Miscellaneous Writings, Volume 2

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The Assembly of God

The Assembly of God; or, The All-sufficiency of the Name of Jesus.

C. H. Mackintosh.

In a day like the present, when almost every new idea becomes the centre or gathering-point of some new association, we cannot but feel the value of having divinely formed convictions as to what the assembly of God really is. We live in a time of unusual mental activity, and hence there is the more urgent need of calm and prayerful study of the word of God. That word, blessed be its Author, is like a rock amid the ocean of human thought. — There it stands unmoved, notwithstanding the raging of the storm and the ceaseless lashing of the waves. And not only does it thus stand unmoved itself, but it imparts its own stability to all who simply take their stand upon it. What a mercy to make one's escape from the heavings and tossings of the stormy ocean, and find a calm resting place on that everlasting Rock.

This, truly, is a mercy, Were it not that we have "the law and the testimony," where should we be? Whither should we go? What should we do? What darkness! What confusion! What perplexity! Ten thousand jarring voices fall, at times, upon the ear, and each voice seems to speak with such authority, that if one is not well taught and grounded in the word, there is great danger of being drawn away, or, at least, sadly unhinged. One man will tell you that this is right; another will tell that is right; a third will tell you that everything is right; and a fourth will tell you that nothing is right. With reference

to the question of church position, you will meet with some who go here; some who go there; some who go everywhere; and some who go nowhere.

Now, under such circumstances, what is one to do? All cannot possibly be right. And yet, surely, there is something right. It cannot be that we are compelled to live in error, in darkness, or uncertainty. “There is a path," blessed be God, though “no fowl knoweth it, and the vulture's eye hath not seen it. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it." Where is this safe and blessed path? Hear the divine reply: “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28)

Let us, therefore, in the fear of the Lord, in the light of His infallible truth, and in humble dependence upon the teaching of His Holy Spirit, proceed to the examination of the subject which stands at the head of this paper; and may we have grace to abandon all confidence in our own thoughts, and the thoughts of others, that so we may heartily and honestly yield ourselves up to be taught only of God.

Now, in order to get fairly into the grand and all-important subject of the assembly of God, we have first to state a fact; and, secondly, to ask a question. The fact is this, There is an assembly of God on the earth. The question is, What is that assembly?

I. And, first then, as to our fact. There is such a thing as the assembly of God on the earth. This is a most important fact, surely. God has an assembly on the earth. I do not refer to any merely human organisation, such as the Greek Church; the Church of Rome; the Church of England; the Church of Scotland; or to any of

the various systems which have sprung from these, framed and fashioned by man's hand, and carried on by man's resources. I refer simply to that assembly which is gathered by God the Holy Ghost, round the Person of God the Son, to worship, and hold fellowship with, God the Father.

If we set forth upon our search for the assembly of God, or for any expression thereof, with our minds full of prejudice, preconceived thoughts, and personal predilections; or if, in our searchings, we seek the aid of the flickering light of the dogmas, opinions, and traditions of men, nothing is more certain than that we shall fail to reach the truth. To recognize God's assembly, we must be exclusively taught by God's word, and led by God's Spirit; for, of God's assembly, as well as of the sons of God, it may be said, “the world knoweth it not."

Hence, then, if we are, in any wise, governed by the spirit of the world; if we desire to exalt man; if we seek to commend ourselves to the thoughts of men; if our object be to gain the attractive ends of a plausible and soul-ensnaring expediency, we may as well, forthwith, abandon our search for any true expression of the assembly of God, and take refuge in that form of human organisation which most fully commends itself to our thinkings or our conscientious convictions.

Further, if our object be to find a religious community in which the word of God is read, or in which the people of God are found, we may speedily satisfy ourselves, for it would be hard indeed to find a section of the professing body in which either or both of these objects might not be fully realized.

Finally, if we merely aim at doing all the good we can, without any question as to how we do it; if Per fas aut nefas, “right or wrong," be our motto, in whatever we undertake; if we are prepared to reverse those weighty words of Samuel, and say that, “To sacrifice is better than to obey, and the fat of rams better than to hearken;” then is it worse than vain for us to pursue our search for the assembly of God, inasmuch as that assembly can only be discovered and approved by one who has been taught to flee from the ten thousand flowery pathways of human expediency, and to submit his conscience, his heart, his understanding, his whole moral being to the supreme authority of “Thus saith the Lord."

In one word, then, the obedient disciple knows that there is such a thing as God's assembly: and he it is, too, that will be enabled, through grace, to understand what is a true expression of it. The intelligent student of scripture knows, full well, the difference between that which is founded, formed, and governed by the wisdom and the will of man, and that which is gathered round and governed by, Christ the Lord. How vast is the difference! It is just the difference between God and man.

But we may here be asked for the scripture proofs of our fact that there is such a thing on the earth as the assembly of God, and we shall, at once, proceed to furnish these; for we may be permitted to say that, without the authority of the word, all statements are utterly valueless. What, therefore, saith the scripture?

Our first question shall be that famous passage, in Matthew 16, When Jesus came into the coast of

Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my assembly [The words “church" and “assembly" are both from the same Greek word.] (ekklesia); and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Vers. 13-18)

Here our blessed Lord intimates His purpose to build an assembly, and sets forth the true foundation of that assembly, namely, “Christ the Son of the living God." This is an all-important point in our subject. The building is founded on the Rock, and that Rock is not the poor failing, stumbling, erring Peter, but Christ, the eternal Son of the living God; and every stone in that building partakes of the Rock-life which, as being victorious over all the power of the enemy, is indestructible.

{It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between what Christ builds, and what man builds. "The gates of hell" shall assuredly prevail against all that is merely of man; and hence it would be a fatal mistake to apply to man's building words which only apply to Christ's. Man may build with “wood, hay, stubble," alas! he does — but all that our Lord Christ builds shall stand for ever. The stamp of eternity is upon every work of His hand. All praise to His glorious name.}

Again, passing over a section of Matthew's Gospel, we come to an equally familiar passage: “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the assembly; but if he neglect to hear the assembly, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 15-20)

We shall have occasion to refer to this passage again, under the second division of our subject. It is here introduced merely as a link in the chain of scripture evidence of the fact that there is such a thing as the assembly of God on the earth. This assembly is not a name, a form, a pretence, an assumption. It is a divine reality — an institution of God, possessing His seal and sanction. It is a something to be appealed to in all cases of personal trespass and dispute which cannot be settled by the parties involved This assembly may consist of only “two or three" in any particular place — the smallest plurality, if you please; but there it is, owned of God, and its decisions ratified in heaven.

Now, we are not to be scared away from the truth on this subject, by the fact that the Church of Rome has

attempted to base her monstrous pretensions on the two passages which we have just quoted. That church is not God's assembly, built on the Rock Christ, and gathered in the name of Jesus; but a human apostasy, founded on a failing mortal, and governed by the traditions and doctrines of men. We must not, therefore suffer ourselves to he deprived of God's reality by reason of Satan's counterfeit. God has His assembly on the earth, and we are responsible to confess the truth of it, and be a practical expression of it. This may be difficult, in a day of confusion, like the present. It will demand a single eye — a subject will — a mortified mind But let the reader be assured of this, that it is his privilege to possess as divine certainty as to what is a true expression of the assembly of God as in reference to the truth of his own salvation through the blood of the Lamb; nor should he be satisfied without this. I should not be content to go on for an hour without the assurance that I am, in spirit and principle, associated with those who gather on the ground of the assembly of God. I say, in spirit and principle; because I may happen to be in a place where there is no local expression of the assembly, in which case I must be satisfied to hold fellowship, in spirit, with all those on the ground of the assembly of God, and wait on Him so to order my way that I may enjoy the real privilege of being present in person with His people, to taste the blessings as well as to share in the holy responsibilities of His assembly.

This simplifies the matter amazingly. If I cannot have a true expression of God's assembly, I shall have nothing. It will not do to point me to a religious community, with some Christians therein, the gospel preached, and the ordinances administered. I must be convinced, by the

authority of the word and Spirit of God, that it is, in very truth, gathered on the ground and marked by the characteristics of God's assembly, else I cannot own it. I can own the children of God therein, if they will permit me to do so, outside the bounds of their religious system; but their system I cannot own or sanction in any one way whatever. Were I to do so, it would just be tantamount to the assertion that it makes not a whit of difference whether I maintain the principles of the assembly of God, or take up with the systems of man — whether I acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, or the authority of man — whether I bow to the word of God, or the opinions of man.

No doubt, this will give offence to many. It will be pronounced bigotry, prejudice, narrow-mindedness, intolerance, and the like. But this need not discourage us. All we have to do is to ascertain the truth as to God's assembly, and cleave to it, heartily and energetically, at all cost. If God has an assembly — and scripture says He has — then let me be with those who maintain its principles, and nowhere else. It must be obvious that where there are several conflicting systems, they cannot all be divine. What am I to do? Am I to be satisfied to take the less of two evils? Surely not. What then? The answer is plain, pointed, and direct — the principles of God's assembly or nothing. If there be a local expression of that assembly, well; be there in person. If not, be content to hold spiritual communion with all who humbly and faithfully own and occupy that holy ground. It may sound and seem like liberality to be ready to sanction and go with everything and everybody. It may appear very easy and very pleasant to be in a place “where everybody's will is indulged, and nobody's

conscience is exercised" — where we may hold what we like, and say what we like, and do what we like, and go where we like. All this may seem very delightful — very plausible — very popular — very attractive; but oh! it will be barrenness and bitterness in the end; and, in the day of the Lord, it will assuredly be burnt up as so much wood, hay, and stubble, that cannot stand the action of His judgement.

But let us proceed with our scripture proofs. In the Acts of the Apostles, or rather, the Acts of the Holy Ghost, we find the assembly formally set up. A passage or two will suffice: “And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the assembly, daily, such as should be saved." (Acts 2: 47) Such was the original, simple apostolic order. When a person was converted, he took his place in the assembly: there was no difficulty in the matter, there were no sects or parties, each claiming to be considered a church, a cause, or an interest. There was just the one thing, and that was the assembly of God, where He dwelt, acted, and ruled. It was not a system formed according to the will, the judgement, or even the conscience of man. Man had not, as yet, entered upon the business of church-making. This was God's work. It was just as exclusively God's province and prerogative to gather the saved, as to save the scattered.

{There is no such thing in scripture as being a member of a church. Every true believer is a member of the church of God — the body of Christ, and can therefore

no more be, properly, a member of anything else than my arm can be a member of any other body.

The only true ground on which believers can gather is set forth in that grand statement, “There is one body, and one Spirit." And, again, “We being many are one loaf and one body." (Eph. 4. 4; 1 Cor. 10: 17) If God declares that there is but one body," it must be contrary to His mind to have many bodies, sects, or denominations.

Now, while it is quite true that no given number of believers in any given place can be called "the body of Christ," or "the assembly of God;" — yet they should be gathered on the ground of that body and that assembly, and on no other ground. We call the reader's special attention to this principle. It holds good at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. The fact of the ruin of the professing church does not touch it. It has been true since the day of Pentecost; is true at this moment; and shall be true until the church is taken to meet her Head and Lord in the clouds, that “there is one body." All believers belong to that body; and they should meet on that ground, and on no other.}

Why, we may justly inquire, should it be different now? Why should the regenerated seek any ground beyond, or different to, that of the assembly of God? Is not that sufficient? Assuredly. Should they rest satisfied with aught else? Assuredly not. We repeat, with emphasis, “Either that or nothing."

True it is, alas! that failure, and ruin, and apostasy have come in. Man's wisdom, and his will; or, if you please, his reason, his judgement, and his conscience have wrought, in matters ecclesiastical, and the result appears before us in the almost numberless and

nameless sects and parties of the present moment. Still, we are bold to say, that the original ground of the assembly is the ground of the assembly still, notwithstanding all the failure, the error, and the confusion, consequent thereon. The difficulty in reaching it practically may be great, but its reality, when reached, is unaltered and unalterable. In apostolic times the assembly stood out, in bold relief, from the dark background of Judaism on the one hand, and Paganism on the other. It wars impossible to mistake it; there it stood, a grand reality! a company of living men, gathered, indwelt, ruled and regulated by God the Holy Ghost, so that the unlearned or unbelieving coming in, were convinced of all, and constrained to acknowledge that God was there. (See carefully, 1 Cor. 12, 14 throughout.)

Thus, in the gospel, our blessed Lord intimates His purpose of building an assembly. This assembly is historically presented to us in the Acts of the Apostles. Then, when we turn to the Epistles of Paul, we find him addressing the assembly, in seven distinct places, namely, Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica; and finally, in the opening of the book of Revelation, we have addresses to seven distinct assemblies. Now, in all these places, the assembly of God was a plain, palpable, real thing, established and maintained by God Himself. It was not a human organisation, but a divine institution testimony — a light bearer for God, in each place.

Thus much as to our scripture proofs of the fact that God has an assembly on the earth, gathered, indwelt, and governed by the Holy Ghost who is the true and only Vicar of Christ upon earth. The Gospel prophetically

intimates the assembly; the Acts historically presents the assembly; and the Epistles formally address the assembly. All this is plain. And if it be broken into fragments now, it is for us to be gathered on the ground of the one assembly of God, and to be a true expression of it.

And let it be carefully noted that we will listen to nothing on this subject but the voice of holy scripture. Let not reason speak, for we own it not. Let not tradition lift her voice, for we wholly disregard her. Let not expediency thrust itself upon us, for we shall give it no place whatever. We believe in the all-sufficiency of holy scripture — that it is sufficient to furnish the man of God thoroughly — to equip him perfectly for all good works. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) The word of God is either sufficient or it is not. We believe it to be amply sufficient for every exigency of God's assembly. It could not be otherwise if God be its author. We must either deny the divinity or admit the sufficiency of the Bible. There is not a single hair's breadth of middle ground. It is impossible that God could have written an imperfect, an insufficient book.

This is a very grave principle in connection with our subject. Many of our Protestant writers have, in assailing popery, maintained the sufficiency and authority of the Bible; but it does seem very plain to us that they are always at fault when their opponents turn sharp round upon them and demand proof from scripture for many things sanctioned and adopted by Protestant communities. There are many things adopted and practised in the National Establishment and other Protestant communities, which have no sanction in the word; and when the shrewd and intelligent defenders of

popery have called attention to these things, and demanded authority for them the weakness of mere protestantism has been strikingly apparent. If we admit, for a moment, that, in some things, we must have recourse to tradition and expediency, then who will undertake to fix the boundary line? If it be allowable to depart from scripture at all, how far are we to go If the authority of tradition be admitted at all, who is to fix its domain? If we leave the narrow and well defined pathway of divine revelation, and enter upon the wide and bewildering field of human tradition, has not one man as much right as another to make a choice? In short, it is obviously impossible to meet the adherents of Roman Catholicism on any other ground than that on which the assembly of God takes its stand, namely, the all-sufficiency of the word of God, the name of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Such, blessed be God, is the impregnable position occupied by His assembly; and however weak and contemptible any expression of that assembly may be in the eye of the world, we know, for Christ has told us, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Those gates shall assuredly prevail against every human system — against all those corporations and associations which men have set on foot. And in no case has that triumph been, even already, made more awfully manifest than in that of the Church of Rome itself, although it has arrogantly laid claim to this very declaration of our! Lord as the bulwark of its strength. Nothing can withstand the power of the gates of hell, but that assembly which is built upon “the living Stone;" and the local expression of that assembly may be “two or three gathered in the name of Jesus;" a poor, feeble, contemptible handful — the filth of the earth, and the off-scouring of all things.

It is well to be clear and decided as to this. Christ's promise can never fail. He has, blessed be His name, come down to the lowest possible point to which an | assembly can be reduced, even “two." How gracious How tender! How considerate! How like Himself! He attaches all the dignity — all the value — all the efficacy of His own divine and deathless name to an obscure handful gathered round Himself. It must be very evident to the spiritual mind that the Lord Jesus, in speaking of the “two or three" thought not of those vast systems which have sprung up in ancient, medieval, and modern times, throughout the eastern and western world, numbering their adherents and votaries, not by "twos or threes," but by kingdoms, provinces, and parishes. It is very plain that a baptised kingdom, and “two or three" living souls, gathered in the name of Jesus, do not and cannot mean the same thing. Baptised Christendom is one thing, and an assembly of God is another. What this latter is, we have yet to unfold; we are here asserting that they are not, and cannot be, the same thing. They are constantly confounded, though no two things can be more distinct.

{The reader will need to ponder the distinction between the church viewed as the body of Christ," and as “the house of God” He may study Ephesians 1: 22, 1 Corinthians 12 for the former, Ephesians 2: 21; 1 Corinthians 3; 1 Timothy 3 for the latter. The distinction is as interesting as it is important}

If we would know under what figure Christ presents the baptised world, we have only to look at the “leaven" and the "mustard tree" of Matthew 13. The former gives us the internal, and the latter the external character of "the kingdom of heaven" — of that which was originally set

up in truth and simplicity — a real thing, though small, but which, through Satan's crafty working, has become inwardly a corrupt mass, though outwardly a far-spreading, showy, popular thing in the earth, gathering all sorts beneath the shadow of its patronage. Such is the lesson — the simple but deeply solemn lesson to be learnt by the spiritual mind from the “leaven “and the “mustard tree" of Matthew 13. And we may add, one result of learning this lesson would be an ability to distinguish between “the kingdom of heaven" and “the assembly of God." The former may be compared to a wide morass, the latter to a running stream passing through it, and in constant danger of losing its distinctive character, as well as its proper direction, by intermingling with the surrounding waters. To confound the two things is to deal a death-blow to all godly discipline and consequent purity in the assembly of God. If the kingdom and the assembly mean one and the same thing, then how should we act in the case of "that wicked person" in 1 Corinthians 5? The apostle tells us “to put him away." Where are we to put him? Our Lord Himself tells us distinctly that “the field is the world;" and again, in John 17, He says that His people are not of the world. This makes all plain enough. But men tell us, in the very face of our Lord's statement, that the field is the assembly, and the tares and wheat, ungodly and godly, are to grow together, that they are on no account to be separated. Thus the plain and positive teaching of the Holy Ghost in 1 Corinthians 5 is set in open opposition to the equally plain and positive teaching of our Lord in Matthew 13; and all this flows from the effort to confound two distinct things, namely, "the kingdom of heaven" and “the assembly of God."

It would not by any means comport with the object of this paper to enter farther upon the interesting subject of “the kingdom." Enough has been said, if the reader has thereby been convinced of the immense importance of duly distinguishing that kingdom from the assembly. What this latter is we shall now proceed to inquire; and may God the Holy Ghost be our Teacher!

II. In handling our question as to the assembly of God, it will give clearness and precision to our thoughts to consider the four following points, namely: —

First, what is the material of which the assembly is composed?

Secondly, what is the centre round which the assembly is gathered?

Thirdly, what is the power by which the assembly is gathered?

Fourthly, what is the authority on which the assembly is gathered?

1. And, first, then, as to the material of which God's assembly is composed; it is, in one word, those possessing salvation, or eternal life. We do not enter the assembly in order to be saved, but as those who are saved. The word is, “On this rock I will build my church." He does not say, “On my church I will build the salvation of souls." One of Rome's boasted dogmas is this — "There is no salvation out of the true church." Yes, but we can go deeper still, and say, “Off the true Rock there is no church." Take away the Rock, and you have nothing but a baseless fabric of error and corruption. What a miserable delusion, to think of being saved by that! Thank God, it is not so. We do not get to

Christ through the church, but to the church through Christ. — To reverse this order is to displace Christ altogether, and thus have neither Rock, nor church, nor salvation. We meet Christ as a life-giving Saviour, before we have anything to say to the assembly at all; and hence we could possess eternal life, and enjoy fall salvation, though there were no such thing as an assembly of God on the earth. [The reader will do well to note the fact that, in Matthew 16 we have the very earliest allusion to the church. and there our Lord speaks of it as a future thing, He says, "On this Rock I will build my church." He does not say, "I have been, or I am building." In short, the church had no existence until our Lord Christ was raised from the dead and glorified at the right hand of God. Then. but not until then, the Holy Ghost was sent down to baptize believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, into one body, and unite them to the risen and glorified Head in heaven. This body has been on the earth since the descent of the Holy Ghost; is here still, and shall be until Christ comes to fetch it to Himself. It is a perfectly unique thing. It is not to be found in Old Testament scripture. Paul expressly tells us it was not revealed in other ages; it was hid in God, and never made known until it was committed to him. (See carefully, Rom. 16: 25, 26; Eph. 3: 3-11; Col. 1: 24-27) True it is — most blessedly true — that God had a people in Old Testament times. Not merely the nation of Israel, but a quickened. saved. spiritual people, who lived by faith, went to heaven. and are there “the spirits of just men made perfect But the church is never spoken of until Matthew 16, and there only as a future thing. As to the expression used by Stephen, "The church in the wilderness" (Acts 7: 38). it is pretty generally known that it simply refers to the congregation of Israel. The

termini of the church's earthly history are Pentecost (Acts 2), and the rapture. (1 Thess, 4: 16, 17)]

We cannot be too simple in grasping this truth, at a time like the present, when ecclesiastical pretension is rising to such a height. The church, falsely so called, is opening her bosom with delusive tenderness, and inviting poor sin-burdened, world-sick, and heavy-laden souls to take refuge therein. She with crafty liberality, throws open her treasury door, and places her resources at the disposal of needy, craving, yearning souls. And truly those resources have powerful attractions for those who are not on “The Rock." There is an ordained priesthood, professing to stand in an unbroken line with the apostles. — Alas! how different the two ends of the line! — There is a continual sacrifice. Alas! a blood-less one, and therefore a worthless one. (Heb. 9: 22) — There is a splendid ritual. Alas! it seeks its origin amid the shadows of a by-gone age — shadows which have been for ever displaced by the Person, the work, and the offices of the eternal Son of God. For ever be His peerless name adored.

The believer has a very conclusive answer to all the pretensions and promises of the Romish system. He can say he has found his all in a crucified and risen Saviour. What does He want with the sacrifice of the mass? He is washed in the blood of Christ. What does he want with a poor, sinful, dying priest, who cannot save himself? He has the Son of God as his priest. What does he want with a pompous ritual, with all its imposing adjuncts? He worships in spirit and in truth, within the holiest of all, whither he enters with boldness, through the blood of Jesus.

Nor is it merely with Roman Catholicism we have to do in the establishment of our first point. We fear there are thousands besides Roman Catholics who, in heart, look to the church, if not for salvation, at least to be a stepping-stone thereto. Hence the importance of seeing clearly that the materials of which God's assembly is composed are those possessing salvation or eternal life; so that whatever be the object of that assembly, it most certainly is not to provide salvation for its members. seeing that all its members are saved ere they enter its precincts at all. God's assembly is a houseful of salvation from one end to the other. Blessed fact! It is not an institution set on foot for the purpose of providing salvation for sinners, nor yet for providing for their religious wants. It is a saved, living body formed and gathered by the Holy Ghost, to make known to "Principalities and powers in the heavenlies, the manifold wisdom of God," and to declare to the whole universe the all-sufficiency of the name of Jesus.

Now, the great enemy of Christ and the church is well aware of what a powerful testimony the assembly of God is called and designed to yield on the earth; and therefore he has put forth all his hellish energy to quash that testimony in every possible way. He hates the name of Jesus, and everything tending to glorify that name. Hence his intense opposition to the assembly as a whole, and to each local expression thereof, wherever it may happen to exist. He has no objection to a mere religious establishment set on foot for the purpose of providing for man's religious wants, whether maintained by government or by voluntary effort. You may set up what you please. You may join what you please. You may be what you please; anything and everything for Satan but

a practical expression of the assembly of God. That he hates most cordially, and will seek to blacken and blast by every means in his power. But those consolatory accents of the Lord Christ fall with divine power on the ear of faith: “On this Rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

2. This conducts us naturally to our second point, namely, What is the centre round which God's assembly is gathered? The centre is Christ — the living Stone, as we read in the Epistle of Peter, “To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priest hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2: 4, 5)

It is around the Person of a living Christ, then, that God's assembly is gathered. It is not round a doctrine, however true; nor round an ordinance, however important; but round a living divine Person. This is a great cardinal and vital point which must be distinctly seized, tenaciously held, and faithfully and constantly avowed and carried out. “To whom coming." It is not said “To which coming." We do not come to a thing, but to a Person; “Let us go forth therefore unto him." (Heb. 13) The Holy Ghost leads us only to Jesus. Nothing short of this will avail. We may speak of joining a church, becoming a member of a congregation, attaching ourselves to a party, a cause, or an interest. All these expressions tend to darken and confuse the mind, and hide from our view the divine idea of the assembly of God. It is not our business to join anything. When God converted us, He joined us by His Spirit to Christ, and

that should be enough for us. Christ is the only centre of God's assembly.

And, we may ask, is not He sufficient? Is it not quite enough for us to be “joined to the Lord?" Why add aught thereto? “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 20) What more can we possibly need? If Jesus is in our midst, why should we think of setting up a human president? Why not unanimously and heartily allow Him to take the president's seat, and bow to Him in all things? Why set up human authority, in any shape or form, in the house of God? But this is done, and it is well to speak plainly about it. Man is set up in that which professes to be an assembly of God. We see human authority exercised in that sphere in which divine authority alone should be acknowledged. It matters not, so far as the foundation principle is concerned, whether it be pope, parson, priest, or president. It is man set up in Christ's place. It may be the pope appointing a cardinal, a legate, or a bishop to his sphere of work; or it may be a president appointing a man to exhort or to “pray for ten minutes. The principle is one and the same. It is human authority acting in that sphere where only God's authority should be owned. If Christ be in our midst, we can count on Him for every thing. Now, in saying this, we anticipate a very probable objection. It may be said by the advocates of human authority, “How could an assembly ever get on without some human presidency? Would it not lead to all sorts of confusion? Would it not open the door for everyone to intrude himself upon the assembly, quite irrespective of gift or qualification? Should we not have men popping up on all

occasions, and worrying us with their empty twaddle and tiresome rodomontade?"

Our answer is a very simple one. Jesus is all-sufficient. We can trust Him to keep order in His house. We feel ourselves far safer in His gracious and powerful hand than in the hands of the most attractive human president. We have all spiritual gifts treasured up in Jesus. He is the fountain head of all ministerial authority. “He hath the seven stars." Let us only confide in Him, and the order of our assembly will be as perfectly provided for as the salvation of our souls. This is just the reason of our connecting, in the title of this pamphlet, “The all-sufficiency of the name of Jesus" with the “Assembly of God." We believe that the name of Jesus is, in very truth, all-sufficient, not only for personal salvation, but for all the exigencies of the assembly — for worship, communion, ministry, discipline, government, everything. Having Him, we have all and abound.

This is the real marrow and substance of our subject. Our one aim and object is to exalt the name of Jesus; and we believe He has been dishonoured in that which calls itself His house. He has been dethroned, and man's authority has been set up. In vain does He bestow a ministerial gift; the possessor of that gift dare not exercise it without the seal, the sanction, and the authority of man. And not only is this so, but if man thinks proper to give his seal, his sanction and authority, to one possessing not a particle of spiritual gift — yea, it may be, not a particle of spiritual life — he is nevertheless a recognized minister. In short, man's authority without Christ's gift makes a man a minister; whereas Christ's gift without man's authority does not.

If this be not a dishonour done to the Lord Christ, what is?

Christian reader, pause here, and deeply ponder this principle of human authority. We confess we are anxious you should get to the root of it, and judge it thoroughly, in the light of holy scripture, and the presence of God. It is, be assured of it, the grand point of distinction between the principles of the assembly of God and every human system of religion under the sun. If you look at all those systems, from Romanism down to the most refined form of religious association, you will find man's authority recognized and demanded. With that you may minister, without it you must not. On the contrary, in the assembly of God, Christ's gift alone makes a man a minister, apart from all human authority. “Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." (Gal. 1: 1) This is the grand principle of ministry in the assembly of God.

Now, in classing Romanism with all the other religious systems of the day, let it, once for all, be distinctly understood that it is only in reference to the principle of ministerial authority. God forbid that we should think of comparing a system which shuts out the word of God, and teaches idolatry, the worship of saints and angels, and a whole mass of gross and abominable error and superstition, with those systems where the word of God is held up, and more or less of scriptural truth promulgated. Nothing can be further from our thoughts. We believe popery to be Satan's master-piece, in the way of a religious system, although “many of the people of God have been, and may yet be, involved therein.

Further, let us at this stage most clearly aver that we believe the saints of God are to be found in every Protestant community, both as ministers and members; and that the Lord uses them in many ways — blesses their work, service, and personal testimony.

And, finally, we feel it right to declare that we would not move a finger to touch any one of those systems. It is not with the systems we have to do; the Lord “ will deal with them. Our business is with the saints in those systems, to seek by every spiritual and scriptural agency to get them to own and act upon the divine principles of the assembly of God.

Having said thus much, in order to prevent misunderstanding, we return with increased power to our point, namely, that the thread of human authority runs through every religious system in Christendom, and that, in good truth, there is not a hair's breadth of consistent standing ground between the church of Rome and a true expression of the assembly of God. We believe that an honest seeker after truth, setting out from amid the dark shadows of popery, cannot possibly halt until he finds himself in the clear and blessed light of that which is a true expression of the assembly of God. He may take years to travel over the intervening space. His steps may be slow and measured; but if only he follows the light, in simplicity and godly sincerity, he will find no rest between those two extremes. The ground of the assembly of God is the true position for all the children of God. Alas! they are not all there; but this is only their loss and their Lord's dishonour. They should be there because not only is God there, but He is allowed to act and rule there.

This latter is of all-importance, inasmuch as it may be truly said, Is not God everywhere? And does He not act in various places? True, He is everywhere, and He works in the midst of palpable error and evil. But He is not allowed to rule in the systems of men, seeing that man's authority is really supreme, as we have already shown. And in addition to this, if the fact of God's converting and blessing souls in a system be a reason why we should be there, then we ought to be in the church of Rome, for how many have been converted and blessed in that awful system? Even in the recent revival we have heard of persons being stricken in Roman Catholic chapels. What proves too much proves nothing at all, and hence no argument can be based on the fact of God's working in a place. He! is sovereign, and may work where He pleases. We are to be subject to His authority, and work where we are commanded. My Master may go where He pleases, but I must go where I am told.

But some may ask, “Is there no danger of incompetent men intruding their ministry upon an assembly of God? And in the event of this, where is the difference between that assembly and the systems of men?" We reply, assuredly there is very great danger. But then such a thing would be despite, not in virtue, of the principle. This makes all the difference. Alas! Alas! we have seen mistakes and failures which are most humiliating.

Let no one imagine that, while we contend for the truth concerning the assembly of God, we are at all ignorant or forgetful of the dangers and trials to which any carrying out its principles are exposed. Far from it. No one could be for twenty-eight years on that ground without being painfully conscious of the difficulty of

maintaining it. But then the very trials, dangers, and difficulties only prove to be so many proofs — painful if you please, but proofs of the truth of the position; and were there no remedy but an appeal to human authority — a setting up of man in Christ's place — a return to worldly systems, we should without hesitation pronounce the remedy to be far worse than the disease. For were we to adopt the remedy, we should have the very worst symptoms of the disease, not to be mourned over as disease, but gloried in as the fruits of so-called order.

But, blessed be God, there is a remedy. What is it? “There am I in their midst." This is enough. It is not, “There is a pope, a priest, a parson, or a president in their midst, at their head, in the chair, or in the pulpit." No thought of such a thing, from cover to cover of the New Testament. Even in the assembly at Corinth, where there was most grievous confusion and disorder, the inspired apostle never hints at such s thing as a human president, under any name whatsoever. “God is the author of peace in all the assemblies of the saints." (1 Cor. 14: 33) God was there to keep order. They were to look to Him, not to a man, under any name. To set up man to keep order in God's assembly is sheer unbelief, and an open insult to the Divine Presence.

Now, we have been often asked to adduce scripture in proof of the idea of divine presidency in an assembly. We at once reply, “There am I;" and “God is the Author." On these two pillars, even had we no more, we can triumphantly build the glorious truth of divine presidency — a truth which must deliver all, who receive and hold it from God, from every system of man, call it by what name you please. It is, in our judgement,

impossible to recognize Christ as the centre and sovereign ruler in the assembly, and continue to sanction the setting up of man. When once we have tasted the sweetness of being under Christ, we car never again submit to the servile bondage of being under man. This is not insubordination or impatience of control. It is only the utter refusal to bow to a false authority — to sanction a sinful usurpation. The moment we see man usurping authority in that which calls itself the church, we simply ask, “Who are you?" and retire to a sphere where God alone is acknowledged.

