christ I shall know, if only a little, a something about it. And the world

- this poor world, with all its pomp, and pride, and empty VANITY - will be to me "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." He is real and she is real, amidst all its unreality, whose eye is on CHRIST, and who is seeking, through grace (for all is of grace) to walk here daily "as He walked." H. C. A.

S. The Occupation of the Soul.

The Occupation of the Soul.

Christian Friend vol. 18, 1891, p. 41.

H. C. Anstey.

"Manoah and his wife LOOKED ON." - Judges 13:20.

Christ is the grand subject of the Bible. He is the object of God, in type and shadow, in the Old Testament, but in real substance in the New. Hence, when on earth, He said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of ME." There is blessed food for the soul in reading the Old Testament in this light. Christ is the key which unlocks the treasure to us. The burnt-offering - Christ in all His blessed perfection - wholly burnt - a sweet savour to God (Leviticus 1:1-17) - is before us in this offering of Manoah and his wife. The burnt-offering was all for God, none of it could be eaten by man; but along with it we find God provided a meat-offering (Judges 13:19, Judges 13:23), and of this the priest might eat.

Christ, as the food of God, is presented to us in the burnt-offering. What did Manoah and his wife see? They saw it was all for God. God has found infinite satisfaction and delight in the work of the cross. It all went up a savour of infinite sweetness to God. But God has called us in to share in our measure in this His own delight in Christ and His work. There is a meat-offering. He has given to the believer that same blessed Christ to be the continual food of his soul. Christ is the fatted calf of Luke 15:1-32. God says, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." Who are the "us" here invited to "eat, and be merry"? It is the Father and the returned prodigal son. God says, "I have found my delight in Him, and now do you come and find your delight in Him too." Thus by His own request I feed upon what the Father feeds upon. Do not be for ever occupied with, and complaining of, your leanness; we must all admit it, and then it is time to have done with it. Can you fathom what that blessed Christ is to God - the burnt-offering? No, you cannot; but you can do what Manoah and his wife did. You can "look on" and see what God's estimate is. We want more of this habit. We want daily to say, "Well I know what Christ was to God in all the work of the cross;" and as I look on and am occupied with that, I am feeding upon what delights the heart of the blessed God Himself. And note it is God's WISH for me to be thus occupied. It will be the theme of eternal occupation in heaven, and if so it is fitting that it should be my theme on earth. Thus we feed upon that which has eternally satisfied God. The fire is judgment. But what need of the judgment of God upon Him? Though Christ in all His absolute perfection is seen in the burnt-offering, the fire proclaims that He took the place of judgment. The sin and the sinner needed this, and the holiness of God demanded it. But then God has accepted that work. Yes, He finds His delight in it. It is done; and as we contemplate it we partake with God. We "look on" upon that wondrous scene, always fresh to God, and we see Christ, and the work He accomplished, all going up and accepted by Him. We are called in to share with God in all the blessing of it, to feed, and if I am not there I am not in communion with God's thoughts of His blessed Son.

"God, thine everlasting portion, Feeds thee with the mighty's meat;

Price of Egypt's hard extortion, Egypt's food no snore to eat."

God delights to draw our attention to His own delight in Christ. May our hearts find their true rest there. It is not what I am or can be, it is what Christ was and is. May it be now the food of our souls, as it will be throughout eternity. H. C. A.

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Truth, and the application of truth, are two very different things. It is one thing to speak of the peculiar glories of the Church, and quite another thing to be practically influenced by those glories. C. H. Mackintosh.

S. The Secret of Power

The Secret of Power.

What is now, and what has always been, the secret of spiritual power in any? This is a question of grave importance for us; but the answer is one we as Christians ought to know something at least about. Such a question is seriously necessary to be both asked and answered today; and little able as we may be to reply to it fully, our lack may help us to seek the divine answer. One thing at least is clear, that where power has been known, either individual or collective, two things (among others perhaps) have been realized by the saints who have known it. First, God's own immediate presence with His people; and secondly, man's (1:e. their own) utter impotency.

It is to be regretted that with certain Christians there should be such an appearance of satisfaction in speaking of that power which they knew in early years long past, and which they gravely tell us has now passed away. They are fain to cry out with Job, "Oh that it were with me as in months past, as in the day when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle." (Job 29:2-4.) All this is sorrowful, inasmuch as it neither helps themselves nor any who hear them. Very different is such a state of soul from that of Paul, who says, "But one thing . . . forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13-14.) Very different too was this experience of Job from that of the wise man in an earlier day than that of Paul, who declares that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18.) And surely this is as it should be. Nearing the object of desire, the way becomes brighter and brighter. Brightened as the past may have been by His presence, I am nearer to Him now; how can I therefore regret and long for those days of shadow and darkness to come again through which in the past He led me? "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11-12), and we are journeying from the night of shadows (illumined notwithstanding by His love) to the day of His manifested glory; and if glimpses of His power and presence have cheered us here, what will it be to abide with Him? But as to power, I turn now to a passage in the Old Testament to see how in the past His presence was manifested, the power of which wrought in a twofold way; and then I desire to note for myself this twofold effect: first, on His own people; and secondly, on all that raised opposition thereto. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was His sanctuary, and Israel His dominion. (Consequence.) The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? (Answer.) Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters." (Psalms 114:1-7.)

What a picture we have here drawn by the Spirit for our contemplation! As the morning light dawns on Rameses we see, not a well-disciplined army with ability to meet its enemies, but six hundred

thousand footmen going forth apparently without resources, and encumbered with the care of wives and little ones. May we not say, What a powerless, defenceless, and easy prey they are to the wandering hordes of the desert? But no, beloved reader; a blood-bought people, and powerless in themselves truly, is going forth; but not alone. At that time "Judah was His sanctuary, and Israel His dominion." Jehovah was in the midst of His people, and what was the result? "The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." Now nothing in nature is more restless than the sea. (Isaiah 57:20, etc.), and nothing in nature so apparently immovable and unbending as the mountain (Psalms 46:2-3; Matthew 17:20); but both confess to a power sovereign and supreme; both bow to its presence, and own it. Nature's might must flee and tremble in His presence; and this is man, who hath power as lord over all His creation - man in his restlessness, man in his pride! And while they marched on in obedience and dependence on it (the power of His presence with them), all was well. It scattered all the opposers; it prepared for them fountains in the desert. But they must remember that He is with them; they must not be inconsistent therewith. Truly He is for them, and against all who are against them; as He says, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee" (Numbers 24:1-25); but He cannot overlook inconsistency in any of His people with the fact that He is there. If they practically ignore Him, it is but that independent restlessness and pride of man which ever opposes Him; and if it work in them, then because they are His people He must deal with it. So again and again He had to remind them of Himself, there in their midst, as they murmur and wander forty years in the wilderness to humble them. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3.) If they desire to have Hobab for eyes (Numbers 10:31-33), He (the ark) immediately goes before them to find out their resting-places. If they faint, feeling but as grasshoppers before the giants of Anak, and the "cities great and walled up to heaven," they faint because they have left the Lord out. But Caleb, the man of faith, cannot do this. He brings Him before the rebellious company, saying, "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land." Yet the people must bear their iniquities for this their unbelief forty years, "each day for a year," from twenty years old and upward; "in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there shall they die." (Numbers 14:1-45)

"Our God is a consuming fire," and His saints must not forget it; they must own it first, before (going out in power) it makes itself felt for them. I see this everywhere among the saints who have gone before us in the path of faith. Thus it wrought in Jacob's case. While he was in servitude in Padan-Aram, and oppressed by Laban (Genesis 31:38-41), far away from the place of testimony, God does not interfere on Jacob's behalf; but when (himself in obedience, and a crippled man) he is again on the way, though weaker than before as to outward appearance, yet it is then, as he journeyed, that the Spirit writes of him: "The terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them;" and they did not pursue after Jacob. (Genesis 35:5.) Ah! in that being crippled lies the secret. He has learnt that he is in the way with God - it regulated him - and then God makes the power of His presence to be felt on those who would hinder His poor servant. It is the same today. And Paul learnt it in his path down here. "Most gladly," says he, "therefore will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may tabernacle (lit. have its dwelling-place) on me." (2 Corinthians 12:9.) And thus, too, it bowed Job in its presence before it dealt with his three friends, and before it blessed his own family. (Job 42:5, 6.) Similar also was its effect upon the prophets Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5) and Elijah. (1 Kings 19:11-13.) That power which can if it please "rend the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord," makes itself known to Elijah, and to His saints, in a still small voice: "And it was so, that when Elijah heard it he wrapped his face in his

mantle." Blessed Master, and blessed servant, may we now more diligently listen to catch Thy voice!

What have we left, beloved reader, as our resource today? The most blessed revelation that we can have here on earth: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20.) HE IS THERE. (Not He will come there perhaps before our meeting closes; He nowhere says that); He is there when we come. Does the fact of His presence regulate us who are gathered? Does it banish for ever all that restlessness and pride of nature which we all more or less possess, so that His people may unhindered go up to Him? Do restlessness, natural ability, and the pride of man, ever exalting itself, flee and tremble in His presence? In short, do we really desire spiritual power individually, and in the assembly? Then we must begin with ourselves. Can I expect to know it myself, or to see its action on others (1 Corinthians 14:24-25), if it have no power over me then present? Nature, and the carnal mind, can find no quarter in any soul who truly realizes the LORD'S presence, whatever others may allow. But He is there, even if I do not realize it individually. May it lead us to judge and refuse that in us which we know HE cannot own.

One question more. If I go on, forgetful of what is due to His presence, must He not deal with me, and will He not do so sooner or later, in order to maintain what is due to Him, and to separate me from evil? (1 Corinthians 11:30-32.) H. C. Anstey.

S. The Servant of God in a Day of Failure.

The Servant of God in a Day of Failure. His Devotion, Separation, Imitation, and Preservation.

Thoughts on 2 Timothy.

These four come before us very distinctly in this epistle, and hence our understanding and accepting them are most helpful to us as the Lord's servants. This understanding will prevent disappointment. The most important thing in any service is the furnishing and fitting of the servant. This is treated of from 2 Timothy 1:18, 2 Timothy 2:1-19. The servant must be first formed for his service, and in this section the paramount requirement, the sine qua non, is before us. He is to be devoted - devotion is to characterise him.

Devotion is here manifested in three ways, and these will come out more or less in every believer today who is like-minded with Timothy; for though we are not Timothys, no one will deny that we ought to possess and manifest, in these perhaps darker days, that which characterized the true servant at the close of the apostolic days. The ways in which devotion manifests itself in the servant are:

1. Antagonism to the ruler of this present scene, and seeking to deliver poor blinded souls who accept his sway; that is, he is a soldier.
2. Contending as an athlete to win the prize; 1:e., he is a racer.
3. Being wholly occupied with hard work - labouring, and not eating of the fruits; 1:e., he is a husbandman.

Each of these three exhibits devotion, and each of them requires it. In the first, he is not only to be in antagonism to the enemy, but he is not to be entangled with things here. He thus is held ready to present himself at any point, and at any moment at which an enemy may appear. In the second he is striving as an athlete, and has entered the lists with two things before him. One is that he shall strive. according to the rules of the games, or lawfully; the other is that he may be crowned at their termination, and not merely come in on a level with others. Those who strive lawfully will be crowned. In the third, to labour and not to rest is his work now. The reaping time is to come, when he shall partake of the fruits. He has devoted himself to soldier work, to racing, and to a life of ceaseless toil in the field, with many, many obstacles to each. He is just content to have it so. All is divinely settled.

After devotion to our work, which is (in all of us) an individual matter, comes the responsibility of a servant in the midst of servants, that is, his attitude in the house. This is Separation. One finds himself in the midst of many vessels in the house, "some to honour, and some to dishonour"; for these vessels form the state of things in which our lot is cast. Separation is the second mark of the faithful servant here. It is before us from 2 Timothy 2:19-26, 2 Timothy 3:1-7. He finds himself a poor solitary vessel in the house, but one only desiring to be there "fit for the Master's use." In order to this desirable result he must purge himself from the "vessels to dishonour." Only such

purged vessels are agreeable to Him. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' Two reasons are before us which demand that the servant shall act in separation. One is obedience to the word, the other is to keep a clear conscience. Devotion calls for separation. This is not isolation. No. Having acted thus, he does not find himself alone. He finds that others have acted similarly, and he is directed not to walk in isolation, but to walk with them. "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Now comes in 2 Timothy 3:8-13 our third point, Imitation. What is right Satan always imitates with one desire - to spoil it. In one way, to find that such a thing as an Imitation exists, is a cheer to a true servant, because it proves that there is a right and real thing somewhere. Jannes and Jambres imitated what Moses had done. The action of the Lord's servant was wrought by the power of God. The imitation is by power also, but it is the power of the enemy. Six verses give this to us - from eight to thirteen. Now I think it is a great help when things happen in this way that you know all about them before they come. You really expect them, and you are furnished by this scripture with directions for your own conduct in the midst of them. These directions are twofold: we continue in the doctrine learnt from Paul, and also cleave very closely to the Holy Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:14-17) We are struck by the simplicity of this provision. In it lies the antidote, when the poison of Imitation is abroad. It is God's grand preservative for every servant of His today. But there is an addition to it which is most important also. It is found in chapter 2 Timothy 4:1-5, viz., active employment in what is good. The servant is not only preserved himself by what we have already quoted, he is also active in the work of the Master. He must "preach the word" and "do the work of an evangelist." We have thus his internal and his external, and both are necessary, in the midst of a scene such as we are in today, wherein are found professors of the truth, imitators of it, and open enemies to it. The one who is thus serving in simplicity and devotion does not imitate others; and though fully conscious that imitation exists, he is too busily engaged to be occupied with it. He who would help others must keep right himself, and the time is too short for us to stop (save by example and precept) to straighten the crooked. We seek to make straight paths for our feet, and simple obedience finds that these are then "ready-made."

Lastly, we come to our fourth point, Preservation. It must be admitted - however dark the scene in the world, and whatever the confusion of the church - that GOD is calmly having His own way in what goes on. There is no contradiction in God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Both are fully admitted; but it is a cheer to the heart to look calmly to His side of things. Whether in the world, in the assembly, or in the individual servant, we can trace His handiwork. This comes out fully in the concluding part of this epistle. The Roman Emperor, the assembly of God, His servant Paul, are all here under review, and all work for the "preservation" of His poor imprisoned servant. Through all, come what may, Paul will be preserved, and so will Timothy, and so will all who are likeminded. Even a cruel death may come, but that does not touch the preservation of the faithful servant. This section is in 2 Timothy 4:6-18. The Lord will both deliver and preserve all His servants who tread this path "unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Thank God for the cheer of this!

Many a so-called Christian path today presents far more attractions than those which this Second Epistle to Timothy offers. The true servant in Paul's line is not caught by such. Devotion, Separation, and Preservation form the only safe path for us, because of the peculiarity of the day

in which we live. No greater attraction to serve the Lord could possibly be presented to faith than the assurance of God's preservation, and this we have before us in this epistle, though perhaps it is only the servant who is walking in faith that will see, or will accept it. May the Lord graciously turn many of His servants into the present enjoyment of the privileges of such a path, and keep in it all who are there for His name's sake, for the individual blessing of each servant, and for the collective blessing of all His saints. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Signal.