"But, then, there are errors, evils, and abuses even in this very sphere." Doubtless; but if there are, we have God to correct them. And hence, if an assembly should be troubled by the intrusion of ignorant and foolish men — men who have never yet measured themselves in the presence of God — men who boldly overleap the wide domain over which common sense, good taste, and moral propriety preside, and then vainly talk of being led by the Holy Ghost — restless men, who will be at something, and who keep the assembly in a continual state of nervous apprehension, not knowing what is to come next — should any assembly be thus grievously afflicted, what should they do? Abandon the ground in impatience, chagrin, and disappointment? give all up as a myth, a fable, an idle chimera? go back to that from which they once came out? Alas! this is what some have done, thus proving that they never understood what they were doing, or, if they understood it, that they had not faith to pursue it. May the Lord have mercy upon such, and open their eyes that they may see from whence they have fallen, and get a true view of the assembly of God,

in contrast with the most attractive of the systems of men.

But what is an assembly to do when abuses creep in? Simply look to Christ as the Lord of His house. Own Him in His proper place. Bring the name of Jesus to bear upon the abuse, whatever it be. Will; any say this is not enough? Has it ever been tried and proved ineffectual? We do not, and cannot, believe it. And, most assuredly we can say, if the name of Jesus is not enough, we shall never betake ourselves to man and his miserable order. We shall never, God being our helper, erase that peerless name from the standard round which the Holy Ghost has convened us, to place the perishable name of a mortal in its stead.

We are fully aware of the immense difficulties and painful trials connected with any expression of the assembly of God. We believe its difficulties and trials are perfectly characteristic. There is nothing under the canopy of heaven that the devil hates as he hates such an assembly. He will leave no stone unturned to oppose it. We have seen this exemplified again and again. An evangelist may go to a place and preach the all-sufficiency of the name of Jesus for the salvation of the soul, and he will have thousands hanging on his lips. Let the same man return, and, while he preaches the same gospel, take another step and proclaim the all-sufficiency of that same Jesus for all the exigencies of an assembly of believers, and he will find himself opposed on all hands. Why is this? Because the devil hates the very feeblest expression of the assembly of God. You may see a town left for ages and generations to its dark and dull routine of religious formalism — a dead people, gathering once a week, to hear a dead man go through a

dead service, and all the rest of the week living in sin and folly. There is not a breath of life, not a leaf stirring. The devil likes it well. But let some one come and unfurl the standard of the name of Jesus — Jesus for the soul and Jesus for the assembly — and you will soon see a mighty change The rage of hell is excited, and the dark and dreadful tide of opposition rises.

This, we most fully believe, is the true secret of many of the bitter attacks that have been recently made on those who maintain the principles of the assembly of God. No doubt we have to mourn over many mistakes, errors, and failures. We have given much occasion to the adversary, by our follies and inconsistencies. We have been a poor blotted epistle, a faint and feeble witness, a flickering light. For all this, we have to be deeply humbled before our God. Nothing could be more unbecoming in us than pretension or assumption, or the putting forth of high-sounding ecclesiastical titles or claims. The dust is our place. Yes, beloved brethren, the place of confession and self judgement becomes us, in the presence of our God.

Still, we are not to let slip the glorious principles of the assembly of God because we have so shamefully failed in carrying them out: we are not to judge the truth by our exhibition of it, but to judge our exhibition by the truth. It is one thing to occupy divine ground, and another thing to carry ourselves properly thereon; and while it is perfectly right to judge our practice by our principles, yet truth is truth for all that, and we may rest assured that the devil hates the truth which characterises the assembly. A mere handful Of poor people, gathered in the name of Jesus to break bread, is a thorn in the side of the devil. True it is that such an assembly evokes the

wrath of men, inasmuch as it throws their office and authority overboard, and they cannot bear that. Yet we believe the root of the whole matter will be found in Satan's hatred of the special testimony which such an assembly bears to the all-sufficiency of the name of Jesus for every possible need of the saints of God.

This is a truly noble testimony, and we earnestly long to see it more faithfully carried out. We may fully count upon intense opposition. It will be with us as it was with the returned captives in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. We may expect to encounter many a Rehum and many a Sanballat. Nehemiah might have gone and built any other wall in the whole world but the wall of Jerusalem, and Sanballat would never have molested him. But to build the wall of Jerusalem was an unpardonable offence. And why? Just because Jerusalem was God's earthly centre, round which He will yet gather the restored tribes of Israel. This was the secret of the enemy's opposition. And mark the affected contempt. “If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." And yet Sanballat and his allies were not able to break it down. They might cause it to cease because of the Jews' lack of faith and energy; but they could not break it down when God would have it up. How like is this to the present moment! Surely there is nothing new under the sun. There is affected contempt, but real alarm. And, oh! if those who are gathered in the name of Jesus were only more true in heart to their blessed centre, what testimony there would be! What power! What victory! How it would tell on all around. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." There is nothing like this under the sun, be it ever so feeble and contemptible. The Lord be praised for raising up such a

witness for Himself in these last days. May He greatly increase its effectiveness, by the power of the Holy Ghost!

3. We must now very briefly glance at our third point, namely, what is the power by which the assembly is gathered. Here again man and his doings are set aside. It is not man's will choosing; nor man's reason discovering; nor man's judgement dictating; nor man's conscience demanding: it is the Holy Ghost gathering souls to Jesus. As Jesus is the only centre, so the Holy Ghost is the only gathering power. The one is as independent of man as the other. It is “where two or three are gathered." It does not say “where two or three are met." Persons may meet together round any centre, on any ground, by any influence, and merely form a society, an association, a community. But the Holy Ghost gathers souls to Jesus on the ground of salvation; and this is the principle of the assembly of God.

An assembly may not embrace all the saints of God in a locality, but may yet be really on the ground of the assembly of God, when nothing else is. It may consist of but "two or three," and there may be hundreds of Christians in the various religious systems around; yet the "two or three" would be on the ground of the assembly of God.

This is a very simple truth. A soul led by the Holy Ghost will gather only to the name of Jesus; and if we gather to aught else, be it a point of truth, or some ordinance or another, we are not in that matter led by the Holy Ghost. It is not a question of life or salvation. Thousands are saved by Christ that do not own Him as their Centre. They are gathered to some form of church government,

some favourite doctrine, some special ordinance, some gifted man. The Holy Ghost will never gather to any one of these. He gathers only to a risen Christ. This is true of the whole church of God upon earth; and each local assembly, wherever convened, should be the expression of the whole.

Now, the power in an assembly will very much depend upon the measure in which each member thereof is gathered in integrity of heart to the name of Jesus. If I am gathered to a party holding peculiar opinions — if I am attracted by the people, or by the teaching — if, in a word, it be not the power of the Holy Ghost, leading me to the true centre of God's assembly, I shall only prove a hindrance, a weight, a cause of weakness. I shall be to an assembly what a waster is to a candle, and instead of adding to the general light and usefulness, I shall do the very reverse.

All this is deeply practical. It should lead to much exercise of heart and self-judgement as to what has drawn me to an assembly. and as to my ways therein. We are fully persuaded that the tone and testimony of an assembly have been greatly weakened by the presence of persons not understanding their position. Some present themselves there because they get teaching and blessing there which they cannot get anywhere else. some come because they like the simplicity of the worship. Others come looking for love. None of these things are up to the mark. We should be in an assembly simply because the name of Jesus is the only standard set up there, and the Holy Spirit has gathered" us thereto.

No doubt ministry is most precious, and we shall have it, in more or less power, where all is ordered aright. So also as to simplicity of worship, we are sure to be simple, and real, and true, when the Divine Presence is realized, and the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost fully owned and submitted to. And as to love, If we go looking for it we shall surely be thoroughly disappointed; but if we are enabled to cultivate and manifest it, we shall be sure to get a great deal more than we expect or deserve. It will generally be found that those persons who are perpetually complaining of want of love in others are utterly failing in love themselves; and, on the other hand, those who are really walking in love will tell you that they receive ten thousand times more than they deserve. Let us remember that the best way to get water out of a dry pump is to pour a little water in. You may work at the handle until you are tired, and then go away in fretfulness and impatience, complaining of that horrible pump; whereas, if you would just pour in a little water, you would get in return a gushing stream to satisfy your utmost desire.

We have but little conception of what an assembly would be were each one distinctly led by the Holy Ghost, and gathered only to Jesus. We should not then have to complain of dull, heavy, unprofitable, trying meetings. We should have no fear of an unhallowed intrusion of mere nature and its restless doings — no making of prayer — no talking for talking's sake — no hymn-book seized to fill a gap. Each one would know his place in the Lord's immediate presence — each gifted vessel would be filled, fitted, and used by the Master's hand — each eye would be directed to Jesus — each heart occupied with Him. If a chapter were read, it would be the very

voice of God. If a word were spoken, it would tell with power upon the heart. If prayer were offered, it would lead the soul into the very presence of God. If a hymn were sung, it would lift the spirit up to God, and be like sweeping the strings of the heavenly harp. We should have no ready-made sermons — no teaching or preaching prayers, as though we would explain doctrines to God, or tell Him a whole host of things about ourselves — no praying at our neighbours, or asking for all manner of graces for them, in which we ourselves are lamentably deficient — no singing for music's sake, or being disturbed if harmony be interfered with. All these evils would be avoided. We should feel ourselves in the very sanctuary of God, and enjoy a foretaste of that time when we shall worship in the courts above, and go no more out.

We may be asked, “Where will you find all this down here?" Ah! this is the question. It is one thing to present a beau ideal on paper, and another thing to realize it in the midst of error, failure, and infirmity. Through mercy, some of us have tasted, at times, a little of this blessedness. We have occasionally enjoyed moments of heaven upon earth. Oh! for more of it! May the Lord, in His great mercy, raise the tone of the assemblies everywhere! May He greatly enlarge our capacity for more profound communion and spiritual worship! May He enable us so to walk, in private life, from day to day — so as to judge ourselves and our ways in His holy presence, that at least we may not prove a lump of lead or a waster to any of God's assemblies.

And then, even though we may not be able to reach in experience the true expression of the assembly, yet let us never be satisfied with anything less. Let us honestly

aim at the loftiest standard, and earnestly pray to be lifted up thereto. As to the ground of God's assembly, we should hold it with jealous tenacity, and never consent for an hour to occupy any other. As to the tone and character of an assembly, they may and will vary immensely, and will depend upon the faith and spirituality of those gathered. Where the tone of things is felt to be low — when meetings are felt to be unprofitable — where things are said and done repeatedly which are felt by the spiritual to be wholly out of' place, let all who feel it wait on God — wait continually — wait believingly — and He will assuredly hear and answer. In this way the very trials and exercises which are peculiar to an assembly will have the happy effect of casting us more immediately upon Him, and thus the eater will yield meat, and the strong sweetness. We must count upon trials and difficulties in any expression of the assembly, just because it is the right and only divine thing on this earth. The devil will put forth every effort to drive us from that true and holy ground. He will try the patience, try the temper, hurt the feelings, cause offence in nameless and numberless ways — anything and everything to make us forsake the true ground of the assembly.

It is well to remember this. We can only hold the divine ground by faith. This marks the assembly of God, and distinguishes it from every human system. You cannot get on there save by faith. And, further, if you want to be somebody, if you are seeking a place, if you want to exalt self, you need not think of any true expression of the assembly. You will soon find your level there, if it be in any measure what it should be. Fleshly or worldly greatness, in any shape, will be of no account in such an

assembly. The Divine Presence withers up everything of that kind, and levels all human pretension. Finally, you cannot get on in the assembly if you are living in secret sin. The Divine Presence will not suit you. Have we not often experienced in the assembly a feeling of uneasiness, caused by the recollection of many things which had escaped our notice during the week? Wrong thoughts — foolish words — unspiritual ways — all these things crowd in upon the mind, and exercise the conscience, in the assembly! How is this? Because the atmosphere of the assembly is more intense than that which we have been breathing during the week. We have not been in the presence of God in our private walk. We have not been judging ourselves; and hence, when we take our place in a spiritual assembly, our hearts are detected — our ways are exposed in the light; and that exercise which ought to have gone on in private — even the needed exercise of self judgement, must go on at the table of the Lord. This is poor miserable work for us, but it proves the power of the presence of God in the assembly. Things must be in a miserably low state in any assembly when hearts are not thus detected and exposed. It is a fine evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit in an assembly when careless, carnal, worldly, self-exalting, money-loving, unprincipled persons are compelled to judge themselves in God's presence, or, failing this, are driven away by the spirituality of the atmosphere. Such an assembly is no place for these. They can breathe more freely outside.

Now, we cannot but judge that numbers that have departed from the ground of the assembly have done so because their practical ways did not comport with the purity of the place. No doubt it is easy, in all such cases,

to find an excuse in the conduct of those who are left behind. But if the roots of things were in every case laid bare, we should find that many leave an assembly because of inability or reluctance to bear its searching light. “Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." Evil must be judged, for God cannot sanction it. If an assembly can, it is not practically God's assembly at all, though composed of Christians, as we say. To pretend to be an assembly of God, and not judge false doctrine and evil ways, would involve the blasphemy of saying that God and wickedness can dwell together. The assembly of God must keep itself pure, because it is His dwelling-place. Men may sanction evil, and call it liberality and large-heartedness so to do; but the house of God must keep itself pure. Let this great practical truth sink down into our hearts, and produce its sanctifying influence upon our course and character.

4. A very few words will suffice to set forth, in the last place, “the authority" on which the assembly is gathered. It is the word of God alone. The charter of the assembly is the eternal word of the living and true God. It is not the traditions, the doctrines, nor the commandments of men. A passage of scripture, to which we have more than once referred in the progress of this paper, contains at once the standard round which the assembly is gathered, the power by which it is gathered, and the authority by which it is gathered — “the name of Jesus" — "the Holy Ghost" — “the word of God."

Now these are the same all over the world. Whether I go to New Zealand, to Australia, to Canada, to London, to Paris, to Edinburgh, or Dublin, the centre, the gathering power, and the authority are one and the same. We can

own no other centre but Christ; no gathering energy but the Holy Ghost; no authority but the word of God; no characteristic but holiness of life and soundness in doctrine.

Such is a true expression of the assembly of God, and we cannot acknowledge aught else. Saints of God we can acknowledge, love, and honour as such, wherever we find them; but human systems we look upon as dishonouring to Christ, and hostile to the true interest of the saints of God. We long to see all Christians on the true ground of the assembly. We believe it to be the place of real blessing and effective testimony. We believe there is a character of testimony yielded by carrying out the principles of the assembly which could not be yielded were that assembly broken up, and each member a Whitefield in evangelistic power. We say this not to lower evangelistic work. God forbid. We would that all were Whitefields. But then we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that many affect to despise the assembly, under the plea of going out as evangelists; and when we trace their path, and examine the results of their work, we find that they have no provision for the souls that have been converted by their means. They seem not to know what to do with them. They quarry the stones, but do not build them together. The consequence is that souls are scattered hither and thither, some pursuing a desultory course, others living in isolation, all at fault as to true church ground.

Now, we believe that all these should be gathered on the ground of the assembly of God, to have “fellowship in the breaking of bread and in prayer." They should 'come together on the first day of the “week, to break bread," looking to the Lord Christ to edify them by the mouth of

whom He will. This is the simple path — the normal, the divine idea, needing, it may be, more faith to realize it, because of the clashing and conflicting sects of the present day, but not the less simple and true on that account.

We are aware of course, that all this will be pronounced proselytising, prejudice, and party spirit, by those who seem to regard it as the very beau ideal of Christian liberality and large-heartedness to be able to say, “I belong to nothing." Strange, anomalous position! It just resolves itself in this: it is somebody professing nothingism in order to get rid of all responsibility, and go with all and everything. This is a very easy path for nature, and amiable nature, but we shall see what will come of it in the day of the Lord? Even now we regard it as positive unfaithfulness to Christ, from which may the good Lord deliver His people.

But let none imagine that we want to place the evangelist and the assembly in opposition. Nothing is further from our thoughts. The evangelist should go forth from the bosom of the assembly, in full fellowship therewith; he should work not only to gather souls to Christ, but also bring them to an assembly, where divinely-gifted pastors might watch over them, and divinely-gifted teachers instruct them. We do not want to clip the evangelist's wings, but only to guide his movements. We are unwilling to see real spiritual energy expended in desultory service. No doubt it is a grand result to bring souls to Christ. Every soul linked to Jesus is a work done for ever. But ought not the lambs and sheep to be gathered and cared for? Should anyone be satisfied to purchase sheep, and then leave them to wander whithersoever they list? Surely not. But whither

should Christ's sheep be gathered? Is it into the folds of man's erection, or into an assembly gathered on divine ground? Into the latter unquestionably; for that, we may rest assured, how ever feeble, however despised, however blackened and maligned, is the place for all the lambs and sheep of the flock of Christ.

Here, however, there will be responsibility, care, anxiety, labour, a constant demand for watchfulness and prayer; all of which flesh and blood would like to avoid, if possible. There is much that is agreeable and attractive in the idea of going through the world as an evangelist, having thousands hanging on one's lips, and hundreds of souls as the seals of one's ministry: but what is to be done with these souls? By all means show them their true place with those gathered on the ground of the assembly of God, where, notwithstanding the ruin and apostasy of the professing body, they can enjoy spiritual communion, worship, and ministry. This will involve mach trial and painful exercise. It was so in apostolic times. Those who really cared for the flock of Christ had to shed many a tear, send up many an agonising prayer, spend many a sleepless night. But, then, in all these things, they tasted the sweetness of fellowship with the chief Shepherd; and when He appears, their tears, their prayers, their sleepless nights will be remembered and rewarded; while those who are building up human systems will find them all come to an end, to be heard of no more for ever, and the false shepherds, who ruthlessly seize the pastoral staff only to use it as an instrument of filthy gain to themselves, shall have their faces covered with everlasting confusion.

Here we might close, were it not that we are anxious to answer three queries which may possibly suggest themselves to the reader's mind.

And, in the first place, we may be asked, “Where are we to find this thing that you call 'A true expression of the assembly of God,' from the days of the apostles up to the nineteenth century? And where are we to find it now?" Our answer is simply to point to the words of Christ — "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." It matters but little to us if Neander, Mosheim, Milner, and scores of ecclesiastical historians besides have failed, in their interesting researches, in discerning a single trace of the true expression of God's assembly, from the close of the apostolic era to the opening of the current century. It is quite possible there may have been here and there, amid the thick gloom of the middle ages, “two or three" really "gathered in the name of Jesus," or at least those that sighed after the truth of such a thing. But, be this as it may, it leaves that truth wholly untouched. It is not on the records of historians that we build, but on the infallible truth of God's word; and therefore, although it could be proved that for eighteen hundred years there were not even “two or three gathered in the name of Jesus," it would not in the smallest degree affect the question. The word is not, "What saith the ecclesiastical historian?" but “What saith the scripture?"

[The vast gold fields of Australia and California lay concealed from man's view for thousands of years. Does this fact render the gold less precious to those who have now discovered it?]

If there be any force in the argument founded on history, it would apply equally to the precious institution of the Lord's supper. For how did it fare with that ordinance for over a thousand years? It was stripped of one of its grand elements, wrapped in a dead language, buried in a sepulchre of superstition, and bore this inscription, “A bloodless sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead." And even when, at the time of the Reformation, the Bible was once more permitted to speak to man's conscience, and pour its living light upon the sepulchre in which the Eucharist lay buried, what was produced? Under what form does the Lord's supper appear before us in the Lutheran church? Under the form of consubstantiation. Luther denied that there was any change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; but he maintained, and that, too, in fierce and unbending opposition to the Swiss divines, that there was a mysterious presence of Christ with the bread and wine.

Well, then, should we not have the Lord's supper celebrated in our midst, according to the order laid down in the New Testament? Ought we to lend our countenance to the sacrifice of the mass, or consubstantiation, because the true idea of the Eucharist seems to have been lost to the professing church for so many ages? Surely not. What are we to do? Take the New Testament and see what it says on the point — bow in reverent submission to its authority — spread the Lord's table in its divine simplicity, and celebrate the feast according to the order laid down by our Lord and Master, who said to His disciples, and therefore to us, “This do in remembrance of me."

But, again, we may be asked, “Is it not worse than useless to seek to carry out the principles of the assembly of God, seeing that the professing church is in such complete ruin?" We reply by asking, “Are we to be disobedient because the church is in ruin? Are we to continue in error because the dispensation has failed?" Surely not. We own the ruin, mourn over it, confess it, take our share in it, and in its sad consequences, seek to walk softly and humbly in the midst of it, confessing ourselves to be most unfaithful and unworthy. But though we have failed, Christ has not failed. He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself. He has promised to be with His people to the end of the age. Matthew 18: 20 holds as good today as it did eighteen hundred years ago. “Let God be true and every man a liar." We utterly repudiate the idea of men setting about church-making, or pretending to ordain ministers. We look upon it as a pure assumption, without a single shadow of scripture authority. It is God's work to gather His church and raise up ministers. We have no business to form ourselves into a church, or to ordain office-bearers. No doubt the Lord is very gracious, tender, and pitiful. He bears with our weakness, and overrules our mistakes, and where the heart is true to Him, even though in ignorance, He will assuredly lead on into higher light.

But we must not use God's grace as a plea for unscriptural acting, any more than we should use the church's ruin as a plea for sanctioning error. We have to confess the ruin, count on the grace, and act in simple obedience to the word of the Lord. Such is the path of blessing at all times. The remnant, in the days of Ezra, did not pretend to the power and splendour of Solomon's days, but they obeyed the word of Solomon's Lord, and

they were abundantly blessed in their deed. They did not say, “Things are in ruin, and therefore we had better remain in Babylon, and do nothing." No; they simply confessed their own and their people's sin, and counted on God. This is precisely what we are to do. We are to own the ruin, and count on God.

Finally, if we be asked, “Where is the true expression of this assembly of God now?" We reply, “Where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus." And be it carefully noted, that in order to reach divine results there must be divine conditions. “ To lay claim to the latter without the former is only an empty conceit. If we are not really gathered in the name of Jesus, we have no right to expect that He will be in our midst; and if He be not in our midst our assembly will be a poor affair. But it is our happy privilege to be assembled in such wise as to enjoy His blessed presence amongst us; and having Him, we do not need to set up a poor mortal to preside over us. Christ is Lord of His own house; let no mortal dare to usurp His place. When an assembly is convened for worship, God presides in its midst, and if He be fully owned, the current of communion, worship, and edification will flow on without a ripple and without a curve.* All will be in lovely harmony. But if the flesh be suffered to act, it will grieve and quench the Spirit, and spoil everything. Flesh must be judged in the assembly, just as it should be judged in our individual walk from day to day. But we have to remember that errors and failures in the assembly are no more to be used as arguments against the truth of the divine Presence there, than are our individual failures and errors to be used against the admitted truth of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the believer.

{*We must remember there is a very material difference between those occasions on which the assembly is gathered for worship, and other special services. In these latter the evangelist or the teacher, the preacher or the lecturer, serves in his individual capacity, in responsibility to his Lord. Nor does it make any difference whether such services are conducted in the rooms usually occupied by the assembly or elsewhere. Those forming the assembly may be present or not, as they feel disposed. But when the assembly, as such, is gathered for worship, for one man however gifted, to assume a place, would be to quench the Spirit.}

“Are you the people, then?" some one may say. Well, the question is not, Are we the people? but are we on divine ground? If we are not, the sooner we abandon our position the better. That there is a divine ground, notwithstanding all the darkness and confusion, will hardly be denied. God has not left His people under the necessity of abiding in connection with error and evil. And how are we to know whether we are on divine ground or not? Simply by the divine word. Let us honestly and seriously test everything with which we stand connected by the standard of scripture, and if it cannot abide the trial, let us abandon it at once. Yes, at once. If we pause to reason or weigh consequences we shall surely miss our way. Pause, certainly, to make yourself sure of the mind of the Lord; but never pause to reason when once you have ascertained it. The Lord never gives light for two steps at a time. He gives us light, and when we act on that He gives us more. “The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Precious, soul-stirring motto “More and more." There is no halting —

no standing still — no resting in attainment. It is “more and more," until we are ushered into the full-orbed light of the perfect day of glory.

Reader, are you assembled on this divine ground? If so, cling to it with your whole soul. Are you in this path? If so, press on with all the energies of your moral being. Never be content with anything short of His dwelling in you, and your conscious nearness to Him. Let not Satan rob you of your proper portion by leading you to rest in a mere name. Let him not tempt you to mistake your ostensible position. for your real condition. Cultivate secret communion — secret prayer — constant self judgement. Be especially on your guard against every form of spiritual pride. Cultivate lowliness, meekness, and brokenness of spirit tenderness of conscience, in your own private walk Seek to combine the sweetest grace towards others with the boldness of a lion where truth is concerned. Then will you be a blessing in the assembly of God, and an effective witness of the all-sufficiency of the Name of Jesus.

C. H. M.

Decision for Christ

Decision for Christ.

C. H. Mackintosh.

In approaching the subject of “Decision for Christ," there are two or three obstacles which lie in our way — two or three difficulties which hang around the question, which we would fain remove, if possible, in order that the reader may be able to view the matter on its own proper ground, and in its own proper bearings.

In the first place, we encounter a serious difficulty in the fact that very few of us, comparatively, are in a condition of soul to appreciate the subject, or to suffer a word of exhortation thereon. We are, for the most part, so occupied with the question of our soul's salvation — so taken up with matters affecting ourselves, our peace, our liberty, our comfort, our deliverance from the wrath to come, our interest in Christ, that we have but little heart for ought that purely concerns Christ Himself — His Name — His Person — His cause — His glory.

There are, we may say, two things which lie at the foundation of all true decision for Christ, namely, a conscience purged by the blood of Jesus, and a heart that bows with reverent submission to the authority of His word, in all things. Now we do not mean to dwell upon these things in this paper; first, because we are anxious to get, at once, to our immediate theme; and, secondly, because we have so often dwelt on the subject of establishing the conscience in the peace of the gospel, and in setting before the heart the paramount claims of the word of God. We merely refer to them here for the

purpose of reminding the reader that they are absolutely essential materials in forming the basis of decision for Christ. If my conscience is ill at ease, if I am in doubt as to my salvation, if I am filled with “anxious thought" as to whether I am a child of God or not, decision for Christ is out of the question. I must know that Christ died for me, before I can, intelligently and happily, live for Him.

So also, if there be any reserve in the heart as to my entire subjection to the authority of Christ as my Lord and Master; if I am keeping some chamber of my heart, be it ever so remote, ever so small, closed against the light of His word, it must, of necessity, hinder my whole-hearted decision for Him in this world. In a word, I must know that Christ is mine and I am His, ere my course down here can be one of unswerving, uncompromising decision for Him. If the reader hesitates as to this, if he is still in doubt and darkness, let him pause, and turn directly to the cross of the Son of God, and hearken to what the Holy Spirit declares as to all those who simply put their trust therein. Let him drink into his inmost soul these words, “Be it known unto you, therefore, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Yes, reader, these are the glad tidings for you. “All from all," by faith in a crucified and risen Lord.

But we see another difficulty in the way of our subject. We greatly fear, that while we speak of decision for Christ, some of our readers may suppose that we are contending for some notion or set of notions of our own; that we are pressing some peculiar views or principles to which we vainly and foolishly venture to apply the imposing title of “Decision for Christ." All this we do

most solemnly disclaim. The words which stand at the head of this paper are the simple expression of our thesis. We do not contend for mere attachment to sect, party, or denomination, for adherence to the doctrines or commandments of men. We write in the immediate presence of Him who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men, and we distinctly avow that our one object is to urge upon the Christian reader the necessity of decision for Christ. We would not, if we know ourselves, pen a single line to swell the ranks of a party, or draw over adherents to any particular doctrinal creed, or any special form of church polity. We are impressed with the conviction that where Christ has His right place in the heart, all will be right; and that, where He has not, there will be nothing right. And, further, we believe that nothing but plain decision for Christ can effectually preserve the soul from the fatal influences that are at work around us in the professing Church. Mere orthodoxy cannot preserve us. Attachment to religious forms will not avail in the present fearful struggle. It is, we feel persuaded, a simple question of Christ as our life, and Christ as our object. May the Spirit of God now enable us to ponder aright the subject of “Decision for Christ!"

It is well to bear in mind that there are certain great truths — certain immutable principles — which underlie all the dispensations of God from age to age, and which remain untouched by all the failure, the folly, and the sin of man. It is on these great moral truths, these foundation principles, that faith lays hold, and in them finds its strength and its sustenance. dispensations change and pass away — men prove unfaithful in their varied positions of stewardship and responsibility; but

the word of the Lord endureth for ever. It never changes, never fails. “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." And, again, “Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Nothing can touch the eternal truth of God, and, therefore, what we want, at all times, is to give that truth its proper place in our hearts; to let it act on our conscience, form our character, and shape our way. “Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." This is true security. Here lies the real secret of decision for Christ. What God has spoken must govern us in the most absolute manner, ere our path can be said to be one of plain decision. There may be tenacious adherence to our own notions, obstinate attachment to the prejudices of the age, a blind devotion to certain doctrines and practices resting on a traditional foundation, certain opinions which we have received to hold without ever enquiring as to whether or not there be any authority whatever for such opinions in holy scripture. There may be all this, and much more, and yet not one atom of genuine decision for Christ.

Now we feel we cannot do better than furnish our readers with an example or two drawn from the page of inspired history, which will do more to illustrate and enforce our theme than aught that we could possibly advance. And first, then, let us turn to the book of Esther, and there contemplate, for a few moments, the instructive history of "MORDECAI THE JEW."

This very remarkable man lived at a time in which the Jewish economy had failed through the unfaithfulness and disobedience of the Jewish people. The Gentile was in power. The relationship between Jehovah and Israel

could no longer be publicly acknowledged. The faithful Jew had but to hang his harp on the willows, and sigh over the faded light of other days. The chosen seed were in exile; the city and temple where their fathers worshipped were in ruins, and the vessels of the Lord's house were in a strange land. Such was the outward condition of things in the day in which Mordecai's lot was cast. But, in addition to this, there was a man, very near the throne, occupying only the second place in the empire, sitting beside the very fountain-head of authority, possessing princely wealth, and wielding almost boundless influence. To this great man, strange to say, the poor exiled Jew sternly refuses to bow. Nothing will induce him to yield a single mark of respect to the second man in the kingdom. He will save the life of Ahasuerus; but he will not bow to Haman.

Reader, why was this? Was this blind obstinacy or bold decision — which? In order to determine this we must enquire as to the real root or principle of Mordecai's acting. If, indeed, there was no authority for his conduct in the law of God, then must we at once pronounce it to have been blind obstinacy, foolish pride, or, it may be, envy of a man in power. But if, on the other hand, there be within the covers of the five inspired books of Moses, a plain authority for Mordecai's deportment in this matter, then must we, without hesitation, pronounce his conduct to have been the rare and exquisite fruit of attachment to the law of his God, and uncompromising decision for Him and His holy authority.

This makes all the difference. If it be merely a matter of private opinion — a question concerning which each one may lawfully adopt his own view — then, verily, might such a line of conduct be justly termed the most narrow-

minded bigotry. We hear a great deal, now-a-days, about narrow-mindedness on the one hand, and large-heartedness on the other. But, as a Roman orator, over two thousand years ago, exclaimed in the senate-house of Rome, “Conscript Fathers, long since, indeed, we have lost the true names of things;" so may we, in the bosom of the professing Church, at the close of the nineteenth century, repeat, with far greater force, “Long since we have lost the true names of things." For what do men now call bigotry and narrow-mindedness? A faithful clinging to, and carrying out of, “Thus saith the Lord." And what do they designate large-heartedness? A readiness to sacrifice truth on the altar of politeness and civility.

Reader, be thou fully assured that thus it is at this solemn moment. We do not want to be sour or cynical, morose or gloomy. But we must speak the truth, if we are to speak; at all. We desire that the tongue may be hushed in silence, and the pen may drop from the hand, if we could basely cushion the plain bold, unvarnished truth, through fear of scattering my readers, or to avoid the sneer of the infidel. We cannot shut our eyes to the solemn fact that God's truth is being trampled in the dust; that the Name of Jesus is despised and rejected. We have only to pass from city to city, and from town to town, of highly-favoured England, and read upon the walls the melancholy proofs of the truth of our assertions. Truth is flung aside, in cold contempt. The Name of Jesus is little set by. On the other hand, man is exalted, his reason deified, his will indulged. Where must all this end? “In the blackness of darkness for ever."

How refreshing, in the face of all this, to ponder the history of Mordecai the Jew It is very plain that he knew little and cared less about the thoughts of men on the question of narrow-mindedness. He obeyed the word of the Lord, and this we must be allowed to call real breadth of mind — true largeness of heart. For what, after all, is a narrow mind? A narrow mind we hold to be a mind which refuses to open itself to admit the truth of God. And what, on the contrary, is a large and liberal heart? A heart expanded by the truth and grace of God. Let us not be scared away from the path of plain decision, by the scornful epithets which men have bestowed upon that path. It is a path of peace and purity, a path where the light of an approving conscience is enjoyed, and upon which the beams of divine favour ever pour themselves in undimmed lustre.