The Signal.

"We shall be like Him." Christian friend, this is your signal. Note - there is no doubt about it - there is nothing left for you to do as to it. It is His purpose for all that are His. Does it not cheer the heart? "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him AS HE IS."

Blessed testimony to the love of his heart! But it is very real to our hearts. The heart that in any way grasps its meaning is not easily turned aside. Grace would have us keep straight on, because we clearly see His purpose for us. Waves may toss around me, and to the distraction of all that is human. But I see the signal. I am not HOPING to see it, and because I see it I go straight on. (See 1 Corinthians 15:58.)

Now supposing that no end of trial and difficulty should be your individual lot in this world. Or, suppose that the Church of God be ever and anon distracted by the will of man rising up within it, will all these alter the blessed words you have read? A through train has to take heed to many a warning signal on the road, but nothing alters the fact that it is a through train. It may have to go at times slower than at other times, and it may have to pass over many a dangerous "point"; but there is its own signal, "all clear," high above every other. And a Christian is like that train. The Holy Spirit is the power. The Holy Spirit is on earth to carry me through. (John 14:16-17.) I must remember that I have no power apart from Him. I am not the power, and the train is not the power, but I am using the power. A turn of the hand, and the power no longer moves the machinery; the train feels it, and slackens speed. Things are too much for me here without the ministry of the Spirit of God. I must remember this; we all must remember it, that we are responsible. And what is this great responsibility? It is not to sever the connection of the power with the machinery.

I see the signal, and I have the power. What a wonderful thing it is for a poor thing like I am to say this. Yet it is true. "We shall be like Him," is the one; and "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," is the other. "Therefore we are always confident." Blessed confidence of FAITH! I am going to enter into the glory where Christ is as man - to see Him there, and to be like Him.

It must have a formative effect upon us if we believe it. God grant that it may upon us all, for I see that every Christian is started by God as a through train. The effort of Satan, who uses his signals all along the road, is to stop that train, or to turn it on to some side line, But let us remember that this very day the line is clear, the machinery is divinely fitted for the road, the power is effective; and let us keep our eyes upon the signal, and then never shut off the steam (Ephesians 4:30), for thus only can we make true progress. H. C. Anstey. The truth of risen life in Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost are distinct; but, now that both are fulfilled, the divine order is the knowledge of the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Ghost, and thus the two are inseparable.

S. The Spirit of God and the Theories of the Mind.

The Spirit of God and the Theories of the Mind.

There is a very common but a very great and subtle evil found among us, and it may exist in those of whose Christianity there is not the least doubt, and whose whole faith and hope are in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is this, the human mind in those who have gone on long in the ways of the Lord, as well as in the one who has only lately been converted, is quite capable of boldly entering upon, and of even seeking to expound, divine things. It is written, "The flesh profiteth nothing." It is the Spirit of God alone that can teach; for I am as a Christian brought into that new sphere where He is all. "They that worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The display of anything else is the display of the mind of man; for the Spirit cannot, and does not, go beyond what is written. I must remember two things if I desire to be led on into further truth. One is, that there must be seen in me the present faithfulness according to the truth that God has already unfolded to me. Without this there can be nothing further communicated to me, nor any advance. If I assume to see something beyond others when I am unfaithful to what is already their known portion as well as my own, it is only a delusion of the flesh seeking by these, or by any means, to exalt itself.

How often the mind (even in those who desire to curb it) is found to wander off and form theories as to the things of God. The Word is then turned to to find scriptural support for these things which, proceeding from the old man, should have been at once rejected. The second thing, if I desire to advance in the truth, is one which I must carefully guard. It is that no power of my mind, no amount of reasoning, can instruct me in the most simple of divine things. These the Holy Spirit alone can explain and teach me, if there is in me the first thing found; namely, that I am acting in faithfulness on all that He has already brought before me.

How can I discern what is of the mind merely, and what is of the Spirit? The working of the human mind in me as a Christian is seen when I get hold of any theory, and then turn to the word of God to try to establish myself in it. It is the reverse way exactly to this when God is teaching me. Then the Word comes first, not the theory. The theory may be presented in a very subtle manner to me (indeed this is generally the case). It is called a "beautiful thought," for example, by some unestablished one, and we forget its origin. All this is to blind us, as well as to puff us up. Then the fruit comes. Blinded ourselves, we set to work to teach and enlighten others upon the subject, and thence we trace all the sects and systems of men. Here they all originated. I must come to the word of God to learn what is there, not to add anything by some greater clearness of vision which I have than those had who were used of God to write it. That holy men of God have spoken and written the Word, and used better words than human, even words which "the Holy Ghost teacheth," ought to rebuke the vain assumption that theories or words of mine can have place here. The Spirit is leading me, I judge, when in simplicity and dependence I read and meditate on the word of God, and see what is unfolded to me therein, and thus I am led forward; but the Word comes first, not the theory. When this is so I have not to frame a theory. All who are in subjection

to the Word (and to the Spirit, the teacher) are satisfied with it, and the theory is unnecessary. If the word of God is not enough, the "theory" forms a sect. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Stable and the Unstable.

The Stable and the Unstable.

Instability marks everything that is of man, and stability is found only in what is of God. It is a mercy that this is so. Instability is connected with SIN, and hence all this world's present moral system must go and must give place to what is enduring. God remains the same, and the Christian is connected (not with the present shaking and ready to vanish away system, which takes its rise from sin, but he is connected) with GOD. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

I do not know any portion of the word of God which treats more clearly of "stability" and of "instability" than the epistle to the Hebrews. The two are put again and again in this epistle in the most vivid contrast the one to the other. Thus in chapter 1 we read, with reference to all that first creation which sin was allowed to taint, "They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." The whole argument of the epistle (and indeed one may say that it is a marked characteristic of Christianity) is that the believer belongs to, and is only interested in, the stable things. That which was of God had not come fully out until Christ was here, but His presence on earth tested what was in man, and it also brought out into prominence what was in God; that is, the "stable" and the "unstable" things stand now fully revealed. In this epistle the believer has done with sin and sins because Christ has. This is no question of attainment, it is simply Christian truth. Christ has done also once and for ever with the system introduced by, and on account of, sin. The world has gone on without law, under law, and, when Christ was here, under grace, and in each has been proved incapable of producing anything for God. Then comes the cross, and everything unstable must go, to make room for all that which "cannot be shaken." Now God has come down to establish eternal stability, founded upon the work of Christ. The Holy Ghost is here. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These latter are all stable things, which will stand when all here goes, so that in the joy of them "we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:1-29)

It is a great mercy that the believer should be now connected by God with all that on which his soul can rest. REST is the great problem put before man to attain, and God has worked that problem out, for only He could do it. God does not overburden the believer with things here, because there is unrest in them. Things here have their place, but if withheld they are not good enough for the child of God, because they are all passing away. Hence in very many cases the believer finds himself as to earthly things lacking, and suffering need. It is God's wisdom for him, and happy is he who so sees it.

Whatever may change, God's purposes and counsel are stable. Everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth has been from the beginning (and is now) contributing to the display of these purposes; that is, to the setting up of eternal things. Two things are before a Christian. One

is, A whole creation in ruin, and God coming in to recover. The other is, Purpose and counsel. To me the latter is the greater.

I think we must admit that the angels, in their connection with man, came in after the ruin of man was there. I have already remarked that all that came in through sin belongs to what I may call the "unstable" things. Hence the ministry of angels, as between God and man, must pass away. The fall of man, which separated him from God, introduced this ministry - a temporal, not an eternal state of things, because purpose and counsel are for eternity, and were long before all this that sin introduced. To these we have to look in faith now. Angels were never the objects of purpose and counsel. But man was. (Ephesians 1:4; Ephesians 1:11.) "Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world." "Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." As a system of service under God - with man as its object - the angelic race gives place to God Himself, whose counsel and purpose are to find His own delight in man without their intervention. I have no doubt of the ministry of angels going on now, but the saints have something greater than this, 1:e. they have communion with the Father and with the Son. This, I believe, is why angels are first brought before us in Hebrews 2:1-18, in order to show their setting aside as to man, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

However much the superiority of angels may be in a sentimental way (Colossians 2:18) insisted on; they are here set aside in order to bring man, according to God's purpose and counsel, upon the scene. We are at the end of the days in Hebrews (" these last days"), and God is about to establish in permanent display the desires of His heart. We find that those desires are not concerning angels, but concerning men. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands." We are in this verse transported to the ages that rolled away before Adam's creation. It is similar to Genesis 1:1, which no doubt was true ages before the second verse could be said of the earth. The purpose of God respecting man is to find His pleasure in him; for if the foundations of the earth were laid, it was in view of man. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him; Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands." (Hebrews 2:1-18) Moreover, God's purpose and counsel are to have man in nearness to and happiness with Himself. I think this is clearly indicated in such a passage as Genesis 2:19, where (before sin came in) God and man are in free and happy intercourse respecting the names of the animals. It is an accomplished fact when we turn to Revelation 21:3-4 : "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Purpose and counsel include more than is here revealed as to God finding His pleasure in the race of Adam, and refer to the Son. Truly every word of God is pure, and the redeemed are to know God Himself dwelling with them, as the passage states; but when it is a question of "THE SON" there is more." There is to be the Bride taken from Adam's race, and displayed in union with Christ in heavenly glory. What have the angels to say to this? I believe they herald it, and desire to look into it. They echoed the delight of God in the first creation. "When I laid the foundations of the earth all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38:1-41) So when the dawn of the accomplishment of God's purpose and counsel drew nigh, the angels were there to introduce it. "On earth peace, good pleasure in men." (Luke 2:1-52) The Son had come, in whom the Adam

race was to be blessed in communion with God, and by whom all these purposes and counsels were to be accomplished. Having heralded this fact they must retire. God founds the establishment of all, not on their ministry, but on Christ's death; and in the glory to which He ascended from the grave He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost who was sent down to the earth to carry on this work, from Him, who is the Head and Source of all. (Ephesians 4:8-13.)

I turn for a moment to purpose and counsel. In Proverbs 8:1-36 the Lord speaks as Wisdom. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." We are carried back beyond creation into that far-away eternity to learn that HE who speaks in Proverbs 8:1-36 was then daily GOD'S DELIGHT. Who is He? When we come to creation and the formation of man on the earth, He is there as one in counsel. "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:1-31.) "Without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1-51.) "All things were created by Him, and for Him." (Colossians 1:1-29.) Then further in Proverbs 8:1-36, Wisdom says, "My delights were with the sons of men." Evidently men were there before they were the objects of His delight; that is, man was created and living on the earth, and with such are His delights. Who then is He? He is undoubtedly the One who brings into actuality all God's purposes and counsels respecting MAN. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." (Hebrews 10:1-39) He taketh not hold of angels, but on the seed of Abraham. Man is His object, and He has condescended to call Himself the "Son of Man." (John 1:51.) It is a wonderful story. He began the work of recovery for God in death; He carries it on now by His ever-living work on high, and by the presence of the Holy Spirit, sent down by Him to dwell in the saints on earth. It is a story of GRACE, "which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter 1:12.)

I think that it is of much importance for Christians to see that they are now in association with God without any intervention, and for them to be willing to let the Holy Spirit have His place and power; and to see that God Himself has drawn nigh to men, and is with them and they, with Him, on the ground of redemption, and that this is soon to be displayed in glory both in the heavenly company 1:e. union with Christ, and in the earthly company, 1:e., God's presence here in the eternal state. (Revelation 21:3-5.) But it is when we come to the first (union with Christ in glory) that we see how purpose and counsel place men above angels, and that these are the stable things with which even now the soul is connected. May we by grace enter into them, and we shall see the wisdom of such words as we find addressed to the saints in Colossians 2:18. People sentimentalize on angels, and a common idea is that some (especially children) become angels after their death, and Roman Catholics pray both to angels and to saints.

Turning away from angels, and from all that marked man as having to do with God on the ground of law, we come to the Son. Here we touch stability, and Christians are on this ground with God. Christ is put before us to be considered in two aspects, as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. As Apostle He is the Sent One, as High Priest He maintains our association with Himself in heavenly blessings, while we are wandering here and subject to infirmity. Moses represented Him as Apostle, Aaron as High Priest - though He is not of Aaron's order, thus maintaining His superiority to, not His succession from, Aaron. He is "after the order of Melchisedec." As Apostle, Moses was sent to lead them out, and to bring them in. (Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:10; Exodus 3:12.) He failed, but Christ does both, and in the meantime as High Priest

He has gone in to maintain us now in association with our true place of blessing, and in all the value of the blood, as God estimates it, until we are put into actual possession, by His coming again. (Hebrews 9:18-28; Hebrews 10:1-37.)

If, then, we are called to consider Him as Apostle, it is as sent to lead out and to bring in. Jews and Gentiles, through faith, are now being led by the Lord out of that system connected with law, which was once set up of God on the earth, into heavenly associations with Himself, and these are for eternity. I take it that before actually in them, "body, soul, and spirit" (as we shall be when He comes), faith is to get the benefit of them even now. In the house of God, firstly angels, then Moses and Joshua, are displaced to make room for the Son. In the house Moses was not a son, but a servant. Hence stability could not be connected with that order of things, because "the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever." All that system passes away to give place to Christ, and to those He brings into this new place. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." It is as having to do with "the Apostle of our profession" that faith drinks into the fulness of the heavenly blessing to which it has come. (See Hebrews 12:22-25) I have come to these things in the company of the Son. He unfolds them, and I am exhorted not to turn away from Him that speaketh now from heaven. All that is connected with the Son is for eternity, hence the immense value of Christianity, as compared with anything that God has ever before made known for the blessing of man. God has purposed it from the beginning, and on the mount of Transfiguration He declares it. Moses and the law disappear, to leave Christ, and man with Him, on the ground of grace alone. (Matthew 17:1-8.)

Faith is made much of in the epistle to the Hebrews, and its need for us is insisted on. Unbelief was the hindrance to the entering in under Moses, and of that the writer speaks in Hebrews 3:1-19. All was ready for them on God's part. So also is it now. "They could not enter in because of unbelief." We are exhorted also, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Then it was entrance upon a state which was only temporal, now it is for eternity. Then it was for earth, now it is for heaven. What hinders any of us entering on eternal things? Faith is lacking. Unbelief finds a home in our hearts. We cling to what is visible, but not ours (see Luke 16:11-12), and what we cannot retain, and we refuse what is "our own," and what will stand for ever, though we know that all here shall vanish away. God is going "yet once more" to shake everything, in order "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Failure was connected with all until the Son came. Angels ministered to man, but even angels He could charge with "folly." (Job 4:18.) Moses did not lead them "in," for he spake unadvisedly with his lips. Joshua did not give them "rest," for long after we read of "another day." (Psalms 95:1-11.) But now the Son is come, and entrance, stability, and rest, for eternity, are ours (I mean, are the portion of all believers) in association with Christ in heavenly blessing. But this portion - REST - is not only to be enjoyed in the individual soul for ever, God is also going to display it on earth. "There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God"; that is, it shall be displayed on earth in actuality. The sabbath is for the earth. (Genesis 2:3.) Meanwhile, we are led into it before its display, by Him who has gone in. Christ leads the willing soul now into what will only be fully known and enjoyed in heaven. It is an overflowing cup. How can Christ do this? He can do it, for He touches both God and man in being the "Brightness of glory," and the "Purger of sins." He is

the beginning and end of God's ways. He is greater than the angels, for He is the Son; greater than Moses, for He has power to lead in; greater than Joshua, for He ministers rest. GOD RESTS IN CHRIST, DISPLAYED AS MAN IN GLORY. This is the key to all. He has passed through the heavens up to the highest point, and we, as called to heaven, "consider Him" saluted "High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec." It is not with us as it was with the Old Testament prophets. When they had received a communication from God, and spoken it, they had to learn that the things of which they had spoken by the Holy Ghost were not for themselves. But with us we get the enjoyment of them first, and, individually, before we can speak of them. We can only learn our present portion in heaven from Him; that is, from the company of the heavenly Christ, who is in it. "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you," refers, I believe, to Christ's present portion there as Man. But we are also called by the Spirit to consider Him as "the High Priest of our profession." We are thus regarded as a people subject to infirmities while on the earth and yet belonging to heaven. In this He is no successor to Aaron; He is superior. Those priests were not allowed to continue "by reason of death." He was saluted of God, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." He has gone into that new scene, "in the power of an endless life," and gone in "for us." There is nothing unstable there. His work is done for God and for us; He hath appeared once "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." His priesthood is unailing. He "hath an unchangeable priesthood." He liveth for evermore to maintain the saints, though in all their "infirmities," in the full value of His own work before God. His perfection as our Priest is the point (not our imperfections to need Him) until we are with Him in His own scene and circumstances.

It is as a believer that, when I am considering Him as "the Apostle and High Priest" of my profession, I am affected by Him. Hence the value of being thus occupied, for it is with what is stable. A work is then going on within, and things which cannot be shaken are assuming a tangible form (so to say) in the soul. Eternal things are becoming more and more its enjoyed portion. In these we can rest. This is what I understand the apostle refers to when he says, "Let us go on unto perfection." The soul cannot rest short of what is perfect. In Christ I have it, for all is perfect that He touches. He has touched me, the believer can say, and by that touch "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In the meantime there is a word to us, for daily faith is necessary in us, and it is this, "Today if YE will hear His voice, [He speaks now from heaven] harden not YOUR hearts." The Spirit of God has brought before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews angels, Moses, and Joshua, and has shown the Lord as superseding them all. He then brings the Lord before us as superseding Aaron in a new order. He is "High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." The exercise of His priestly office, as we learn in what follows, has in view two objects. First, it is exercised on account of my infirmities. Second, it is that I may receive from a new scene apart from the question of my infirmities altogether. The first is temporal. This last will go on when I have no infirmities. Infirmities being connected with my time state, therefore it is as passing through the wilderness that I need the support. But there is the ministry of Christ as to heavenly things, which is apart from wilderness circumstances entirely, and it is this which will continue toward us for ever. Herein is stability. Thank God that even now this ministry goes on, as we see here in the reference to Melchizedek's blessing and supply, to which the apostle is drawing the attention of the Hebrew brethren. As to its permanence, the language used is precise. It is all in view of Christ, and we have reference made therefore to the "immutability of His counsel." He who is also the subject of the Spirit's testimony here is "Priest for ever." He "abideth continually." "He hath an unchangeable [intransmissible] priesthood." He is "a great Priest." He has "sat down in perpetuity,"

and by His "one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

These Hebrew Christians needed to be better instructed in the two aspects of our Lord's present ministry to us; for as in all the value of the Lord's victory over "him that had the power of death" I am looked at as in the wilderness (Exodus 15:1-27), where I am subject to infirmity (infirmity is not sin), and where the Lord is sufficient for me, whatever be the exigencies of the path. It is as in all the value of Christ's death that we sing, "He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." That is, I am in the consciousness of Christ's victory. I am over the Red Sea, and therefore in the wilderness. But then there is my own moral victory over the world. Not only the physical, but it is Abraham's own moral victory that we have before us in Genesis 14:1-24 - the Melchizedek type. And consequent upon that there is the ministry of strength and joy, bread and wine; full blessing from Christ, the true Melchizedek, and from His own side of things.

Christ then ministers in two ways. 1st. He is the One who meets me in all my infirmities here. 2nd. He is the One who ministers strength and joy from His own scene. In the one case He supports me in my circumstances, in the other He takes me into His. The world comes before all who are Christians in two forms - in its gross aspect, and in its refined aspect. Egypt, with all its idols, with its magicians, its soothsayers, and its slavery, gives me the one; and Sodom, with its honours, its ease, and its luxury, gives me the other. Both have to be refused. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? When Abraham met Melchizedek he had for many a day refused both Egypt and Sodom. But the latter had only recently again made its appeal to him. He met the king of Sodom before he met Melchizedek, and what was the result? "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." The language of faith is, "I want nothing from you, and I will receive nothing here except from God." (John 5:41.) Now Lot had given up Egypt, as Abraham had. (Genesis 13:1.) Lot never gave up Sodom.

I consider that our portion in heaven - as united to Christ - and our interest in eternal things, is not ministered to the soul, but in the measure in which by grace we give up the world; that is, the rejection of the one and the reception of the other go on at the same time. This moral system, the world, is the great hindrance both to the communication and to the reception of all that side of the truth. All the truth is contained in the Word, and the Holy Spirit is on earth for the blessing of all the saints alike, and to unfold to us these things, so as to make them the known and enjoyed portion of the soul. But the world is in possession, and by the individual soul in the power of the Spirit the battle must be fought, and fought out there - within. The enemy must be dispossessed and routed out there. In his heart, as a natural man, Abraham was just as fond of the honours and ease and luxury of Sodom as Lot. We are all alike in this, but it is fatal (if not judged) to the ministry of the Spirit, who would lead us into heavenly things. And this was the character of Sodom in her day. "Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49.) This world is a moral scene which has sprung up outside the garden of Eden. Its works are characterised by its heart. In the midst of such a scene God has a clean place for His people, where He can bless them. But to occupy it they must be with Him, according to the desire of His own heart (as a jealous God) to have them separate from it all, and for Himself alone. Do we not see the proof within us, and all

around us, that if we have judged the world in its gross form it is not enough? Many have judged it as Egypt who have not judged it as Sodom, hence the lack of an apprehension of their true place here, and of the new and heavenly order of blessing that Christ desires to minister to us. That which marked Abraham did not characterise Lot. I think that we shall find pilgrim character, communion with God as such, and heavenly supplies to all stand or fall together. Lot was no pilgrim and stranger on earth. No doubt that Lot sought the Lord amid all his anxieties, and the worry of his spirit in Sodom. His righteous soul we read was "vexed from day to day," and he would naturally turn to the Lord in that distress. And no doubt also that the Lord helped him, but that is not what I understand by heavenly supplies. I take it that heavenly supplies are independent of circumstances. Many may mistake the Lord's sustainment in distressing times for heavenly supplies, but I think they must be distinguished.

Looking abroad upon the world in its garb of outward morality, refinement, comfort, ease, and honour, we see it offering them all to the Christian. One is in danger of forgetting, as Lot did, that we are not looking upon "the garden of the Lord" in these things. Eden is gone, and my supplies now must come from heaven. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." It was a delusive look and a false appearance, from which, through grace, Abraham was kept, while Lot fell into the snare. "He chose." Abraham said, "I will not take anything that is thine."

There are some Christians who suppose that as they give up the world (the unstable thing) they will receive from God, in their souls, their proper heavenly portion, which I call the stable. They therefore long for more giving up of the world, and even their public prayers take this form. This looks well, but it is not the liberty of the Spirit as I see it. It tends rather to bondage. As to the order, it is exactly in the reverse way that the blessing comes. If I take Scripture, the order is that I first get the better, and then I gladly give up the good (so-called).

Every Christian has received a measure of certain and positive "better" from the Lord. If true to what I have received, I possess it in my soul and enjoy it, and I know, as an undeniable and established fact which needs no demonstration, that the world will, if it can, rob me of this. Now, then - for there is no other way to retain what I have - I GIVE UP THE WORLD - not only the sinful gross thing, palpably evil - but all that which I have called "Sodom," and which can be quite understood when we see that it is that which tends to make me an accepted and respected citizen down here. It is different with each saint, according to the different walks of life, but remember it is everything that has this tendency. The tendency is to make me contented with the present scene here. Those who go on any other line, and tell you that they are seeking to give up the world, are not in faith as to what they have already received, nor in the enjoyment of the Melchizedek blessing. They are not entering into the heavenly portion, but are outside it. One could not perhaps doubt their Christian profession, but you cannot give up the world save as in the present enjoyment of what is better, and you cannot enjoy what is heavenly while you are in the grasp of the earthly. No saint receives all his portion at one time from the Lord. He learns and receives daily. (Php 4:11.) But every reception - and we find it so as we go on - of fresh light from God entails a corresponding response in our every day life. They go together, and thus we continue to receive. We all learn "bit by bit," but it is clear that one can only do so as true to the principles already received. There was a very similar start with most of us. We made a bright and true start at

the beginning of our course. The world then to us had little worth. Avowedly, all the aspects of it were refused; but this theory (good in itself) was not practice. Time has passed on. How much of the soul's true portion is known in power now? for there is a power which daily keeps us right, and which first put the soul right as to this world. The apostle desired not only to begin but also to finish his course with joy," and at the close of it he wrote, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

Reader, you and I have entered upon our course, but we have not yet finished it. One way, and only one way, is open to us, and this faith will gladly take in order to end our course as he ended his - "with joy." The world AS SODOM must be given up - must be judged by the soul; and its opposite, namely, the path of the pilgrim and stranger here, will, I think, mark him who has taken, and is walking with God in such a path.

Paul had much to write as to Christ in the type of Melchizedek, but though the Hebrew saints had once given up the world, and he reminds them of it (see Hebrews 10:32-35), they are now not ready for this. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." What then is before us in this type? Blessing, undoubtedly, as overcomers.

We are not here regarded as the assembly, the body of Christ, or as children with the Father. The blessing before us is that of individual overcomers, and from Christ in that character. So far as I know, this epistle only names the church in Hebrews 2:1-18 and Hebrews 13:1-25, because it is not the subject. The Lord is before us as the mighty Overcomer. (See Hebrews 2:14; Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 12:2, etc.) He has reached the top, travelling along the road of faith, where WE walk now. Therefore not suffering, but reigning; not humiliation, but the throne is before us. Melchizedek was king of righteousness and king of peace. He came forth to meet Abram. In the figure, the king is Christ who has overcome (John 16:33), and who meets the saint when he is an overcomer, and blesses him with His own supply and from His own side of things, entirely independently of his circumstances down here.

Israel as a nation awaits this ministry of the Lord towards her, but the Church has it now, as I understand it. It is a present privilege, as I believe, for Christians to know, enter into, and receive these things while (as Abram was) we are on the faith-road, and in the wilderness, for as in this place the saint is regarded in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

I think that we can speak of stability - that is, of eternity and eternal things when they are in connection with God's purposes respecting Christ. We are not upon the ground of the trial of man now, or we should still be on the ground of instability. All that is over, and life and stability are before us. Life was introduced into this world by Him, and was seen in this world in Him. Beautiful shadows (indications of what was ever in God's purpose respecting Christ and HIS - the saints called "us" in Hebrews 11:40 and in 1 Peter 1:12) have appeared again and again while the first man was under probation, and have passed away. The second Man is before the eye of God for eternity, and that is the Man we have to be occupied with now; the substance has come, and we are no longer kept in a region of shadows. You can neither connect instability with the second Man, nor stability with the first. In Christ we get the key which admits to the understanding of all the shadows. I delight in those words, "The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father," because I believe that that time is now. The second Man and His race or generation are now before God. (Hebrews 2:10-13.)

All Christians are addressed in the passage, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," though the state of Hebrew saints first gave occasion to the words. All the saints are called to heaven and heavenly blessings in exact contrast therefore to the saints of past dispensations, whose blessings were earthly. The overcoming of the world in both its phases of foe and friend, the entrance now into the Holiest of all, the communion there - 1:e. the reception of heavenly things from the Lord - these are what I understand by heavenly things, and they are what the saint is called to now. In the midst of my "infirmities" down here I have Christ ever living as my Intercessor. I am here for God's will, as He was (Hebrews 10:7-39; Hebrews 11:1-40; Hebrews 12:1-29; Hebrews 13:1-21), and He will relieve me and support me in that path, having trodden it perfectly Himself. He is thus conscious of all that could possibly come to hinder me in it. As thus relieved of everything that could hinder, I am free to be led into the enjoyment of my own proper blessings. It is then that He leads me into the Holiest of all. Here I know communion; for, by the Spirit who dwells in us, we are where naught of the flesh can intrude, we are in the joy of the communion of the Father and of the Son. (1 John 1:3.) As seen on earth I am an overcomer of the world, both as Egypt and as Sodom, having, instead of all that the world can give its votaries, heavenly supplies. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This is a continuous victory, for the exhortation is, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

I think I see three results in the path of the believer, who has received and desires to continue in the present enjoyment of his, or her, true portion.

1st. He refuses to accept any place on earth, but the place the Lord had as a man here, the place He got based upon faithfulness to God.

2nd. Christ is on high as Intercessor on purpose to support him in this path, wherein he finds every opposing element.

3rd. Having thus freed him, He brings him into the Holiest of all, where he receives from Him both bread and wine, His own communications to him.

He is thus in communion with the mind of God by the Spirit which dwells in us, and as looked at on earth he overcomes the world. The idea connected with the Holiest of all is, I think, that everything there is in harmony with the mind of God - that is, there is nothing there that is discordant. God is Holy. Its atmosphere can be only heavenly, but it is to be known and entered into by the saints on earth. (Hebrews 10:19-22.)

I would say one word more about the world. It is as I am fed from above, from the new scene day by day, that the world loses its hold upon me. Its spirit, aims, interests, and future become of no interest to me, and if touched, or sought after, I become conscious of "weights." (Hebrews 12:1-2.) It may help to explain why there is not so much of the present conscious knowledge and enjoyment of the "Holiest of all" as there should be if we first ask, Have I accepted as my place and portion on earth, the path of the believer to which I have referred, namely, the place and portion which Jesus Christ had here as a Man? If not, though He intercedes for ALL His saints, I am not in the present consciousness of that intercession, and of support from Him. How then can I know the third, the communion and portion that He would have me know with Himself? Rather is my course that of the one whose "hands" are hanging down, and whose "knees" are feeble.

(Hebrews 12:12-13.)

Now may the Lord keep us living in the power of these stable things, so that, leaving all that is unreal and unstable here, we may be running on to heaven. May we accept God's will for us (Hebrews 13:21) as a sufficient soul occupation for us while we are down here; for this was what marked Christ, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." The first man has always been characterized by doing his own will. There is no stability and no blessing in doing my own will - sooner or later all that must come to an end in each of us. The will of man came to an end before God in the cross, because the whole question of sin and sins (the root and outcome of man's will) came out there, and was for ever settled. A new Man, life and stability, eternal life and communion with the Father and the Son, are before us now. Oh the blessed favour of God, which thus shines upon us, and in which He would have us every day to REST even while here on earth. But that joy will have no end - for we are of these stable things, and of the second Man. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:17) Well may the believer sing - "Praise ye the Lord, again, again, The Spirit strikes the chord, And faith takes up the happy strain, We praise, we praise the Lord."