But why did Mordecai refuse to bow to Haman? Was there any great principle at stake? Was it merely a whim of his own? Had he a “Thus saith the Lord“ for his warrant in refusing a single nod of the head to the proud Amalekite? Yes. Let us turn to the seventeenth chapter of the book of Exodus, and there we read, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it. Jehovah-nissi; for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

[It is deeply interesting to note that neither the Jews' best Friend, nor their worst enemy is once formally named in the Book of Esther; but faith could recognize both the one and the other.]

Here, then, was Mordecai's authority for not bowing to Haman the Agagite. A faithful Jew could not do reverence to one with whom Jehovah was at war. The heart might plead a thousand excuses and urge a thousand reasons. It might seek an easy path for itself on the plea that the Jewish system was in ruins, and the Amalekite in power, and that therefore it was worse than useless, yea, it was positively absurd, to maintain such lofty ground when the glory of Israel was gone, and the Amalekite was in the place of authority. “Of what use," it might be argued, “can it be to hold up the standard when all is gone to pieces? You are only making your degradation more remarkable by the pertinacious refusal to bow your head. Would it not be better to give just one nod? That will settle the matter. Haman will be satisfied, and you and your people will be safe. Do not be obstinate. Show a tendency to be courteous. Do not stand up, in that dogged way, for a thing so manifestly non-essential. Besides, you should remember that the command in Exodus 17 was only to be rehearsed in the ears of Joshua, and only had its true application in his bright and palmy days. It was never meant for the ears of an exile, never intended to apply in the days of Israel's desolation."

All this, and much beside, might have been urged on Mordecai; but, ah! the answer was simple: “God hath spoken. This is enough for Me. True, we are a scattered people; but the word of the Lord is not scattered. He has not reversed His word about Amalek, nor entered into a treaty of peace with him. Jehovah and Amalek are still at war, and Amalek stands before me in the person of this haughty Agagite. How can I bow to one with whom Jehovah is at war? How can I do homage to a man whom

the faithful Samuel would hew in pieces before the Lord?" “Well, then," it might be further urged upon this devoted Jew, “you will all be destroyed. You must either bow or perish." The answer is still most simple: “I have nothing to do with consequences. They are in the hand of God. Obedience is my path, the results are with Him. It is better to die with a good conscience than live with a bad one. It is better to go to heaven with an uncondemning heart, than remain upon earth with a heart that would make me a coward. God has spoken. I can do no otherwise. May the Lord help me! Amen."

Oh! how well we can understand the mode in which this faithful Jew would be assaulted by the enemy. Nothing but the grace of God can ever enable any one to maintain a deportment of unflinching decision, at a moment in which everything within and around is against us. True it is, we know that it is better to suffer anything than deny our Lord, or fly in the face of His commandments; but yet how little are some of us prepared to endure a single sneer, a single scornful look, a single contemptuous expression, for Christ's sake. And, perhaps, there are few things harder, for some of us at least, to bear than to be reproached on the ground of narrow-mindedness and bigotry. We naturally like to be thought large-hearted and liberal. We like to be accounted men of enlightened mind, sound judgement, and comprehensive grasp. But we must remember that we have no right to be liberal at our Master's expense. We have simply to obey.

Thus it was with Mordecai. He stood like a rock and allowed the whole tide of difficulty and opposition to roll over him. He would not bow to the Amalekite, let the consequence be what it might. Obedience was his path.

The results were with God. And look at the result! In one moment, the tide was turned. The proud Amalekite fell from his lofty eminence, and the exiled Jew was lifted from his sackcloth and ashes and placed next the throne. Haman exchanged his wealth and dignities for a gallows; Mordecai exchanged his sackcloth for a royal robe.

Now it may not always happen that the reward of simple obedience will be as speedy and as signal as in Mordecai's case. And, moreover, we may say that we are not Mordecais, nor are we placed in his position. But the principle holds good whoever and wherever we are. There is not one of us, however obscure or insignificant, that has not a sphere within which our influence is felt for good or for evil. And, besides, independent altogether of our circumstances and the apparent results of our conduct, we are called upon to obey implicitly the word of the Lord — to have His word hidden in our hearts to refuse, with unswerving decision, to do or to say aught that the word of the living God condemns. “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" This should be the language, whether it be the question of a child tempted to steal a lump of sugar, or the most momentous step in evil that one can be tempted to take. The strength and moral security of Mordecai's position lay in this fact, that he had the word of God for his authority. Had it not been so, his conduct would have been senseless in the extreme. To have refused the usual expression of respect to one in high authority, without some weighty reason, could only be regarded as the most unmeaning obstinacy. But the moment you introduce a Thus saith the Lord," the matter is entirely changed The word of

the Lord endureth for ever. The divine testimonies do not fade away or change with the times and seasons. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle of what our God hath spoken shall never pass away. Hence, what had been rehearsed in the ears of Joshua, as he rested in triumph under the banner of Jehovah, was designed to govern the conduct of Mordecai, though clothed in sackcloth as an exile, in the city of Shushan. Ages and generations had passed away; the days of the Judges and the days of the Kings had run their course; but the commandment of the Lord with respect to Amalek had lost — could lose - none of its force. “The Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek;" not merely in the days of Joshua, nor in the days of the Judges, nor in the days of the Kings, but “from generation to generation." Such was the record — the imperishable and immutable record of God, and such was the plain, solid and unquestionable foundation of Mordecai's conduct.

And here let us say a few words as to the immense importance of entire submission to the word of God. We live in a day which is plainly marked by strong self-will. Man's reason, man's will, and man's interest are working together, with appalling success to ignore the authority of holy scripture. So long as the statements of the word of God chime in with man's reason, so long as they do not run counter to His will, and are not subversive of his interests, so long he will tolerate them, or it may be he will quote them with a measure of respect, or, at least, with self-complacency; but the moment it becomes a question of Scripture versus reason, will, or interest, the former is either silently ignored or contemptuously rejected. This is a very

marked and solemn feature of the days that are now passing over our heads. It behoves Christians to be aware of it, and to be on their watchtower. We fear that very few comparatively are truly alive to the real state of the moral atmosphere which enwraps the religious world. We do not refer here so much to the bold attacks of infidel writers. To these we have alluded elsewhere. What we have now before us is rather the cool indifference, on the part of professing Christians, as to scripture; the little power which pure truth wields over the conscience; the way in which the edge of scripture is blunted or turned aside. You quote passage after passage from the inspired Volume, but it seems like the pattering of rain upon the window; the reason is at work, the will is dominant, interest is at stake, human opinions bear sway, God's truth is practically, if not in so many words, set aside.

All this is deeply solemn. We know of few things more dangerous than intellectual familiarity with the letter of Scripture where the spirit of it does not govern the conscience, form the character, and shape the way. We want to tremble at the word of God, to bow down, in reverential submission, to its holy authority, in all things. A single line of scripture ought to be sufficient for our souls, on any point, even though, in carrying it out, we should have to move athwart the opinions of the highest and best of men. May the Lord raise up many faithful and true-hearted witnesses in these last days — men like the faithful Mordecai, who would rather ascend a gallows than bow to an Amalekite.

For the further illustration of our theme, we shall ask the reader to turn to the. sixth chapter of the book of Daniel. There is a special charm and interest in the

history of these living examples presented to us in the Holy Scriptures. They tell us how the truth of God was acted upon, in other days, by men of like passions with ourselves; they prove to us that in every age there have been men who so prized the truth, so reverenced the word of the living God, that they would rather face death, in its most appalling forms, than depart one hair's breadth from the narrow line laid down by the authoritative voice of their Lord and Master. It is healthful to be brought in contact with such men — healthful at all times, but peculiarly so in days like the present, when there is so much laxity and easy-going profession — so much of mere theory — when every one is allowed to go his own way, and hold his own opinion, provided always that he does not interfere with the opinions of his neighbour — when the commandments of God seem to have so little weight, so little power over the heart and conscience. Tradition will get a hearing; public opinion will be respected; anything and everything, in short, but the plain and positive statements of the word of God, will get a place in the thoughts and opinions of men. At such a time, it is we repeat, at once healthful and edifying to muse over the history of men like Mordecai the Jew, and Daniel the prophet, and scores of others, in whose estimation a single line of holy scripture rose far above all the thoughts of men, the decrees of governors, and the statutes of kings, and who declared plainly that they had nothing whatever to do with consequences where the word of the Lord was concerned. Absolute submission to the divine command is that which alone becomes the creature.

It is not, be it observed and well remembered, that any man or any number of men have any right to demand subjection to their decisions or decrees; this would be most strongly deprecated. No man has any right to enforce his opinions upon his fellow. This is plain enough, and we have to bless God for the inestimable privilege of civil and religious liberty, as enjoyed under the government of England. But what we urge upon our readers, just now, is plain decision for Christ, and implicit subjection to His authority, irrespective of everything, and regardless of consequences. This is what we do most earnestly desire for ourselves and for all the people of God, in these last days. We long for that condition of soul, that attitude of heart, that quality of conscience, which shall lead us to bow down in implicit subjection to the commandments of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. No doubt there are difficulties, stumbling blocks, and hostile influences to be encountered. It may be said, for instance, that “It is very difficult for one, now-a-days, to know what is really true and right. There are so many opinions and so many ways, and good men differ so in judgement about the simplest and plainest matters, and yet they all profess to own the Bible as the only standard of appeal; and, moreover, they all declare that their one desire is to do what is right, and to serve the Lord, in their day and generation. How, then, is one to know what is true or what is false, seeing that you will find the very best of men ranged on opposite sides of the same question?"

The answer to all this is very simple. “If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light." But most assuredly my eye is not single if I am looking at men, and reasoning on what I see in them. A single eye rests

simply on the Lord and His word. Men differ, no doubt — they have differed, and they ever will differ; but I am to hearken to the voice of my Lord and do His will. His word is to be my light and my authority, the girdle of my loins in action, the strength of my heart in service, my only warrant for moving hither and thither, the stable foundation of all my ways. If I were to attempt to shape my way according to the thoughts of men, where should I be? How uncertain and unsatisfactory would my course be! Thank God, He has made it all plain — so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein; and all I want is a single eye, a subject will, a teachable spirit, to be led aright. If I really want to be guided aright, my God will surely guide me; but if I am looking to men, if I am governed by mixed motives, if I am seeking my own ends and interests, if I am seeking to please my fellows, then, undoubtedly, my body shall be full of darkness, heavy clouds shall settle down upon my pathway, and uncertainty mark all my goings.

Christian reader, think of these things. Think deeply upon them. Depend upon it, they have a just claim upon your attention. Do you earnestly desire to follow your Lord? Do you really aim at something beyond mere empty profession, cold orthodoxy, or mechanical religiousness? Do you sigh for reality, depth, energy, fervour, and whole heartedness? Then make Christ your one object, His word your rule, His glory your aim. Oh! that thus it may be with the writer and the reader of these lines. Alas! alas! how we have failed in these things, God only knows. But, blessed be His Name, there is full forgiveness with Him, and He giveth more grace, so that we can count upon Him to restore our souls, to revive His work in our hearts, and grant us a closer walk

with Him than we have ever known before. May the blessed Spirit be pleased to use for the furtherance of these ends our meditation on the interesting narrative of "DANIEL THE PROPHET."

"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three presidents, of whom Daniel was first; that the princes might give accounts unto them and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion or fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." (Dan. 6: 1-4)

What a testimony! How truly refreshing to the heart! “No error or fault!" Even his most bitter enemies could not put their finger upon a single blemish in his character, or a flaw in his practical career. Truly this was a rare and admirable character — a bright witness for the God of Israel, even in the dark days of the Babylonish captivity — an unanswerable proof of the fact that no matter where we are situated, or how we are circumstanced, no matter how unfavourable our position, or how dark the day in which our lot is cast, it is our happy privilege so to carry ourselves, in all the details of daily life, as to give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully.

How sad when it is otherwise! How humiliating when those who make a high profession are found constantly breaking down in the most commonplace affairs of

domestic and commercial life! There are few things which more tend to discourage the heart than to hear — as, alas! one so often does — that Christians, so-called, are the most unsatisfactory persons to have any dealings with — that they are bad masters, or bad servants, or bad tradesmen — that they do not attend to their business, that they charge higher prices and give worse value than those who make no profession at all. It is most deplorable when any just ground is afforded for such statements.

No doubt worldly people are only too ready to find occasion against those who profess the Name of Jesus; and, further, we have to remember that there are two sides to every question, and that, very frequently, a broad margin must be left for exaggeration, high colouring, and false impressions. But still, it is the Christian's plain duty so to walk in every position and relationship of life, as that “no error or fault" may be found in him. We should not make any excuses for ourselves. The duties of our situation, whatever it may happen to be, should be scrupulously performed. A careless manner, a slovenly habit, an unprincipled mode of acting, on the part of a Christian, is a serious damage to the cause of Christ, and a dishonour to His holy name. And, on the other hand, diligence, earnestness, punctuality, and fidelity, bring glory to that Name. And this should ever be the Christian's object. He should not aim at his own interest, his own reputation, or his own progress, in seeking to carry himself aright in his family and in his calling in life. True, it will promote his interest, establish his reputation, and further his progress, to be upright and diligent in all his ways; but none of these things should ever be his motive. He is to

be ever and only governed by the one thing, namely, to please and honour his Lord and Master. The standard which the Holy Ghost has set before us, as to all these things, is furnished in the words of the epistle to the Philippians: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." We should not be satisfied with anything less than this. “They could find none occasion nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." Noble testimony! Would that it were more called forth, in this our day, by the deportment, the habits, the temper, and ways of all those who profess and call themselves Christians.

But there was one point in which Daniel's enemies felt they could lay hold of him. “Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Here was a something in the which occasion might be found to ruin this beloved and honoured servant of God. It appears that Daniel had been in the habit of praying three times a day, with his window open toward Jerusalem. This fact was well known, and was speedily laid hold of, and turned to account. “Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, king Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not

changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree."

Here, then, was a deep plot, a subtle snare, laid for the blameless and harmless Daniel. How would he act in the face of all this? Would he not feel it right to lower the standard? Well, if the standard were something of his own, he might surely lower it, and perhaps he ought. But if it were something divine — if his conduct were based upon the truth of God, then clearly it was his place to hold it up as high as ever, regardless of statutes, decrees, and writings established, signed, and countersigned. The whole question hinged upon this. Just as in the case of Mordecai the Jew, the question hinged upon the one point of whether he had any divine warrant for refusing to bow to Haman; so, in the case of Daniel the prophet, the question was, had he any divine authority for praying toward Jerusalem. It certainly seemed strange and odd. Many might have felt disposed to say to him, “Why persist in this practice? What need is there for opening your window and praying toward Jerusalem, in such a public manner? Can you not wait until night has drawn her sable curtain around you, and your closet door has shut you in, and then pour out your heart to your God? This would be prudent, judicious, and expedient. And, surely, your God does not exact this of you. He does not regard time, place, or attitude. All times and places are alike to Him. Are you wise — are you right, in persisting in such a line of action, under such circumstances? It was all well enough before this decree was signed, when you could pray when and as you thought right; but now it does seem like the most

culpable fatuity and blind obstinacy to persevere; it is as though you really courted martyrdom."

All this, and much more we may easily conceive, might be suggested to the mind of the faithful Jew; but still the grand question remained, “What saith the scripture?" Was there any divine reason for Daniel's praying toward Jerusalem? Assuredly there was, In the first place, Jehovah had said to Solomon, in reference to the temple at Jerusalem, “Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." Jerusalem was God's centre. It was, it is, and ever shall be. True, it was in ruins — the temple was in ruins; but God's word was not in ruins, and here is faith's simple but solid warrant. King Solomon had said, at the dedication of the temple, hundreds of years before Daniel's time, “If thy people sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captive unto a land far off or near. Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee, in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly; if they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captive, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee." (2 Chr. 6: 36-39)

Now this was precisely what Daniel was doing — this was the ground he took. He was a captive exile, but his

heart was at Jerusalem, and his eyes followed his heart. If he could not sing the songs of Zion, he could at least breathe his prayers toward Zion's hill. If his harp was on the willows at Babylon, his fond affections turned toward the city of God, now a heap of ruins, but ere long to be an eternal excellency, the joy of the whole earth. It mattered not to him that a decree had been signed by earth's greatest monarch, forbidding him to pray toward the city of his fathers and to his fathers' God. It mattered not to him that the lions' den was yawning to receive him, and the lions' jaws ready to devour him. Like his brother Mordecai, he had nothing to do with consequences. Mordecai would rather mount the gallows than bow to Haman, and Daniel would rather descend to the lions' den than cease to pray to Jehovah. These, surely, were the worthies — the spiritual giants of other days. They were men of the right stamp — real, downright, thorough-going men — men whose hearts and consciences were governed absolutely by the word of God. The world may dub them bigots and fools; but, oh! how the heart does long for such bigots and fools, in these days of false liberality and wisdom!

It might have been said to Mordecai and Daniel that they were contending for mere trifles — for things wholly indifferent and non-essential. This is an argument often used; but, ah! it has no weight with an honest and a devoted heart. Indeed there is nothing more contemptible, in the judgement of every true lover of Jesus, than the principle that regulates the standard as to essentials and non-essentials. For, what is it? Simply this, “All that concerns my salvation is essential; all that merely affects the glory of Christ is nonessential." How terrible is this! Reader, dost thou not utterly abhor it?

What! shall we accept salvation as the fruit of our Lord's death, and deem aught that concerns Him non-essential? God forbid. Yea; rather let us entirely reverse the matter, and regard all that concerns the honour and glory of the Name of Jesus, the truth of His word, and the integrity of His cause, as vital, essential, and fundamental; and all that merely concerns ourselves as non-essential and indifferent. May God grant us this mind! May nothing be deemed trivial by us which has for its foundation the word of the living God!

Thus it was with those devoted men whose history we have been glancing at. Mordecai would not bow his head, and Daniel would not close his window. Blessed men The Lord be praised for such, and for the inspired record of their actings. Mordecai would rather surrender life than diverge from the truth of God, and Daniel would rather do the same than turn away from God's centre. Jehovah had said that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and therefore Mordecai would not bow. Jehovah had said of Jerusalem, “Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually;" therefore Daniel would not cease to pray toward that blessed centre. The word of the Lord endureth for ever, and faith takes its stand on that imperishable foundation. There is an eternal freshness about every word that has come forth from the Lord. His truth holds good throughout all generations; its bloom can never be brushed away, its light can never fade, its edge can never be blunted. All praise be to His holy name!

But let us look, for a moment, at the result of Daniel's faithfulness. The king was plunged into the deepest grief when he discovered his mistake. “He was sore

displeased with himself." So well he might. He had fallen into a snare; but Daniel was in good keeping. It was all right with him. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." It matters not whether it be a lion's den at Babylon or a prison at Philippi, faith and a good conscience can make a man happy in either. We question if Daniel ever spent a happier night on this earth, than the night which he spent in the lions' den. He was there for God, and God was there with him. He was there with an approving conscience and an uncondemning heart. He could look up from the very bottom of that den straight into heaven, yea, that den was heaven upon earth to his happy spirit. Who would not rather be Daniel in the den than Darius in the palace? The one, happy in God, the other “sore displeased with himself." Darius would have every one pray to him; Daniel would pray to none but God. Darius was bound by his own rash decree; Daniel was bound Only by the word of the living God. What a contrast!

And then see in the end what signal honour was put upon Daniel. He stood publicly identified with the one living and true God. “O Daniel," cried the king, “servant of the living God." Truly he had earned this title for himself. He was, unquestionably, a devoted and decided servant of God. He had seen his three brethren cast into a furnace because they would worship only the true God, and he had been cast into the lions' den because he would pray only to Him; but the Lord had appeared for them and him, and given them a glorious triumph. He had allowed them to realize that precious promise made of old to their fathers, that they should be the head and their enemies the tail; that they should be above and

their enemies below. Nothing could be more marked — nothing could more forcibly illustrate the value which God puts upon plain decision and true-hearted devotedness, no matter where, when, or by whom exhibited.

Oh! for an earnest heart in this day of lukewarmness! O Lord, revive thy work!

Gilgal

"Gilgal."

Joshua 5.

C. H. Mackintosh.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4) These few words furnish a title, distinct and unquestionable, for the Christian to range through the wide and magnificent field of Old Testament scripture, and gather therein instruction and comfort, according to the measure of his capacity, and the character or depth of his spiritual need. And, were any further warrant needed, we have it with equal clearness in the words of another inspired epistle: “Now all these things happened unto them (Israel) for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10: 11.

No doubt, in reading the Old Testament, as in reading the New, there is constant need of watchfulness; need of self-emptiness, of dependence upon the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, by whom all scripture has been indicted. The imagination must be checked, lest it lead us into crude notions and fanciful interpretations, which tend to no profit, but rather to the weakening of the power of scripture over the soul, and hindering our growth in the divine life.

Still, we must never lose sight of the divine charter made out for us, in Romans 15: 4 — never forget for a single moment, that “Whatsoever things were written

aforetime were written for our learning." It is in the strength of these words that we invite the reader to accompany us back to the opening of the Book of Joshua, that we may together contemplate the striking and instructive scenes presented there, and seek to gather up some of the precious “learning" there unfolded. If we mistake not, we shall learn some fine lessons on the banks of the Jordan, and find the air of Gilgal most healthful and bracing for the spiritual constitution.

We have all been accustomed to look at Jordan as the figure of death — the death of the believer — his leaving this world, and going to heaven. Doubtless, the reader has often read and heard these lines —

"Could we but stand where Moses stood,

And view the landscape o'er,

Not Jordan's stream, or death's cold flood,

Could fright us from the shore."

But all this line of thought, feeling, and experience, is very far below the mark of true Christianity. A moment's reflection, in the true light which scripture pours upon our souls, would be sufficient to show how utterly deficient is the popular religious thought as to Jordan. For instance, when a believer dies and goes to heaven, is he called to fight? Surely not. All is rest and peace up yonder — ineffable, eternal peace. Not a ripple on that ocean. No sound of alarm throughout that pure and holy region. No conflict there. No need of armour. We shall want no girdle, because our garments may flow loosely around us. We shall not need a breastplate of righteousness, for divine righteousness shall there have its eternal abode. We shall have no want of sandals, for

there will be no rough or thorny places in that fair and blissful region. No shield called for there, inasmuch as there will be no fiery darts flying; no helmet of salvation, for the divine and eternal results of God's salvation shall then be reached. No sword, inasmuch as there will be neither enemy nor evil occurrent throughout all that blissful, sunny region.

Hence, therefore, Jordan cannot mean the death of the believer and his going to heaven, for the simplest of all reasons that it was when Israel crossed the Jordan that their fighting, properly speaking, began. True they had fought with Amalek in the wilderness; but it was in Canaan that their real war commenced. A child can understand this.

But does not Jordan represent death? Most surely it does. And may not the believer have to cross it? True; but if he has, he finds it dry, because the Prince of Life has gone down into its deepest depths, and opened up a pathway for His people by the which they pass over into their eternal inheritance.

There is no such idea in the word of God — in the gospel of Christ, or in the entire range of our heavenly Christianity — as a Christian standing where Moses stood, when, from Pisgah's top, he looked forth over the promised land. Moses, in the governmental dealings of God, was prevented going over Jordan. And, looking at Moses officially, we know that the law could not possibly bring the people into Canaan.

But Christ, the true Joshua, has crossed the Jordan, and not only crossed it, but turned it into a pathway by which the ransomed host can pass over dryshod into the heavenly Canaan. The Christian is not called to stand

shivering on the brink of the river of death, as one in doubt as to how it may go with him. That river is dried up for faith. Its power is gone. Our adorable Lord “has abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel."

Glorious, enfranchising fact! Let us praise Him for it. Let all our ransomed powers adore Him. Let our whole moral being be stirred up to chant the praises of Him who has taken the sting from death, and destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and conducted us into a sphere which is pervaded throughout with life, light, incorruptibility, and glory. May our entire practical career be to His glory!

We shall now proceed to examine, more particularly, the teaching of scripture on this great subject, and may the Holy Spirit Himself be our immediate instructor!

"And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there, before they passed over. And it came to pass, after three days, that the officers went through the host; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Joshua 3: 1-4.

There are three deeply important points in Israel's history, which the reader would do well to ponder. There is, first, the blood-stained lintel, in the land of Egypt; secondly, the Red Sea; thirdly, the river Jordan.

Now, in each of these we have a type of the death of Christ, in some one or other of its grand aspects — for, as we know, that precious death has many and various aspects, and nothing can be more profitable for the Christian, and nothing, surely, ought to be more attractive, than the study of the profound mystery of the death of Christ. There are depths and heights in that mystery which eternity alone will unfold; and it should be our delight, now, under the powerful ministry of the Holy Ghost, and in the perfect light of holy scripture, to search into these things for the strength, comfort, and refreshment of the inward man.

Looking, then, at the death of Christ, as typified by the blood of the paschal lamb, we see in it that which screens us from the judgement of God. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement; I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." Exodus 12.

Now, we need hardly say, it is of the deepest moment for the exercised, consciously guilty, soul, to know that God has provided a shelter from wrath and judgement to come. No rightly instructed person would think, for a moment, of undervaluing such an aspect of the death of Christ. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Israel's safety rested upon God's estimate of the blood. He does not say, “When you see the blood." The Judge saw the blood — knew its value, and passed over the house. Israel was screened by the blood of the lamb —

by God's estimate of that blood, not by their own. Precious fact!

How prone we are to be occupied with our thoughts about the blood of Christ, instead of with God's thoughts! We feel we do not value that precious blood as we ought — who ever did or ever could? and then we begin to question if we are safe, seeing we so sadly fail in our estimate of Christ's work, and in our love to His Person.

Now, if our safety depends, in the smallest degree, upon our estimate of Christ's work, or our love to His Person, we are in more imminent danger than if it depended upon our keeping the law. True it is — most true — who could think of denying it? — we ought to value Christ's work, and we ought to love Himself. But if all this be put upon the footing of a righteous claim, and if our safety rests upon our answering to that claim, then are we in greater danger, and more justly condemned than if we stood on the ground of a broken law. for, just in proportion as the claims of Christ are higher than the claims of Moses, and in proportion as Christianity is higher than the legal system, so are we worse off, in greater danger, further from peace, if our safety depends upon our response to those higher claims.

Mark, it is not that we ought not to answer to such claims; we most certainly ought. But we have not; and hence, so far as we are concerned, our ruin and guilt are only made more manifest, and our condemnation more righteous, if we stand upon the claims of Christ, because we have not answered to them. If we are to be saved by our estimate of Christ, by our response to His claims, by our appreciation of His love, we are worse off by far

than if we were placed under the claims of the law of Moses.

But, blessed be God, it is not so. We are saved by grace — free, sovereign, divine, and eternal grace — not by our sense of grace. We are sheltered by the blood, not by our estimate of the blood. Jehovah did not say, on that awful night, “When you see the blood, and estimate it as you ought, I will pass over you." Nothing of the kind. This is not the way of our God. He wanted to shelter His people, and to let them know that they were sheltered — perfectly, because divinely sheltered — and therefore He places the matter wholly upon a divine basis; He takes it entirely out of their hands, by assuring them that their safety rested, simply and entirely, upon the blood, and upon His estimate thereof. He gives them to understand that they had nothing whatever to do with providing the shelter. It was His to provide. It was theirs to enjoy.

Thus it stood between Jehovah and His Israel, in that memorable night; and thus it stands between Him and the soul that simply trusts in Jesus now. We are not saved by our love, or our estimate, or our anything. We are saved by the blood, and by God's estimate of it. And just as Israel, within that bloodstained lintel, screened from judgement — safe from the sword of the destroyer — could feed upon the roasted lamb, so may the believer, perfectly sheltered from the wrath to come — sweetly secure from all danger — screened from judgement, feed upon Christ in all the preciousness of what He is.

But more of this by-and-by.

We are specially anxious that the reader should weigh the point on which we have been dwelling, if he be one

who has not yet found peace, even as to the question of safety from judgement to come, which, as we shall see (if God permit) ere we close this paper, is but a small part, though an ineffably precious part, of what the death of Christ has procured for us. We have very little idea indeed of how much of the leaven of self-righteousness cleaves to us, even after our conversion, and how immensely it interferes with our peace, and our enjoyment of grace. It may be we fancy we have got done with self-righteousness when we have given up all thoughts of being saved by our works; but, alas! it is not so, for the evil takes a thousand shapes, and of all these, none is more subtle than that at which we have glanced, namely, the feeling that we do not value the blood as we ought, and the doubting our safety on that ground. All this is the fruit of self-righteousness. We have not got done with self. True, we are not, it may be, making a saviour of our doings, but we are of our feelings. We are seeking, unknown to ourselves perhaps, to find some sort of title in our love to God, or our appreciation of Christ.

Now, all this must be given up. We must rest simply on the blood of Christ, and upon God's testimony to that blood. He sees the blood. He values it as it deserves. He is satisfied. This ought to satisfy us. He did not say to Israel, When I see how you be have yourselves; when I see the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the girded loins, the shod feet, I will pass over you.

No doubt all these things had their proper place; but that proper place was not as the ground of safety, but as the secret of communion. They were called to behave themselves — called to keep the feast; but it was as being, not in order to be, a sheltered people. This made

all the difference. It was because they were divinely screened from judgement that they could keep the feast. They had the authority of the word of God to assure them that there was no judgement for them; and if they believed that word they could celebrate the feast in peace and safety. “Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Heb. 11: 28.

Here lies the deep and precious secret of the whole matter. It was by faith he kept the Passover. God had said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you," and He could not deny Himself. It would have been a denial of His very nature and character, and an ignoring of His own blessed remedy, had a single hair of an Israelite's head been touched, on that deeply solemn night. It was not, we repeat, in anywise a question of Israel's state or Israel's deservings. It was simply and entirely a question of the value of the blood in God's sight, and of the truth and authority of His own word.

What stability is here! What peace and rest! What a solid ground of confidence! The blood of Christ, and the word of God! True — divinely true; — let it never be forgotten or lost sight of; it is only by the grace of the Holy Spirit that the word of God can be received, or the blood of Christ relied upon. Still, it is the word of God and the blood of Christ, and nothing else, which give peace to the heart, as regards all question of coming judgement. There can be no judgement for the believer. And why? Because the blood is on the mercy-seat, as the perfect proof that judgement has been already executed.

"He bore on the tree the sentence for me,

And now both the Surety and sinner are free."

Yes, all praise to His name, thus it stands as to every soul that simply takes God at His word, and rests in the precious blood of Christ. It is as impossible that such an one can come into judgement, as that Christ Himself can. All who are sheltered by the blood are as safe as God can make them — as safe as Christ Himself. It seems perfectly wonderful, for any poor sinful mortal to be able to pen such words; but the blessed fact is, it is either this or nothing. If there is any question as to the believer's safety, then the blood of Christ is not on the mercy-seat, or it is of no account in the judgement of God. If it be a question of the believer's state, of his worthiness, of his feelings, of his experience, of his walk, of his love, of his devotedness, of his appreciation of Christ, then would there be no force, no value, no truth in that glorious sentence, “When I see the blood, I will pass over;" for, in that case, the form of speech should be entirely changed, and a dark and chilling shade be cast over its heavenly lustre. It should then be, “When I see the blood, and...."

But no, beloved anxious reader, it is not, and it never can be, thus. Nothing must ever be added — not the weight of a feather, the breadth of a hair, or the movement of an eyelash — to that precious blood which has perfectly satisfied God as a Judge, and which perfectly shelters every soul that simply believes what God says because He says it. If the righteous Judge has declared Himself satisfied, surely the guilty culprit may well be satisfied also. God is satisfied with the blood of Jesus; and when the soul is satisfied likewise, all is settled, and there is peace, as regards the question of judgement. “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." How can there be, seeing He has borne

the condemnation in their stead? To doubt the believer's exemption from judgement is to make God a liar, and to make the blood of Christ of none effect.

The reader will note that, thus far, we have been occupied only with the question of deliverance from judgement — a most weighty question surely. But, as we shall see in the course of this series of papers, there is far more secured for us by the death of Christ than freedom from judgement and wrath, blessed as that is. That peerless sacrifice does a great deal more for us than keep God out as a Judge.

But, for the present, we pause, and shall close this paper with a solemn and earnest question to the reader — Art thou sheltered by the blood of Jesus? Do not rest, beloved, until you can answer with a clear and unhesitating “Yes." Remember, you are either sheltered by the blood, or exposed to the horrors of eternal judgement.

PART 2.

In our last paper we had before us Israel under the shelter of the blood. A grand reality, most surely; who could duly estimate it? What human language could suitably unfold the deep blessedness of being screened from the judgement of God by the blood of the Lamb — of being within that hallowed circle where wrath and judgement can never come? Who can speak aright of the privilege of feeding, in perfect safety, on the Lamb, whose precious blood has for ever averted from us the wrath of a sin-hating God?