Thus may we be found occupied with stable things till the Lord Jesus comes. Amen. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Truth

The Truth I. "The" Truth, not "A" Truth.

If the subject be examined we shall come to but one conclusion on it, namely, that truth is presented in the Word of God now as a whole. We read of "truth," of "the truth," and of "all truth," but we do not read, anywhere that I can find, of "a truth," as though many existed. If truth is in the mind of God one complete whole, then, however much anyone has learned of it, or however long through grace he has been walking in it, there is that for him yet to learn and yet to walk in, beyond anything that he has yet attained to. When we speak of "a truth" (and it is a common but, I think, wrong way of speaking, as though we had grasped a something independent in itself) the tendency is to puff us up. This is not the case when we view what we know as only a part of one great whole, which exists for us in the mind of God. To attempt to pass the little we know of as all, and to feel superior to others on account of it, is folly and assumption. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."

God, who dwells in us, must necessarily be beyond us; and in the truth, which he knows, no man knows all, so as to be independent of the whole, or of what the others have. God dwells in all believers alike by His Spirit, but the Spirit does not ignore the condition of soul of any believer, and no man can really go in present enjoyment beyond the truth which the Holy Spirit makes good to him in his own soul, nor say that in the truth which he knows, he knows all. In God he has the source of all, of course.

II. What is truth?

God is called "the God of truth," and also "the true God."

If I may be allowed to suggest a thought, it is this: There are two vast systems of things working actively all around us. The one is, in the smallest detail of it, founded upon "A LIE"; the other is, in all its parts, founded upon "THE TRUTH." The first took its rise in sin in the garden of Eden, where the first man is seen as its victim, with Satan as the seducing spirit - all this goes on today - and ends with "believing a lie," and the judgment of God. (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12.) The second takes its origin from God's thoughts and purposes regarding the second Man, with the Holy Spirit on earth now to effect those purposes in so far as they concern us, and to build up the whole system of "the truth," whether for heaven or earth, in connection with Him, who is both its Centre and its Head. (Colossians 1:16-18.) The result is seen in glory, and a new heaven and a new earth. The following passages indicate the two systems: "No lie is of the truth. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." "As the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." The truth, as I understand it, is all that system of things which God will have for the glory of Christ; the opposite of that which exists now, and which is based on Satan's lie.

III. What is the Relation of the Holy Spirit and the Truth?

We cannot, I think, separate the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, and the truth. The Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth," and "the Spirit is the truth." (1 John 5:6.) Whatever there is of truth in any of us, is of the Spirit; and whatever is of the Spirit in any of us, is the truth. The Spirit is the truth. He is the embodiment of that which is only made known to us in parts. In Him we have all. So the Lord says to the disciples, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come"; and John says, "Ye know all things." (1 John 2:20.)

IV. The Truth versus Assumption. The ship Allendale (Sunderland) ran aground in a fog. Judgment given respecting her in the Board of Trade enquiry was, that J. W., the master, "had not used the lead, but had shown too much confidence, having gone the voyage so often before." This was assumption. There is peculiar danger, lest in the ministry of the Word we assume (because the Lord ministers through us known truth) that we are abreast of Him in the truth thus ministered. It may be taken as the only safe sign of spiritual health, that we seek ourselves to be under the present power of the truth ministered through us. We must, so to speak, "use the lead," or take soundings. As we think of possessing a truth, we are in this very danger; as we think of "the truth" we are humbled. In old time the ministers sought the meaning as to themselves, of what "the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify." (1 Peter 1:11-12.) The principle herein was a right one. The servant of God now, in whose ministry there is power, will be found similarly exercised. There were teachers in our Lord's day, as also there are now. They occupied the place of authority, they sat "in Moses' seat." Many things (speaking thence) they bade the people to "observe and do," yet they themselves did them not! The Lord pronounces a solemn "woe" upon them in Matthew 23:1-39. But even the people detected the hollowness of it. Why? It lacked authority. There was not power with it. How different the Lord's ministry! "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." There was no assumption. He was what He ministered. "Altogether that which I also say to you." (See N.T., John 8:25.) May all those who minister the truth know more of the life of Him, the true Servant. H. C. Anstey.

S. The Windows of Heaven opened

The Windows of Heaven opened; or, "Prove me now herewith."

Malachi 3:10.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 6. The Christian lives by the day, for his tomorrow is the coming of the Lord. See Galatians 2:20 "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." I know that God is enough for me today, and if I should be left here for other days my experience in them will only be the same. And I am content that it should be thus with me: anything else tends to distraction, and this God does not want me to have. (1 Peter 5:7.)

Now, in Malachi 3:10, you are not asked to prove God for tomorrow. You do not know that you may have a tomorrow on earth. But you are asked to prove Him just for today, "Prove me Now herewith." And what is the result? Why there is such a wave of blessing from Him that "there is not room enough to receive it." And mark, it is blessing from God. How inclined we are to think at once of temporal wants to be supplied and of present relief as to them. But this scripture may be, and often is, fulfilled when there is no temporal change. The greatest of all God's blessings today is not found in temporal ease and relief, but in spiritual; or what means that wonderful passage, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ"? (Ephesians 1:1-23.) But this exhortation of Malachi 3:10 has no limit. And I think I can almost hear some burdened believer say, "Ah! is this so? Then I must take courage. If blessing is to be had thus cheaply and without limit then I may surely come." Yes, my friend, it is even so, you may come, and coming to Him thus you shall be filled. "He filleth the hungry with good things." The only requisite in your coming is, that you hunger.

Let us turn then for a moment to this Scripture, for though it is contained in the Old Testament, the same truth is fully unfolded also in the New, as we shall see. God was ever the God to meet His people's needs, and in this He stands alone and knows no change, and He (who giveth bread to all things) gives His people "bread from heaven."

Whatever you need at this moment God is sufficient for. I would press upon you to lose no time to avail yourself of this wondrous fact. God has the power, and He also has the will, to fill your soul to overflowing. But do you ask, "How am I to begin?" Then begin thus: Give to God what He claims from you. Never mind others, or their thoughts. Everything you possess belongs to God, and you are only a steward. But while many readily own this in a general way, it is not all that we have to consider. God has a particular claim also beyond this. He claims a place in your every-day calculations - and not any place, nor a second place, but the first place. That is what we have here. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house." It is no particular quantity of your time, intellect, or money. You may give Him a large portion of these in a legal spirit, thinking you may then use the rest for yourself, and yet be far, far away from the blessing. No, it is not this. To give God His place is more to Him than giving Him any portion. The

tithes are His. Abraham gave these to Melchizedek. God claims them as His right. The meaning is, that God must have the first place. Not your wants, nor the wants or interests of your family, but first God Himself in everything. We read, "Abraham gave Him tithes [not of some, but] or ALL." These then are the terms. Place is greater than portion. God will not accept a second place at your hands, and to offer Him one as Israel did is only to rob Him. Think of this. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings."

Give God His place. I delight to think that these are the only terms of the blessing, because they are so simple that the most ignorant one cannot fail to understand them. And then such is His heart (with whom you have to do) that He will "open the windows of heaven, and pour you out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." And notice that He says, "Prove me now" - it is not tomorrow, it is now - it is today. God always deals with the present. "Today," "now" - these are words with which He seeks to draw souls to Himself, and are not you one of them? for I address believers. You have come to Him; but Peter says, "To whom coming." (1 Peter 2:4.) Have you any lack today? - a care, an anxiety, a want - only one? Come to Him, then; give Him His place. Think of Him first, and not of the matter in hand, and you shall prove His faithfulness to His word.

I turn now to one or two passages of the New Testament, in order to trace there the same teaching as we have in Malachi. In doing so I ask, Why is it that there are not more souls - Christians - living day by day in the joy of their heavenly portion? I leave the heart of each reader to answer the question.

How often things not wrong in themselves come in and God gets a second place in our calculations. But in Luke 14:1-35 I read, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." These are solemn words, and may God send them home with divine authority into our souls. Could He speak to us of anything nearer or dearer on earth than these? Will you put them, are you putting them, in His place? Are you putting them before God? If so, my reader, is it a matter of wonder with you why it is that you know so little of these "windows of heaven" being opened upon you? "Will a man rob God?" Will he do it with impunity? Alas! no. We know that "God is not mocked," and we had read it; "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7.)

I turn to one passage more. "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." (Acts 24:16.) You notice God is put first. I must seek first to be right with Him. I then trace the life of the blessed servant of God, and I may listen to his experience of what God did for him as a man walking down here - how the "windows of heaven" were opened upon him. Listen to him before the tribunal of the king. Would he change places with Agrippa that day? Ah! no. What does he say? "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am." He knew the "windows of heaven" were opened upon him, and so great was the blessing, that there was even enough for all who heard him that day.

Writer and reader, let us ask each other, Are we both living in this atmosphere? To do this there must be no reserves. Paul could say, in the full joy of his heart, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It mattered little to him what his path was down here; he had kept nothing back from God.

May the Lord exercise us as to this. The secret of our lack is often some little reserve that we keep for ourselves. May we each be willing and desirous of saying what Paul said in Acts 24:16, so that we may know, in a spiritual sense, something of this opening upon us of these "windows of heaven." Amen. H. C. A.

S. The things that are

"The things that are."

Revelation 2:1-29, Revelation 3:1-22.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 16, 1889, p. 182 etc. The Church looked at, first, in her relation to Christ; second, in her relation to the world; and, third, in her consequent condition at the second coming of the Lord.

These three may be easily traced in Revelation 2:1-29, Revelation 3:1-22. In addressing the Church on earth, just prior to His return, the Lord puts before her the real origin of her condition. He tells her that the beginning was departure in heart from Him, that her heart then went out after the world, and that thence has arisen all her present condition - a condition in which He will find her at His return. This condition He places fully before us in the last four churches. Her relationship to Himself and to the world He shows us in the first three. In reading these addresses we must remember that the whole professing Church on earth is addressed, but that those in view are they "who have an ear to hear." These are exhorted to overcome individually, when the mass is going on either with satisfaction or indifference. The mass, which calls itself the church, is satisfied with its condition, and indifferent to the thoughts of Christ. In this state of things individuals are exhorted to overcome.

It is as cast out of the world that God gives to the Lord (1:e., as Man) the knowledge of His future purposes. The book we are reading is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." The Lord by the hand of John, an exile in "the isle that is called Patmos," communicates these purposes to the Church on earth. And He is first shown to John as invested with all authority. He is the "Ancient of days" (see Daniel 7:9), and holds the keys of hell and of death as the "LIVING ONE" who was once dead. These purposes of God to be executed by Him are those of judgment. He is about to return to the earth to execute God's final judgment in and upon all in this scene, in the midst of which we live and move every day. He "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." (John 5:1-47) "His servants" stand here in the relationship of John 15:15 - "His friends" - and as such He would communicate to them all that is about to come to pass on the earth. It is imminent judgment, and this is the subject of the book.

I. The Church in her relation to Christ.

First, then, He speaks to the whole Church (in His message to Ephesus) of her relationship to Himself. She owes her existence to Him. He is the "Alpha" of God's ways (Revelation 1:11); and "He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." Unchanged in His affection for her, He tells her that she has "left her first LOVE."

Though fallen from that condition which marked her when the "first works" were done in all the freshness of that "first love," how precious to Christ is the Church! He would seek to remind her of this. She was taken out of the world to be for Him. He says, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And this is truly His voice, and what the Spirit with to her and to us, my brethren, today. The first works refer to what she did on earth, and at the commencement. These were done with the eye upon Christ. How changed is every thing done by her now, as seen by His eye. "Works" are still there (Revelation 2:2), but the pitcher is broken at the fountain; the spring that caused Him to delight in them is gone.

We are carried back to the relationship between Christ and the Church at the beginning in order to get the sense in our souls of how vast the fall. As first seen, in the midst of all the rubbish of this world, no love existed in her. "Hateful and hating" was her condition then, as Titus 3:3 says. And it was when she was in that condition that He saw her. "Having found one pearl of great price, He went and sold all that He had, and bought it." He went down to the bottom of the waters of death and judgment to have her for Himself. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." And thence it was that in her sprang up that which never existed before. "We love Him because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) He speaks then of her love, and His heart is conscious that her love is defective. And why does the Lord thus address her and us? (for every true believer forms a part of the true body and bride of Christ in the midst of this vast profession which has taken up this responsibility and name.) It is that true bridal affections, and "first works" which manifest them, may be awakened in us, and that hearts may shake themselves loose from all that worldliness which burdens and crushes the Church in her testimony, and may start out afresh for Christ. For as we read on in these addresses we shall see that worldliness is the defect. The WORLD has come in, and this is the worm which is gnawing at the root of a simple testimony here for the Lord. Oh for the heart to realize - the heart of each Christian individually - that the Lord is jealous lest any thing intervene between us and Himself! To have every thought, every motive, every action consciously under His eye, and subject to Him, "to the Lord." (Colossians 3:23.) How it tests us to ask, Did you do that to the Lord, and desiring only His approbation? These were the first works; the motive power was affection for Him. It is what the apostle Paul refers to when he says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Love, the constraining spring of service, and the only motive power that satisfies the heart of Christ. May the Lord lead us into this path more distinctly, that we may be found doing all that we do with the eye and the heart occupied with Himself. Every thing done with reference to the Lord, who "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," and who is so soon coming back to receive her to Himself. The first address of the seven (Revelation 2:1-29) is to Ephesus. The fitness of this being first is manifest. This assembly had been fully instructed by the apostle Paul as to the relationship of the whole Church to Christ. It is in that epistle that we learn that the Church on earth is "His body." There we learn too that each Christian is a "member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." We learn too that Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it;" a love so great, that "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." The Church is not considered in these addresses as the body of Christ, though that was the truth committed to Ephesus in Paul's epistle to that assembly, but as the responsible woman - responsible, as knowing this truth, to be true to the relationship existing between herself and the Lord. The relationship is not affected by failure to answer to its claims. Ephesus is addressed as in the relationship, and she, (representing the whole Church) is declared by Him

who has loved her, and still loves her with a perfect love, to have been, and to be still, untrue to Christ. "Thou hast left thy first love." Her heart was not His, His alone. She had left Him, and another had her affections. It is the world, and He fully unfolds it in what follows. In the meantime each Christian is exhorted to hear what the Spirit says in this address, as to the Church's present condition, and to "overcome" in the midst of it, a responsibility resting upon every believer in Christ, wherever found; but observe, whatever the cost, it is one which, when responded to in the power of the Spirit, will lead into present food for the soul. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

II. The Church in her relation to the World. This is presented in two aspects in the two addresses which follow. In the first (that to Smyrna) the world is seen in its own true character - that of a persecutor. This is in harmony with the Lord's own words in John 15:1-27; John 16:1-33. It is the only proper attitude which the world can assume if the Church is true to Christ. The Church should never know the world, save as a persecuting world. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." If the Church has ceased to know the world thus (as a persecutor), then God has given to individuals to prove it, when through grace there has been given to any a recovery from the worldliness into which the whole Church has sunk. It is a great favour, given to us individually from God, to know the true character of the world, and to be called on to prove it in our walk on earth.