But, blessed as all this is, there is much more than this. There is far more comprehended in the salvation of God than deliverance from judgement and wrath. We may

have the fullest assurance that our sins are forgiven, that God will never enter into judgement with us on account of our sins; and yet be very far indeed from the enjoyment of the true Christian position. We may be filled with all manner of fears about ourselves — fears occasioned by the consciousness of indwelling sin — the power of Satan — the influence of the world. All these things may crop up before us, and fill us with the gravest apprehensions.

Thus, for example, when we turn to Exodus 14, we find Israel in the deepest distress, and almost overwhelmed with fear. It would seem as if they had, for the moment, lost sight of the fact that they had been under the cover of the blood.

Let us look at the passage.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them: and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" — mark these words: — "And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the

Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them, encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord."

Now, we may feel disposed to ask, “Are these the people whom we have seen so recently feeding, in perfect Safety, under the cover of the blood?" The very same. Whence, then, these fears, this intense alarm, this agonising cry? Did they really think that Jehovah was going to judge and destroy them, after all? Not exactly. Of what, then, were they afraid? Of perishing in the wilderness after all. “And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

All this was most gloomy and depressing. Their poor hearts seem to fluctuate between “graves in Egypt" and death in the wilderness. There is no sense of deliverance; no adequate knowledge either of God's purposes or of God's salvation. all seems utter darkness, almost bordering upon hopeless despair. They are thoroughly hemmed in and “shut up." They seem in a worse plight than ever. They heartily wish themselves

back again amid the brick-kilns and stubble fields of Egypt. The mountains on either side of them; the sea in front; Pharaoh and all his terrific hosts behind.

The case seemed perfectly hopeless; and hopeless it was, so far as they were concerned. They were utterly powerless, and they were being made to realize it, and this is a very painful process to go through; but very wholesome and valuable, yea, most necessary for all. We must all, in one way or another, learn the force, meaning, and depth of that phrase, “without strength"! It is exactly in proportion as we find out what it is to be without strength, that we are prepared to appreciate God's “due time."

But, we may here inquire, "is there aught in the history of God's people now answering to Israel's experience at the Red Sea?" Doubtless there is; for we are told that the things which happened unto Israel are our ensamples, or types. And, most surely, the scene at the Red Sea is full of instruction for us. How often do we find the children of God plunged in the very depths of distress and darkness as to their state and prospects! It is not that they question the love of God, or the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, nor yet that God will reckon their sins to them, or enter into judgement with them. But still, they have no sense of full deliverance. They do not see the application of the death of Christ to their evil nature. They do not realize the glorious truth that by that death they are completely delivered from this present evil world, from the dominion of sin, and from the power of Satan. They, to a certain extent, see that the blood of Jesus screens them from the judgement of God; but there is no bright, happy, emancipating sense of full and everlasting salvation. They are, to speak

according to our type, at Egypt's side of the Red Sea, and in danger of falling into the hands of the prince of this world They do not see “all their enemies dead on the seashore." They cannot sing the song of redemption. No one can sing it, until he stands by faith on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, or, in other words, until he sees his complete deliverance from sin, the world, and Satan.

Thus, in contemplating the facts of Israel's history, as recorded in the first fifteen chapters of Exodus, we observe that they did not raise a single note of praise until they had passed through the Red Sea. We hear the cry of sore distress, under the cruel lash of Pharaoh's task-masters, and amid the grievous toil of Egypt's brick-kilns. And we hear the cry of terror when they stood “between Migdol and the sea." All this we hear; but not one note of praise, not a single accent of triumph, until the waters of the Red Sea rolled between them and the land of death and darkness, and they saw all the power of the enemy broken and gone. “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord and his servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel."

Now, what is the simple application of all this to us as Christians? What grand lesson are we to learn from the scenes on the shores of the Red Sea? In a word, of what is the Red Sea a type? And what is the difference between the blood-stained lintel and the divided sea?

The Red Sea is the type of the death of Christ, in its application to all our spiritual enemies, sin, the world, and Satan. By the death of Christ the believer is completely and for ever delivered from the power of sin. He is, alas! conscious of the presence of sin; but its power is gone. He has died to sin, in the death of Christ; and what power has sin over a dead man? It is the privilege of the Christian to reckon himself as much delivered from the dominion of sin as a man lying dead on the floor. What power has sin over such an one? None whatever. No more has it over the Christian. Sin dwells in the believer, and will do so to the end of the chapter; but its rule is gone. Christ has wrested the sceptre from the grasp of our old master, and shivered it to atoms. It is not merely that His blood has purged our sins; but His death has broken the power of sin.

It is one thing to know that our sins are forgiven, and another thing altogether to know that “the body of sin is destroyed" — its rule ended — its dominion gone. Many will tell you that they do not question the forgiveness of their past sins, but they do not know what to say as to indwelling sin. They fear lest, after all, that may come against them, and bring them into judgement. Such persons are, to use the figure, “between Migdol and the sea." They have not learnt the doctrine of Romans 6. They have not as yet, in their Spiritual intelligence and apprehension, reached the resurrection side of the Red Sea. They do not know what it is to be dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And let the reader particularly note the force of the apostle's word, “reckon." How very different it is, in every way, from our word, “realise!" This latter word may do very well where natural or human things are

concerned. We can realize physical or material facts; but where a spiritual truth is involved, it is not a question of realising, but of reckoning. How can I realize that I am dead to sin? All my own experience, my own feelings, my inward self-consciousness seems to offer a flat contradiction to the truth. I cannot realise that I am dead; but God tells me I am. He assures me that He counts me to have died to sin when Christ died. I believe it; not because I feel it, but because God says it. Reckon myself to be what God tells me I am. If I were sinless; if I had no sin in me, I should never be told to reckon myself dead to sin; neither should I ever be called to listen to such words as, “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body." But it is just because I have sin dwelling in me, and in order to give me full practical deliverance from its reigning I power, that I am taught the grand enfranchising truth, that the dominion of sin is broken by the death of Christ.

How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? Certainly not. How could I feel it? How could I realise it? How could I ever have the self-consciousness of it, while in the body? Impossible. But God tells me I am dead to sin. I believe it. I do not reason about it. I do not stagger at it because I cannot find any evidence of its truth in myself. I take God at His word. I reckon myself to be what He tells me I am. I do not endeavour to struggle, and strive, and work myself into a sinless state which is impossible. Neither do I imagine myself to be in it, which were a deceit and a delusion; but by a simple, childlike faith, I take the blessed ground which faith assigns me, in association with a dead and risen Christ. I look at Christ, and see in Him, according to God's word, the true expression of what I am, in the Divine Presence. I do not

reason from myself upwards, but I reason from God downwards. This makes all the difference. It is just. the difference between unbelief and faith — between law and grace — between human religion and divine Christianity. If I reason from self, my process of reasoning is carried on in the dark, and all my conclusions must be utterly false. But if, on the other hand, I reason from God, my process of reasoning is carried on in the light, even the light of His eternal truth, and all my conclusions are divinely sound.

It is an unspeakable mercy to get done with self, in all its phases and in all its workings, and to be brought to rest, in all simplicity, on the written word, and on the Christ which that written word presents to our souls. Self-occupation is the death-blow to fellowship, and a complete barrier to the soul's rest. It is absolutely impossible for any one to enjoy peace so long as he is occupied with himself. He must cease from self, and hearken to God's word, and rest, without a single question, on its pure, precious, and everlasting record. God's word never changes. I change; my frames, my feelings, my experience, my circumstances, change continually; but God's word is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Furthermore, it is a grand and essential point for the soul to apprehend that Christ is the only definition of the believer's place before God. This gives immense power, liberty, and blessing. “As he is, so are we, in this world." (1 John 4: 17) This is something perfectly wonderful; only let us ponder it. Let us think of a poor, wretched, guilty, slave of sin, a bondslave of Satan, a votary of the world, exposed to eternal judgement — the flames of an everlasting hell — such an one taken up by

sovereign grace, delivered completely from the grasp of Satan, the dominion of sin, the power of this present evil world — pardoned, washed, justified, brought nigh to God, accepted in Christ, and perfectly and for ever identified with Him, so that the Holy Ghost can say, as Christ is, so is he in this world.

All this seems too good to be true; and, most assuredly, it is too good for us to get; but, blessed be the God of all grace, and blessed be the Christ of God it is not too good for Him to give. God gives like Himself. He will be God, spite of our unworthiness and Satan's opposition. He will act in a way worthy of Himself, and worthy of the Son of His love. Were it a question of our deservings, we could only think of the deepest and darkest pit of hell. But seeing it is a question of what is worthy of God to give, and that He gives according to His estimate of the worthiness of Christ, then, verily, we can think of the very highest place in heaven. The glory of God, and the worthiness of His Son, are involved in His dealings with us; and hence everything that could possibly stand in the way of our eternal blessedness, has been disposed of in such a manner as to secure the divine glory, and furnish a triumphant answer to every plea of the enemy. Is it a question of trespass? “He has forgiven us all trespasses." Is it a question of sin? He has condemned sin. Is it a question of guilt? It is cancelled by the blood of the cross. Is it a question of death? He has taken away its sting, and actually made it part of our property. Is it a question of Satan? He has destroyed him. Is it a question of the world? He has delivered us from it, and snapped every link which connected us with it.

Thus, beloved Christian reader, it stands with us, if we are to be taught by scripture — if we are to take God at

His word — if we are to believe what He says. And, we may add, if it be not thus, we are in our sins; under the power of sin; in the grasp of Satan; obnoxious to death; part and parcel of an evil, Christless, Godless, world, and exposed to the unmitigated wrath of God — the vengeance of eternal fire.

Oh! that the blessed Spirit may open the eyes of God's people, and give them to see their proper place, their proper portion, on resurrection ground, in association with a risen and glorified Christ.

PART 3.

Having glanced at two of the leading points in our subject, namely, Israel under the shelter of the blood; and Israel on the shores of the Red Sea; we have, now, to contemplate for a few moments, Israel crossing the Jordan, and celebrating the paschal feast at Gilgal, in which they represent the true position of Christians now.

The Christian is one who is not only sheltered from judgement by the blood of the Lamb, but delivered from this present evil world, by the death of Christ, and associated with Him where He now is, at the right hand of God. He is blessed with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies in Christ. He is, thus, a heavenly man, and, as such, is called to walk — in this world, in all the varied relationships and responsibilities in which the good hand of God has placed him. He is not a monk, or an ascetic, or a man living in the clouds — fit neither for earth or heaven. He is not one who lives in a dreamy, misty, unpractical region; but, on the contrary, one whose happy privilege it is, from day to day, to reflect, amid the scenes and circumstances of earth, the graces and virtues of a heavenly Christ with whom, through

infinite grace, and on the solid ground of accomplished redemption, he is linked by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Such is the Christian, according to the teaching of the New Testament. Let the reader see that he understands it. It is very real, very definite, very positive, very practical. a child may know it, and realise it, and exhibit it. A Christian is one whose sins are forgiven — who possesses eternal life and knows it — in whom the Holy Ghost dwells — He is accepted in, and associated with a risen and glorified Christ — He has broken with the world, is dead to sin and the law, and finds His object, and His delight, and his spiritual sustenance in the Christ who loved him and gave Himself for him, and for whose coming he waits every day of his life.

This, we repeat, is the New Testament idea of a Christian. How immensely it differs from the ordinary type of Christian profession around as, we need not say. But let the reader measure himself by the divine standard, and see wherein he comes short; for of this he may rest assured, that there is no reason whatsoever, so far as the love of God, or the work of Christ, or the testimony of the Holy Ghost is concerned, why he should not be in the full enjoyment of all the rich and rare spiritual blessings which appertain to the true Christian position. Dark unbelief, fed by legality, bad theology and spurious religiousness, robs many of God's dear children of their proper place and portion. And not only so, but from want of a thorough break with the world, many are sadly hindered from the clear perception and full realisation of their position and privileges as heavenly men.

But we are rather anticipating the instruction unfolded to us in the typical history of Israel, in Joshua 3-5 to which we shall now turn. “And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass, after three days, that the officers went through the host. And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this sway heretofore." Joshua 3: 1-4.

It is most desirable that the reader should, with all simplicity and clearness, seize the true spiritual import of the river Jordan. It typifies the death of Christ in one of its grand aspects, just as the Red Sea typifies it in another. When the children of Israel stood on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, they sang the song of redemption. They were a delivered people — delivered from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. They saw all their enemies dead on the sea shore. They could even anticipate, in glowing accents, their triumphal entrance into the promised land. “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by

the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

All this was perfectly magnificent, and divinely true. But they were not yet in Canaan. Jordan — of which, most surely, there is no mention in their glorious song of victory — lay between them and the promised land. True, in the purpose of God, and in the judgement of faith, the land was theirs; but they had to traverse the wilderness, cross the Jordan, and take possession.

How constantly we see all this exemplified in the history of souls. When first converted, there is nothing but joy and victory and praise. They know their sins forgiven; they are filled with wonder, love and praise. Being justified by faith, they have peace with God, and they can rejoice in hope of His glory, yea and joy in Himself through Jesus Christ our Lord. They are in Romans 5: 1-11; and, in one sense, there can be nothing higher. Even in heaven itself, we shall have nothing higher or better than "joy in God." Persons sometimes speak of Romans 8 being higher than Romans 5. But what can be higher than “joy in God?" If we are brought to God, we have reached the most exalted point to which any soul can come. To know Him as our portion, our rest, our stay, our object, our all; to have all our springs in Him, and know Him as a perfect covering for our eyes, at all times and in all places, and under all circumstances. This is heaven itself to the believer.

But there is this difference between Romans 5 and Romans 8 that 6 and 7 lie between; and when the soul has travelled practically through these latter, and learnt how to apply their profound and precious teaching to the great questions of indwelling sin and the law, then is it in a better state, though, most assuredly, not in a higher standing.

We repeat, and with emphasis, the words, “travelled practically." For it must be even so, if we would really enter into these holy mysteries, according to God. It is easy to talk about being “dead to sin “and “dead to the law" — easy to see these things written in Romans 6 and Romans 7 easy to grasp, in the intellect, the mere theory of these things. But the question is, have we made our own of them? — Have they been applied practically to our souls, by the power of the Holy Ghost? And are they livingly exhibited in our ways, to the glory of Him who, at such a cost to Himself, has brought us into such a marvellous place of blessing and privilege?

It is much to be feared that there is a vast amount of merely intellectual traffic in these deep and precious mysteries of our most holy faith which — were they only laid hold of in spiritual power — are calculated to produce the most marked results in practice.

But, we must return to our theme; and, in doing so, we would ask the reader if he really understands the true spiritual import of the river Jordan? What does it really mean? We have said that it typifies the death of Christ. But in what aspect? — For that precious death has many and various aspects. We believe the Jordan sets forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, not so much in its application to that from which we are delivered, as to

that into which we are introduced. The Red Sea delivered Israel from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. Jordan brought them into the land of Canaan.

We find both in the death of Christ. He, blessed be His Name, has by His death on the cross — His death for us, delivered us from our sins — from guilt and condemnation — from Satan's power, and from this present evil world.

But, more than this, He has by the same infinitely precious work, brought us, now, into an entirely new position, in living union and association with Himself, where He is at God's right hand. Such is the distinct teaching of Ephesians 2. “But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." Verses 4-6.

Note the little word “Hath." He is not speaking of what God will do; but of what He hath done — done for us and with us in Christ Jesus. The believer is not one who is waiting to go to heaven when he dies. He is there already in the Person of His living and glorified Head — there, too, in spirit and by faith.

Is all this real and true? As real and true as that Christ hung on the cross and lay in the grave. As real and true as that we were dead in trespasses and sins. As real and true as the eternal truth of God can make it. As real and true as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the body of every true believer.

Mark, reader, we are not, now, speaking of the practical working out of all this glorious truth in the life of

Christians, from day to day. This is another thing altogether. Alas! alas! if our only idea of true Christian position were to be drawn from the practical career of professing Christians, we might give up Christianity as a myth, a sham and a fable.

But thank God, it is not so. We must learn what true Christianity is from the pages of the New Testament; and, having learnt it there judge ourselves, our ways, our surroundings, by its heavenly light. In this way, while we shall ever have to confess and mourn over our shortcomings, our hearts shall, ever more and more, be filled with praise to Him whose infinite grace has brought us into such a glorious position in union and fellowship with His own Son — a position, blessed be God, in nowise dependent upon our personal state; but which, if really apprehended, must exert a powerful influence upon our entire course, conduct and character.

PART 4.

The more deeply we ponder the typical instruction presented in the river Jordan, the more clearly we must see that the whole Christian position is involved in the standpoint from which we contemplate it. If Jordan means death, and we have to meet it, then, verily, our prospect is a gloomy one. death is the wages of sin, and sin is death's sting; and most surely, if we have to encounter death, there can be but the one terrible issue.

But, thanks be to God, it is not so. The great Antitype of the ark has passed over before us into Jordan, to stem its torrent for us, and make it a dry path for our feet, so that we might pass clean over into our heavenly inheritance. The Prince of life has destroyed, on our behalf, him that had the power of death. He has taken

the sting from death; yea, He has made death itself the very means by which we reach, even now, in spirit and by faith, the true heavenly Canaan.

Let us see how all this is unfolded in our type. Mark particularly the commandment given by the officers of the host. “When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." The ark must go first. They dared not to move one inch along that mysterious way, until the symbol of the divine presence had gone before.

“Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." It was an unknown, an untrodden way. No mortal could tread it with impunity. Death and destruction are linked together. "It is appointed unto men" — not to all men, thank God — "once to die; but after this the judgement." (Heb. 9) Who can stand before the king of terrors? Who can face that grim and terrible foe? Who can encounter the swellings of Jordan? Poor Peter thought he could; but he was sadly mistaken. He said unto Jesus, “Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

How fully these words explain the import of that mystic “space" between Israel and the ark. Peter did not understand that space. He had not studied aright Joshua 3: 4. He knew nothing of that terrible pathway which his blessed Master was about to enter upon. "Peter said

unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

Poor dear Peter! How little he knew of himself, or of that which he was — sincerely, no doubt, though ignorantly — undertaking to do! How little did he imagine that the very sound of death's dark river, heard even in the distance, would be sufficient so to terrify him, as to make him curse and swear that he did not know his Master! “Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."

"Yet there shall be a space between you and it." How needful! How absolutely essential! Truly there was a space between Peter and his Lord. Jesus had to go before. He had to meet death in its most terrific form. He had to tread that rough path in profound solitude — for who could accompany Him? “There shall be a space between you and it: come not near to it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have — not passed this way heretofore."

"Thou canst not follow me now': but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Blessed Master! He would not suffer His poor feeble servant to enter upon that terrible path, until He Himself had gone before, and so entirely changed its character, that the pathway of death should be lighted up with the beams of life and immortality. Our Jesus has "abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel."

Thus death is no longer death to the believer. It was death to Jesus, in all its intensity, in all its horrors, in all its reality. He met it as the power which Satan wields over the soul of man. He met it as the penalty due to sin.

He met it as the just judgement of God against sin — against us. There was not a single feature, not a single ingredient, not a single circumstance, which could possibly render death formidable which did not enter into the death of Christ. He met all; and, blessed be God, we are accounted as having gone through all in and by Him. We died in Him, so that a death has no further claim upon us, or power over us. Its claims are disposed of, its power broken and gone for all believers. The whole scene is cleared completely of death, and filled with life and incorruptibility.

And hence, in Peter's case, we find our Lord, in the last chapter of John, most graciously meeting the desire of His servant's heart — a desire in which he was perfectly sincere — the desire to follow his beloved Lord. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God." Thus death, instead of being the judgement of God to overwhelm Peter, was turned into a means by which Peter could glorify God.

What a glorious fact! What a stupendous mystery! How it magnifies the cross, or rather the One who hung thereon! What a mighty revelation, when a poor sinful man can, in death, glorify God! So completely has death been robbed of its sting — so thoroughly has its character been changed — that, instead of shrinking from it with terror, we can meet it — if it does come — and go through it with songs of victory; and instead of its being to us the heavy wages of sin, it is a means by which we can glorify God.

All praise to Him who has so wrought for us — to Him who has gone down into Jordan's deepest depths for us, and made there a highway by which His ransomed people can pass over into their heavenly inheritance! May our hearts adore Him! May all our powers be stirred up to magnify His holy name May our whole life be devoted to His praise.

But we must proceed with our type.

"And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." Joshua stands before us as a type of the risen Christ, leading His people, in the power of the Holy Ghost, into their heavenly inheritance. The priests bearing the ark into the midst of Jordan typify Christ going down into death for us, and destroying completely its power. “He passed through death's dark raging flood, to make our rest secure;" and not only to make it secure, but to lead us into it, in association with Himself, now, in spirit and by faith; by-and-by, in actual fact.

“And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan."

The passage of the ark into Jordan proved two things, namely, the presence of the living God in the midst of

His people; and that He would most surely drive out all their enemies from before them. The death of Christ is the basis and the guarantee of everything to faith. Grant us but this, that Christ has gone down into death for us, and we argue, with all possible confidence, that, in this one great fact, all is secured. God is with us, and God is for us. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The difficulty of unbelief is, "How shall he?" The difficulty of faith is, “How shall he not?"

Israel might wonder how all the hosts of Canaan could ever be expelled from before them; let them gaze on the ark in the midst of Jordan, and cease to wonder, cease to doubt. The less is included in the greater. And hence we can say, What may we not expect, seeing that Christ has died for us? There is nothing too good, nothing too great, nothing too glorious, for God to do for us, and in us, and with us, seeing He has not spared His only-begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Everything is secured for us by the precious death of Christ. It has opened up the everlasting floodgates of the love of God, so that the rich streams thereof might flow down into the very depths of our souls. It fills us with the sweetest assurance that the One who could bruise His only begotten Son, on the cursed tree, for us, will meet our every need, carry us through all our difficulties, and lead us into the full possession and enjoyment of all that His eternal purpose of grace has in store for us. Having given us such a proof of His love, even when we were yet sinners, what may we not expect at His hands now that He views us in association with that blessed One who glorified Him in death — the death that He died for us? When Israel saw the ark in the

midst of Jordan, they were entitled to consider that all was secured. True they had, as we know, to take possession: they had to plant their feet upon the inheritance; but the power that could stem death's dark waters, could also drive out every foe from before them. and put them in peaceful possession of all that God had promised.

PART 5.

In closing this series of brief papers on Gilgal, we must turn our thoughts to the practical application of that which has been engaging our attention. If it be true — and it is true — that Jesus died for us, it is equally true that we have died in Him, as one of our own poets has sweetly put it:

"For me, Lord Jesus, thou hast died

And I have died in thee;

Thou' t risen; my bands are all untied;

And now Thou livest in me.

The Fathers face of radiant grace

Shines, now in light on me."

Now this is a great practical truth — none more so. It lies at the very foundation of all true Christianity. If Christ has died for us, then, in very deed, He has taken us completely out of our old condition, with all that appertained to it, and placed us upon an entirely new footing. We can look back, from resurrection ground into the dark river of death, and see there, in its deepest depths, the memorial of the victory gained for us by the Prince of Life. We do not look forward to death; we look

back at it. We can truly say, “The bitterness of death is past."

Jesus met death for us, in its most terrible form. Just as the river of Jordan was divided when it presented its most formidable appearance — " For Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest" — so our Jesus encountered our last great enemy, vanquished him in his most terrific form, and left behind, in the very centre of death's dark and dreary domain, the imperishable record of His glorious victory. All praise, homage, and adoration to His peerless name! It is our privilege, by faith and in spirit, to stand on Canaan's side of Jordan, and erect our memorial of what the Saviour, the true Joshua, has done for us.

“And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man. And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God, into the midst of Jordan, and take you up everyman of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel. That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan,

the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." Joshua 4: 1-7.

The great fact was to be seized, and practically carried out, by the whole assembly — "of every tribe a man" — "Every man of you a stone upon his shoulder" — a stone taken from the very spot where the priests' feet stood firm. All were to be brought into living personal contact with the great mysterious fact that the waters of Jordan were cut off. All were to engage in erecting such a memorial of this fact as should elicit inquiry from their children as to what it meant. It was never to be forgotten.

What a lesson is here for us! Are we erecting our memorial? Are we giving evidence — such evidence as may strike even the mind of a child — of the fact that our Jesus has vanquished the power of death for us? Are we affording any practical proof in daily life that Christ has died for us, and that we have died in Him? Is there aught in our actual history, from day to day, answering to the figure set forth in the passage just quoted — "Every man of you a stone upon his shoulder?" Are we declaring plainly that we have passed clean over Jordan — that we belong to heaven — that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? Do our children see aught in our habits and ways, in our spirit and deportment, in our whole character and manner of life, leading them to inquire, “What mean ye by these things?" Are we living as those who are dead with Christ — dead to sin — dead to the world? Are we practically sitting loose to the world — letting go our hold of present things, in the power of communion with a risen Christ?

These are searching questions for the soul, beloved Christian reader. Let us seek to meet them honestly as in the divine presence. We profess these things, we hold them in theory. We say we believe that Jesus died for us, and that we died in Him. Where is the proof? Where the abiding memorial? Where the stone on the shoulder? Let us judge ourselves honestly before God. Let us no longer rest satisfied with anything short of the thorough, practical, habitual, carrying out of the great truth, that “We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God." Mere profession is worthless. We want the living power — the true result — the proper fruit.

"And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan" — stones of peculiar import — no other stones could tell such a tale, teach such a lesson, or symbolise such a stupendous fact — no other stones like them — "those twelve stones did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over. That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever."

Here, then, we see Israel at Gilgal. “Everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded

Joshua." Every member of the host had passed clean over Jordan, not one had been suffered to feel the slightest touch of the river of death. Grace had brought them all safely over into the inheritance promised to their fathers. They were not only separated from Egypt by the Red Sea, but actually brought into Canaan across the dry bed of the Jordan, and encamped in Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho.

And now mark what follows. “And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites which were on — the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of — the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. At that time" — note the words! when all the nations were paralysed with terror at the very thought of this people — "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time."

How deeply significant is this! How suggestive are these “sharp knives!" How needful! If Israel are about to bring the sword upon the Canaanites, Israel must have the sharp knife applied to themselves. They had never been circumcised in the wilderness. The reproach of Egypt had never been rolled away from them. And ere they could celebrate the Passover, and eat of the old corn of the land of Canaan, they must have the sentence of death written upon them. No doubt this was aught but agreeable to nature, but it must be done. How could they take possession of Canaan with the reproach of Egypt resting upon them? How could uncircumcised people dispossess the Canaanites! Impossible. The sharp

knives had to do their work throughout the camp of Israel ere they could eat of Canaan's food, or prosecute its warfare.

“And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise. All the people that came out of Egypt that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.....And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal ("rolling") unto this day. And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month, at even, in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn, in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."

Here, then, we have a type of the full Christian position. The Christian is a heavenly man, dead to the world, crucified with Christ, associated with Him where He now is: and, while waiting for His appearing, occupied in heart with Him, feeding, by faith, upon Him as the proper nourishment of the new man.

Such is the Christian's position — such his portion; but in order to enter fully into the enjoyment thereof, there

must be the application of the “sharp knife “to all that belongs to mere nature. There must be the sentence of death written upon that which scripture designates “the old man."

All this must be really and practically entered into, if we would maintain our position, or enjoy our proper portion as heavenly men. If we are indulging nature, if we are living in a low, worldly atmosphere, if we are going in for this world's pursuits, its pleasures, its politics, its riches, its honours, its fashions, and its distinctions, then, verily, it is impossible that we can be enjoying fellowship with our risen Head and Lord. [The reader may here remark that “the old corn of the land of Canaan" is a type of Christ risen and glorified. The manna is a type of Christ in His humiliation. The remembrance of Him in the latter is ineffably precious to the soul. It is sweet to look back and trace His way, as the lowly, humble, self-emptied man. This is to feed upon the hidden manna — "Christ once humbled here." Nevertheless, a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ is the true object for the heart of the Christian; but to enjoy this object, the reproach of this present evil world must be rolled away from us by the spiritual application of the circumcision of Christ.] Christ is in heaven, and to enjoy Him we must be living, in spirit and by faith, where He is. He is not of this world; and if we are of it, we cannot be enjoying fellowship with Him. “If we say that we have fellow ship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." 1 John 1: 6.

This is most solemn. If I am living in and of the world, I am walking in darkness, and I can have no fellowship with a heavenly Christ. “Wherefore," says the blessed apostle, “if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of

the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" Do we really understand these words? Have we weighed the full force of the expression, “living in the world?" Is the Christian not to be as one living in the world? Clearly not. He is to live in spirit where Christ is. As to fact, He is obviously on this earth, moving up and down, and in and out, in the varied relations of life, and in the varied spheres of action in which the hand of God has set him. But his home is in heaven. His life is there. His object, his rest, his proper all, is in heaven. He does not belong to earth. His citizenship is in heaven; and in order to make this good in actual practice, from day to day, there must be the denial of self, the mortification of our members.

All this comes vividly out in Colossians 3. Indeed, it would be impossible to give a more striking exposition of the entire subject of “Gilgal" than that presented in the following lines: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." And now comes the true spiritual import and application of “Gilgal" and its “sharp knives."

“Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." May the Holy Spirit lead us into a deeper and fuller understanding of our place, portion, and practice, as Christians! Would to God that we better knew what it is to feed upon the old corn of the land, at the true spiritual Gilgal, that thus we might be better fitted for the conflict and service to which we are called?

God For Us

"God for us."

C. H. Mackintosh.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8: 31.

How much is wrapped up in these few words, “God for us" They form one of those marvellous chains of three links so frequently found in scripture. We have “God" linked on to “us" by that precious little word "for." This secures everything, for time and eternity. There is not a single thing within the entire range of a creature's necessities that is not included in the brief but comprehensive sentence which forms the heading of this paper. If God be for us, then it follows, of necessity — blessed necessity — that neither our sins, nor our iniquities, nor our guilt, nor our ruined nature, nor Satan, nor the world, nor any other creature can possibly stand in the way of our present peace and our everlasting felicity and glory. God can dispose of all — has disposed of them, in such a way as to illustrate His own glory, and magnify His holy Name, throughout the wide universe, for ever and ever. All praise and adoration be to the Eternal Trinity!

It may, however, be that the reader feels disposed, at the very outset, to inquire how he is to know his place amongst the “us," of our precious thesis. This truly, is a most momentous question. Our eternal weal or woe hangs upon the answer. How, then, are we to know that God is for us? In reply to this most weighty question, we shall seek, by God's grace, to furnish the reader with

five substantial proofs that God is for us, in all our need, our guilt, our misery, and our danger — for us, spite of all that we are, and all that we have done — for us, although there is no reason whatever, so far as we are concerned, why He should be for us, but every reason why He should be against us.

The first grand proof which we shall adduce is

THE GIFT OF HIS SON.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

Now, we are glad, for various reasons, to commence our series of proofs with these memorable words. In the first place, they meet a difficulty which may suggest itself to the mind of an anxious reader — a difficulty based upon the fact that the sentence culled from Romans 8: 31 evidently applies, primarily, to believers and only to such, as does the entire epistle and every one of the epistles.

But, blessed be God, no such difficulty can be started in reference to the all-embracing, and encouraging words of Him who spake as never man spake. When we have from the lips of our blessed Lord Himself, the eternal Son of God, such words as these, "God so loved the world," we have no ground whatever for questioning their application to each and all who come under the comprehensive word “world." Before anyone can prove that the free love of God does not apply to him, he must first prove that he does not form a part of the world, but that he belongs to some other sphere of being. If indeed, our Lord had said, “God so loved a certain portion of the world," call it what you please, then verily it would be

absolutely necessary to prove that we belong to that particular portion or class, ere we could attempt to apply His words to ourselves. If He had said that God so loved the predestinated, the elect, or the called, then we must seek to know our place amongst the number of such, before we can take home to ourselves the precious assurance of the love of God, as proved by the gift of His Son.

But our Lord uses no such qualifying clause. He is addressing one who, from his earliest days, had been trained and accustomed to take a very limited view indeed of the favour and goodness of God. Nicodemus had been taught to consider that the rich tide of Jehovah's goodness, loving kindness, and tender mercy could only flow within the narrow enclosure of the Jewish system and the Jewish nation. The thought of its rolling forth to the wide wide world had never, we may safely assert, penetrated the mind of one trained amid the contracting influences of the legal system. Hence, therefore, it must have sounded passing strange in his ear, to hear “a teacher come from God" giving utterance to the great fact that God loved not merely the Jewish nation, nor yet some special portion of the human race, but “the world." No doubt, such a statement would add not a little to the amazement felt by this master in Israel at being told that he himself, with all his religious advantages, needed to be born again in order to see or enter the kingdom of God.

Do we then deny or call in question the grand truth of predestination, election, or effectual calling? God forbid We hold these things as amongst the fundamental principle of true Christianity. We believe in the eternal

counsels and purposes of our God — His unsearchable decrees — His electing love — His sovereign mercy.