Hence there is no fault found with the assembly at Smyrna. He does not blame. She is the persecuted one, as He had been, and therefore in her proper position with respect to the world, and the Lord only comforts and encourages her. "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The object of the enemy, who is the god of this world, is to turn aside the Church from being true to Christ. This he attempts by persecution, seeking to "wear out" the saints by it; and it may even go on to death, as it has often done in the times past (Acts 22:4), man's histories too agreeing with God's that this has been so. The object of the world, and of Satan, its prince, is to oblige saints by persecution to give up Christ. The tendency of the natural heart is to faint under opposition and continued pressure. But the Lord cares for this persecuted condition of His Church, and is beyond it: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The overcomer may have to go on to the death of the body; but if so, he shall "not be hurt of the second death." It is what is beyond and after death that is presented for our encouragement. "I will give thee a crown of life." When the world has done its worst, the Lord is found on the other side.

We have thus far seen what the Church on earth was to be in her relation to Christ. We have also seen what she was to be in her relation to the world. These are true for us today. The failure of the Church to maintain both brings us to the condition of Pergamos, which is the next in order of the seven. May the Lord meanwhile arouse us all to increased devotedness to Himself.

Pergamos.

Revelation 2:12-17. The Church is in fellowship with the world. This is what the Lord reveals in His message to Pergamos. The Church is not a stranger on earth; she is dwelling where Satan's seat

is. Satan's seat, or throne, is this world. Here only is the sphere that owns, nor will any other ever own, his sway, and in it she is seen by the Lord's eye; not hastening through it, as through a defiled and defiling scene, to which she does not belong, but dwelling in it, as though at home there. And the Lord presents Himself to the Church in this condition as "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." By presenting Himself to her thus, He declares that He will sever the unholy league into which, as one seduced, she has entered. There can be no tolerance of it. "All judgment" is committed unto Him, and upon the world it must fall, however unfaithful the professing body may be. And fellowship with the world, while professing at the same time to be for Christ, is the Church's condition. For it is very evident that the Church as addressed here has not cast off the profession of His faith and name. She does profess to be His, however unfaithful she is. He tells her this. "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." Yet while He can own this, He does not withhold that the doctrine of Balaam is there also. And how feeble, how imperfect the Church's testimony! And if she is untrue to her calling, the Lord will show her what true faithfulness is. Antipas, not the Church, is His faithful witness. How touching the allusion, if the Church has any heart to respond to it, when He says, "Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth!" "My faithful martyr," says the Lord - words which He should have been able to use as to the whole company. But this is impossible. The Church in fellowship with the world can no longer be the "faithful witness." And Antipas gives up his life as a testimony in the midst of the Church that should have been true to her absent Lord. But there is more than this, more than the inability of the Church to be a faithful witness. There is a reason for it. The Lord continues, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam." This is positive wickedness. It was an endeavour to seduce the people of God, and at any price, into association with the world. For in speaking of Balaam, the Lord throws back the veil, and shows that which destroyed all possibility of devotion to Him. That hidden spring, working under the assumed guise of "increased liberality," is friendship with the world. Toleration accepted, there is then only a short step to amalgamation, and this is "the doctrine of Balaam." God's thought, the one great thought which can be traced like a golden thread running from Genesis 1:2-3, down to Revelation 22:14-15, is not toleration, not amalgamation, but everywhere "SEPARATION" from what is evil. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." You can introduce no toleration of evil, and His thought for His people is consistent with Himself. It is ever so; and even Balaam, the deluded tool of the enemy, has to declare that separation is God's thought. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23:1-30) But, unable to curse God's people, and compelled to speak only what the Lord would have spoken concerning them, what did Balaam teach? He "taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

There are always steps to be traced in decline in the history of our souls, and we can trace them here. Forgetting her true relationship to Christ, who is not on earth, how easy for the Church to forget that His place is hers. As He was not of this world, so the Church is not of it. As He is heavenly, so she is also, for she is His body. The first thing that we read about Israel after Balaam had failed to curse God's people is this, "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab." So the Church is said by the Lord to be "dwelling" where Satan's seat is, dwelling in the midst of the place where the Lord had no place. He had on earth "not where to lay His head." And what was the next step with Israel, and the next step in the Church's decline? Why, as dwelling there, Balaam's counsel is, "Let us be all together; let us be

social;" and, oh, what a subtle delusion is this of the enemy - this plea of friendship! "And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." (Numbers 25:1-3.) And we see in this address to the Church on earth that she has repeated Israel's history, and that this is why the Lord refers her to it. The false prophet is within the Church, and the result of his doctrine is manifest in her present condition. He is teaching that she may eat things sacrificed unto idols; that she may enjoy Moab's food. He is teaching that she may, without fear, form alliances with this world, and so stop to rest (on her way to GOD'S rest) among those who have never any intention of going there. And if we admit the complete analogy and parallel, as seen in the past history of Israel and the present condition of the Church, we must, notwithstanding, thank God that it is He in His grace who calls our attention afresh to it. Still more is it to be regretted that any who call themselves Christians should now, nevertheless, remain blind and deaf to what is said - unable to "hear what the Spirit with unto the churches." For if it is fairly admitted, and people do fairly admit (without apparently any exercise of conscience), that they do not understand even these two chapters which are especially and only addressed to the Church; is there not both blindness and deafness as to what is the Church's present condition? Yet the Spirit says as to this Book of the Revelation, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." He attaches a special blessing to the reading, and hearing, and keeping of what He here puts before us. And how can the soul keep what it has never in faith received?

One other matter the Lord speaks of before closing this address to Pergamos, and it is with reference to the Nicolaitanes. Much has been written as to the meaning of this word, and as to what these people were, and perhaps much of what has been said is right. As there is not in Scripture any explanation of the meaning of this word, nor of the word Pergamos, we may calmly weigh what godly men have written to explain each. It has been said that the word Pergamos has some relation to the Greek word for marriage, and that it points to the "marriage of the Church and the world." No doubt there is some important meaning for each word, and for the use of each. Enough is written in the Word, however, for us. The Nicolaitanes have been mentioned before in the address to Ephesus. We may compare these two references to them. We learn then, from Revelation 2:6, that although the Church has left her first love, she is not yet quite prepared to sanction that thing which the Lord hates. He says, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." But He does not thus speak to Pergamos. Again he refers to the Nicolaitanes, but He cannot now say that the Church hates them. No; as He has said that she allows within them that hold the "doctrine of Balaam," so now she allows within also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," "which thing I hate." The reader, as a Christian, will see the inconsistency, and weigh the value of what is said to the Church respecting this evil. She is said to hate their deeds, then to allow within them that hold their doctrine. You see that the PERSONS are allowed. But "God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34.) And the Church must be governed by God's Word; she does not make it, she is taught by it. It says, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin." (James 2:9.) And "God accepteth no man's person." (Galatians 2:6.) When once there is a departure from a right path, with an assumption of rectitude, the Word of God must, in some form or another, be given up, however much of it may be retained. But for the Church, as well as for individual Christians, there is then no way of recovery but by the Word of God; and if we do not use it as the way of recovery, HE must and will maintain the truth. And the address to

Pergamos closes thus: "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." It is the unsparing judgment of all evil. May we give heed to the word that follows to the overcomer: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit with unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." And, seeking to be delivered from what the Lord condemns, may we be found individually feeding upon Christ in the sense of the immensity of God's present favour to us. Amen. The Threefold Division of the Book.

We have drawn the reader's attention to a threefold division of the Book of Revelation, given to us by the Spirit of God in Revelation 1:19. We again direct his earnest attention to it. It will keep him out of the maze of different interpretations given by many earnest men in answer to these questions, which must again and again present themselves to all diligent students of this important book; namely, What part of the book is already fulfilled? What part is now in progress of fulfilment? and, What is yet future? The following are the three divisions to which we refer as given to us in this verse. John was bidden to write in a book - 1st, The things that he had seen; 2nd, The things that are; 3rd, The things that shall be after these. No careful reader would deny that the first things that John was here bidden to write about were those that he had seen in the vision of Revelation 1:1-20. By no possible means can we construe the words "hast seen" into "shall see," so as to make them include all that he should see as detailed up to the end of the book. The language is most precise: "Write the things which thou hast seen;" that is, if we interpret it simply, "Write what you have already seen." This is the first division and first part of the book, ending with chapter 1. We then come to the second division of the book, "The things that are." What are these? "Are" means to exist. What existed at the moment? Evidently the varied conditions of the Church on earth, as seen in the seven different localities mentioned in Revelation 2:1-29 and Revelation 3:1-22. - The "things" are told us which the Lord commends, and the "things" which He condemns, in the Church wherein all His interests are centred. Revelation 4:1-11 begins the third division of the book with the words of verse 19 - "After these things" - so that we have all three before us. And since the words are precise, "After these things," the third division of the book is all unfulfilled, because "the things that are" are still around us, and the Church is yet on earth as the seven golden candlesticks to sustain in this dark world a light for Him (whose eye even now, as then, discerns and scrutinizes all) "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" today.

It is important for us to have a sense in our souls of WHO it is who condescends to tell us His estimation of the "things that are," in order that we may have some perception of the value of the communication. He is the "Ancient of days" of the Book of Daniel, yet the One who stoops to lay His right hand on the poor exile of Patmos, in order to make him know that he has not to fear since he has to do with Him "that liveth, and was dead," now to die no more, but who is alive for "the ages of ages." He is the Almighty God of the Old Testament; the "Alpha and Omega" of all God's purposes; and, blessed for us to know, He is the One that John sung of in Revelation 1:6 - the "I Jesus" of Revelation 22:16. If Jesus is before us as the glorified Man, He is none the less all these, and the Spirit of God would have us to know this, and He records it. Reader, have we grasped WHO it is? WHO tells us where His interests are today, so that in any little measure they have become our interests?

We have not to consult Church history to learn the past condition of the Church, nor have we to plunge into the Babel that exists among her doctors to know her present or future condition. All is unfolded here up to the end, when she will be rejected as the light-bearer. I know what He thinks of that which professes to be for Him as I read these two chapters, and that is of more moment to me than volumes of Church history, coupled with the opinions of all her doctors; for the "things that are," if (as here) they are fully described, are still.

We have seen the Church in what should have been her true relation to Christ (Ephesus, pp. 153, 219), that of "first love." We have spoken, too, of what would then have been her attitude towards the world (Smyrna, p. 220), the "persecuted one." We have also seen what is her present condition as to Christ - the first love left - as well as what it is toward the world - fellowship with it. (Pergamos, p. 234.) And now the four following aspects of the Church's condition, all of which run on to the end of her earthly history (since the coming of the Lord is before us in each), are the natural outcome of these first three. And although there can be no doubt that in a general way all seven assemblies and their conditions are necessary at any moment to present me with a perfect picture of "the things that are," yet as the first three show how the ruin was wrought, so the last four instruct us as to what the ruin is, or the condition of the Church at the coming of the Lord. This event brings before us in each of them an event which is presented in other passages of the New Testament as the one HOPE of the Church. The Church's condition at the Second Coming of the Lord; or, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Thyatira is the next in order. The Lord reveals Himself here with eyes as a flaming fire; 1:e., in piercing judgment. Nothing could be worse as to the state of the Church. Jezebel is the governing power, and by her name we are carried back to Israel's apostasy in the days of Ahab, when she fed the prophets of Baal at her own table, and persecuted the prophets of the Lord. It is a similar case. Children are born of her whom the Lord says that He will "kill with death." But she is here the mother; and it is the voice of the Church of Rome that says, "He who has not the Church [of Rome] for his mother, has not God for his Father." Thus we now have, in this phase of the Church's history, the greatest outward assumption at the moment of the grossest wickedness within. She is an actor, teacher, and seducer. But this is always the case. Where the voice of the spirit is not heard calling for judgment on the evil, there will always be found the greatest assumption of rectitude; and in this case she assumes to be henceforward THE CHURCH on earth, distinctly and exclusively so. This is Jezebel and her children. But the Lord's eye discerns another company. These He addresses as "the rest in Thyatira." They have not received this doctrine, or the teaching of Jezebel, and He encourages them, "That which ye have hold fast till I come." He who overcomes in Thyatira shall have "power over the nations." Now, this is the very thing that Home has sought. The Lord will give it to the Church in His own time. When He reigns she shall reign with Him; but the order is, "If we co-suffer, we shall also co-reign." (2 Timothy 2:12.) Suffering comes first, and as He was, so the Church must be - the rejected one on the earth. And while He says to the assembly, "I know thy works," He cheers the overcomer as "he that keepeth my works unto the end;" and he shall have the "Morning Star" for his portion through the gloom of the night. May we be found so separating ourselves in heart and association from all these things herein condemned, that we may enjoy even now this portion of the overcomer. Amen.

II. Sardis.

Revelation 3:1-6. That which the assembly lacks is presented to each in the manner in which the Lord speaks of Himself. He addresses the church of Sardis as "He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." Now, while we have not Jezebel and her doctrine in Sardis, we have not in her the unhindered and unquenched energy of the Spirit. There is truly "a name to live," but the power of life is always the energy of the Spirit, and that is wanting. However, we see that there is a measure of recovery from the doctrines of Thyatira, so that we have before us Protestantism in the church of Sardis, the second phase of the Church's condition at the coming of the Lord. His coming is referred to in what He says in verse 3. Doctrinal correctness is not enough. Hampered by human arrangements within, and clogged by state associations (1:e., by the world) without, the Spirit of God does not bring out and develop in the assembly the life proper to it. Hence the works are defective. "I have not found thy works perfect before God." The Spirit of God quenched, and human methods substituted to carry on the works within - all this, coupled with the worldly pride given by "a name to live," reduces the Church to the level of the world. Hence the Lord's coming bursts upon her, as upon it, "as a thief" - unexpectedly. "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." The coming of the Lord to be watched for as the hope of the Church is lost to it, and night and sleep have overcome her instead. But there are some in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with the Lord in white; for they are worthy. In these white garments the overcomer too will be arrayed.

III. Philadelphia.

Revelation 3:7-13. The Lord presents Himself here as the One who can open and shut; that is, whatever seems to oppose, He has all power, all ability in Himself. He commends the cleaving to the Word, and the non-denial of His name. We see here a great recovery from the Sardis condition. Not only are the doctrines taught in Thyatira refused (for keeping His word implies this), but also the Spirit of God is controlling, so that the walk and ways, the character, and (including all) the name of Christ is not denied. He will accomplish all the rest. "Behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown:"* *The rendering of the New Translation.

There are the Word and the Name, and there is around us today a tendency to separate these two things - a great assumption of "keeping the Word," and but little understanding of not "denying His name." Now, the name not only brings before me a person, but always what characterized the person who bore the name. The Spirit by which He moved, and which stamped His path as one separated from all the self-will that marks men, this Spirit ever guided the Lord here. But Christians bear that name, for by profession they belong to Christ, and are professed followers of Christ. The word of God may be gloried in, but it must not be severed from the Holy Spirit, who alone can wield it, and who so wields it that He first forms me according to it. My path thus becomes very simple. The word of God has supreme authority, and the Spirit within me so uses it, that as I walk I do not deny His name, who as Man was ever led and guided by the Holy Ghost, according to that Word, in a path well pleasing to God. May the Lord guide and exercise as to this both reader and

writer, that this may be daily and more and more seen in us!