But do any or all of these things interfere, in the smallest degree, with the gracious activities of the divine nature, or the outgoings of God's love towards a lost world? In no wise. God is love. That is His blessed nature, and this nature must express itself toward all. The mistake lies in supposing that because God has His purposes, His counsels, His decrees — because He is sovereign in His grace and mercy — because He has chosen from all eternity a people for His own praise and glory — because the names of the redeemed, all the redeemed, were written down in the book of the slain Lamb, before the foundation of the world — that therefore God cannot be said to love all mankind — to love the world — and, moreover that the glad tidings of God's full and free salvation ought not to be proclaimed in the ears of every creature under heaven.

The simple fact is that the two lines, though so perfectly distinct, are laid down with equal clearness, in the word of God; neither interferes, in the smallest degree, with the other, but both together go to make up the beauteous harmony of divine truth and to set forth the glorious unity of the divine nature.

Now, it is with the activities of the divine nature and the outgoings of divine love that the preacher of the gospel has specially to do. He is not to be cramped, crippled, or confined in his blessed work, by any reference to God's secret decrees or purposes, though fully aware of the existence of such. His mission is to the world — the wide wide world. His theme is salvation — a salvation as full as the heart of God, as permanent as the throne of God

— as free as the air — free to all without any exception, limitation, or condition whatsoever. The basis of his work is the atoning death of Christ which has removed all barriers out of the way, and opened up the floodgates in order that the mighty tide of divine love may roll forth, in all its fullness, richness and blessedness, to a lost and guilty world.

And here, we may add, lies the ground of man's responsibility in reference to the gospel of God. If, indeed, it be true that God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son — if “the righteousness of God is unto all" — if it be God's gracious will that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" — if He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance — then verily is every man who hears this glorious gospel laid under the most solemn responsibility to believe it and be saved. No one can honestly and truthfully turn round and say, “I longed to be saved, but could not, because I was not one of the elect. I longed to flee from the wrath to come but was prevented by the insuperable barrier of the divine decree which irresistibly consigned me to an everlasting hell."

There is not, within the covers of the volume of God, in the entire range of His dealings with His creatures, in the aspect of His character, or in the enactments of His moral government, the very faintest shadow of a foundation for such an objection. Every man is left without excuse. God can say to all who have rejected His gospel, “I would, but ye would not." There is absolutely no such thing as reprobation in the word of God, meaning, the consignment on God's part, of any number of His creatures to everlasting damnation. Everlasting

fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25.) Men will rush into it. “Vessels of wrath" are fitted, not by God, but by themselves, “to destruction." (Rom. 9.) Everyone who gets to heaven will have to thank God for it. Everyone who finds himself in hell will have to thank himself for it.

Furthermore, we have ever to remember that the sinner has nothing to do with God's unpublished decrees. What does he — what can he — know about such? Nothing whatever. But he has to do with God's published love — His proffered mercy — His free salvation — His glorious gospel. We may fearlessly assert that so long as these glowing and glorious words shine in the record of God, “Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely," it is impossible for any son or daughter of Adam to say, “I longed to be saved, but could not. I thirsted for the living water, but could not reach it. The well was deep and I had nothing to draw with." Ah, no, such language will never be used, such an objection will never be urged by anyone in all the ranks of the lost. When men pass into eternity they will see with awful clearness what they now affect to think is so obscure and perplexing, namely, the perfect compatibility of God's electing sovereign grace and the free offer of salvation to all — the fullest harmony between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, We fondly trust the reader sees these things, even now. It is of the very last possible importance to maintain the balance of truth in the soul — to allow the beams of divine revelation to act, with full power, on the heart and conscience, unimpeded by the murky atmosphere of mere human theology. There is imminent danger in taking up a certain number of abstract truths and forming them into a system. We

want the adjusting power of all truth. The growth and practical sanctification of the soul are promoted, not by some truth, but by the truth, in all its fullness, as embodied in the person of Christ, and set forth by the eternal Spirit in the holy scriptures. We must get rid completely of all our own preconceived notions — all merely theological views and opinions — and come like a little child, to the feet of Jesus to be taught by His Spirit, from out His holy word. Thus only shall we find rest from conflicting dogmas. Thus shall all the heavy clouds and mists of human opinion be rolled away and our enfranchised souls shall bask in the clear sunlight of a full divine revelation.

We shall now proceed with our proofs.

The second fact which we shall adduce to prove that God is for us will be found in THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

And, for our present purpose, it is only necessary for us to take up one feature in the atoning death of Christ, but that one feature is a cardinal one. We refer to the marvellous fact set forth by the Holy Ghost in the prophet Isaiah, “It pleased Jehovah to bruise him. He hath put him to grief" Isaiah 53.

Our blessed Lord might have come into this world of sin and sorrow. He might have become a man. He might have been baptised in the Jordan — anointed by the Holy Ghost — tempted of Satan in the wilderness. He might have gone about doing good. He might have lived and laboured, wept and prayed, and, at the close, gone back to heaven again, thus leaving us involved in deeper gloom than ever. He might, like the priest or the Levite, in the parable, have come and looked upon us in our

wounds and misery, passed by on the other side and returned alone to the place from whence He came.

And what if He had? what, reader, but the flames of an everlasting hell, for thee and me? For, be it well remembered, that all the living labours of the Son of God — His amazing ministry — His days of toil and His nights of prayer — His tears, His sighs, His groans — the whole of His life-work, from the manger up to, but short of, the cross, could not have blotted out one speck of guilt from a human conscience. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." No doubt, the eternal Son had to become a man that He might die; but incarnation could not cancel guilt. Indeed, the life of Christ, as a man on this earth, only proved the human race more guilty still. “If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin." The light that shone in His blessed ways only revealed the moral darkness of man — of Israel — of the world. Hence, therefore, had He merely come and lived and laboured here for three-and-thirty years, and gone back to heaven, our guilt and moral darkness would have been fully proved but no atonement made. “It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

This is a grand foundation-truth of Christianity, and must be constantly affirmed, and tenaciously held. There is immense moral power in it. If it be true that all the life-labours of the Son of God — His tears, His prayers, His groans — His sighs — if all these things put together could not cancel one single speck of guilt; then, indeed, may we not lawfully inquire what possible value can there be in our works — our tears — our prayers — our religious services — our ordinances, sacraments and ceremonies — the whole range of religious activity and moral reform? Can such things avail to cancel our sins

and give us a righteousness before God? The thought is perfectly monstrous. If any or all of these things could avail, then why the sacrificial, atoning death of Christ? Why that ineffable and inestimable sacrifice, if aught else would have done?

But, it will perhaps be said that, although none of these things could avail without the death of Christ, yet they must be added to it. For what? To make that peerless death — that precious blood — that priceless sacrifice of full avail? Is that it? Shall the rubbish of human doings, human righteousness, be flung into the scale to make the sacrifice of Christ of full avail in the Judgement of God? The bare thought is positive and absolute blasphemy.

But are there not to be good works? Yes, verily; but what are they? Are they the pious doings, the religious efforts, the moral activities of unregenerate, unconverted, unbelieving nature? Nay. What then? What are the Christian's good works? They are life work's, not dead works. They are the precious fruits of life possessed — the life of Christ in the true believer. There is not anything beneath the canopy of heaven which God can accept as a good work save the fruit of the grace of Christ in the believer. The very feeblest expression of the life of Christ, in the daily history of a Christian, is fragrant and precious to God. But the most splendid and gigantic labours of an unbeliever are, in God's account, but “dead works."

All this, however, is a digression from our main line, to which we must now return.

We have said that, for our present purpose, we shall merely refer to one special point in the death of Christ,

and that is the fact that it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him. Herein lies the striking and soul-subduing proof that God is for us. “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." He not merely gave Him but bruised Him, and that for us. That spotless, holy, perfect One — the only perfect Man that ever trod this earth — the One who ever did the things which pleased His Father — whose whole life from the manger to the tree was one continued sweet odour ascending to the throne and to the heart of God — whose every movement, every word, every look, every thought was well pleasing to God — whose one grand object, from first to last, was to glorify God and finish His work — this blessed One was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God — was nailed to the cursed tree, and there endured the righteous wrath of a sin hating God; and all this because God was for us — even us.

What marvellous and matchless grace is here! The Just One bruised for the unjust — the sinless, spotless, holy Jesus, bruised by the hand of Infinite Justice in order that guilty rebels might be saved; and not only saved but brought into the position and relationship of sons — sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty — heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

This surely is grace — rich, free, sovereign grace — grace abounding to the very chief of sinners — grace reigning, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ. Who would not trust this grace? Who can look at the cross, and doubt that God is for the sinner — for any sinner — for him — for the reader of these lines? Who would not confide in that love that shines in the cross? Who can look at the cross and not see that God willeth not the death of any sinner? Why did He not

allow us to perish in our guilt — to descend into that everlasting hell which we so richly deserved because of our sins? Why give His Only-begotten Son? Why bruise Him on that shameful cross? Why hide His face from the only perfect Man that ever lived — that Man His own Eternal Son? Why all this, reader? Surely it was because God is for us, spite of all our guilt and sinful rebellion. Yes, blessed be His Name, He is for the poor self-destroyed, hell-deserving sinner, be he who or what he may; and each one whose eye scans these lines is now entreated to come and confide in the love that gave Jesus from the bosom and bruised Him on the cross.

Oh! beloved reader, do come, just now. Delay not! Waver not! Reason not! Listen not to Satan! Listen not to the suggestions and imaginings of your own heart; but listen to that word which assures you that God is for you, and to that love which shines forth in the gift and the death of His Son.

In pursuing what we may truly call the golden chain of evidence in proof that God is for us, we have dwelt upon the two precious facts of the gift and the death of His Son. We have travelled from the bosom to the cross, along that mysterious and marvellous path which is marked by the footprints of divine and everlasting love. we have seen the blessed One not only giving His only begotten Son from His bosom, but actually bruising Him for us — making His spotless soul an offering for sin — bringing Him down into the dust of death — making Him to be sin for us judging Him in our stead — thus affording the most unanswerable evidence of the fact that He is for us, that His heart is toward us, that He earnestly desires our salvation, seeing that He hath not

withheld His Son, His only Son from us, but delivered Him up for us all.

We shall now proceed to our third proof, which is furnished by THE RAISING OF HIS SON.

And in speaking of the glorious fact of resurrection, we must confine ourselves to the one point therein, namely, the proof which it furnishes of God's being friendly to us. A passage or two of scripture will suffice to unfold and establish this special point.

In Romans 4, the inspired apostle introduces God to our hearts as the One who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He is speaking of Abraham who, He tells us, “against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that" — what? That gave His Son? Nay. That bruised His Son upon the cross? Nay. What then? “That raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" — the very same "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Anxious reader, weigh this great fact. What was it that brought the precious Saviour to the cross? What brought Him down to the dust of death? Was it not our

offences? Truly so. “He was delivered for our offences." He was nailed to the cursed tree for us. He represented us on the cross. He was our Substitute, in all the full value and deep significance of that word. He took our place and was treated, in every respect, as we deserved to be treated. The hand of infinite justice dealt with our sins — all our sins, at the cross. Jesus made Himself responsible for all our offences, our iniquities, our transgressions, our liabilities, all that was or ever could be against us — He, blessed be His peerless and adorable name! — made himself answerable for all, and died in our stead, under the full weight of our sins. He died, the just for the unjust.

Where is He now? The heart bounds with ineffable joy and holy triumph at the thought of the answer. Where is the blessed One who hung on yonder cross, and lay in yonder tomb? He is at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour. Who set Him there? Who put the crown upon His blessed brow? God Himself. The One who gave Him, and the One who bruised Him is the One who raised Him, and it is in Him we are to believe if we are to be counted righteous. This is the special point before the apostle's mind. Righteousness shall be imputed to us if we believe on God as the One who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Mark the vital link. Seize the all-important connection. The self-same One who hung upon the cross, charged with all our offences, is now on the throne without them. How did He get there? Was it in virtue of His eternal Godhead? No: for on that ground He was always there. He was God over all blessed for ever. Was it in virtue of His eternal Sonship? Nay; for He was ever there on that ground also. [We rejoice in every opportunity for the

setting forth of Christ's eternal Sonship. We hold it to be an integral and essentially necessary part of the Christian faith.]

Hence, therefore, it could, in no wise, meet our need as guilty sinners, charged with innumerable offences, to be told that the eternal Son of the Father had taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, inasmuch as that place ever belonged to Him — yea, the very deepest and tenderest place in the bosom of the Father.

But, further, we may enquire, was it as the spotless, sinless, perfect Man that our adorable Lord took His seat on the throne? Nay; as such, He could, at any moment, between the manger and the cross, have taken His place there.

To what conclusion, then, are we absolutely shut up, in this matter? To that most precious, that tranquillising conclusion, that the self-same One who was delivered for our offences, bruised for our iniquities, judged in our stead, is now in heaven; that the One who represented us on the cross, is now on the throne; that the One who stood charged with all our guilt, is now crowned with glory and honour; that, so perfectly, so absolutely and completely, has He disposed of the entire question of our sins, that infinite justice has raised him from the dead, and placed a diadem of glory upon His sacred brow.

Reader, dost thou understand this? Dost thou see its bearing upon thyself? Dost thou believe in the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? Dost thou see that, in so doing, He has declared Himself friendly to thee? And dost thou believe that, in raising up Jesus, He set forth His infinite satisfaction in the great work of

atonement, and furnished thee with a receipt in full for all thy debts — a receipt for the “ten thousand talents."

Here lies the gist, marrow, and substance of this magnificent argument of Romans 4. If the man who was delivered for our offences is now in heaven, and in heaven, too, by the hand and act of God himself; then, most surely, our offences are all gone, and we stand justified from all things, as free from every charge of guilt, and every breath of condemnation, as the blessed One Himself. It cannot possibly be otherwise, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It is utterly impossible for a charge to be brought against the believer in the God of resurrection, for the simplest of all reasons that the One whom He raised was the One whom He bruised for the believer's sins. Why did He raise Him? Because the sins for which He bruised Him were all put away, and put away for ever. The Lord Jesus, having undertaken our cause, and made Himself answerable for us in every way, could not be where He now is, if a single jot or tittle of our guilt remained. But, on the other hand, being where He now is, and being there by God's own act, it is impossible — utterly impossible — for any question to be raised as to the full and complete justification and perfect righteousness of the soul that believes in Him. Thus, the moment that any one believes in God, in the special character of the raiser of Jesus, he is counted perfectly righteous before Him. This is most marvellous, but divinely and eternally true. May the reader feel its power, sweetness, and tranquillising virtue! Yea, may the eternal Spirit give him the blessed sense of it, deep down in his heart! Then, indeed shall he have perfect peace in his soul; then, too, shall he under stand how

that, in raising, as well as in bruising and giving His Son, God has declared and proved Himself to be for us.

We had intended to bring under the special notice of the reader Hebrews 13: 20, but we must allow him to dwell upon that lovely passage for himself, while we proceed to exhibit our fourth proof that God is for us, which will be found in THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Here, too, we must confine ourselves to one point in that most glorious event, and that is the form in which that august witness, the eternal Spirit, descended.

Let the reader turn to the second chapter of the Acts. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues", like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome,

Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Here then we mark one special fact — a fact of deepest interest — three times referred to in the foregoing quotation. It is this, the Holy Ghost came down to speak to every man “in his own dialect" — not the dialect in which he was educated merely, but “in which he was born" — the very dialect in which his mother first whispered into his infant ears, the sweet and tender accents of a mother's love. Such was the medium, such the vehicle which the divine Messenger adopted for the blessed purpose of making known to man that God was for us. He did not speak to the Hebrew in Greek, or to the Greek in Latin. He spoke to each one in the language which he understood, in the plain vernacular — the mother tongue. If there was any peculiarity in that mother tongue, any idiom, any provincialism in the dialect of each, the blessed Spirit would make use of it for the purpose of reaching the heart with the sweet story of grace.

Contrast with this the giving of the law from Mount Sinai. There Jehovah confined Himself absolutely to one language. If persons had been gathered there "from every nation under heaven," they would not have understood a single syllable. The law — the ten words — the record of man's duty to God and to his neighbour was sedulously wrapped up in one tongue. But when “the wonderful works of God" were to be published — when the blessed story of love was to be told out when the heart of God towards poor guilty sinners was to be revealed, was one language enough? No, "Every nation under heaven" must hear. and hear, too, in their own very mother tongue.

Reader, is not this a telling fact? It will perhaps be said that those who heard Peter and the rest on the day of Pentecost, were Jews. Well, that in no wise robs our fact of its charm, its sweetness, and its power. Our fact is that when the eternal Spirit descended from heaven, to tell of the resurrection of Christ, to tell of accomplished redemption — to publish the glad tidings of salvation — to preach repentance and remission of sins — He did not confine Himself to one language, but spoke in every dialect under heaven!

And why? Because He desired to make man understand what He had to say to him — He desired to reach his heart with the sweet tidings of redeeming love — the soul-stirring message of full remission of sins. When the law was to be given — when Jehovah had to speak to man about his duty — when He had to address him in such terms as, “Thou shalt do this, and thou shalt not do that," He confined Himself to one solitary language. But when He would unfold the precious secret of His love — when He would prove to man that He was for him, He, blessed for ever be His name, took care to speak in every language under heaven, so that every man might hear, in his own dialect wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God.

[The reader will note with interest a fact alluded to elsewhere, that in Genesis 11 divers tongues were given as a judgement upon man's pride. In Acts 2 divers tongues were given in grace to meet man's need. And in Revelation 7 the various tongues are all found united in one song or praise to God and to the Lamb. Such are some of the wonderful works of God. May we praise Him with all our ransomed powers! May our hearts adore Him!]

Thus, then, in our series of proofs — our golden chain of evidence, we have travelled from the bosom of God to the cross of Christ, and from that precious cross back to the throne — we have marked the giving, the bruising, and the raising of the Son; we have seen the very heart of God told out in deep and marvellous love, and tender compassion toward guilty perishing sinners. Moreover, we have marked the descent of the eternal Spirit, from the throne of God — His mission to this world to announce to every creature under heaven the glad tidings of a full, free, and everlasting salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, and to announce these tidings not in an unknown tongue, but in the very tongue wherein each was born.

What more remains? Is there yet another link to be added to the chain? Yes; there is THE POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

It may perhaps be said that oar fifth proof is involved in our fourth, inasmuch as the fact of my possessing a copy of the bible in my mother tongue is, in reality, the Holy Ghost speaking to me in the language in which I was born.

True; but still, so far as the reader is concerned, the fact that God has put into his hand or within his reach the sacred volume — the inestimable boon, the holy scriptures — is an additional proof that He is for him. For why were we not left in ignorance and total darkness? Why was the divine book put into our hands? Why, each one may say, for himself and herself, was I thus favoured? Why was I not left to live and die in heathen blindness? Why was the heavenly lamp allowed to cast its precious beams on me — even me?

Ah I beloved reader, the answer is, "Because God is for thee." Yes, for thee, notwithstanding all thy many sins — for thee, spite of all thy forgetfulness, ingratitude and rebellion — for thee, although as thou very well knowest, thou canst not show a single reason why He should not be against thee. He gave His Son from His bosom, bruised Him on the cross, raised Him from the dead, sent down the Holy Ghost, put into your very hands His blessed book, all to show you that He is for you, that His heart is toward you, that He earnestly desires your salvation.

And mark, we pray thee, thou canst not say, nor wilt thou ever dare to say, “I could not understand the bible; it; was beyond me; it was full of abstruse mysteries which I could not fathom; of difficulties which I could not solve; of discrepancies which I could not reconcile. And when I turned to those who professed to be Christians, I found them split up into almost innumerable sects, and divided into almost endless schools of doctrine. And, not only so, but I saw such utter hollowness, such gross inconsistency, such flagrant contradiction between profession and practice, that I was forced to abandon the whole subject of religion with a mingled feeling of perplexity, contempt, and disgust."

These objections will not stand in the judgement, nor keep thee out of the lake that,burneth with fire and brimstone. Remember this. Yes, ponder it deeply. Let not the devil, let not thine own heart deceive thee. What does Abraham say to the rich man, in Luke 16? “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." Why does the rich man not reply, "They cannot understand them?" He dare not.

No, reader; a child can understand the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. There is not one beneath the canopy of God's heaven, who possesses a copy of the holy scriptures, who is not solemnly responsible before God for the use he makes of them. If professing Christians were split up into ten thousand times as many sects as they are; if they were ten thousand times as inconsistent as they are; if schools and doctors of divinity were ten thousand times more conflicting than they are — still the word to each possessor of the bible is, “You have Moses and the prophets, and the New Testament, hear them."

Oh! that we could persuade the unconverted, the unawakened, the unbelieving reader to think of these things, to think of them now, to ponder them, in the very hidden depths of his moral being, to give them his heart's undivided attention, ere it be too late. We contemplate, with ever-deepening horror, the condition of a lost soul in hell — of one opening his eyes, in that place of endless torment, to the tremendous fact that God is against him and against him for ever; that all hope is gone; that nothing can ever bridge the chasm that separates the region of the lost from the heaven of the redeemed; that “there is a great gulf fixed."

We cannot proceed. The thought is really overpowering. The heart is crushed by the appalling contemplation. Dear, dear reader, do let us entreat of thee, ere we lay down the pen, to turn, this very hour, to a dear loving Saviour who stands with open arms and open bosom to receive all who come to Him, and who assures thee that “him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Do

come and trust in God's faithful word and Christ's finished work.

Here lies the precious secret of the whole matter. Look away from self, look straight to Jesus, confide simply in Him, and in what He has done for thee on the cross, and all thy sins shall be blotted out, divine righteousness shall be thine, eternal life, sonship, an indwelling Spirit, an all-prevailing Advocate, a bright home in the heavens, a portion in Christ's eternal glory — yes, reader, if thou wilt but believe in Jesus all shall be thine — Himself the best of all.

May the Holy Ghost lead thee, this moment, to the feet of Jesus, and enable thee to cry out, in holy triumph, “If God be for us, who can be against us?" God grant it for Jesus Christ's sake.

Thoughts on the Lord's Supper

Thoughts on the Lord's Supper;

Designed for the help of Christians in this day of difficulty.

C. H. Mackintosh.

Preface.

The institution of the Lord's Supper must be regarded, by every spiritual man, as a peculiarly touching proof of the Lord's gracious care and considerate love for His Church. From the time of its appointment until the present hour, it has been a steady, though silent, witness to a truth which the enemy, by every means in his power, has sought to corrupt and set aside, namely, that redemption is an accomplished fact to be enjoyed by the weakest believer in Jesus. Eighteen centuries have rolled away since the Lord Jesus appointed “the bread and the cup" in the Eucharist, as the significant symbols of His broken body and His blood shed for us; and notwithstanding all the heresy, all the schism, all the controversy and strife, the war of principles and prejudices which the blotted page of ecclesiastical history records, this most expressive institution has been observed by the saints of God in every age. True, the enemy has succeeded, throughout a vast section of the professing church, in wrapping it up in a shroud of dark superstition — in presenting it in such a way as actually to hide from the view of the communicant, the grand and eternal reality of which it is the memorial — in displacing Christ and His accomplished sacrifice, by a powerless ordinance — an ordinance, moreover, which

by the very mode of its administration, proves its utter worthlessness and opposition to the truth. (See note to page 28.) Yet, notwithstanding Rome's deadly error in reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, it still speaks to every circumcised ear, and every spiritual mind, the same deep and precious truth — it “shows the Lord's death till he come." The body has been broken, the blood has been shed ONCE, no more to be repeated: and the breaking of bread is but the memorial of this emancipating truth.

With what profound interest and thankfulness, therefore, should the believer contemplate “the bread and the cup" Without a word spoken, there is the setting forth of truths at once the most precious and glorious — grace reigning — redemption finished — sin put away — everlasting righteousness brought in — the sting of death gone — eternal glory secured — "grace and glory" revealed as the free gift of God and the Lamb — the unity of the "one body," as baptised by “one Spirit." What a feast! it carries the soul back, in the twinkling of an eye, over a lapse of eighteen hundred years, and shows us the Master Himself, “in the same night in which he was betrayed," sitting at the supper table, and there instituting a feast which, from that solemn moment, that memorable night, until the dawn of the morning, should lead every believing heart, at once, backward to the cross, and forward to the glory.

This feast has, ever since, by the very simplicity of its character, and, yet, the deep significance of its elements, rebuked the superstition that would deify and worship it, the profanity that would desecrate it, and the infidelity that would set it aside altogether; and, furthermore, while it has rebuked all these, it has strengthened,

comforted, and refreshed the hearts of millions of God's beloved saints. It is sweet to think of this — sweet to bear in mind, as we assemble, on the first day of the week, round the supper of the Lord — that apostles, martyrs, and saints have gathered round that feast, and found therein, according to their measure, refreshment and blessing. Schools of theology have arisen, — flourished, and disappeared — doctors and fathers have accumulated ponderous tomes of divinity — deadly heresies have darkened the atmosphere, and rent the professing church from one end to the other — superstition and fanaticism have put forth their baseless theories and extravagant notions — professing Christians have split into sects innumerable — all these things have taken place; but the Lord's Supper has continued, amid the darkness and confusion to tell out its simple yet comprehensive tale. “As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11: 26) Precious feast! Thank God for the great privilege of celebrating it. And yet is it but a sign, the elements of which must, in nature's view, be mean and contemptible. Bread broken — wine poured out — how simple faith alone can read, in the sign, the thing signified, and therefore it needs not the adventitious circumstances, which false religion has introduced, in order to add dignity, solemnity, and awe to that which derives all its value, its power, and its impressiveness from its being a memorial of an eternal fact which false religion denies.

May you and I, beloved reader, enter with more freshness and intelligence into the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and with deeper experience into the blessedness of breaking that bread which is “the “communion of the

body of Christ," and drinking of that cup which is “the communion of the blood of Christ."

In closing these few prefatory lines, I would just observe that this edition only differs from the former in the alteration of a sentence or two, and the addition of a few notes. I now commend this little book to the Lord's gracious care, praying Him to make it increasingly useful to the souls of His people. C. H. M.

THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." — 1 Cor. 11: 23-26.

I desire to offer a few brief remarks on the subject of the Lord's Supper, for the purpose of stirring up the minds of all who love the name and institutions of Christ, to a more fervent and affectionate interest in this most important and refreshing ordinance.

We should bless the Lord for His gracious consideration of our need in having established such a memorial of His dying love, and also in having spread a table at which all His members might present themselves, without any other condition than the indispensable one of personal connection with, and obedience to. Him. The Blessed Master knew well the tendency of our hearts to slip

away from Him, and from each other, and to meet this tendency was one, at least, of His objects in the institution of the Supper. He would gather His people around His own blessed Person — He would spread a table for them, where, in view of His broken body, and shed blood, they might remember Him, and the intensity of His love for them, and from whence, also, they might look forward into the future, and contemplate the glory of which the cross is the everlasting foundation. There, if anywhere, they would learn to forget their differences, and to love one another — there, they might see around them those whom THE LOVE OF GOD had invited to the feast, and whom the BLOOD OF CHRIST had made fit to be there.

However, in order that I may, the more easily and briefly, convey to the mind of my reader what I have to say on this subject, I shall confine myself to the four following points, viz.: —

1st. — The nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

2nd. — The circumstances under which it was instituted.

3rd. — The persons for whom it was designed.

4th. — The time and manner of its observance.

1. And first, as to the nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This is a cardinal point. If we understand not the nature of the ordinance, we shall be astray in all our thoughts about it. The Supper, then, is, purely and distinctly, a feast of thanksgiving — thanksgiving for grace already received. The Lord Himself, at the institution of it, marks its character by giving thanks. “He took bread; when he had given thanks," &c. Praise,

and not prayer, is the suited utterance of those who sit at the table of the Lord.

True, we have much to pray for — much to confess — much to mourn over; but the table is not the place for mourners; its language is, “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Ours is “a cup of blessing" — a cup of thanksgiving — the divinely appointed symbol of that precious blood which has procured our ransom. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" How, then, could we break it with sad hearts or sorrowful countenances? Could a family circle, after the toils of the day, sit down to supper with sighs and gloomy looks? Surely not. The supper was the great family meal — the only one that was sure to bring all the family together. Faces that might not have been seen during the day, were sure to be seen at the supper table, and no doubt they would be happy there. Just so should it be at the Lord's Supper; the family should assemble there, and, when assembled, they should be happy — unfeignedly happy, in the love that brings them together. True, each heart may have its own peculiar history — its secret sorrows, trials, failures, and temptations, unknown to all around; but these are not the objects to be contemplated at the supper; to bring them into view, is to dishonour the Lord of the feast, and make the cup of blessing a cup of sorrow. The Lord has invited us to the feast, and commanded us, notwithstanding all our shortcomings, to place the fullness of His love, and the cleansing efficacy of His blood, between our souls and everything; and when the eye of faith is filled with Christ, there is no

room for aught beside. If my sin be the object which fills my eye, and engages my thoughts, of course I must be miserable, because I am looking right away from what God commands me to contemplate; I am remembering my misery and poverty, the very things which God commands me to forget. Hence the true character of the ordinance is lost, and, instead of being a feast of joy and gladness, it becomes a season of gloom and spiritual depression; and the preparation for it, and the thoughts which are entertained about it, are more what might be expected in reference to Mount Sinai, than to a happy family feast.

If ever a feeling of sadness could have prevailed at the celebration of this ordinance, surely it would have been on the occasion of its first institution, when, as we shall see, when we come to consider the second point in our subject, there was everything that could possibly produce deep sadness and desolation of spirit; yet, the Lord Jesus could “give thanks;" the tide of joy that flowed through His soul was far too deep to be ruffled by surrounding circumstances; He had a joy, even in the breaking and bruising of His body, and in the pouring forth of His blood, which lay far beyond the reach of human thought and feeling. And if he could rejoice in spirit, and give thanks in breaking that bread, which was to be to all future generations of the faithful the memorial of His broken body, should not we rejoice therein — we who stand in the blessed results of all His toil and passion? Yes; it becomes us to rejoice. We can hear our heavenly Father say, “It is meet we should make merry and be glad," and shall we deny the meetness, by making that table, where the Father and the prodigal sit together over the fatted calf, the scene

of sorrow and gloomy mistrust? God forbid; we must not bring sorrow into the divine presence; yea, we cannot, for "in his presence is fullness of joy;" and when we are unhappy we certainly are not in the presence of God, but in the presence of our sins, or our sorrows, or something outside God.

But, it may be asked, Is there no preparation necessary? — are we to sit down at the table of the Lord with as much indifference as if we were sitting down to an ordinary supper table? Surely not, we need preparation; but it is the preparation of God, and not our own preparation; it is the preparation which suits the presence of God, which is certainly not the result of human sighs or penitential tears, but the simple result of the finished work of the Lamb of God attested by the Spirit of God. Apprehending this by faith, we apprehend that which makes us perfectly fit for God. Many imagine that they are putting honour upon the Lord's table when they approach it with their souls bowed down into the very dust, under a sense of the intolerable burden of their sins. This thought can only flow from the legalism of the human heart, that ever fruitful source of thoughts at once dishonouring to God-dishonouring to the Cross of Christ — grievous to the Holy Ghost, and completely subversive of our own peace. We may feel quite satisfied that the honour and purity of the Lord's table are more fully maintained when THE BLOOD OF CHRIST is made the ONLY title, than if human sorrow and human penitence were superadded. [It is needful to bear in mind that, while the blood of Christ is that alone which introduces the believer, in holy boldness, into the presence of God, yet it is nowhere set forth as our centre, or bond of union. Truly precious is it for every

blood-washed soul to remember, in the secret of the divine presence, that the atoning blood of Jesus has rolled away for ever his heavy burden of sin. Yet, the Holy Ghost can only gather us to the Person of a risen and glorified Christ, who, having shed the blood of the everlasting covenant, is gone up into heaven in the power of an endless life, to which divine righteousness inseparably attaches. A living Christ, therefore, is our centre and bond of union. The blood having answered for us to God, we gather round a risen and exalted Head in the heavens “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." We behold in the cup in the Lord's Supper the symbol of shed blood; but we are neither gathered round the cup, nor the blood; but round Him who shed it. The blood of the Lamb has put away every obstacle to our fellowship with God; and, in proof of this, the Holy Ghost has come down to baptise believers into the unity of the body, and gather them round the risen and glorified Head. The wine is the memorial of a life shed out for sin: the bread is the memorial of a body broken for sin: but we are not gathered round a life poured out, nor round a body broken, but round a living Christ, who dieth no more, who cannot have His body broken any more, or His blood shed any more. This makes a serious difference; and when looked at in connection with the discipline of the house of God, the difference is immensely important. Very many are apt to imagine that when any one is put away from, or refused, communion, the question is raised as to there being a link between his soul and Christ. A moment's consideration of this point, in the light of Scripture, will be sufficient to prove that no such question is raised. If we look at the case of the “wicked person" in 1 Corinthians 5 we see one put away from the communion

of the Church on earth, who was nevertheless a Christian, as people say. He was not, therefore, put away because he was not a Christian; such a question was never raised; nor should it be in any case. How can we tell whether a man is eternally linked with Christ or not? Have we the custody of the Lamb's book of life? Is the discipline of the Church of God founded upon what we can know, or upon what we cannot? Was the man in 1 Corinthians 5 linked eternally with Christ, or not? Was the Church told to inquire Even suppose we could see a man's name written in the book of life, that would not be the ground of receiving him into the assembly on earth, or retaining him there. That which the Church is held responsible for, is to keep herself pure In doctrine, pure in practice, and pure in association, and all this on the ground of being God's house. “Thy testimonies are very sure; holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." When any one was separated, or “cut off," from the congregation of Israel, was it because of not being an Israelite? By no means: but because of some moral or ceremonial defilement which could not be tolerated in God's assembly. In Achan's case (Joshua 7), although there were six hundred thousand souls ignorant of his sin, yet God says, "Israel hath sinned." Why? Because they were looked at as God's assembly, and there was defilement there which, if not judged, all would have been broken up.]