When, through little strength, the tendency is to give up, the overcomes is characterized by "holding fast." Power is not in us. All power is in the Lord; we must be subject in the power of an ungrieved Spirit to the Word; He does the rest. And the one who overcoming has learnt it shall be made "a pillar in the temple of my God," the Lord says, "and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from my God, and my new name."

IV. Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14-22. The last of the four conditions in which the Lord will find the assembly is now before us. The Lord presents Himself as the "faithful and true witness." This is what the professing Church has totally failed to be. He speaks from outside the assembly, the professing company on earth, although His proper place in the assembly is not outside, but "in the midst." (Matthew 18:20.) He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." He is not only outside; the door is also shut against Him. Within there is nothing but self-satisfaction and self-exaltation - the first man reigns supreme. The Church is not only totally ignorant of her loss of the Lord's presence with her, but boasts that "she" is "rich, and increased with goods," and has "need of nothing." Rich, but without Christ; has no need, but with Christ outside the door. Alas! how Satan has wrought to manufacture a system that shall blind the eyes of his dupes! for who is disturbed? Are we not rich? Our goods multiply, and is not the "cause" triumphing? If we once numbered our missionaries by tens, do we not number them today by hundreds? Our places of worship increase. Our theological colleges, are they not springing up all over the land? Are they not filled with young men, all diligent students for the ministry? It is the voice of Laodicea, ignorant of the end in dishonour and shame of the Church's history on earth. But the Lord is seeking individuals. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." If there is a heart desiring more of Himself, He will come in to refresh and satisfy that heart at a time when indifference to the claims of the Lord, coupled with immense assumption, mark the professing assembly. This word of cheer is what the spring of the oasis is to the thirsting desert traveller. This the Lord today is for the individual soul who will hear "His voice, and open the door." But the end is not far off. It is when she is full of self-gratulation and indifference to Christ that her final rejection is pronounced. She is then repulsive to Him, and He says, "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

We close by drawing the special attention of the reader to these just quoted and final words of the Spirit, addressed to those who are part of "the things that are." Professing Christians, these words apply to us. We must fix our individual Christian positions today somewhere. We are somewhere in His sight, amidst "the things that are" - the professing Church on earth. Where are we? "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He knows exactly where each one stands, and He is (in these words) speaking to you and to me as individuals. It is, "He that hath an ear, let him hear;" and the voice is the Spirit's voice telling me the mind of CHRIST, "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" today. God give to us grace to respond to the voice, and not to turn away the ear to those who say, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." (Isaiah 30:1-33.) For now "the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision." (Ezekiel 12:23.) Moreover, the time is short. He whose messages to the churches we have

been considering, He who "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," and He who "testifieth these things," saith, "Surely I come quickly." May the writer and reader be able truthfully to respond, in the conscious sense of being delivered through grace from that which the Lord here condemns, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Amen. H. C. A.

S. This Do in Remembrance of Me

"This Do in Remembrance of Me"

Luke 22:1-71; 1 Corinthians 11:1-34.

We shall NEVER forget the Lord! This is certain, and it is because of the Holy Ghost who is in us, and who ever testifies of Him. His name both here and in heaven is, and will ever be, "as ointment poured forth." But He has chosen in an especial way to connect the remembrance of Himself now (that is, while we are on earth) with this one simple act: the "breaking of bread."

We get something deeply affecting to us in this. We remember HIM, and cannot help it, but it is His LOVE that is specially before us when it is His death. And this, His death, is before us in the breaking of bread; "This is My body which is given for you. . . . This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." We have reached Him and His love, and in His LOVE we have reached the relation in which now and to all eternity we are with Him.

Human love as formed of God is great, and it may even be so great as to go on to death. "Love is strong as death." But death comes in, and it is of no avail then. Here is a love that is stronger than death. For death His death, in infinite love, is before us, and still we know His love. The judgment of God was met in infinite LOVE, and it was exhausted. When it is a question of not only exhausting, but of going beyond, the judgment of God, it is only the love of Christ that can do that. This is before us in the breaking of bread.

We remember HIM. As we break bread, His love, expressed in death and going beyond it, comes before us, but we do not gather together to show the Lord's death. We do show it, but we gather together to "do this in remembrance" of HIM. He is more to us than anything that He has done, and in the breaking of bread He is pleased to remind us of the greatness of LOVE - HIS love. But if His love was what He manifested, of necessity He is greater than it! "This do in remembrance of ME." May our hearts give the glad response that He can accept, the only one that is becoming in us to give. It is the way to be led on to know Him better: He joins the company. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." (Hebrews 2:1-18.) And in listening to Him, do we not learn more? H. C. Anstey.

S. This Life

"This Life."

1 Corinthians 15:19.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 16.

Either under Satan's hand or under God's.

"What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14.) But it is this life, so apparently unworthy of consideration, yet so pregnant in its after results, that Satan seeks to wholly usurp for his own use, as the wilfulness in a child does a toy - to destroy it, and then cast it away. The life of the apostle Paul is a remarkable illustration of a life at one time in Satan's hand, at another in God's. Earnest we find him in each. When the Lord takes up the natural life, despoiling the "strong man" of his prey, that life becomes supernatural, and so was his. He is touching the strings of Paul's life (after Acts 9:1-43), and in Acts 20:24 what sweet music its chords give forth: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course." And is this the life that was once spent in breathing out "threatenings and slaughter" against Christ, and against all that were His? Yes, it is the same life. It is still "the life that I live in the flesh" with all its cares; for thus he speaks of it in Galatians 2:1-21. But a new power is behind it. What is it which has wrought this wondrous change? The answer is not far to seek, it is in Galatians 2:20 : "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is the hand of the Master that is sweeping over the strings now, bringing out the music of His will, and the melody of the strain thrills our hearts as we listen to it.

What grace has come in to carry us by a power above nature - supernatural - to alter the whole occupations and objects of a man's daily life! "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." He says, "I have suffered the loss of all things." Nature had no voice here. Does he regret their loss? No. If he has suffered the loss of all things, his present judgment of them is, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things Loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Oh that we all as Christians knew more of the satisfying power of the Master's hand playing on the strings of "this life!" What a deliverance would it be for us from all the miserable selfishness so commonly seen in the lives of some called Christians today. Instead of it what heavenly melody would be produced from us, carrying its own reward with it - the satisfying joy of a life devoted to others. Paul knew this, and it encourages us to listen to him - if in any way seeking the same path. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." This as to his serving the saints; and if it were a question of the race he was running, it was, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as the one that beateth the air." Or, again, was it a question of satisfaction in his every day circumstances? He will say, "I have learned

in whatsoever state I am to be content." Paul carried that truth which made him a debtor to all men, and he lived merely for others. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Does the meditation humble us? We are here but for Christ, as Paul was. May we know more of the power of the Master's hand bringing out from us, and also satisfying us. May "this life" of yours and mine be onward one bright illustration of the meaning of our Lord's own words, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

H. C. A.

* * *

Absolute consecration to Christ is the strongest bond between human hearts. It strips them of self, and they have but one soul in thought, intent, and settled purpose, because they have only one object.

S. Thy latter end

"Thy latter end."

God's desire for us to consider it.

Deuteronomy 8:16; Deuteronomy 32:29.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 113.

"Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" In the life of a man of purpose everything takes its colouring from the end to be attained. And if this is so in the natural life, so surely should it be in the exercise of the divine life. Hope - that is, something beyond - is the spring of human life from the cradle to the grave, even when a man's view is limited to this world. True hope has to do with God and His purpose. In the daily life of a Christian, when the end to be attained is clearly seen, and God's purpose is accepted by the soul, still, I think, he has to learn another thing on the road. Nature always resists God's purpose for us, and we have to learn God's estimate of it as the flesh. I think we shall find there is no other way to go on. There is one way out for us, and God will surely bring us out, and accomplish His purpose in us all; but I must go through the process, painful as it is, wherein I learn what flesh is, and that God's heart is set upon the end for me, and not on the necessary flesh-rejecting, present process through which I am passing. He wants my heart to be set upon it too. Nothing diverts Him, and everything moves on in my circumstances, which He has arranged, toward the accomplishment of His purpose for me. Whatever may happen to me on the road, God's heart has in view the end, where there shall be no flesh and no evil occurrent. He would have us now, as we thread our way along His path for us (the every-day circumstances of each human life), to be in communion with His mind about this. He would occupy us with what are His ultimate purposes and counsel respecting us. When a poor sinner considers his "latter end" as a sinner, it must land him in the blackness and horror of despair. And it is just at this point that the gospel comes in with all its blessed and gloom-dispelling light. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, for the "outshining" of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." I see here that it is all settled, all finished for me, a poor guilty sinner. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." And that glory which shines now, and which I see in the face of Jesus Christ, is God's warrant and rest for my soul. "The true light now shines." All is done. Thus the heart is set at rest as to the question of sins and judgment. But still I have to learn with God what the flesh is, and its corruption. This is the process when I have accepted God's purpose and counsel respecting me, and as I accept the one I have to learn the other. But God would teach me the incurable nature of the flesh that is in me, not by occupying me with it, but rather with His purpose respecting me. I am privileged to say, wherever I may be along the path, But we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:1-39) I can say, It matters little what the fare on the road may be, so that I know surely and

clearly what awaits me at home. God's desire is to occupy you with what awaits you there. Christ is there, and the joy of that scene is what He is. You are going to be exactly like that Christ.

It is in this way that I learn what the flesh is, not by being occupied with it, but by being occupied with God's final purpose and counsel for me. I say, Is this God's purpose to conform me to the image of His Son? How unlike Him I am now! What a wretched thing is this flesh in me - nothing but rebellion all the way along! This is true; but as your eye is upon the end and that blessed Object (to which, remember, it is God's purpose to conform you, and not yours to conform yourself), you are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18.)

It was not when the apostle Paul was looking at himself that he saw how imperfect he was, but it was when he was looking at Christ. "I press toward the mark." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend [lay hold of] that for which I am also apprehended [laid hold of] by Christ Jesus." (Php 3:1-21.) Perfection here is complete likeness to Christ in glory. This was God's purpose for Paul, and nothing else is His purpose for each of us. But seeing that it was, getting hold of it in his inmost soul only set the apostle running faster in the race. "I press toward the mark." It was clear and distinct before his eye, and it eclipsed for him everything else. "That I may win Christ." Has it become the eclipsing substance for us all?

Satan always is seeking to occupy me with myself. This occupation never leads to a true judgment of myself, though to be moaning over my inconsistencies may appear to some to be pious and humble. The true object is outside; and as I am engaged with it, and with God's purposes respecting me, I fashion my way and judge myself as an obstruction to those purposes. But Satan can get a good man occupied with himself. Job is an example of this, and in twenty chapters he expresses it; but God had to empty him of all that. (Job 42:5-6.) To get you so completely before yourself that God's purposes respecting you are all as if He had none - this is the object of the enemy. Herein was the ground of all the failure of Israel in the wilderness. Were they looking in unbelief at their strength, or in faith at God's purposes for them, when they thought of the giants of Anak?

I am going to be like Christ in glory; and as I look at that Christ I am "changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit." God's desire then for me, as expressed in Deuteronomy 8:16, Deuteronomy 32:29, is, that I should consider the end - His end for me; and it is similar to what I find Paul considering in Php 3:1-21 He says, "I press toward the mark." H. C. A.

* * * The heart is always upright when it says, "To me to live is Christ" Paul had no object but Christ, and he walked day by day by that - Christ as source, Christ as object, Christ as motive, Christ as character. All the way through Christ was his life, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that the rage of man and Satan had no power over him. Self was practically gone.

S. Treasure in an Earthen Vessel.

Treasure in an Earthen Vessel.

2 Corinthians 4:7.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 196.

Thy grace transforms the shapeless clay 1 To vessel 2 for Thy hand;

Then fills,³ till living waters flow 4 To cheer Thy pilgrim band.

Oh, grace! beyond expression great To choose, and form, and fill Thyself the Fountain, Lord, to be, Unchanged by earthly ill. In PEACE, surpassing human ken, Thy Peace, O Lord, I stand 5 And wait, contented just to be This "vessel" for Thy hand. H. C. Anstey.

1, Jeremiah 18:2-6; Romans 12:2.

2, 2 Timothy 2:21.

3, John 4:14.

4, John 7:38 5, John 14:27; John 20:19-20.

S. Trial and Temptation - God's object in bringing us into them.

Trial and Temptation - God's object in bringing us into them.

James 1:1-27.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 149.

We try various things with the object of displaying either their badness or their goodness, and thus God works oftentimes with men. When God allows special trials to overtake natural men, it is to lead them to turn to Him in them, to teach them that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Daniel 4:17), and that He is able to abase him who walks in pride. But trials of similar character to those found among the "children of this world" are found also among God's children. Oftentimes God's desire in thus dealing with them is to manifest to themselves the evil of their own natural hearts (but this is not always necessary); and what is always necessary and of far greater importance in God's sight is to make them, faith shine more brightly. This was the desired end in His dealings with His servant Job, though in the same trials Job also learnt deep lessons as to nature's (1:e., his own) vileness. (Job 42:5-6) God sees faith in His children: this He values, and the trial is a trial of faith. Thus God takes the distinct ground in our trials of helping us. This is in order that faith (which, it may be, He sees is so feeble) may be strengthened. I believe there is no exception, but that every trial of a Christian is a trial of faith. (1 Peter 1:7.)

It is evidently not always the desire of God to manifest to me (or to any one else) the evil that is in my nature - evil which always rebels against the trials He sends. For if I bow to the trials, and to the word of God, which tells me God is taking the ground of helping me in and by them, nature gets no place and no voice; that is, it is not displayed, though there.

These trials are called "chastenings" in Hebrews 12:5-8, and "purging" in John 15:1-27. In both we see that God is helping us - dealing with us as with sons. Chastening is either to prevent or to remedy our running into evil. First, it is by the word of God, which runs always counter to my will; and second, where this fails it is by trials of various kinds, for God seeks to keep me in a right path, and to prevent me from going wrong. Both of these are chastening, but neither is because of any wrong doing. Then chastening and trial are for something wrong done. Then they are remedial, not preventive. I believe God always chastens to prevent before He chastens to remedy. But to be without that, "of which all are partakers," would mark me as not of the family. If trials and chastenings to prevent my going wrong, as well as trials and chastenings to restore me when I have gone wrong, should both fail to effect this object, God may repeat them, or act in judgment. (1 Corinthians 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16.) We have then to "count it all joy," according to this chapter 1, "when we fall into divers temptations." God sees in me something that He desires to help. Hence the trial, and hence also my joy. The trials are occasions of manifesting my faith, opportunities given to me to prove God in a way that I have not done previously. What is the

meaning of James 1:13? "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." I believe God's desire is by the trial to manifest the good that is in us; that is, to bring out that faith which He has given. (Ephesians 2:8.) If the trial manifests only the evil that is in me (rebellion, or plans of my own to get out of the trial), I am drawn away by my own evil lusts. But this was not God's first object in sending the trial. He may see it necessary to show me out to myself; but even with the ungodly their trials are allowed, in order to turn them to God. (See Job 33:19-29; see also Psalms 107:1-43.) Trials test faith, or they stir up the evil (rebellion, etc.) that dwells in my nature. The one casts me on God, the other carries me farther and farther away from Him, as to the experience of my soul. I believe that it means that God never tries a man merely to expose the evil that is in him to the man himself, as if this were the end, the prime motive of the trial, though this may come out (as with Job), in order that we may see what we are. God has a higher object than this, even our blessing. In this way I understand Genesis 22:1. H. C. A.