However, the question of preparedness will come more fully before us as we proceed with our subject; I shall, therefore, state another principle connected with the nature of the Lord's Supper, viz., that there is involved in it an intelligent recognition of the unity of the body of Christ. “The bread which we break is it not the

communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Now there was sad failure and sad confusion in reference to this point at Corinth; indeed the great principle of the Church's unity would seem to have been totally lost sight of there. Hence, the apostle observes, that, “when ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for every one taketh before other his own supper." (1 Cor. 11: 20, 21.) Here, it was isolation, and not unity; an individual, and not a corporate question; “his own supper'' is strikingly contrasted with “the Lord's Supper." It can only be the Lord's Supper, where the body is fully recognized; if the body be not recognized, it is pure sectarianism. The Lord Himself must be excluded. If the table be spread upon any narrower principle than that which would embrace the whole body of Christ, it is not the Lord's table, nor has it any claim upon the hearts of the faithful. On the contrary, where a table is spread upon this divine principle, which embraces all the members of the body simply as such, every one who refuses to present himself at it is chargeable with schism, and that, too, upon the plain principles of 1 Corinthians 11. “There must," says the apostle, “be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

When the great church principle is lost sight of by any portion of the body, there must be heresies, in order that the approved ones may be made manifest, and, under such circumstances, it becomes the business of each one to approve himself, and so to eat. The “approved" ones stand in contrast with the heretics, or those who were doing their own will.

{Those who are competent to do so, can look at the original of this important chapter, where they will see that the word translated “approved" (ver. 19), comes from the same root as that translated “examine himself.'' (Ver. 28.) Thus we see that the man who approves himself, takes his place amongst the approved, and is the very opposite of those who were amongst the heretics. Now, the meaning of a heretic is not merely one who holds false doctrine, though one may be a heretic in so doing, but one who persists in the exercise of his own will. The apostle knew that there must be heresies at Corinth, seeing that there were sects; those who were doing their own will were acting in opposition to God's will, and thus producing division, for God's will had reference to the whole body. Those who were acting heretically were despising the Church of God.}

But, it may be asked, Do not the numerous denominations, at present existing in the professing church. altogether preclude the idea of ever being able to gather the whole body together? and, under such circumstances, is it not better for each denomination to have their own table? If there be any force in this question, it merely goes to prove that the people of God are no longer able to act upon God's principles, but that they are left to the miserable alternative of acting on human expediency. Thank God, such is not the case. The truth of the Lord endureth for ever, and what the Holy Ghost teaches, in 1 Corinthians 11 is binding upon every member of the Church of God. There were divisions and heresies existing in the church at Corinth, just as there are divisions and heresies existing in the professing church now, but the apostle did not tell them to set up separate tables on the one hand, nor yet to cease from

breaking bread on the other. No; he merely presses upon them the principles connected with “the Church of God," and tells those who could approve themselves in reference to the Church, or body of Christ, to eat. The expression “So let him eat," settles everything. We are to eat, at all events; our care must be to eat “so," as the Holy Ghost teaches us, and that is in the true recognition of the unity of the Church of God.

{It may be well to add a word here for the guidance of any simple-hearted Christian, who may find himself placed in circumstances in which he is called upon to decide between the claims of different tables which might seem to be spread upon the same principle. To confirm and encourage such an one in a truthful course of action, I should regard as a most valuable service.

Suppose, then, I find myself in a place where two or more tables have been spread, what am I to do? I believe I am to inquire into the origin of these various tables — to see how it became needful to have more than one table. If, for example, a number of Christians meeting together, have admitted and retained amongst them any unsound principles, affecting the Person of the Son of God — or subversive of the unity of the Church of God on earth; if I say, such principles be admitted and retained in the assembly, or if persons who hold and teach them be received and acknowledged by the assembly; under such painful and humiliating circumstances, the table ceases to be the Lord's table. Why? Because I cannot take my place at it without identifying myself with manifestly unchristian principles. The same remark, of course, applies, if the case be that of corrupt conduct unjudged by the assembly. And then, if the table ceases to be the Lord's, it has no more claim

on the Christian, who desires to keep himself pure, than any other sectarian table.

Now, if a number of Christians should find themselves placed in the circumstances above described, they would be called upon to maintain THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PURITY OF THE TRUTH OF GOD These are really the points, unity and purity. We have not only to maintain the grace of the Lord's table, but the holiness of it also. Truth is not to be sacrificed in order to maintain unity, nor will true unity ever be interfered with by the strict maintenance of truth. Human confederations may be broken up, but the Church of God can never be touched by the maintenance of truth, provided it be maintained in love.

It is not to be imagined that the unity of the body of Christ is interfered with, when a community, based upon unsound principles or countenancing unsound doctrine or practice, is broken up or separated from. The Church of Rome charged the Reformers with schism, because they separated from her; but we know that the Church of Rome lay, and still lies, under the charge of schism, because she imposes false doctrine upon her members. Let it only be ascertained that the truth of God is called in question by any community, and that, to be a member of that community, I must identify myself with unsound doctrine or corrupt practice, and then it cannot be schism to separate from such a community, nay, I am bound to separate.

The whole question is settled by a single verse of scripture, viz, “Receive ye one another as Christ also received us;" here we have the unity of the Church. But

it must be “to the glory of God," and here we have the purity of the truth.

These considerations will, I trust, assist any dear Christian, whose mind may be perplexed by the opposing claims of tables. The question can be very simply resolved where the eye is single, and the heart and conscience fully subject to the word of God.}

When the Church is despised, the Spirit must be grieved and dishonoured, and the certain end will be spiritual barrenness and freezing formalism; and although men may substitute intellectual, for spiritual, power, and human talents and attainments, for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet will the end be “like the heath in the desert." The true way to make progress in the divine life is to live for the Church, and not for ourselves. The man who lives for the Church is in full harmony with the mind of the Spirit, and must necessarily grow. On the contrary, the man who is living for himself, having all his thoughts revolving round, and all his energies concentrated upon, himself, must soon become cramped and formal, and, in all probability, openly worldly. Yes; he will become worldly, in some sense of that extensive term, for the world and the Church stand in direct opposition the one to the other, nor is there any aspect of the world in which this opposition is more fully seen than in its religious aspect. What is commonly called the religious world, will be found, when examined in the light of the presence of God, to be more thoroughly hostile to the true interests of the Church of God, than almost anything.

But I must hasten on to other branches of our subject, and I would just state another simple principle

connected with the Lord's Supper, to which I desire to call the special attention of the Christian reader; it is this, the celebration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be the distinct expression of the unity of ALL believers, and not merely of the unity of a certain number gathered upon certain principles, which distinguish them from others. If there be any term of communion proposed, save the all-important one of faith in the atonement of Christ, and a walk consistent with that faith, the table ceases to be the Lord's, and becomes the table of a sect, and possesses no claims whatever upon the hearts of the faithful.

Furthermore, if, by sitting at the table, I must identify myself with any one thing, whether it be principle or practice, not enjoined in Scripture as a term of communion, there also the table ceases to be the Lord's, and becomes the table of a sect. It is not a question of whether there may be Christians there or not; it would be hard indeed to find a table amongst the reformed communities of which some Christians are not partakers. The apostle did not say “there must be heresies among you, that they which are Christians may be made manifest among you." No; but "that they which are approved." Nor did he say, “Let a man prove himself a Christian, and so let him eat." No; but “let a man approve himself," i.e., let him show himself to be one of those who are not only upright in their consciences as to their individual act in the matter, but who are also furthering the unity of the body of Christ. When men set up terms of communion of their own, there you find the principle of heresy; there, too, there must be schism. On the contrary, where a table is spread in such a manner, and upon such principles, as that a Christian, as such,

can take his place at it, then it becomes schism not to be there, for, by being there, and by walking consistently with our position and profession there, we, so far as in us lies, promote the unity of the Church of God — that grand object for which the Holy Ghost was sent from heaven to earth. The Lord Jesus, having been raised from the dead, and having taken His seat at the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Ghost to earth for the purpose of forming one body. Mark, to form one body — not many bodies. He has no sympathy with the many bodies, as such; though He has blessed sympathy with many members in those bodies, because they, though being members of human sects or schisms, are, nevertheless, members of the one body; but He does not dwell in the many bodies, but in the one body, for “by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12: 13.)

I desire that there may be no misunderstanding on this point. I say the Holy Ghost cannot dwell in all the schisms in the professing church, for He Himself has said of such, “I praise you not." He is grieved by them — He would counteract them — He baptises all believers into the unity of the one body, so that it cannot be thought, by any intelligent mind, that the Holy Ghost could dwell in schisms, which are a grief and a dishonour to Him.

We must, however, distinguish between the Spirit's dwelling in the Church, and His dwelling in individuals. He dwells in the body of Christ, which is the Church (see 1 Cor. 3: 17; Eph. 2: 22); He dwells also in the body of the believer, as we read, “your body is the temple of the

Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God." (1 Cor. 6: 19) The only body or community, therefore, in which the Spirit can dwell, is the whole Church of God, and the only person in which He can dwell is the believer. But, as has already been observed, the table of the Lord, in any given locality, should be the exhibition of the unity of the whole Church, and where it is not this, it is not the Lord's table. This leads us to another principle connected with the nature of the Lord's Supper, viz., this, It is an act whereby we not only show forth the death of the Lord until He come, but whereby we, also, give expression to a fundamental truth, which cannot be too strongly or too frequently pressed upon the minds of Christians, at the present day, viz., that all believers are "one bread and one body." It is a very common error to view this ordinance merely as a channel through which grace flows to the soul of the individual, and not as an act bearing upon the whole body, and bearing, also, upon the glory of the Head of the Church. That it is a channel through which grace flows to the soul of the individual communicant there can be no doubt, for there is blessing in every act of obedience. But that individual blessing is but a very small part of it, can be seen by the attentive reader of 1 Cor. 11. It is the Lord's death — the Lord's coming, that are brought prominently before our souls in the Lord's Supper, and where any one of these elements is excluded there must be something wrong. If there be anything to hinder the complete shadowing forth of the Lord's death, or the exhibition of the unity of the body, or the clear perception of the Lord's coming, then there must be something radically wrong in the principle on which the table is spread, and we only need a single eye,

and a mind entirely subject to the word and Spirit of Christ, in order to detect the wrong.

Let the Christian reader, now, prayerfully examine the table at which he periodically takes his place, and see if it will bear the threefold test of 1 Cor. 11, and if not, let him, in the name of the Lord, and for the sake of the Church, abandon it. There are heresies, and schisms flowing from heresies, in the professing church, but “let a man approve himself, and so let him eat" the Lord's Supper; and if, once for all, it be asked, What means the term “approved?" it may be answered, It is, in the first place, to be personally true to the Lord in the act of breaking bread; and in the next place, to shake off all semblance of schism, and take our stand, firmly and decidedly, upon the broad principle which will embrace all the members of the flock of Christ. We are not only to be careful that we ourselves are walking in purity of heart and life before the Lord; but also, that the table of which we partake has nothing connected with it that could at all act as a barrier to the unity of the Church. It is not merely a personal question. Nothing more fully proves the low ebb of Christianity, at the present day, or the fearful extent to which the Holy Ghost is grieved, than the miserable selfishness which tinges, yea, pollutes, the thoughts of professing Christians. Everything is made to hinge upon the mere question of self. It is my forgiveness — my safety — my peace — my happy frames and feelings, and not the glory of Christ, or the unity of His beloved Church. Well, therefore, may the words of the prophet be applied to us, “Thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and BUILD THE HOUSE; and I will take pleasure in it, and I WILL BE GLORIFIED. Ye looked for

much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house." (Hag. 1: 7-9.) Here is the root of the matter. Self stands in contrast with the house of God; and, if self be made the object, no marvel that there should be a sad lack of spiritual joy, energy, and power. To have these, we must be in fellowship with the Spirit's thoughts; and He thinks of the body of Christ; and, if we are thinking of self, we must be at issue with Him; and the consequences are but too apparent.

2. Having now treated of, what I conceive to be, by far the most important point in our subject, I shall proceed to consider, in the second place, the circumstances under which the Lord's Supper was instituted. These were particularly solemn and touching. The Lord was about to enter into dreadful conflict with all the powers of darkness — to meet all the deadly enmity of man; and to drain to the dregs the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin. He had a terrible morrow before Him — the most terrible that had ever been encountered by man or angel; yet, notwithstanding all this, we read that “on the same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread." What unselfish love is here! “The same night" — the night of profound sorrow — the night of His agony and bloody sweat — the night of His betrayal by one, His denial by another, and His desertion by all, of His disciples — on that very night, the loving heart of Jesus was full of thoughts about His Church — on that very night, He instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He appointed the bread to be the emblem. of His broken body, and the wine to be the emblem of His shed blood; and such they are to us now, as often as we partake of

them, for the word assures us that "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Now, all this, we may say, attaches peculiar importance and sacred solemnity to the Supper of the Lord; and, moreover, gives us some idea of the consequences of eating and drinking unworthily. {It is usual to apply the term “unworthily," in the passage, to persons doing the act, whereas it really refers to the manner of doing it. The apostle never thought of calling in question the Christianity of the Corinthians; nay, in the opening address of his epistle, he looks at them as “the church of God which is at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints (or saints by calling). How could he use this language, in the first chapter, and, in the eleventh, call in question the worthiness of these saints to take their seat at the Lord's Supper? Impossible. He looked upon them as saints, and as such he exhorted them to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. The question of any but true Christians being there, is never raised; so that it is utterly impossible that the word "unworthily" could apply to persons. Its application is entirely to the manner. The persons were worthy, but their manner was not; and they were called, as saints, to judge themselves as to their ways, else the Lord might judge them in their persons, as was already the case. In a word, it was as true Christians they were called to judge themselves. If they were in doubt as to that, they were utterly unable to judge anything. I never think of setting my child to judge as to whether he is my child or not; but I expect him to judge himself as to his habits, else, if he do not, I may have to do, by chastening, what he ought to do by self judgement. It is because I look

upon him as my child, that I will not allow him to sit at my table with soiled garments and disorderly manners. — Things New and Old, vol. 2, p. 2.}

The voice which the ordinance utters in the circumcised ear is ever the same. The bread and wine are deeply significant symbols; the bruised corn and the pressed grape being both combined to minister strength and gladness to the heart: and not only are they significant in themselves, but they are also to be used in the Lord's Supper, as being the very emblems which the blessed Master Himself ordained on the night previous to His crucifixion; so that faith can behold the Lord Jesus presiding at His own table — can see Him take the bread and wine, and hear Him say, “Take, eat; this is my body;" and again, of the cup, “Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

In a word, the ordinance leads the soul back to the eventful night already referred to — brings before us all the reality of the cross and passion of the Lamb of God, in which our whole souls can rest and rejoice, and reminds us, in the most impressive manner, of the unselfish love and pure devotedness of Him, who, when Calvary was casting its dark shadow across His path, and the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin, of which He was about to be the bearer, was being filled for Him, could, nevertheless, busy Himself about us, and institute a feast which was to be, at once, the expression of our connection with Him, and with all the members of His body.

And may we not infer, that the Holy Ghost made use of the expression, "the same night," for the purpose of

remedying the disorders that had arisen in the church at Corinth? Was there not a severe rebuke administered to the selfishness of those who were taking “their own supper," in the Spirit's reference to the same night in which the Lord of the feast was betrayed? Doubtless there was. Can selfishness live in the view of the cross? Can thoughts about our own interests, or our own gratification, be indulged in the presence of Him who sacrificed Himself for us? Surely not. Could we heartlessly and wilfully despise the Church of God — could we offend or exclude beloved members of the flock of Christ, while gazing on that cross on which the Shepherd of the flock, and the Head of the body, was crucified? Ah, no; let believers only keep near the cross — let them remember “the same night" — let them keep in mind the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there will soon be an end to heresy, schism, and selfishness.

{The reader will bear in mind that the text does not touch the question of scriptural discipline. There may be many members of the flock of Christ who could not be received into the assembly on earth, inasmuch as they may possibly be leavened by false doctrine, or wrong practice. But, though we might not be able to receive them, we do not, by any means, raise the question as to their being in the Lamb's book of life. This is not the province nor the prerogative of the Church of God. “The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2: 19.)}

If we could only bear in mind that the Lord Himself presides at the table, to dispense the bread and wine; if we could hear Him say, “Take this, and divide it among

yourselves," we should be better able to meet all our brethren on the only Christian ground of fellowship which God can own. In a word, the person of Christ is God's centre of union. “I," said Christ “if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Each believer can hear his blessed Master speaking from the cross, and saying of his fellow believers, “Behold thy brethren;" and, truly, if we could distinctly hear this, we should act, in a measure, as the beloved disciple acted towards the mother of Jesus; our hearts and our homes would be open to all who have been thus commended to our care. The word is, “Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

There is another point worthy of notice, in connection with the circumstances under which the Lord's Supper was instituted, namely, its connection with the Jewish Passover. “Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he. took the cup [i.e., the cup of the Passover], and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22: 7-18.)

The Passover was, as we know, the great feast of Israel, first observed on the memorable night of their happy deliverance from the thraldom of Egypt. As to its connection with the Lord's Supper, it consists in its

being the marked type of that of which the Supper is the memorial. The Passover pointed forward to the cross; the supper points back to it. But Israel was no longer in a fit moral condition to keep the Passover, according to the divine thoughts about it; and the Lord Jesus, on the occasion above referred to, was leading His apostles away altogether from the Jewish element to a new order of things. It was no longer to be a lamb sacrificed, but bread broken and wine drunk, in commemoration of a sacrifice ONCE offered, the efficacy of which was to be eternal. Those whose minds are bowed down to Jewish ordinances, may still look, in some way or another, for the periodical repetition, either of a sacrifice, or of something which is to bring them into a place of greater nearness to God.

{The Church of Rome has so entirely departed from the truth set forth in the Lord's Supper, that she professes to offer, in the mass, "an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead." Now, we are taught, in Hebrews 9: 22, that “without shedding of blood is no remission;" consequently, the Church of Rome has no remission of sins for her members. She robs them of this precious reality, and, instead thereof, gives them an anomalous and utterly unscriptural thing, called “an unbloody sacrifice, or mass." This, which, according to her own practice and the testimony of Hebrews 9: 22, can never take away sin, she offers day by day, week by week, and year by year. A sacrifice without blood must, if scripture be true, be a sacrifice without remission Hence, therefore, the sacrifice of the mass is a positive blind raised by the devil, through the agency of Rome, to hide from the sinner's view the glorious sacrifice of Christ, “once offered," and never to be repeated. "Christ,

being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom. 6: 9.) Every fresh sacrifice of the mass only declares the inefficiency of all the previous sacrifices, so that Rome is only mocking the sinner with an empty shadow. But she is consistent in her wickedness, for she withholds the cup from the laity, and teaches her members that they have body and blood and all in the wafer. But, if the blood be still in the body, it is manifestly not shed, and then we get back to the same gloomy point, namely, “no remission." “Without shedding of blood is no remission."

How totally different is the precious and most refreshing institution of the Lord's Supper, as set before us in the New Testament. There we find the bread broken, and the wine poured out — the significant symbols of a body broken, and of blood shed. The wine is not in the bread, because the blood is not in the body, for, if it were, there would be "no remission." In a word, the Lord's Supper is the distinct memorial of an eternally accomplished sacrifice; and none can communicate thereat with intelligence and power, save those who know the full remission of sins It is not that we would, by any means, make the knowledge of forgiveness a term of communion, for very many of the children of God, through bad teaching, and various other causes, do not know the perfect remission of sins, and were they to be excluded on that ground, it would be making knowledge a term of communion, instead of life and obedience. Still, if I do not know, experimentally, that redemption is an accomplished fact, I shall see but little meaning in the symbols of bread and wine; and, moreover, I shall be in great danger of attaching a species of efficacy to the

memorials which belongs only to the great reality to which they point.}

Some there are who think that in the Lord's Supper the soul makes, or renews, a covenant with God, not knowing that if we were to enter into covenant with God, we should inevitably be ruined; as the only possible issue of a covenant between God and man, is the failure of one of the parties (i.e., man), and consequent judgement. Thank God, there is no such thing as a covenant with us. The bread and wine, in the supper, speak a deep and wondrous truth; they tell of the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of God — the Lamb of God's own providing. Here the soul can rest with perfect complacency; it IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, and not a covenant between God and man. Man's covenant had signally failed, and the Lord Jesus had to allow the cup of the fruit of the vine (the emblem of joy in the earth) to pass Him by. Earth had no joy for Him — Israel had become" the degenerate plant of a strange vine;" wherefore, He had only to say, “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." A long and dreary season was to pass over Israel, ere her King could take any joy in her moral condition: but, during that time, “the Church of God" was to “keep the feast" of unleavened bread, in all its moral power and significance, by putting away the “old leaven of malice and wickedness," as the fruit of fellowship with Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

However, the fact of the Lord's Supper having been instituted immediately after the Passover, teaches us a very valuable principle of truth, viz., this: the destinies of the Church and of Israel are inseparably linked with

the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. True, the Church has a higher place, even identification with her risen and glorified Head; yet, all rests upon the cross. Yes; it was on the cross that the pure sheaf of corn was bruised, and the juices of the living vine pressed forth, by the hand of Jehovah Himself, to yield strength and gladness to the hearts of His heavenly and earthly people for ever. The Prince of Life took from Jehovah's righteous hand the cup of wrath — the cup of trembling, and drained it to the dregs, in order that He might put into the hands of His people the cup of salvation — the cup of God's ineffable love, that they might drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more. The Lord's Supper expresses all this. There the Lord presides there the redeemed should meet in holy fellowship and brotherly love, to eat and drink before the Lord; and while they do so, they can look back at their Master's night of deep sorrow, and forward to His day of glory — that “morning without clouds," when “he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

3. We shall now consider, in the third place, the persons for whom, and to whom alone the Lord's Supper was instituted.

The Lord's Supper, then, was instituted for the Church of God — the family of the redeemed. All the members of that family should be there; for none can be absent, without incurring the guilt of disobedience to the plain command of Christ, and His inspired apostle, and the consequence of this disobedience will be positive spiritual decline, and a complete failure in testimony for Christ. Such consequences, however, are the result only of wilful absence from the Lord's table. There are

circumstances which, in certain cases, may present an insurmountable barrier, though there might be the most earnest desire to be present at the celebration of the ordinance, as there ever will be, where the mind is spiritual; but we may lay it down, as a fixed principle of truth, that no one can make progress in the divine life who wilfully absents himself from the Lord's table. “ALL the congregation of Israel" were commanded to keep the Passover. (Exodus 12) No member of the congregation could, with impunity, be absent, “The man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." (Num. 9: 13)

I feel that it would be rendering really valuable service to the cause of truth, and a furtherance of the interests of the Church of God, if an interest could be awakened on this important subject. There is too much lightness and indifference in the minds of Christians, as to the matter of their attendance at the table of the Lord, and where there is not this indifference, there is an unwillingness arising from imperfect views of justification. Now both these hindrances, though so different in their character, spring from one and the same source, viz., selfishness. He who is indifferent about the matter, will selfishly allow trifling circumstances to interfere with his attendance; he will be hindered by family arrangements, love of personal ease, unfavourable weather, trifling, or, as it frequently happens, imaginary bodily ailments; things which are lost sight of, or counted as nothing, when some worldly object is to be gained. How often does it happen, that

men who have not spiritual energy to leave their houses on the Lord's day, have abundant natural energy to carry them some miles, to gain some worldly object, on Monday. Alas! that it should be so. How sad, to think that worldly gain could exert a more powerful influence on the heart of the Christian, than the glory of Christ and the furtherance of the Church's benefit; for this is the way in which we must view the question of the Lord's Supper. What would be our feelings, amid the glory of the coming kingdom, if we could remember that, while on earth, a fair, or a market, or some such worldly object, had commanded our time and energies, while the assembly of the Lord's people, around His table, was neglected?

Beloved Christian reader, if you are in the habit of absenting yourself from the assembly of Christians, I pray you to ponder the matter, before the Lord, ere you absent yourself again. Reflect upon the pernicious effect of your absence in every way. You are failing in your testimony for Christ — you are injuring the souls of your brethren, and you are hindering the progress of your own soul in grace and knowledge. Do not suppose that your actings are without their influence on the whole Church of God; you are, at this moment, either helping or hindering every member of that body on earth. “If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." This principle has not ceased to be true, though professing Christians have split into so many different divisions. Nay, it is so divinely true that there is not a single believer on earth, who is not acting, either as a helper to, or a drain upon, the whole body of Christ; and, if there be any truth in the principle already laid down (viz., that the assembly of Christians, and the breaking

of bread, in any given locality, is, or ought to be, the expression of the unity of the whole body), you cannot fail to see, that, if you absent yourself from that assembly, or refuse to join in giving expression to that unity, you are doing serious damage to all your brethren, as well as to your own soul. I would lay these considerations on your heart and conscience, in the name of the Lord, looking to Him to make them influential.

{I can only feel myself responsible to present myself in the assembly when it is gathered on proper church ground, i.e., the ground laid down in the New Testament. People may assemble, and call themselves the Church of God, in any given locality; but if they do not exhibit the characteristic features and principles of the Church of God, as set forth in holy scripture, I cannot own them. If they refuse, or lack spiritual power, to judge worldliness, carnality, or false doctrine, they are evidently, not on proper church ground; they are merely a religious fraternity, which in its collective character, I am in no wise responsible, before God, to own. Hence, the child of God needs much spiritual power, and subjection to the word, to be able to carry himself through all the windings of the professing church, in this peculiarly evil and difficult day.}

But, not only does this culpable and pernicious indifference of spirit act as a hindrance to many, in presenting themselves at the Lord's table; imperfect views of justification produce the same unhappy result. If the conscience be not perfectly purged — if there be not perfect rest in God's testimony about the finished work of Christ, there will either be a shrinking from the Supper of the Lord, or an unintelligent celebration of it.

Those only can show the Lord's death, who know, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the value of the Lord's death. If I regard the ordinance as a means whereby I am to be brought into a place of greater nearness to God, or whereby I am to obtain a clearer sense of my acceptance, it is impossible that I can rightly observe it. I must believe as the gospel commands me to believe, that ALL my sins are FOR EVER put away, ere I can take my place, with any measure of spiritual intelligence, at the Lord's table. If the matter be not viewed in this light, the Lord's Supper can only be regarded as a kind of step to the altar of God, and we are told, in the law, that we are not to go up by steps to God's altar, lest our nakedness be discovered. (Ex. 20: 26.) The meaning of which is, that all human efforts to approach God must issue in the discovery of human nakedness.

Thus we see that, if it be indifference that prevents the Christian from being at the breaking of bread, it is most culpable in the sight of God, and most injurious to his brethren and himself; and if it be an imperfect sense of justification that prevents, it is not only unwarrantable, but most dishonouring to the love of the Father, the work of the Son, and the clear and unequivocal testimony of the Holy Ghost.

But it is not infrequently said, and that, too, by those who are of reputation for spirituality and intelligence, “I derive no spiritual benefit by going to the assembly, I am as happy in my own room reading my Bible." I would affectionately ask such, are we to have no higher object before us in our actings, than our own happiness? Is not obedience to the command of our Blessed Master — a command delivered on “the same night in which He was

betrayed," a far higher and nobler object to set before us than anything connected with self? If He desires that His people should assemble, in His name, for the express object of showing forth His death till He come, shall we refuse because we feel happier in our own rooms He tells us to be there; we reply, “We feel happier at home;" our happiness, therefore, must be based on disobedience, and, as such, it is an unholy happiness. It is much better, if it should be so, to be unhappy in the path of obedience, than happy in the path of disobedience. But I verily believe, the thought of being happier at home is a mere delusion, and the end of all who are deluded by it will prove it such. Thomas might have deemed it indifferent whether he was present with the other disciples, but he had to do without the Lord's presence, and to wait for eight days, until the disciples came together on the first day of the week, for there and then the Lord was pleased to reveal Himself to his soul; and just so will it be with those who say, We feel happier at home than in the assembly of believers; they will surely be behind hand in knowledge and experience; yea, it will be well if they come not under the terrible woe denounced by the prophet, “Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened." (Zech. 11: 17) And again, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. - For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. 10: 25-27)

As to the objection upon the grounds of the barrenness and unprofitableness of Christian assemblies, it will generally be remarked that the greatest spiritual barrenness will always be found in connection with a captious and complaining spirit: and I doubt not that, if those who complain of the unprofitableness of meetings, and draw from thence an argument in favour of their remaining at home, were to spend more time in secret waiting on the Lord, for His blessing on the meetings, they would have a very different experience.

And now, having shown from the scripture, who ought to be at the breaking of bread, we shall proceed to consider who ought not. On this point scripture is equally explicit: in a word, then, none should be there who are not members of the true Church of God. The same law which commanded all the congregation of Israel to eat the Passover, commanded all uncircumcised strangers not to eat; and now that Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, none can keep the feast which is to extend throughout this entire dispensation, nor yet break bread, or drink wine in true remembrance of Him, save those who know the cleansing and healing virtues of His precious blood. To eat and drink without this knowledge, is to eat and drink unworthily — to eat and drink judgement, and, like the woman in Numbers 5 who drank the water of jealousy, to make the condemnation more manifest and awfully solemn.

Now, it is in this that Christendom's guilt is specially manifest. In taking the Lord's Supper, the professing church has, like Judas, put her hand on the table with Christ, and betrayed Him — she has eaten with Him, and, at the same time, lifted up her heel against Him. What will be her end? Just like the end of Judas. “He

then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and," the Holy Ghost adds, in awful solemnity, “IT WAS NIGHT." Terrible night! The strongest expression of divine love only elicited the strongest expression of human hatred. So will it be with the false professing church collectively, and each false professor individually; and all those who, though baptised in the name of Christ, and sitting down at the table of Christ, have, nevertheless, been His betrayers, will find themselves, at last, thrust out into outer darkness — involved in a night which shall never see the beams of the morning — plunged in a gulf of endless and ineffable woe; and though they may be able to say to the Lord, “We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," yet His solemn, heart-rending reply will be, while he shuts the door against them, “Depart from me, I never knew you." Oh! my reader, think of this, I pray you; and if you be yet in your sins, defile not the Lord's table by your presence; but, instead of going thither as a hypocrite, repair to Calvary, as a poor ruined and guilty sinner, and there receive pardon and cleansing from Him, who died to save just such as you are.

4. Having now considered, through the Lord's mercy, the nature of the Lord's Supper; the circumstances under which it was instituted; and the persons for whom it was designed; I would only add a word as to what scripture teaches us about the time and manner of its celebration.

Although the Lord's Supper was not first instituted on the first day of the week, yet Luke 24, and Acts 20, are quite sufficient to prove, to a mind subject to the word, that that is the day on which the ordinance should specially be observed. The Lord broke bread with His disciples on "the first day of the week" (Luke 24: 30);

and “on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread." (Acts 20: 7) These scriptures are quite sufficient to prove that it is not once a month, nor once in three months, nor once in six months, that disciples should come together to break bread, but once a week at least, and that upon the first day of the week. Nor can we have any difficulty in seeing that there is a moral fitness in the first day of the week, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper; it is the resurrection day — the Church's day, in contrast with the seventh, which was Israel's day; and as, in the institution of the ordinance, the Lord led His disciples away from Jewish things altogether, by refusing to drink of the fruit of the vine, and then instituting another ordinance, so, in the day on which that ordinance was to be celebrated, we observe the same contrast between heavenly and earthly things. It is in the power of resurrection that we can rightly show the Lord's death. When the conflict was over, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine, and blessed Abraham, in the name of the Lord. Thus, too, our Melchizedek, when all the conflict was over, and the victory gained, came forth, in resurrection, with bread and wine, to strengthen and cheer the hearts of His people, and to breathe upon them that peace which He had so dearly purchased.