S. We shall see him as he is

"We shall see him as he is."

1 John 3:2.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 197. This especial favour is reserved for a unique company. Christians only are to have this sight of their Lord; therefore the great importance of the last word. It is not what He was on earth, nor is it here what He will be. What He was the apostle (who had seen Him as a perfect Man on earth) speaks of in 1 John 1:1-10. On earth he had seen Him "the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;" and what He will be John tells us in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:7; Revelation 19:11-16.) But in this passage the apostle says it is what He is now that we shall see. And what is He now? He has entered into that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, as the ever-obedient Son, obedient even unto death; and in John 17:1-26 the Lord prays respecting us, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" - that glory which He has now, the glory which He had before the world was. That wondrous relationship too of the Son with the Father, into which He has entered, He has entered as Man, as the One who glorified God on the earth, and who could claim the glory as earned which was always His. We are to witness what that glory and that relationship are. Infinite grace that brings us in on the ground of His own work, that work for God's glory, and for our eternal blessing! Blessed Lord, we shall see Thee in Thine own glory, and in Thine own enjoyment of all the affections of Thy Father's heart! Into that full joy the Lord entered after His work on the cross. His hour of sorrow (John 12:27) all ended with that work, and the hour of His glory began, as He said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." If we seek the answer to the question, What is He now? the Holy Ghost, descended from Him when glorified, gives the answer through the apostle Peter. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus." It is the answer to His prayer in John 17:1-26 : "With the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" and we are to be there to see Him in it.

How does this affect us? We wander on the earth absent from Him (2 Corinthians 5:6), and our faith but feebly lays hold of what He is now, consequent on the work which He has accomplished. Thence may be traced the miserable apprehension we have of our own relationship, that in which we stand with the Father; and that, alas! is no uncommon thing with real Christians. How can I know what I am with God until I see Him by faith or "as He is"? Well, in that day I shall know it. He is now seated in the enjoyment of all the affections of the Father's bosom, and all the love of the Father's heart. Nothing more shall ever disturb that blessed relationship and rest into which He has entered, based on the completion of all His earthly toil. But that work also puts every Christian before God "as He is," in the blessed relationship of children with God as their Father; and that is the way it affects us. (John 17:23; John 20:17.) "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17.) We are in the wine relationship, His Father ours, His God ours. (John 20:17.) But not only are we

in the same relationship, but we are to be in the same place, in order to behold His glory; we are to be with Him in it. It is this unique favour that John, I believe, speaks of in the verse quoted at the head of this paper, because only in the same place as He Himself is in can I behold what His glory is in the place. When I see Christ in it, and see what it is as displayed towards Him, I shall have the true sense of what is my place and relationship with the Father as belonging to Christ, both, alas! so feebly entered into by me now. But this necessitates my being with Him in it, in order to see it displayed towards Him; that is, in the glory that he speaks of in John 17:1-26 : "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." It is a glory that flows from love, the Father's personal love to the Son, but which of necessity includes in that all that are His.

John looked forward with joy to that time when he, in the company of all the members of the body, shall "see Him as He is." We and he are still awaiting it. We shall be admitted into the "Father's house" to see what that sphere has been, glory and affection displayed towards Him, before we are brought out to share with Him in all the glory of the kingdom. The heart of the Father has been for eighteen centuries delighting in Him, in Him who was ever His delight, even before the foundation of the world, as Proverbs 8:1-36 says. But what saint has fully entered into what that delight, that joy of the Father, in Him has been? Well, we shall see it in that day; for "we shall see Him as He is," as He is now, and not as He will be when displayed in the day of His appearing.

We are going into the Father's house, as John 14:1-3 says; but the first thought is that we shall "see Him as He is" there. We are to have, so to speak, this private time with Him in His own abode, before the whole universe, heaven and earth participate in the joy of themselves giving to Him His chief place over them all. But the precious thing is the intimacy of the house. Who will picture the joy of that hour, the joy of the Father's house? It is more than the joy of Luke 15:1-32; for this His eternal Son never went astray. It is this beloved Son that we shall see as He is. We shall be like Him when He appears, but we shall first have seen Him as He is. "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him AS HE IS." H. C. Anstey.

* * *

There are two ways the Christian is seen in the epistles. First, as in Christ - here is no progress, no question; he is accepted in Him: a complete, perfect, present state. But he is also a pilgrim upon earth, having to attain the goal. This gives occasion to every kind of exhortation, warning, and "ifs." Thus he learns obedience and dependence, the two characteristics of the new man. But with this he is led to the sure, infallible faithfulness of God to bring him through to the end, and bound to reckon on it. (1 Corinthians 1:8.)

S. What We Find Where there is the Consciousness of the Lord's Presence

What We Find Where there is the Consciousness of the Lord's Presence

Psalms 114:1-8.

Notes of an address.

I think that we have two remarkable illustrations of what we find where there is the sense of the Lord's presence, in the Word. The first is when the Lord took His place in the midst of the redeemed earthly people. The second is when He took His place in the midst of the ransomed heavenly company; and both are full of interest. I refer you for the first to this Psalms 114:1-8, which I have read. For the other I would ask you to read John 20:1-31 from John 20:19. The first thing I draw your attention to in the psalm is that the Lord's presence subdues all natural restlessness, and the second is that it causes to flee all merely natural greatness and strength; and both of these must be effected first in us before we can get the good of THE LORD'S PRESENCE.

We read that when Israel came out of Egypt "Judah was His sanctuary, and Israel His dominion." God took His place among them; that is, when Israel went, out, God went in. Here we see that to get the good of God's presence at any time (mind, I do not say His presence, but the good of His presence) there must be separation from the world, of which Egypt is the type. God never took up His place with them until then, and if not, He did not make His presence felt. Now He does. Let me ask, "Have we all turned our backs to the world?" The first thing then you realize, beloved friends, when you have the consciousness that you are in His presence, is that human restlessness and strength are nowhere. These, so natural to man, are both subdued. "The sea saw it, and fled." The sea was conscious of the presence of its Creator. But I must press that these things are to be known by us individually. It is the necessary consequence of entering into His presence. Then the strength and stability of nature is also touched. "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills as lambs." He subdues and refuses everything in us which is not of His Spirit. If this is not so in us we shall be of little use to others, and then, if there is activity, we shall be great hinderers of the saints and of the Spirit.

Moses made everything of the Lord's presence, and so should we. It works individually first - it subdues me. It works also in the assembly, and it puts the first man in his right place there, that is, OUTSIDE. Moses said, "If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." But you may say the Lord's presence is always with us, both individually and collectively. Yes, my friend, this is true in one sense, but many a time it is also true of saints that "their eyes were holden that they did not know Him." You are very much like your forerunners in this matter. I will tell you that if there is no subduing power known to you, You do not know Him at that moment, nor are you at all in the good of His presence, because this is its first effect - it subdues.

Now the fact that the Lord is there is POWER; I mean when the fact is made a living substance in my soul. Tell me what can resist it. His presence? That is God Himself. The most restless it subdues; the mountains' strength is as nothing, though "they cannot be moved" - it removes them. Nothing can stand before it. The wilderness becomes for His people "a standing water," and the dry ground becomes water-springs. It meets all the needs of the saints. But it also works for the saints. It subdues the enemy. I see that when the people are in the hands of God and all human power and strength gone, then the enemy must flee. He shows his back and not his face. Why is this? Ah, it is because there is nothing left that he can work upon. There is nothing left but God, and then, of course, he must flee. If there were more of the effect of the Lord's presence seen in US, we should see far more of the back of the enemy than we see of his face. He cannot stand before GOD, and whenever God can He puts Himself to meet the foe. Alas! there is oftentimes something that He has to correct in us, and then He may, as He did with Job, use the enemy to do it. But what a wonderful thing that the Lord's presence may be so good to me that the enemy has to flee. Oh, the joy of living in such a day as this! Individually it is what we have in 1 John - "He keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not"; and collectively it is the assembly - "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The blessed Lord Himself illustrates the saint when alone. He is with God (tempted in the wilderness). And he illustrates the saint in the company - 1:e., in the assembly, where He is occupied with the Father. (Hebrews 2:1-18.) Remember it, and may I ever remember it. The enemy will flee from the LORD'S presence, but not from me! If I confront him I shall find that he is more than a match for me. There is only one way to be strong - "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of HIS might." Allow yourself to disappear, and allow the LORD to come to the front, and you will be astonished at what you will see.

Now then, if the first man is gone out, is refused, and if in the energy of the Holy Spirit he is thus continuously dealt with, I am free for the Lord to occupy me. With what do you think the LORD desires to occupy the saints - the sanctified - His own - the new creation company? He desires to occupy them with what He - blessed and exalted MAN - Head of the new race - knows as MAN, of the Father now, so that they may be led also into it! They are His brethren, and HE has made them what they are. He is not ashamed of them. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto Thee." What name will He declare? Read the last verse of John 17:1-26, and you have the answer. He declared the Father's name as He knew it when with them a Man on earth. He now declares the Father's name as He knows it now - as HE knows it - a Man in the glory of God!

Beloved friends, is it not important that we should listen to Him? Who could make this known but Himself? for there is no other man there. I feel that I could not presume to unfold to you what you can only learn in the Lord's presence; namely, what we find there. You must be there yourself to know what it is. But I have not the least bit of doubt that you will find that it is, first; exclusive. I think that then you will find that it is also inclusive; namely, that, in the grace of God, you are included in all that belongs to Christ, as the risen and exalted MAN, and that "as He is, so are we in this world." And what is included in God's present thought of Him as the One who glorified God? If you can put a limit to that, and only then, the finite could measure the Infinite. Though I cannot unfold then what we find when consciously in the presence of Christ, I think saints can say with Dr. Watts (though not in the way he applied it) - "I have been there, and still would go, 'Tis like a heaven below." May we all know more of what it is, both as individuals and in the assembly, so that we

may say with Him, in spite of all our earthly distractions, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage." May this be our experience yet more and more! H. C. Anstey.

S. What is there always for me in Christ?

What is there always for me in Christ?

Answer: The affections of His heart, and the power of His arm.

John 11:1-57.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 19, 1892, p. 294.

These are both in Him, for me and for every Christian. These never alter, they are always there.

1st. I have the affections of His heart for me.

2nd. I have the power of His arm on my behalf.

He is increasingly displaying to me the affections of His heart. Had we the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the heart to understand, the thousand proofs of the affections that change not, fresh themes for joy and praise would appear in our daily path. The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, is not an inactive principle. Oh, no! Love must act towards its object, and it does. What we require is the anointed eye to see it.

We should never in our meditations separate these two thoughts, the thought of "the affections of His heart" from that of "the power of His arm." We may not see the power of His arm displayed on our behalf in this or in that difficulty, but we know it is there. We may be totally unable to trace "the affections of His heart" in this or in that dealing of His hand, but, none the less, the affection exists there in all its magnificent grandeur. I am called on earth to delight myself day by day in both; in the unchanging "affections of His heart," and in the untiring "power of His arm." Such is the Christian calling. How great, how complete But we may think of the one apart from the other; and so Satan may be busily trying to make us miserable by leading us to question the affections of His heart, because we do not understand these dealings of His hand. Alas, such hearts have we, and so easily affected for evil, that this is no difficult task to him.

Thus we find it in John 11:1-57. The onlooker (yet himself blind) might say, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" "He has the power, where is His affection?" It is one who does not know Him who reasons thus. but in this hour of trial are not His own also very low in their estimate of Him? His love, His power, where were they? "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." As if to say, "Lord, you did not interfere, nor come to us while he lived; your power and love might have stayed the work of death, and now by this time he stinketh." But all this is unbelief, and as such He rebukes it. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God? " His love was unchanged! "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," "Behold, how He loved him!" Nothing could change that. And His power was the same too, though "He abode two days still in the same place where He was." Oh for the faith which, rising above these seen and passing

changes of this world, can calmly rest itself above the horizon of unbelief!

JESUS is THE SAME! Come what may, His love to me is the same, His power for me is as great as the love which (at present) sees that it is better to wait than to display itself. But He displays both when He comes; and if He waits to do this, then surely I can wait. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"; this is what comes out in John. I am in faith now with Him. "Part with me" is the portion of the believer now. All is our true and assured present portion, 1:e. "His love" and "His power"; but they are only true to "faith." "Ye believe in God," He said, "believe also in me." He would have us quietly enjoying our portion. "Lazarus, come forth!" proved His power as it proved WHO He was. Again, "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." (John 12:2) This proved His love, which must have its object near itself. It is "Jesus the Son of God" who is before us here. Faith knows Him, and in Him it rests. We have a great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, "Jesus the Son of God." And the dealings of His hand are all "for the glory of God, that the Son of GOD might be glorified thereby." Faith cannot separate the "affections of His heart" from "the power of His arm," but He is all for us, and He who is so, is "Jesus the Son of God." May the Lord teach us more about these things, and lead us into them through our subjection to the Spirit in us. H. C. A.

S. What meaneth . . . this bleating of the sheep . . . and the lowing of the oxen which I hear

"What meaneth . . . this bleating of the sheep . . . and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

1 Samuel 15:1-35.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 17, 1890, p. 189.

It is important to remember that we "are not under the law, but under grace." Israel was under grace when Amalek came and fought against them. (Exodus 17:1-16.) They had not yet placed themselves under the responsibility of keeping the law, and thus made themselves dependent for blessing on their own obedience.

Now, though we are "not under the law, but under grace," the flesh is not changed. The old nature remains, and Amalek (a type of Satan) can still use it. The Lord had in grace given them water, a supply for the desert, in 1 Samuel 15:6, as He has also in perfect grace given to us the Holy Spirit. Amalek opposes at once this state of things. The people overcame by the intercession of Moses, as we overcome by the intercession of Christ; but the Lord swears that He "will have war with Amalek" - that is, with Satan - "from generation to generation." Only Moses' hands were heavy, and he had to be sustained, and the victory was ebbing and flowing. Christ is never thus; and hence the Christian dependent on Him can always say, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Romans 8:37.)

All our troubles, individual trials as well as conflicts in the Church, come through the flesh. Satan would be no trial to us, did not the flesh exist, on which he can and does act. I ought to treat the promptings of the flesh in me as Satan (Amalek), God's enemy and mine. It was thus the Lord treated it in Peter. Apparently affection, or pity, or amiability; yet the Lord says, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matthew 16:1-28.) Do we thus treat the suggestions of the flesh? Alas! no; and hence "this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear." Amalek is spared, for the flesh is spared; and the disturbed and disturbing clang of voices in the camp comes from that which is spared, and which ought to be judged. Ah! but you say, Is there nothing good in me? One has said, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing." But we are ready to respond, "I do not know it. Is not my morality, or my industry, or my religion to be of some account?" Saul thought so. He thought there was a best and a worst side to be considered, as you do; and while he would not defend the worst, he pleaded for and spared the best. Do you think Satan has a best side in the eyes of God? The flesh came from Satan, not from God. But "Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good." Why? "To sacrifice unto the Lord thy God," he says to Samuel, "in Gilgal." Yet God had said, "Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have."