If then, the first day of the week be the day on which scripture teaches the disciples to break bread, it is clear that man has no authority to alter the period to once a month, or once in six months. We must be as strictly subject to scripture as to the time for celebrating the ordinance, as we would be in reference to any other point connected with it. And I doubt not, that when the affections are lively and fervent toward the Person of the

Lord Himself, the Christian will desire to show the Lord's death as frequently as possible; indeed it would seem from the opening of Acts, that the disciples broke bread whenever they met. This we may infer from the expression “breaking bread from house to house." However, we are not left to depend upon mere inference, as to the question of the first day of the week being the day on which the disciples came together to break bread; we are distinctly taught this, and we see its moral fitness and beauty.

Thus much as to the time. And now one word about the manner. It should be the special aim of Christians, to show that the breaking of bread is their grand and primary object in coming together, on the first day of the week. They should show that it is not for preaching or teaching that they assemble, though teaching may be a happy adjunct, but that the breaking of bread is the leading object before their minds. This can be done by making it the first thing at their meetings. And there is a moral fitness in this order, as well as in the time. It is the work of Christ which we show forth in the Supper, wherefore it should have the first place, and, when it has been duly set forth, there should be a full and unqualified opening left for the work of the Holy Ghost in ministry. The office of the Spirit is to set forth and exalt the name, the Person, and the work of Christ; and if He be allowed to order and govern the assembly of Christians, as He undoubtedly should, He will ever give the work of Christ the primary place.

I cannot close this paper without expressing my deep sense of the feebleness and shallowness of all that I have advanced, on a subject of really commanding interest. I do feel before the Lord, in whose presence I

desire to write and speak, that I have so failed to bring out the full truth about this matter, that I almost shrink from letting these pages see the light. It is not that I have a shadow of doubt as to the truth of what I have endeavoured to state; no: but I feel that, in writing upon such a subject as the breaking of bread, at the time when there is such sad confusion among professing Christians, there is a demand for pointed, clear, and lucid statements, to which I am little able to respond.

We have but little conception of how entirely the question of the breaking of bread is connected with the Church's position and testimony on earth; and we have as little conception of how thoroughly the question has been misunderstood by the professing church. The breaking of bread ought to be the distinct enunciation of the fact, that all believers are one body; but the professing church, by splitting into sects, and by setting up a table for each sect, has practically denied that fact.

In truth, the breaking of bread has been cast into the back-ground. The table, at which the Lord should preside, is almost lost sight of, by being placed in the shade of the pulpit, in which man presides; the pulpit, which, alas! is too often the instrument of creating and perpetuating disunion, is, to many minds, the commanding object, while the table, which, if properly understood, would perpetuate love and unity, is made quite a secondary thing. And even in the most laudable effort to recover from such a lamentable condition of things, what complete failure have we seen. What has the Evangelical Alliance effected? It has effected this, at least, it has fully developed a need existing among professing Christians, which they are confessedly unable to meet. They want union, and are unable to attain it.

Why? Because they will not give up everything, save what they have as Christians, and meet together as disciples, to break bread. I say, as disciples, and not as Churchmen, Independents, or Baptists. It is not that all such may not have much valuable truth, I mean those of them who love our Lord Jesus Christ: they certainly may, but they have no truth that should prevent them from meeting together to break bread. How could truth ever hinder Christians from giving expression to the unity of the Church? Impossible! A sectarian spirit in those who hold truth may do this, but truth never can. But how is it now in the professing church? Christians, of various communities, can meet for the purpose of reading, praying, and singing together, during the week, but when the first day of the week arrives, they have not the least idea of giving the only real and effectual expression of their unity, which the Holy Ghost can recognize, which is the breaking of bread. “We being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

The sin at Corinth was their not tarrying one for another. This appears from the exhortation with which the apostle sums up the whole question (1 Cor. 11), “Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." Why were they to tarry one for another? Surely, in order that they might the more clearly express their unity. But what would the apostle have said, if, instead of coming together, into one place, they had gone to different places, according to their different views of truth? He might then say, with, if possible, greater force, “Ye cannot eat the Lord's Supper." (See margin.)

It may, however, be asked, “How could all the believers in London meet in one place?" I reply, if they could not meet in one place, they could, at least, meet on one principle. But how did the believers at Jerusalem meet together? The answer is, they were “of one accord." This being so, they had little difficulty about the question of a meeting-room. “Solomon's porch," or any where else, would suit their purpose. They gave expression to their unity, and that, too, in a way not to be mistaken. Neither various localities, nor various measures of knowledge and attainment, could, in the least, interfere with their unity. There was “one body and one spirit”

Finally, then, I would say, the Lord will assuredly honour those who have faith to believe and confess the unity of the Church on earth; and the greater the difficulty in the way of doing so, the greater will be the honour. The Lord grant to all His people a single eye, and an humble and honest spirit.

C. H. M.

Thy broken body, gracious Lord,

Is shadowed by this broken bread,

The wine which in this cup is pour'd

Points to the blood which Thou hast shed.

And while we meet together thus,

We show that we are one in Thee

Thy precious blood was shed for us,

Thy death, O Lord, has set us free.

Brethren in Thee, in union sweet, (For ever be thy grace ador'd), 'Tis in Thy name, that now we meet, And know

Thou'rt with us, gracious Lord We have one hope — that Thou wilt come, Thee in the air we wait to see, When Thou wilt take Thy people home And we shall ever reign with Thee.

The Man of God

"The man of God."

C. H. Mackintosh.

"That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3: 17.

The sentence which we have just penned occurs in Paul's second Epistle to his beloved son Timothy — an epistle marked, as we know, by intense individuality. All thoughtful students of scripture have noticed the striking contrast between the two Epistles of Paul to Timothy. In the first, the church is presented in its order, and Timothy is instructed as to how he is to behave himself therein. In the second, on the contrary, the church is presented in its ruin. The house of God has become the great house, in the which there are vessels to dishonour as well as vessels to honour; and where, moreover, errors and evils abound — heretical teachers and false professors, on every hand.

Here, then, it is, in this epistle of individuality, that the expression, “The man of God" is used with such obvious force and meaning. It is in times of general ruin, failure, declension, and confusion that the faithfulness, devotedness, and decision of the individual man of God are specially called for. And it is a signal mercy for such an one to know that, spite of the hopeless failure of the church, as a responsible witness for Christ, on this earth, it is the privilege of the individual to tread as lofty a path, to taste as deep communion, and to enjoy as rich blessings, as ever were, or could be known, in the church's brightest and palmiest days.

This is a most encouraging and consolatory fact — a fact established by many infallible proofs, and set forth in the very passage from which our heading is taken; and which we shall here quote, at length, for the reader — a passage of singular weight and power.

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good: works."* 2 Timothy 3: 17.

{*The reader should be informed that the word which is rendered “perfect," in the above passage, occurs but this once in the entire New Testament. It is (artios) and signifies ready, complete well fitted as an instrument with all its strings, a machine with all its parts, a body with all its limbs, joints, muscles, and sinews. The usual word for "perfect" is (telios) which signifies the reaching of the moral end, in any particular thing.}

Here we have “the man of God," in the midst of all the ruin and confusion, the heresies and moral pravities of the last days, standing forth in his own distinct individuality, "perfect and throughly furnished unto all good works." And, may we not ask, what more could be said in the church's brightest days? It we go back to the day of Pentecost itself, with all its display of power and glory, have we anything higher or better, or more solid

than that which is set forth in the words “perfect and throughly furnished unto all good works?"

And is it not a signal mercy for anyone who desires to stand for God, in a dark and evil day, to be told that, spite of all the darkness, all the evil, all the error and confusion, he possesses that which can make a child wise unto salvation, and make a man perfect and throughly furnished unto all good works? Assuredly it is; and we have to praise our God for it, with full and overflowing hearts. To have access, in days like these, to the eternal fountain of inspiration, where the child and the man can meet and drink and be satisfied — that fountain so clear that you cannot see its depth, and so deep that you cannot reach the bottom — that peerless, priceless volume which meets the child at his. mother's knee, and makes him wise unto salvation; and meets the man in the most advanced stage of his practical career and makes him perfect and fully furnished for exigency of every hour. However, we shall have occasion, ere we close this paper, to look, more particularly, at “the man of God," and to consider what is the special force and meaning of this term. That there is very much more involved in it than is ordinarily understood, we are most fully persuaded.

There are three aspects in which man is presented in scripture; in the first place, we have man in nature, secondly, a man in Christ; and, thirdly, we have, the man of God. It might perhaps be thought that the second and third are synonymous; but we shall find a very material difference between them. True, I must be a man in Christ before I can be a man of God; but they are, by no means, interchangeable terms.

Let us then, in the first place, contemplate

MAN IN NATURE.

This is a very comprehensive phrase indeed. Under this title, we shall find every possible shade of character, temperament, and disposition. Man, on the platform of nature, graduates between two extremes. You may view him at the very highest point of cultivation, or at the very lowest point of degradation. You may see him surrounded with all the advantages, the refinements and the so-called dignities of civilised life; or you may find him sunk in all the shameless and barbarous customs of savage existence. You may view him in the almost numberless grades, ranks, classes, and castes into which the human family has distributed itself.

Then again, in the self-same class or caste you will find the most vivid contrasts, in the way of character, temper, and disposition. There, for example, is a man of such an atrocious temper that he is the very horror of every one who knows him. He is the plague of his family circle, and a perfect nuisance to society. He can only be compared to a porcupine with all his quills perpetually up; and if you meet him once you will never wish to meet him again. There, on the other hand, is a man of the sweetest disposition and most amiable temper. He is just as attractive as the other is repulsive. He is a tender, loving, faithful husband; a kind, affectionate, considerate father; a thoughtful liberal master; a kindly, genial neighbour; a generous friend, beloved by all, and justly so; the more you know him the more you must like him, and if you meet him once you are sure to wish to meet him again.

Further, you may meet on the platform of nature, a man who is false and deceitful, to the very heart's core, He delights in lying, cheating, and deception. Even where there is no object to be gained or interest to be served, he would rather tell a lie than the truth. He is mean and contemptible in all his thoughts, words, and ways; a man to whom all who know him would like to give as wide a berth as possible. And, on the other hand, you may meet a man of high principle, frank, honourable, generous, and upright; one who would scorn to tell a lie, or do a mean action, whose reputation is unblemished — his character unexceptionable. His word would be taken for any amount; he is one with whom all who know him would be glad to have dealings; an almost perfect natural character; a man of whom it might be said, he lacks but one thing.

Finally, as you pass to and fro on nature's platform, you may meet the atheist who affects to deny the existence of God; the infidel who denies God's revelation; the sceptic and — the rationalist who disbelieves everything. And, on the other hand, you will meet the superstitious devotee who spends his time in prayers and fasting, ordinances, and ceremonies; and who feels sure he is earning a place in heaven by a wearisome round of religious observances that actually unfit him for the proper functions and responsibilities of domestic and social life. You may meet men of every imaginable shade of religious opinion, high church, low church, broad church, and no church; men who, without a spark of divine life in their souls, are contending for the powerless forms of a traditionally religion.

Now, there is one grand and awfully solemn fact common to all these various classes, castes, grades,

shades, and conditions of men who Occupy the platform of nature, and that is there is not so much as a single link between them and heaven — there is no link with the Man who sits at the right hand of God — no link with the new creation. They are without Christ and without hope. They are unconverted. They have not rotten eternal life. As regards God, and Christ, and eternal life, and heaven, they all — however they may differ, morally, socially, and religiously — stand on one common ground; they are far from God — they are out of Christ — they are in their sins — they are in the flesh — they are of the world — they are on their way to hell This being the case, it follows as a necessary and terrible consequence, that, underneath the platform of nature, and right in front of all who stand thereon, there are the flames of an everlasting hell. There is really no getting over this, if we are to listen to the voice of holy scripture. False teachers may deny it. Infidels may pretend to smile contemptuously at the idea; but scripture is plain — as plain as plainness itself. It speaks in manifold places, of a fire that NEVER shall be quenched, and of a worm that shall never die.

It is the very height of folly for anyone to seek to set aside the plain testimony of the word of God on this most solemn and weighty subject. Better far to let that testimony fall, with all its weight and authority, upon the heart and conscience — infinitely better to flee from the wrath to come than to attempt to deny that it is coming, and that, when it does come, it will abide for ever — yes, for ever, and for ever, and for ever! Tremendous thought! — overwhelming consideration! May it speak, with living power, to the soul of the unconverted reader,

leading him to cry out, in all sincerity, “What is to be done?"

Yes, here is the question, “What must I do to be saved?" The divine answer is wrapped up in the following words which dropped from the lips of two of Christ's very highest and most gifted ambassadors. "Repent and be converted," said Peter to the Jew. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house," said Paul to the Gentile. And again, the latter of these two blessed messengers, in summing up his own ministry, thus defines the whole matter, “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

How simple! But how real! How deep! How thoroughly practical! It is not a nominal, national head belief. It is not saying, in mere flippant profession, "I believe." Ah! no; it is something far deeper and more serious than this. It is much to be feared that a large amount of the professed faith of this our day is deplorably superficial. There are vast numbers of those who throng our preaching rooms and lecture halls who are, after all, but wayside and stony ground hearers. The plough has never passed over them. The fallow ground has never been broken up. The arrow of conviction has never pierced them through and through. They have never been smashed to pieces — turned inside out — thoroughly revolutionised. The preaching of the gospel to all such is just like scattering precious seed on the hard asphalt, the pavement, or the beaten highway. It never penetrates. It does not enter into the depths of the soul; the conscience is not reached; the heart is not affected. The seed lies on the surface and is carried away by the first passing breeze.

Nor is this all. It is also much to be feared that many of the preachers of the present day, in their efforts to make the gospel simple, lose sight of the eternal necessity of repentance, and the essential necessity of the action of the Holy Ghost, without which so-called faith is a mere human exercise and passes away like the vapours of the morning, leaving the soul still in the region of nature, satisfied with itself, daubed with the untempered mortar of a merely human gospel that cries peace, peace, where there is no peace, but the most imminent danger.

All this is very serious, and should lead the soul into profound exercise. We want the reader to give it his grave and immediate consideration. We would put this pointed question to him, which we entreat him to answer, now, “Have you got eternal life?" Say, dear friend, have you? “He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life." Grand reality! If you have not got this, you have nothing. You are still on that platform of nature of which we have spoken so much. Yes, you are still there, no matter though you were the very fairest specimen to be found there — amiable, polished, affable, frank, generous, truthful, upright, honourable, attractive, beloved, learned, cultivated, and even pious after a merely human fashion. You may be all this, and yet not have a single pulsation of eternal life in your soul.

This may sound harsh, stern, and severe. But it is true; and you will find out its truth sooner or later. We want you to find it out now. We want you to see that you are a thorough bankrupt, in the fullest sense of that word. A deed of bankruptcy has been filed against you in the high court of heaven. Here are its terms, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Have you ever pondered

these words? Have you ever seen their application to yourself. So long as you are unrepentant, unconverted, unbelieving, you cannot do a single thing to please God — not one. “In the flesh" and “on the platform of nature" mean one and the same thing; and so long as you are there and thus, you cannot please God. “You must be born again" — renewed in the very deepest springs of your being, unrenewed nature is wholly unable to see and unfit to enter the kingdom of God. You must be born of water and of the Spirit — that is by the living word of God, and of the Holy Ghost. There is no other way by which to enter the kingdom. It is not by self-improvement but by new birth, we reach the blessed kingdom of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and “the flesh profiteth nothing," for “they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

How distinct is all this! How pointed! How full! How personal! How earnestly we desire that the unawakened or undecided reader should, just now, take it home to himself, as though he were the only individual upon the face of the earth. It will not do to generalise — to rest satisfied with saying, "We are all sinners." No; it is an intensely individual matter. “You must be born again." If you again ask, “How?" hear the divine response from the lips of the Master Himself, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Here is the sovereign remedy, for every poor broken-hearted, conscience-smitten, hopelessly ruined, hell deserving sinner — for every one who owns himself lost — who confesses his sins, and judges himself — for every weary, heavy laden, sin-burdened soul — here is

God's own blessed promise. Jesus died, that you might live. He was condemned, that you might be justified. He drank the cup of wrath, that you might drink the cup of salvation. Behold Him hanging on yonder cross for thee. See what He did for thee. Believe that He satisfied, on your behalf, all the claims — the infinite and everlasting claims of the throne of God. See all your sins laid on Him — your guilt imputed to Him — your entire condition represented and disposed of by Him. See His atoning death answering perfectly for all that was or ever could be brought against you. See Him rising from the dead, having accomplished all. See Him ascending into the heavens, bearing in His divine Person the marks of His finished atonement. See Him seated on the throne of God, in the very highest place of power. See Him crowned with glory and honour. Believe in Him there, and you will receive the gift of eternal life — the seal of the Holy Ghost — the earnest of the inheritance. You will pass off the platform of nature — you will be “A man in Christ."

PART 2.

To all whose eyes have been opened to see their true condition, by nature — who have been brought under the convicting power of the Holy Ghost — who know aught of the real meaning of a broken heart and a contrite spirit — to all such it must be ox the deepest possible interest to know the divine secret of rest and peace. If it be true — and it is true, because God says it — that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God" — then how is any one to get out of the flesh? How can he pass off the platform of nature? How can he reach the blessed position of those to whom the Holy Ghost declares, “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit?"

These are momentous questions, surely. For, be it thoroughly known and ever remembered, that no improvement of our old nature is of any value whatsoever, as to our standing before God. It may be all very well, so far as this life is concerned, for a man to improve himself, by every means within his reach, to cultivate his mind, furnish his memory, elevate his moral tone, advance his social position. All this is quite true, so true as not to need a moment's argument.

But, admitting, in the fullest manner, the truth of all this, it leaves wholly untouched the solemn and sweeping statement of the inspired apostle that “They that are in the flesh cannot please God." There must be a new standing altogether, and this new standing cannot be reached by any change in the old nature — by any doings — any sayings — any feelings — ordinances of religion, prayers, alms or sacraments. Do what you will with nature and it is nature still. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and do what you will with flesh you cannot make it spirit. There must be a new life — a life flowing from the new man, the last Adam, who has become, in resurrection, the Head of a new race.

How is this most precious life to be had? Hear the memorable answer — hear it, anxious reader hear it and live. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement; but is passed from death unto life." John 5: 24.

Here we have a total change of standing — a passing from death to life — from a position in which there is not so much as a single link with heaven — with the new creation — with the risen Man in glory, into a position in

which there is not a single link with the first man — with the old creation — and this present evil world. And all this is through believing on the Son of God — not saying we believe, but really, truly, heartily, believing on the Son of God — not by a head belief, a nominal, notional, intellectual faith — but by believing with the heart.

Thus only does any one become A MAN IN CHRIST.

Every true believer is a man in Christ. Whether it be the convert of yesterday or the hoary-headed saint of fifty or sixty years' standing as a Christian, each stands in precisely the same blessed position — he is in Christ. There can be no difference here. The practical state may differ immensely; but the positive standing is one and the same. As on the platform of nature, you may meet with every imaginable shade, grade, class, and condition, though all having one common standing; so on the new, the divine, the heavenly platform, you may meet with every possible variety of practical condition: the greatest possible difference in intelligence, experience, and spiritual power, while all possessing the same standing before God, all being in Christ. There can be no degrees as to standing, whatever there may be as to state. The convert of yesterday, and the hoary headed father in Christ are both alike as to standing. Each is a man in Christ, and there can be no advance upon this. We sometimes hear of “The higher Christian life;" but, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a higher or a lower Christian life, inasmuch as Christ is the life of every believer. It may be that those who use the term mean a right thing. They probably refer to the higher stages of the Christian life — greater nearness to God — greater likeness to Christ — greater power in the Spirit — more devotedness — more separation from the world

— more entire consecration of heart to Christ. But all these things belong to the question of our state, not to our standing. This latter is absolute, settled, unchangeable. It is in Christ, nothing less, nothing more, nothing different. If we are not in Christ, we are in our sins; but if we are in Christ, we cannot possibly be higher, as to standing.

If the reader will turn with us, for a few moments, to 1 Corinthians 15: 45-48, he will find some powerful teaching on this great foundation truth. The apostle Speaks here of two men, "the first and the second." And let it be carefully noted that the second Man is, by no means, federally connected with the first, but stands in contrast with him — a new, independent, divine, heavenly source of life in Himself. The first man has been entirely set aside, as a ruined, guilty, outcast creature. We speak of Adam federally — as the head of a race Personally, Adam was saved by grace; but if we look at him from a federal standpoint, we see him a hopeless wreck.

The first man is an irremediable ruin. This is proved by the fact of a second Man, for truly we may say of the men as of the covenants, “1f the first had been found faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." But the very fact of a second Man being introduced demonstrates the hopeless ruin of the first. Why a second, if aught could be made of the first? If our old Adam nature was, in any wise, capable of being improved, there was no need of something new. But “they that are in the flesh cannot please God." “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Romans 8, Galatians 6.

There is immense moral power in all this line of teaching. It sets forth Christianity in vivid and striking contrast with every form of religiousness under the sun. Take Judaism or any other that ever was known or that now exists in this world, and what do you find it to be? Is it not invariably something designed for the testing, trying, improvement, or advancement of the first man? Unquestionably.

But what is Christianity? It is something entirely new — heavenly — spiritual — divine. It is based upon the cross of Christ, in the which the first man came to his end — where sin was put away — judgement borne — the old man crucified and put out of God's sight for ever, so far as all believers are concerned. The cross closes, for faith, the history of the first man. “I am crucified with Christ," says the apostle. And again, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

Are these mere figures of speech, or do they set forth, in the mighty words of the Holy Ghost, the grand fact of the entire setting aside of our old nature, as a thing utterly worthless and condemned? The latter, most assuredly, blessed be God. Christianity starts, as it were, from the open grave of the second Man, to pursue its bright career onward to eternal glory. It is, emphatically, a new creation in which there is not so much as a single shred of the old thing — for “all things are of God." And if “all things" are of God, there can be nothing of man.

What rest! What comfort! What strength! What moral elevation! What sweet relief for the poor burdened soul that has been vainly seeking, for years perhaps, to find peace in self-improvement! What deliverance from the

wretched thraldom of legality, in all its phases, to find out the precious secret that my guilty, ruined, bankrupt self — the very thing that I have been trying, by every means in my power, to improve, has been completely and for ever set aside — that God is not looking for any amendment in it — that He has condemned it and put it to death in the cross of His Son! What an answer is here to the monk, the ascetic, and the ritualist! Oh! that it were understood in all its emancipating powers This heavenly, this divine, this spiritual Christianity. Surely were it only known in its living power and reality, it would deliver the soul from the thousand and one forms of corrupt religion whereby the arch-enemy and deceiver is ruining the souls of untold millions. We may truly say that Satan's masterpiece — his most successful effort against the truth of the Gospel, against the Christianity of the New Testament — is seen in the fact of his leading unconverted people to take and apply to themselves ordinances of the Christian religion, and to profess many of its doctrines. In this way he blinds their eyes to their own true condition, as utterly ruined, guilty, and undone; and strikes a deadly blow at the pure Gospel of Christ. The best piece that was ever put upon the “old garment" of man's ruined nature is the profession of Christianity; and, the better the piece, the worse the rent. See Mark 2: 21.

Let us bend an attentive ear to the following weighty words of the greatest teacher and best exponent of true Christianity the world ever saw. “For I through law am dead to law, that I might live to God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Mark this, “I — not I — but Christ." The old "I" — "crucified." The new “I" — Christ. “And the life which I

now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2: 19, 20.

{*The reader will distinguish between the expression “in the flesh" as used in Galatians 2: 20, and in Romans 8: 8, 9. In the former, it simply refers to our condition as in the body. In the latter, it sets forth the principle or ground of our standing. The believer is in the body, as to the fact of his condition; but he is not in the flesh as to the principle of his standing. But very often the expression “in the flesh," is synonymous with being "in the body." We need to ponder more deeply the words of scripture.}

This, and nothing else, is Christianity. It is not "the old man" — the first Adam — nature, becoming religious, even though the religion be the profession of the doctrines, and the adopting of the ordinances of Christianity. No; it is the death, the crucifixion, the burial of the old man — the old I — the old nature, and becoming a new man in Christ. Every true believer is a new man in Christ. He has passed clean out of the old creation — standing — the old estate of sin and death, guilt and condemnation; and he has passed into a new creation-standing — into a new estate of life and righteousness in a risen and glorified Christ — the Head of the new creation — the last Adam.

Such is the position and unalterable standing of the very feeblest believer in Christ. There is absolutely no other standing for any Christian. I must either be in the first man or in the second. There is no third man, for the second Man is the last Adam. There is no middle ground. I am either in Christ, or I am in my sins. But if I am in

Christ, I am as He is before God. ' As he is so are we, in this world." He does not say, "As he was" but "as he is." That is, the Christian is viewed by God as one with Christ, in every respect — His Deity, of course, excepted, as being incommunicable. That blessed One stood in the believer's stead — bore his sins, died his death, paid his penalty, represented him, in every respect; took all his guilt, all his liabilities, all that pertained to him as a man in nature, stood as his substitute, in all the verity and reality of that word, and having divinely met his case, and borne his judgement, He rose from the dead, and is now the Head, the Representative, and the only true definition of the believer before God.

To this most glorious and enfranchising truth, holy scripture bears the amplest testimony. The passage which we have just quoted from Galatians is a most vivid, powerful, and condensed statement of it. And if the reader will turn to Romans 6. he will find further evidence. We shall quote some of the weighty sentences.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Far be the thought. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also of resurrection. Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also

live with him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6: 1-11.

Reader, mark, especially, these words in the foregoing quotation — "We that are dead" — "We are buried with him" — "Like as Christ was raised.... even so we also" — "Our old man is crucified with him" — "Dead with Christ" — "Dead indeed unto sin." Do we really understand such utterances? Have we entered into their real force and meaning? Do we, in very deed, perceive their application to ourselves. These are searching questions for the heart; but they are needful. The real doctrine of Romans 6 is but little apprehended. There are thousands who profess to believe in the atoning virtue of the death of Christ, but who do not see aught therein beyond the forgiveness of their sins. They do not see the crucifixion, death, and burial of the old man — the destruction of the body of sin — the condemnation of sin — the entire setting aside of the old system of things belonging to their first Adam condition — in a word their perfect identification with a dead and risen Christ. Hence it is that we press this grand and all-important line of truth upon the attention of the reader. It lies at the very base of all true Christianity, and forms an integral part of the truth of the Gospel.

Let us hearken to further evidence on the point. Hear what the apostle saith to the Colossians: “Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to

ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men, [such as] touch not, taste not, handle not" — thus it is that human ordinances speak to us, telling us not to touch this, not to taste that, not to handle the other, as if there could possibly be any divine principle involved in such things — "which all are to perish with the using;" and which, “have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Here, again, let us inquire how far we enter into the true force, meaning, and application of such words as these — "Why as though living in the world," &c.? Are we living in the world or living in heaven — which? The true Christian is one who has died out of this present evil world. He has no more to do with it than Christ. "Like as Christ.... even so we." He is dead to the law — dead to sin: alive in Christ — alive to God — alive in the new creation. He belongs to heaven. He is enrolled as a citizen of heaven. His religion, his politics, his morals are all heavenly. He is a heavenly man walking on the earth, and fulfilling all the duties which belong to the varied relationships in which the hand of God has placed him, and in which the word of God most fully recognises him, and amply guides him, such as husband, father, master, child, servant, and such like. The Christian is not a monk, an ascetic, or a hermit. He is, we repeat, a heavenly, spiritual man, in the world, but not of it. He is like a foreigner so far as his residence here is concerned. He is in the body, as to the fact of his

condition; but not in the flesh as to the principle of his standing. He is a man in Christ.

Ere closing this article, we should like to call the reader's attention to 2 Corinthians 12. In it he will find, at once, the positive standing and the possible state of the believer. The standing is fixed and unalterable as set forth in that one comprehensive sentence — "A man in Christ." The state may graduate between the two extremes presented in the opening and closing verses of this chapter. A Christian may be in the third heaven, amid the seraphic visions of that blessed and holy place; or he may, if not watchful, sink down into all the gross and evil things named in verses 20, 21.

It may be asked, “Is it possible that a true child of God could ever be found in such a low moral condition?" Alas! alas! reader, it is indeed possible. There is no depth of sin and folly into which a Christian is not capable of plunging, if no; kept by the grace of God. Even the blessed apostle himself, when he came down from the third heaven, needed “a thorn in the flesh" to keep him from being “exalted above measure." We might suppose that a man who had been up in that bright and blessed region could never again feel the stirrings of pride. But the plain fact is that even the third heavens cannot cure the flesh. It is utterly incorrigible, and must be judged and kept under, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, else it will cut out plenty of sorrowful work for us.

Still, nothing can touch the believer's standing. He is in Christ, for ever — justified, accepted, perfect in Him, and never can be anything else. And, moreover, he must ever judge his state by his standing, never his standing

by his state. To attempt to reach the standing by my state is legalism, to refuse to judge my state by the standing is antinomianism. Both — though so diverse one from the other — are alike false — alike opposed to the truth of God — alike offensive to the Holy Ghost — alike removed from the divine idea of “A Man in Christ."

PART 3.

Having considered the deeply interesting questions of “a man in nature" and “a man in Christ," it remains for us, now, to dwell for a little, in the third and last place, on the thoroughly practical subject suggested by the title of this paper, namely, THE MAN OF GOD.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that every Christian is a man of God. Even in Paul's day — in the days of Timothy, there were many who bore the Christian name who were very far indeed from acquitting themselves as men of God, that is, as those who were really God's men, in the midst of the failure and error which, even then, had begun to creep in.

It is the perception of this fact that renders the Second Epistle to Timothy so profoundly interesting. In it we have what we may call ample provision for the man of God, in the day in which he is called to live — a dark, evil, and perilous day, most surely, in which all who — will live godly must keep the eye steadily fixed on Christ Himself — His Name — His Person — His word, if they would make any headway against the tide.

It is hardly possible to read Second Timothy without being struck with its intensely individual character. The very opening address is strikingly characteristic. “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure

conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."

What glowing words are these! How affecting to hearken thus to one man of God pouring the deep and tender feelings of his great, large, loving heart into the heart of another man of God! The dear apostle was beginning to feel the chilling influence that was fast creeping over the professing church. He was tasting the bitterness of disappointed hopes. He found himself deserted by many who had once professed to be his friends and associates in that glorious work to which he had consecrated all the energies of his great soul. Many were becoming “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, and of his prisoner." It was not that they altogether ceased to be Christians, or abandoned the Christian profession; but they turned their backs upon Paul, and left him alone in the day of trial.

Now, it is under such circumstances that the heart turns, with peculiar tenderness, to individual faithfulness and affection. If one is surrounded, on all hands, by true hearted confessors — by a great cloud of witnesses: — a large army of good soldiers of Jesus Christ — if the tide of devotedness is flowing around one and bearing him on its bosom, he is not so dependent upon individual sympathy and fellowship.

But, on the other hand, when the general condition of things is low — when the majority prove faithless — when old associates are dropping off, it is then that personal grace and true affection are specially valued. The dark background of general declension throws individual devotedness into beauteous relief.

Thus it is in this exquisite Epistle which now lies open before us. It does the heart good to hearken to the breathings of the aged prisoner of Jesus Christ who can speak of serving God from his forefathers with a pure conscience, and of unceasing remembrance of his beloved son and true yoke fellow.

It is specially interesting to notice that, both in reference to his own history and that of his beloved friend, Paul goes back to facts of very early date — facts in their own individual path — facts prior to their meeting one another, and prior to what we may call their church associations — important and interesting as these things most surely are in their place. Paul had served God, from his forefathers, with pure conscience, before he had known a fellow Christian. This he could continue to do though deserted by all his Christian companions. So also, in the case of his faithful friend, he says, “I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in thee also."

This is very touching and very beautiful. We cannot but be struck with such references to the previous history of those beloved men of God. The “pure conscience" of the one, and “the unfeigned faith" of the other, indicate two grand moral qualities which all must possess if they would prove true men of God in a dark and evil day. The former has its immediate reference, in all things, to the one living and true God; the latter draws all its springs from Him. That leads us to walk before God; this enables us to walk with Him. Both together are indispensable in forming the character of the true man of God.

It is utterly impossible to over-estimate the importance of keeping a pure conscience before God, in all our ways. It is positively invaluable. It leads us to refer everything to God. It keeps us from being tossed hither and thither by every wave and current of human opinion. It imparts stability and consistency to the entire course and character. We are all in imminent danger of falling under human influence — of shaping our way according to the thoughts of our fellow man — of adopting his cue, and mounting his hobby.

All this is destructive of the character of the man of God. If you take your tone from your fellow; if you suffer yourself to be formed in a merely human mould; if your faith stands in the wisdom of man; if your object is to please men, then instead of being a man of God, you will become a member of a party or clique. You will lose that lovely freshness and originality so essential to the individual servant of Christ, and become marked by the peculiar and dominant features of a sect.