Something "good" from this flesh of mine for God! Something I can excuse. A corner in my heart on which I write, "This is reserved from judgment" This thing is not, in God's account, wholly gone in the cross! Alas! it is easy to write and exhort. But what are we going to do? What am I sparing which you know nothing about? What are you allowing which I know nothing of? We are hindering if we are not helping the peace of the whole company. And to spare the flesh, though only in its best form, is to spare "Agag the king of the Amalekites." Ah! you had no thought of sparing him - God's great enemy - when you pitied yourself, and allowed the flesh, in its politest and gentlest form, a little space. Is it any wonder that there is a disturbed clang of voices in the camp, where God dwells among His people? or that there should be confusion in your own soul? Ishmael is allowed a place in that house, and there is no quiet or peace known in it. "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Do you not hear "this bleating of the sheep . . . and the lowing of the oxen"? What means it in your own heart? What means it among God's people? May we be willing to take the true place of owning that we have ministered to this state of things, and judge ourselves in His presence who smites us, but only that He may heal us; that in private and in ways unknown to each other the flesh has been spared, and hence the multitude of voices filling the air. God cannot accept that which we spare. The word to us is, "Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord." Oh, may the Lord give us to be simple, and to be real in private and individually, as to these things! H. C. A.

S. Who are the "Spiritual" in Gal_6:1.

Who are the "Spiritual" in Galatians 6:1. Does not the place in which this scripture is found throw great light on its meaning? I believe it does, and I would draw your attention to one or two points that strike me as to it.

It is not supposed as a right condition in a local assembly, whether composed of many or of few, that there is one class who are the "spiritual," while the rest have not attained to that standing; and yet this is often the interpretation which is given to what is said of it. To admit that this is the meaning, and that the apostle is only allowing a common condition, well known among the saints everywhere, as well as in the several assemblies of Galatia, is most disastrous to all fellowship and communion of saints in each assembly. It introduces at once two distinct parties, where but one spirit should animate the whole, of which those who assume to be the "spiritual" are certainly the most culpable, though assuming to possess intelligence beyond the others. The apostle is correcting an evil, not providing for its continuance. Often has the writer, and perhaps the reader too, heard this reason given for not personally visiting a certain failing and erring brother, "Oh, I am not spiritual; that is not my work, so I brought this before brother So-and-so," referring, by thus speaking, to the word spiritual in the passage before us.

Now any one carefully reading the epistle will observe that what is condemned in it is a hard, legal spirit. It is clear that the law exacts and expects from a man, and is the opposite of the Spirit of grace, which brings all to him, and which is to operate now in all our dealings with each other. The assemblies of Galatia here addressed were nurturing such a legal spirit. It is not of the Spirit of God, and it is by the apostle totally condemned. To do so is to fall from grace. It tends to exclude from our minds that ministry of love which should and would flow forth amongst us spontaneously. For love acts (when it is divine) quite irrespective of any deserving in its objects. The spiritual are those who are controlled and guided by the Spirit of God, and they are in contrast to others who are legal in this epistle. But anything save grace and the Spirit's control is wrong. It is very important to weigh well how strongly the apostle speaks. He says, "I stand in doubt of you." The very Christianity of those who foster this legal spirit in their assemblies was almost questioned by him, so entirely is it apart from the leading of the Spirit of God. In the beginning he calls it another gospel, which is not another, and in this last chapter he shows that it tends to shut out all the manifestations of love to an erring brother. It fosters religious pride. (Galatians 6:12-13.) Legality says, "When he has done something to merit my confidence, then I will restore him to the place he once held in my esteem and affections." Spirituality says, "When he is down is not the time to expect him to do much (save show a willingness to be helped). I will go to him in meekness to do something for him, for I consider myself in him, and that I am exposed to a similar temptation as long as I am in the body." How different! But a word more as to "overtaken." It means either that I overtake him, or that the fault overtakes him, for we are all running along in our Christian course. In either case he has stopped in his race heavenward. Legality still recognizes the flesh, and the flesh stops a man in his race. I should not have overtaken him, and the fault would not have overtaken him, had he continued running. But here he is helpless. Am I to pass him by in my

distress? Like the legal spirit of the Levite and the priest, am I to take the other side? Nay; rather let me imitate the good Samaritan, so-called, who "went down to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." Our blessed Lord Himself is before us here, who turns to each of us individually with His own beautiful homely comment on the whole story: "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?" and adds that marvellous exhortation, so short, yet so full and pointed, "Go, and do thou likewise." Such is the leading of the Spirit in opposition to legality. The Christianity of those may well be doubted who take the ground of not being "spiritual," and who act among their brethren in another spirit - on the ground of law and not of grace. They admit that they are legal; 1:e. still in bondage themselves. The Corinthians were not legal, but "carnal." Hence we have a man in one of four conditions now. Either he is natural, dead in trespasses and sins; or he is carnal, allowing the flesh; or he is legal, as the Galatians were, still in bondage, and not in the liberty of the Son; or he is spiritual, under the control of the blessed Spirit of God,* and if so, in all the joy of conscious sonship, as a child with the Father. This last is the only proper Christian condition, and Paul insists on it, and therefore no allowance is made for a class in any assembly who take the ground of not being "spiritual." Nothing can be more solemn than the strong way in which the apostle speaks to them in this epistle. However much there may be of the appearance of humility in one who says I am not "spiritual," yet not to be led of the Spirit is a denial of Christ, and is the overthrow of Christianity.

*Spiritual is put in contrast with natural in 1 Corinthians 2:1-16, and with legal in Galatians 6:1.

H. C. Anstey.

S. Worship.

Worship.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 16, 1889, p. 36.

1. When worship is an offence, and the worshipper comes under the judgment of God.
2. Why there is a defect of judgment in us, and inability to put a difference between "Holy and unholy," and between "Unclean and clean." - Leviticus 10:1-20. The Church, composed of all believers, and typified here by the sons of Aaron, is now in the place of privileged nearness and approach to God. And it is because she is so that God would have us consistent with the privilege, and would teach us a solemn lesson in this chapter. It is important that we should not forget that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." As all are priests (1 Peter 2:5), so all stand in nearness to God, to present to Him that worship (typified by the incense) the "sweet savour," which He has found in His beloved Son, and in all the work that He has accomplished for God's glory. In this God finds ever His own peculiar joy.

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." We note here that as Aaron's sons they had the right of approach. We see too that the censers and the incense are not found fault with; but that which came with them - "the fire." That which, so to speak, called forth the savour was the defect, and this led to the rejection of it all. There was fire with which all who were engaged with priestly service should have been familiar. It was that which burnt continually upon the brazen altar. (Leviticus 6:12-13.) It met the eye of everyone approaching from without. The brazen altar was the first thing within the court. There could be no approach to God apart from the death of the victim upon this brazen altar. And the fire needed to produce the savour of the incense had to be taken from off this altar. (Leviticus 16:12-13.) This was not "strange fire:" The burnt-offering in Leviticus 1:1-17 presents the death of Christ, and His personal ability to bear the judgment. It is not strange but familiar to us, that it was the judgment of God testing Him fully there that only brought out the sweet savour more distinctly. The fire thus presents to us a figure of the judgment of God. In the first chapter of Leviticus the fire consuming the burnt-offering only brings fully out the sweet savour which God received from the death of the unblemished victim. This judgment of God, fully searching Christ on the cross, found only that in which God could delight. But in the fourth chapter of Leviticus, where we have the death of Christ in another aspect, and the judgment still typified by the action of fire, we have another effect produced. It is not for sweet savour (save as showing who He was in the fat, etc.), but for consumption or destruction of the body of the victim, and not on the brazen altar at all, but far away "outside the camp." Still the place is associated with the brazen altar; for it is where the

ashes from it were poured out. It is the sin-offering. It is Christ "made sin" for us, and "bearing our sins." It is the cross as the place where the whole "body of the flesh" (Colossians 2:1-23) was destroyed - consumed - under the judgment of God, so that the second time the Lord comes into this world it is "without sin" (Hebrews 9:1-28); that is, with no question of sin at all to settle or to consider, so perfectly has this been done once for all on the cross. The action of fire in the burnt-offering produces only a sweet savour. The action of fire in the sin-offering consumes, outside of the dwelling-place of God (the camp), all that is contrary (as charged with sin) to His holy presence. These two effects are connected with the action of fire, and both met their fulfilment at the cross. On this basis God seeks worshippers who shall worship Him in spirit and in truth. But it cannot be apart from this action of the fire, nor apart from this remembrance of it; because the incense savour (type of our worship) was only produced by putting the incense on the fire taken from off the altar. Worship in spirit and in truth has for its basis the refusal and judgment of all that I am in myself, and the confession that God has found His eternal satisfaction in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus everything that prompts to worship save these two is "strange fire." Neither natural talent, gift, ability, intellect, or educational training will avail here as being only of the first man; and nothing of the first man (that is, which has its origin only in him) can come before God save for judgment. All Christians are on the common ground of worshippers; but self-assertion disappears if we see that Christ is the only object which delights the heart of God, and thus we discern that the place on which we stand is "holy ground." The fire consumes all that is contrary to the mind of God, and brings out before Him the person and work of His beloved Son.

It is important that what people call worship should be tested in the light of this scripture. If the meaning of Leviticus 4:1-35 be left out it will be Cain worship. Cain came to God on the ground of his own assumed right to come. This is leaving out the important truth taught in the sin-offering, and it is also a total denial of the fall. Unless God Himself make the way, man has none. In ourselves we have no fitness. We confess it, and we come in all the value of the person and work of Another. God Himself has provided it. Every presentation to God of the person and work of Christ is accepted. We need no more. God has given us this, and can accept nothing in addition to it. In worship, and when taught of the Spirit, we learn what is pleasing to God. And having learnt this, this chapter goes on to unfold another thing, the need of which presents itself continually to us as we walk amidst a defiling scene, namely, ability to judge between "holy and unholy," and between "unclean and clean." "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." (Leviticus 10:8-11.) Who is able to judge between "holy and unholy," and between "unclean and clean," but the soul which has learnt, from the intimacy of communion, and from that highest privilege which communion gives, namely, from worship, what is acceptable to God? Then wine and strong drink, and any thing that moves the natural man, must be refused. In worship nothing is allowed save the fire, which declares my rejection and judgment, and Christ's acceptance. It is not supposed that the wine and strong drink can be tolerated within; but then if I am in the habit of allowing nature to govern me without, if I am in the habit of feeding it, and of not judging it there, I shall find myself

without power of forming a judgment in very simple matters. I lose the sense of right and wrong, and I am also a hindrance in the worship of the saints; for what I present is rejected. The soul thus loses the sense of what is holy and unholy, unclean and clean; and in this condition it is also unable to instruct others in "the statutes which the Lord had spoken."

We find that it is only from learning in the Lord's presence what is suitable to Him, that the minor details of daily life are regulated aright. The anxieties of the world, of the family, of the assembly, all bring before us cases in which the priest has to discern and pronounce the mind of the Lord as to what is holy and unholy, unclean and clean, and we can thank Him that He has made this complete provision, so that we should not be confounded, but should have a right judgment when such questions come before us.

It is useless to seek advice about anything from the soul who knows little or nothing of worship. Worship is our highest privilege on earth, and the joy of heaven. In it we draw nigh to God with the consciousness that we delight His heart in so doing, and what can give greater joy to our hearts than this? The manner is indicated in Leviticus 10:3. This verse should be read and re-read. It is the key to all we have in this chapter. H. C. A.

S. Your own salvation

"Your own salvation."

Php 2:12.

H. C. Anstey.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 284.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." It seems to me to confuse the true meaning of this exhortation to say that "we have this salvation, and now we have to work it out." The point here is not the salvation of the soul. If the whole passage be read, I think this will be clear to anyone. Nor does it cast any doubt on the fact of the salvation of the soul, which is the effect of faith, and is dependent on no works of ours. But at the time of writing this epistle the apostle was in prison, and he gladly remembered the obedience of these Philippian saints. They had manifested it when he was among them. Through taking heed to his words, they had saved themselves from the attacks of Satan, and from his wiles. And now that he was in prison, was it safe for them to be less obedient? No; if possible they were to be yet more earnestly careful and watchful than they had been in his presence, and this would manifest itself in obedience to his words. Therefore he says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Now it is clear that present obedience is that which the apostle inculcates and desires them to aim at, in order to their present blessing, and that blessing is what he calls "your own salvation."* And while none, save those who possess the salvation of the soul, can thus "work" (because only of such could Php 2:13 be true), the salvation of the soul is not the point in the apostle's mind. Obedience to the words of an apostle (and now to the words of all the apostles) goes on at the same time as the working of God, by His Spirit, within the soul. They never oppose one another. Indeed obedience is wrought by the Spirit. Nothing can be a greater proof of the possession of divine life than this, that because God speaks in His word, I do not question, but I OBEY. Then it was the words of the apostle which they had heard (when he was with them), and which they were reading now again in his letter to them: "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." Obedience produces a quiet and steady walk on earth even to the end, and Php 2:1-30 sets this path before us in perfection. It was the path of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is presented in it. He "always obeyed," as the apostle desires them to do, and the result is that "God hath highly exalted Him;" and Satan's history, in opposition to the Lord in His walk of obedience, is a history of his continuous defeat. So should his history be in conflict with us, and this is the point, I believe, in the passage before us. The enemy was ceaseless in his efforts against them. But he says, "in nothing terrified by your adversaries." We have not only to believe, he says, "but also to suffer for His sake." The question is, How are the saints to save themselves from all the traps and snares which Satan spreads for their feet? Why, by having the "same mind"

which marked Him who walked calmly on amid them all, because He walked in obedience. Here is the one grand and only remedy to meet them all - obedience. No saint (however long on the road) is safe but in the path of obedience. By it he works out "his own salvation with fear and trembling," from every trap and from every snare which Satan spreads in his path. Fear and trembling will always accompany me - not distrust of God, but distrust of myself - because I see what a poor thing I am in conflict with my wily foe, and how I tend to respond to the very suggestions which he makes to me on the road.

*The reader will weigh this interpretation. For ourselves, while entirely agreeing with the line pursued in the paper, we understand "salvation" in this passage to mean, as in Php 1:19, complete salvation at the end - deliverance through all perils, temptations, etc., until the end of the race, at the Lord's coming. - Ed.

It is important also to notice that this verse (Php 2:12) is one of the texts which is used by the enemies of the truth to deny that one can know that he has the salvation of the soul. They say, "Even Paul tells the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." When the context is seen this assumed difficulty disappears. It is most disastrous to take words or passages of Scripture out of their connection; for, if kept and read where God has placed them, the harmony and beauty of the whole is preserved; and what is more, the enemy is often defeated by the very text with which he sought to, defeat us. No one need fear to look at the passages of Scripture he quotes. H. C. A.

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