Let us carefully guard against this. It has ruined many a valuable servant. Many who might have proved really useful workmen in the vineyard, have failed completely through not maintaining the integrity of their individual character and path. They began with God. They started on their course in the exercise of a pure conscience, and in the pursuit of that path which a divine hand had marked out for them. There was a bloom, a freshness, and a verdure about them, most refreshing to all who came in contact with them. They were taught of God. They drew near to the eternal fountain of holy scripture and drank for themselves. Perhaps they did not know much; but what they did know was real because they

received it from God, and it turned to good account for “there is much food in the tillage of the poor."

But, instead of going on with God, they allowed themselves to get under human influence; they got truth second-hand, and became the vendors of other men's thoughts; instead of drinking at the fountain head, they drank at the streams of human opinion; they lost originality, simplicity, freshness, and power, and became the merest copyists, if not miserable caricatures. Instead of giving forth those “rivers of living water" which flow from the true believer in Jesus, they dropped into the barren technicalities and cut and dry common-places of mere systematised religion.

Beloved Christian reader, all this must be sedulously guarded against. We must watch against it, pray against it, believe against it, and live against it. Let us seek to serve God, with a pure conscience. Let us live in His own immediate presence, in the light of His blessed countenance, in the holy intimacy of personal communion with Him, through the power of the Holy Ghost. This, we may rest assured, is the true secret of power for the man of God, at all times, and under all circumstances. We must walk with God, in the deep and cherished sense of our own personal responsibility to Him. This is what we understand by a pure conscience."

But will this tend, in the smallest degree, to lessen our sense of the value of true fellowship — of holy communion with all those who are true to Christ? By no means; indeed it is the very thing which will impart power, energy, and depth of tone to the fellowship. If every “man in Christ" were only acquitting himself thoroughly as “a man of God," what blessed fellowship

there would be! what heart work! what glow, what unmistakable power! How different from the dull formalism of a merely nominal assent to certain accredited dogmas of a party, on the one hand, and from the mere esprit de corps of cliquism, on the other.

There are few terms in such common use and so little understood as “fellowship." In numberless cases, it merely indicates the fact of a nominal membership in some religious denomination — a fact which furnishes no guarantee whatsoever of living communion with Christ, or personal devotedness to His cause. If all who are nominally “in fellowship" were acquitting themselves thoroughly as men of God, what a very different condition of things we should be privileged to witness!

But what is fellowship? It is, in its very highest expression, having one common object with God, and taking part in the same portion; and that object — that portion is Christ — Christ known and enjoyed through the Holy Ghost. This is fellowship with God. What a privilege! What a dignity! What unspeakable blessedness! To be allowed to have a common object and a common portion with God Himself! To delight in the One in whom He delights! There can be nothing higher, nothing better, nothing more precious than this. Not even in heaven itself shall we know aught beyond this. Our own condition will, thank God, be vastly different. We shall be done with a body of sin and death, and be clothed with a body of glory. We shall be done with a sinful, sorrowful, distracting world, where all is directly opposed to God and to us, and we shall breathe the atmosphere — the pure and exhilarating atmosphere of that bright and blessed world above. But, in so far as our fellowship is concerned, it is now as it shall be then,

“with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" — "In the light," and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thus much as to our fellowship with God. And, as regards our fellowship one with another, it is simply as we walk in the light, as we read, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7) We can only have fellowship one with another as we walk in the immediate presence of God. There may be a vast amount of mere intercourse without one single particle of divine fellowship. Alas! alas! a great deal of what passes for Christian fellowship is nothing more than the merest religious gossip — the vapid, worthless, soul-withering chit-chat of the religious world, than which nothing can be more miserably unprofitable. True Christian fellowship can only be enjoyed in the light. It is when we are individually walking with God, in the power of personal communion, that we really have fellowship one with another, and this fellowship consists in real heart enjoyment of Christ as our one object — our common portion. It is not heartless traffic in certain favourite doctrines which we receive to hold in common. It is not morbid sympathy with those who think, and see, and feel with us, in some favourite theory or dogma. It is something quite different from all this. It is delighting in Christ, in common with all those who are walking in the light. It is attachment to Him — to His Person — His Name — His word — His cause — His people. It is joint consecration of heart and soul to that blessed One who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and brought us into the light of God's presence, there to walk with Him and with one another. This and nothing

less is Christian fellowship; and where this is really understood it will lead us to pause and consider what we say when we declare, in any given case, “such an one is in fellowship."

But we must proceed with our Epistle, and there see what full provision there is for the man of God, however dark the day may be in which his lot is cast.

We have seen something of the importance — yea rather we should say, the indispensable necessity of “a pure conscience," and “unfeigned faith," in the moral equipment of God's man. These qualities lie at the very base of the entire edifice of practical godliness which must ever characterise the genuine man of God.

But there is more than this. The edifice must be erected as well as the foundation laid. The man of God has to work on amid all sorts of difficulties, trials, sorrows, disappointments, obstacles, questions, and controversies. He has his niche to fill, his path to lead, his work to do. Come what may, he must serve. The enemy may oppose; the world may frown; the church may be in ruins around him; false brethren may thwart, hinder, and desert; strife, controversy, and division may arise and darken the atmosphere; still the man of God must move on, regardless of all these things, working, serving, testifying, according to the sphere in which the hand of God has placed him, and according to the gift bestowed upon him. How is this to be done? Not only by keeping a pure conscience and the exercise of an unfeigned faith — priceless, indispensable qualities! but, further, he has to hearken to the following weighty word of exhortation — "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance

that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

The gift must be stirred up, else it may become useless if allowed to lie dormant. There is great danger of letting the gift drop into disuse through the discouraging influence of surrounding circumstances. A gift unused will soon become useless; whereas, a gift stirred up and diligently used grows and expands. It is not enough to possess a gift, we must wait upon the gift, cultivate it, and exercise it. This is the way to improve it.

And observe the special force of the expression, “Gift of God." In Ephesians 4 we read of “the gift of Christ," and there, too, we find all the gifts, from the highest to the lowest range, flowing down from Christ the risen and glorified Head of His body the church. But in 2 Timothy, we have it defined as “the gift of God." True it is — blessed be His holy name! — our Lord Christ is God over all, blessed for ever, so that the gift of Christ is the gift of God. But we may rest assured there is never any distinction in scripture without a difference; and hence there is some good reason for the expression “gift of God. “We doubt not it is in full harmony with the nature and object of the Epistle in which it occurs. It is “the gift of God" communicated to “the man of God “to be used by him notwithstanding the hopeless ruin of the professing church, and spite of all the difficulty, darkness, and discouragement of the day in which his lot is cast.

The man of God must not allow himself to be hindered in the diligent cultivation and exercise of his gift, though everything seems to look dark and forbidding, for “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of

love, and of a sound mind." Here we have “God'' again introduced to our thoughts, and that, too, in a most gracious manner, as furnishing His man with the very thing he needs to meet the special exigence of his day — "The Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Marvellous combination! Truly, an exquisite compound after the art of the apothecary! Power, love and wisdom! How perfect! Not a single ingredient too much. Not one too little. If it were merely a spirit of power, it might lead one to carry things with a high hand. Were it merely a spirit of love, it might lead one to sacrifice truth for peace' sake; or indolently to tolerate error and evil, rather than give offence But the power is softened by the love; and the love is strengthened by the power; and, moreover, the spirit of wisdom comes in to adjust both the power and the love. In a word, it is a divinely perfect and beautiful provision for the man of God — the very thing he needs for “the last days" so perilous, so difficult, so full of all sorts of perplexing questions and apparent contradictions. If one were to be asked what he would consider most necessary for such days as these? surely he should, at once, say, “power, love, and soundness of mind." Well, blessed be God, these are the very things which He has graciously given to form the character, shape the way, and govern the conduct of the man of God, right on to the end.

But there is further provision and further exhortation for the man of God. “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." In Pentecostal days, when the rich and mighty tide of divine grace was flowing in, and bearing thousands of ransomed souls upon its bosom;

when all were of one heart and one mind when those outside were overawed by the extraordinary manifestations of divine power, it was rather a question of partaking of the triumphs of the gospel, than its afflictions. But in the days contemplated in 2 Timothy, all is changed. The beloved apostle is a lonely prisoner at Rome; all in Asia had forsaken him; Hymeneus and Philetus are denying the resurrection; all sorts of heresies, errors, and evils are creeping in; the landmarks are in danger of being swept away by the tide of apostasy and corruption.

In the face of all this, the man of God has to brace himself up for the occasion. He has to endure hardness; to hold fast the form of sound words; he has to keep the good thing committed to him; to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; to keep himself disentangled — however he may be engaged; he must keep himself free as a soldier; he must cling to God's sure foundation; He must purge himself from the dishonourable vessels in the great house; he must flee youthful lusts, and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. He must avoid foolish and unlearned questions. He must turn away from formal and heartless professors. He must be thoroughly furnished for all good works, perfectly equipped through a knowledge of the holy scriptures. He must preach the word; be instant in season and out of season. He must watch in all things; endure afflictions; and do the work of an evangelist.

What a category for the man of God! Who is sufficient for these things? Where is the spiritual power to be had for such works? It is to be had at the mercy-seat. It is to be found in earnest, patient, believing, waiting upon the

living God, and in no other way. All our springs are in Him. We have only to draw upon Him. He is sufficient for the darkest day. Difficulties are nothing to Him, and they are bread for faith. Yes, beloved reader, difficulties of the most formidable nature are simply bread for faith, and the man of faith can feed upon them and grow strong thereby. Unbelief says, “There is a lion in the way;" but faith can slay the strongest lion that ever roared along the path of the Nazarite of God. It is the privilege of the true believer to rise far above all the hostile influences which surround him — no matter what they are, or from whence they spring — and, in the calmness, quietness, and brightness of the divine presence, to enjoy as high communion, and taste as rich and rare privileges as ever were known in the church's brightest and palmiest days.

Let us remember this. Every man of God will need to remember it. There is no comfort, no peace, no strength, no moral power, no true elevation to be derived from looking at the ruins. We must look up out of the ruins to the place where our Lord Christ has taken His seat, at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Or rather — to speak more according to our true position — we should look down from our place in the heavens upon all the ruins of earth. To realise our place in Christ, and to be occupied in heart and soul with Him, is the true secret of power to carry ourselves as men of God. To have Christ ever before us — His work for the conscience, His Person for the heart, His word for the path, is the one grand, sovereign, divine remedy for a ruined self — a ruined world — a ruined church.

But we must close. Very gladly would we linger, in company with the reader, over the contents of this most

precious 2 Timothy. Truly refreshing would it be to dwell upon all its touching allusions, its earnest appeals, its weighty exhortations. But this would demand a volume, and hence we must leave the Christian reader to study the epistle for himself, praying that the eternal Spirit who indicted it may unfold and apply it, in living power to his soul, so that he may be enabled to acquit himself as an earnest, faithful, whole-hearted man of God and servant of Christ, in the midst of a scene of hollow profession, and heartless worldly religiousness.

May the good Lord stir us all up to a more thorough consecration of ourselves, in spirit, soul, and body — all we are and all we have — to His service! We think we can really say we long for this — long for it, in the deep sense of our lack of it — long for it, more intensely, as we grow increasingly sick of the unreal condition of things within and around us.

O beloved Christian, let us earnestly, believingly, and perseveringly cry to our own ever gracious God to make us more real — more whole-hearted — more thoroughly devoted to our Lord Jesus Christ in all things.

Prayer

Prayer, in its proper place.

C. H. Mackintosh.

There is a strong tendency in the human mind to take a one-sided view of things. This should be carefully guarded against. It would ever be our wisdom to view things as God presents them to us, in His holy word. We should put things where He puts them, and leave them there. Were this more faithfully attended to, the truth would be much more clearly understood, and souls much better instructed. There is a divine place for everything, and every thing should be in a divine place. We should avoid putting right things in wrong places, just as carefully as we would avoid setting them aside altogether. The one may do as much damage as the other. Let any divine institution be taken out of its divinely-appointed place, and it must necessarily fail of its divinely-appointed end. This, I imagine, will hardly be questioned by any enlightened or well-regulated mind. It will be admitted, on all hands, to be wrong to put things in any place but just where God intended them to be.

Now, in proportion to the importance of a right thing is the importance of having it in its right place. This remark holds good, in an especial manner, with respect to the hallowed and most precious exercise of prayer. It is hard to imagine how any one, with the word of God in his hand, could presume to detract from the value of prayer. It is one of the very highest functions, and most important privileges of the Christian life. No sooner has the new nature been communicated, by the Holy Ghost,

through faith in Christ, than it expresses itself in the sweet accents of prayer.

Prayer is the earnest breathing of the new man, drawn forth by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in all true believers. Hence, to find any one praying, is to find him manifesting divine life in one of its most touching and beauteous characteristics, namely dependence. There may be a vast amount of ignorance displayed in the prayer, both in its character and object; but the spirit of prayer is, unquestionably, divine. A child may ask for a great many foolish things; but, clearly, he could not ask for anything, if he had not life. The ability and desire to ask are the infallible proofs of life. No sooner had Saul of Tarsus passed from death unto life, than the Lord says of him, "Behold, he prayeth!" (Acts 9) Doubtless, he had, as "a Pharisee of the Pharisees," said many "long prayers;" but, not until he "saw that Just One, and heard the voice of his mouth," could it be said of him, “behold, he prayeth." (Acts 22: 14)

Saying prayers, and praying, are two totally different things. A self-righteous Pharisee may excel in the former; none but a converted soul can enjoy the latter. The spirit of prayer is the spirit of the new man; the language of prayer is the distinct utterance of the new life. The moment a spiritual babe is born, into the new creation,. it sends up a cry of helpless dependence toward the source of its birth. Who would dare to hush that cry? Let the babe be gently satisfied, not rudely silenced. The very cry which ignorance would seek to stifle, falls like sweetest music on a parent's ear. It is the proof of life. It evidences the existence of a new object around which the affections of a parent's heart may entwine themselves.

All this is plain enough. It commends itself to every renewed mind. The man who could think of hushing the accents of prayer must be wholly ignorant of the precious and beautiful mysteries of the new creation. The understanding of the praying one may need to be instructed; but oh! let not the spirit of prayer be quenched. Let the beams of divine revelation, in all their emancipating power, shine in upon the struggling conscience, but let not the breathings of the new life be interrupted.

The newly-converted soul may be in great darkness. The chilling mists of legalism may enwrap his spirit. He may not, as yet, be able to rest fully in Christ, and His accomplished work. His awakened conscience may not, as yet, have found its peace-giving answer in the precious blood of Jesus. Doubts and fears may sorely beset him. He may not know about the important doctrine of the two natures, and the continual conflict between them. He is bowed down beneath the humiliating sense of indwelling sin and sees not, as yet, the ample provision which redeeming love has made for that very thing, in the sacrifice and priesthood — the blood and advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. The joyous emotions which attended upon the first moments of his conversion have passed away. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness are hidden by the heavy clouds which arise from within and around him. It is not with him as in days past. He marvels at the sad change which has come over him and well nigh doubts if he were ever converted at all.

Need we wonder, though such an one should cry mightily to God? Yea, the wonder would be if he could do aught else. How, then, should we treat him? Should we

teach him not to pray? God forbid. This would be to do the work of Satan, who, assuredly, hates prayer most cordially. To drop a syllable which could even be understood as making little of an exercise so entirely divine, would be to fly in the face of the entire book of God, to deny the very example of Christ, and hinder the utterance of the Holy Ghost in the new-born soul.

The Old and New Testament Scriptures literally teem with exhortations and encouragements to pray. To quote the passages, would fill a volume. The blessed Master Himself has left His people an example as to the unceasing exercise of a spirit of prayer. He both prayed Himself and taught His disciples to pray. The same is true of the Holy Ghost in the apostles. (See the following passages: Luke 3: 21; Luke 6: 12; Luke 9: 28, 29; Luke 11: 1-13; Luke 18: 1-8; Acts 1: 14; Acts 4: 31; Rom. 12: 12; Rom. 15: 30; Eph 6: 18; Phil. 4: 6; Col. 4: 2-4; 1 Thess. 5: 17; 2 Thess. 3: 1, 2; 1 Tim. 2: 1-8; Heb. 13: 18; James 5: 14, 15.)

If my reader will look out and ponder the foregoing passages, he will have a just view of the place which prayer occupies in the Christian economy. He will see that disciples are exhorted to pray; and he will note that it is only disciples who are exhorted. He will see that prayer is a grand prominent exercise of the house of God; and he will note that he must be in the house of God to engage in it. He will see that prayer is the undoubted utterance of the new life; and he will note that the life must be there to utter itself. He will see that prayer is an important part of the Christian's privilege; and he will note that it enters, in no wise, into the foundation of the Christian's peace.

Thus, he will be able to put prayer in its proper place; and how important it is that it should be so put How important it is that the anxious enquirer should see that the deep and solid foundations of his present and everlasting peace were laid in the work of the cross, eighteen centuries ago! How important that the blood of Jesus should stand out before the soul in clear and bold relief, and in its own solitary grandeur, as the alone foundation of the sinner's rest! A soul may be earnestly seeking and crying for salvation, and, all the while, be ignorant of the great fact that it is ready to his hand-that he is actually commanded to accept a free, full, present, personal, and eternal salvation-that Christ has done all-that a brimming cup of salvation is set before him, which faith has only to take and drink for its everlasting satisfaction. The gospel of God's free grace points to the rent veil — the empty tomb — the occupied throne above. (Matt. 28; Heb. 1 and Heb. 10) What do these things declare? What voice do they utter in the anxious sinner's ear? Salvation! salvation! salvation! The rent veil, the empty tomb, the occupied throne, do all cry out, salvation!

Reader, do you really want salvation? Then why not take it, as God's free gift? Are you looking to your own heart or to Christ's finished work for salvation? Is it needful, think you, to wait another moment in order to know that you are fully and for ever saved? If so then Christ's work was not finished; the ransom was not paid; something yet remains to be done. But Christ said, “It is finished," and God says, “I have found a ransom." (Job 33; John 19) If you have to do, say, or think aught, to complete the work of salvation, then Christ would not be a whole, a perfect Saviour.

And, further, it would be a plain denial of Rom. 4: 5, which says, “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Take heed that you are not mixing up your poor prayers with the glorious work of redemption, completed by the Lamb of God on the cross. Prayer is most precious; but, remember, “without faith it is impossible to please God;" (Heb. 11) and if you have faith, you have Christ, and having Christ, you have ALL. If you say you are crying for mercy, the word of God points you to mercy's copious stream flowing from the finished sacrifice. You have all your anxious heart can want in Jesus, and He is God's free gift to you just as you are, where you are, now. If you had to be aught else but what you are, or to go anywhere else from where you are, then salvation would not be “by grace, through faith." (Eph. 2) If you are anxious to get salvation, and God desires you should have it, why need you be another moment without it? It is all ready. Christ died and rose again. The Holy Ghost testifies. The word is plain. “Only believe."

Oh! may the Spirit of God lead anxious souls to find settled repose in Jesus. May He lead them to look away from all beside, straight to an all-sufficient atonement. May He give clearness of apprehension, and simplicity of faith to all; and may He especially endow all who stand up to teach and preach with ability, “rightly to divide the word of truth," so that they may not apply to the unregenerate sinner, or the anxious enquirer, such passages of scripture as refer only to the established believer. Very serious damage is done both to the truth of God, and to the souls of men, by an unskilful division and application of the word.

There must be spiritual life, before there can be spiritual action; and the only way to get spiritual life is by believing on the name of the Son of God.* (John 1: 12, 13; John 3: 14-16, 36; John 5: 24; John 20: 31.) If, therefore, the precepts of God's word be applied to persons who have not spiritual life to act upon them, confusion must be the result. The precious privileges of the Christian are formed into a heavy yoke for the unconverted. A strange system of half-law, half-gospel, is propounded, whereby true Christianity is robbed of its characteristic glory, and the souls of men are plunged in mist and perplexity. There is urgent need, just now, for clearness in setting forth the true ground of a sinner's peace. Hundreds and thousands of souls are being convicted of sin. They have gotten life, but not liberty. They are quickened, but not yet emancipated. They want a full, clear, unclouded gospel. The claims of a divinely awakened conscience can only be answered by the blood of the cross. If anything, no matter what, be added to the finished work of Christ, the soul must be filled with doubt and darkness.

{*When the gaoler at Philippi enquired of Paul and Silas "What must I do to be saved?" they, simply, replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thine house." (Acts 16: 30, 31) It would, surely, be well if this method of dealing with an anxious inquirer were more faithfully adopted.}

May God grant us to know, more fully, the true place and value of simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of earnest prayer in the Holy Ghost.

C. H. M.

The Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry

The Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry.

C. H. Mackintosh.

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

A Scriptural Enquiry.

In resuming our lectures, for the winter months, we feel called upon to offer a few words of explanation to all such as may be desirous of knowing something of the doctrines held by those persons who stand connected, in any measure, with this service.

We feel that such persons have a claim upon us, to which we ought to respond, not for the purpose of vindicating ourselves, but simply to guard the truth against misrepresentation, and to remove, so far as in us lies, a stumbling-block out of the way of honest enquirers.

"Charity thinketh no evil;" and, hence, we shall not allow ourselves to think that any one could wilfully misrepresent our opinions; but it is a well-known fact that the most extravagant ideas are current in reference to these opinions; and while we can leave all those, who have given currency to such ideas, to Him before whose judgement-seat all must stand, (2 Cor. 5: 10) we, at the same time, deem ourselves responsible “to give a reason of the hope that is in us," and of the ground which we occupy, “with meekness and fear," (1 Peter 3: 15) in order to meet those who may be scared away from the consideration of truth, by the fact that monstrous errors

are attributed to the persons who profess to hold and teach that truth. We all know how prone we are to receive an opinion ready made to our hand, rather than take the trouble of investigating matters for ourselves, and comparing what is put before us, not with our own or others' preconceived Judgement or opinion, but with the word of God.

The Bereans were counted “more noble than those in Thessalonica," not because they consulted the decrees or traditions of the elders, but because "they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." (Acts 17: 11) Now, this is precisely what we want the reader to do. We want him to imitate the “noble" conduct of the Bereans. We want him to “search the Scriptures," with an unbiased mind. We want him to form his convictions, not amid the darkness of misrepresentation and prejudice, but amid the pure and hallowed light which the page of inspiration sheds around him. We would affectionately entreat him to watch against a disposition to think people in error, merely because their position differs from his own. Let him seek for a dispassionate judgement, a calm, well-adjusted mind, a liberal spirit. In this way if he cannot agree with people, he will, at least, refrain from hard feelings, and hard words, neither of which can possibly serve any desirable end, either as regards himself or others. To ascertain truth is the object of every judicious and reflecting mind, and this object should ever be pursued with a spirit freed from the defiling and withering influences of a narrow and demoralising bigotry.

We shall now proceed with the special subject of these pages.

There are three important points in reference to which we are entirely misrepresented, namely, the Sabbath the Law, and the Christian Ministry.

And first, as to the Sabbath. If it were merely a question of the observance or non-observance of a day, it might be easily disposed of, inasmuch as the apostle teaches us in Rom. 14: 5, 6, and also in Col. 2: 16, that such things are not to be made a ground of judgement. But seeing there is a great principle involved in the Sabbath question, we deem it to be of the very last importance to place it upon a clear and scriptural basis We shall quote the Fourth Commandment at full length. “Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made-heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it.” (Ex. 20: 8-11) This same law is repeated in Exodus 31: 12-17. And, in pursuance thereof, we find, in Numbers 15 a man stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day. All this is plain and absolute enough. Man has no right to alter God's law in reference to the Sabbath, no more than he has to alter it in reference to murder, adultery, or theft. This, we presume, will not be called in question. The entire body of Old Testament Scripture fixes the seventh day as the Sabbath; and the Fourth Commandment lays down the mode in which that Sabbath was to be observed. Now, where, we ask, is this precedent followed? Where is this command obeyed? Is it not plain that the professing

church neither keeps the right day, as the Sabbath; nor does she keep it after the Scripture mode? The commandments of God are made of none effect by human traditions, and the glorious truths which hang around “the Lord's day “are lost sight of. The Jew is robbed of his distinctive day, and all the privileges therewith connected, which are only suspended for the present, while judicial blindness hangs over that loved and interesting, though now judged and scattered, people. And, furthermore, the Church is robbed of her distinctive day and all the glories therewith connected, which, if really understood, would have the effect of lifting her above earthly things into the sphere which properly belongs to her, as linked by faith to her glorified Head in heaven. In result, we have neither pure Judaism nor pure Christianity, but an anomalous system arising out of an utterly unscriptural combination of the two.

However, we desire to refrain from all attempt at developing the deeply spiritual doctrine involved in this great question, and confine ourselves to the plain teaching of Scripture on the subject; and, in so doing, we maintain that if the professing church quotes the Fourth Commandment and parallel Scriptures, in defence of keeping the Sabbath, then it is evident, that, in almost every case, the law is entirely set aside. Observe, the word is, “thou shalt not do any work." This ought to be perfectly binding on all who take the Jewish ground. There is no room here for introducing what we deem to be “works of necessity," we may think it necessary to kindle fires, to make servants harness our horses, and drive us hither and thither. But the law is stern and absolute, severe and unbending. It will not, it

cannot, lower its standard to suit our convenience or accommodate itself to our thoughts. The mandate is, “thou shalt not do any work," and that, moreover, on “the seventh day," which answers to our Saturday. We ask for a single passage of Scripture in which the day is changed, or in which the strict observance of the day is, in the smallest degree, relaxed.

We request the reader of these lines to pause and search out this matter thoroughly, in the light of Scripture. Let him not be scared as by some terrible bugbear, but let him, in true Berean nobility of spirit, “search the Scriptures." By so doing, he will find that, from the second chapter of Genesis, down to the very last passage in which the Sabbath is named, it means the seventh day and none other; and, further, that there is not so much as a shadow of divine authority for altering the mode of observing that day. Law is law; and, if we are under the law, we are bound to keep it, or else be cursed, for “it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Deut. 27: 26; Gal. 3: 10)

But it will be said, “We are not under the Mosaic law; we are the subjects of the Christian economy." Granted — most fully, freely, and thankfully granted. All true Christians are, according to the teaching of Romans 7 and Romans 8 and Galatians 3 and Galatians 4 the happy and privileged subjects of the Christian dispensation? But, if so, what is the day which specially characterises that dispensation? Not “the seventh day," but “the first day of the week" — "THE LORD'S DAY." This is, pre-eminently, the Christian's day. Let him observe this day, with all the sanctity, the sacred reverence, the hallowed retirement, the elevated tone,

of which his new nature is capable. We believe the Christian's retirement from all secular things cannot possibly be too profound on the Lord's day. The idea of any one, calling himself a Christian, making the Lord's day a season of what is popularly called recreation, unnecessary travelling, personal convenience, or profit, in temporal things, is, to us, perfectly shocking. We are of opinion that such acting could not be too severely censured. We can safely assert, that we never yet came in contact with a godly, intelligent, right-minded Christian person who did not love and reverence the Lord's day; nor could we have any sympathy with one who could deliberately desecrate that holy and happy day.

We are aware, alas! that some persons have, through ignorance or misguided feelings, said things in reference to the Lord's day which we utterly repudiate, and that they have done things on the Lord's day of which we wholly disapprove. We believe that there is a body of New Testament teaching on the important subject of the Lord's day, quite sufficient to give that day its proper place in every well-regulated mind. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead on that day. (Matt. 28: 1-6; Mark 16: 1, 2; Luke 24: 1; John 20: 1) He met His disciples, once and again, on that day. (John 20: 19, 26.) The early disciples met to break bread on that day. (Acts 20: 7) The apostle, by the Holy Ghost, directs the Corinthians to lay by their contributions for the poor on that day. (1 Cor. 16: 2.) And, finally, the exiled apostle was in the Spirit and received visions of the future on that day. (Rev. 1: 10.) The above scriptures are conclusive. They prove that the Lord's day occupies a place quite unique, quite heavenly, quite divine. But they

as fully prove the entire distinctness of the Jewish Sabbath and the Lords day. The two days are spoken of throughout the New Testament with fully as much distinctness as we speak of Saturday and Sunday. The only difference is, that the latter are heathen titles, and the former divine. (Comp. Matt. 28: 1; Acts 13: 14, Acts 17: 2, Acts 20: 7; Col. 2: 16)

Having said thus much as to the question of the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's day, we shall suggest the following questions to the reader — namely, Where in the Word of God is the Sabbath said to be changed to the first day of the week? Where is there any repeal of the law as to the Sabbath? Where is the authority for altering the day or the mode of observing it? Where, in Scripture, have we such an expression as “the Christian Sabbath? “Where is the Lord's day ever called the sabbath? [For a fuller exposition of the doctrine of the Sabbath, see "Notes on Genesis." (Chapter 2.) Also "Notes on Exodus." (Chaps 16. & 31.)]

We would not yield to any of our dear brethren in the various denominations around us, in the pious observance of the Lord's day. We love and honour it with all our hearts; and were it not that the gracious Providence of God has so ordered it in these realms, that we can enjoy the rest and retirement of the Lord's day without pecuniary loss, we should feel called upon to abstain from business, and give ourselves wholly up to the worship and service of God on that day, not as a matter of cold legality, but as a holy and happy privilege.

It would be the deepest sorrow to our hearts to think that a true Christian should be found taking common ground with the ungodly, the profane, the thoughtless,

and the pleasure-hunting multitude, in desecrating the Lord's day. It would be sad, indeed, if the children of the kingdom and the children of this world were to meet in an excursion train on the Lord's day. We feel persuaded that any who, in any wise, profane or treat with lightness the Lord's day, act in direct opposition to the word and Spirit of God.

The above are our thoughts in reference to the Lord s day, and we therefore consider ourselves unfairly dealt with when we are represented as having any sympathy with the wickedness and infidelity that would propose measures for the open and deliberate profanation of the Lord's day. We utterly abhor such measures, and the spirit from which they emanate.

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the other points.

As regards the law, it is looked at in two ways: first, as a ground of justification; and, secondly, as a rule of life. A passage or two of Scripture will suffice to settle both the one and the other. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3: 20.) “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Verse 28.) Again, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal. 2: 16.)

Then, as to its being a rule of life, we read, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another,

even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7: 4.) “But now are we delivered from the law, being dead to that (see margin) wherein we were held: that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Ver. 6.) Observe in this last-quoted passage, two things: lst, “we are delivered from the law;" 2nd, not that we may do nature's pleasure, but “that we should serve in newness of spirit." Though delivered from bondage, it is our privilege to “serve" in liberty. Again, we read further on in the chapter, “And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Ver. 10.) It evidently did not prove as a rule of life to him. “I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." (Ver. 9.) Whoever “I" represents in this chapter, was alive until the law came, and then he died. Hence, therefore, the law could not have been a rule of life to him; yea, it was the very opposite, even a rule of death.

In a word, then, it is evident that a sinner cannot be justified by the works of the law; and it is equally evident that the law is not the rule of the believer's life. “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." (Gal. 3: 10.) The law knows no such thing as a distinction between a regenerated and an unregenerated man; it curses all who attempt to stand before it. It rules and curses a man so long as he lives; nor is there any one who will so fully acknowledge that he cannot keep it as the true believer, and hence no one would be more thoroughly under the curse.

What, therefore, is the ground of our justification? and what is our rule of life? The word of God answers, “We are justified by the faith of Christ," and Christ is our rule

of life. He bore all our sins in His Own body on the tree; He was made a curse for us, He drained, on our behalf, the cup of God's righteous wrath; He deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its victory; He gave up His life for us; He went down into death, where we lay, in order that He might bring us up in eternal association with Himself in life, righteousness, favour, and glory. before our God and His God, our Father and His Father. (See carefully the following scriptures: John 20: 17; Rom. 4: 25; Rom. 5: l-10; Rom. 6: 1-11; Rom. 7. passim, Rom. 8: 1-4; 1 Cor. 1: 30, 31; 1 Cor. 6: 11; 1 Cor. 15: 55-57; 2 Cor. 5: 17-21; Gal. 3: 13, 25-29; Gal. 4: 31; Eph. 1: 19-23; Eph. 2: 1-6; Col. 2 10-15; Heb. 2: 14, 15; 1 Peter 1: 23.) If the reader will prayerfully ponder all these passages of Scripture he will see clearly that we are not justified by the works of the law; and not only so, but he will see how we are justified. He will see the deep and solid foundations of the Christian's life, righteousness, and peace, planned in God's eternal counsels, laid in the finished atonement of Christ, developed by God the Holy Ghost in the word, and made good in the happy experience of all true believers.

Then, as to the believer's rule of life, the apostle does not say, to me to live is the law, but “To me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1: 21.) Christ is our rule, our model, our touchstone, our all. The continual inquiry of the Christian should be, not is this or that according to law? but, is it like Christ? The law never could teach me to love, bless, and pray for my enemies; but this is exactly what the gospel teaches me to do, and what the divine nature leads me to do. “Love is the fulfilling of the law," and yet were I to seek justification by the law, I should be lost; and were I to make the law my standard of

action, I should fall far short of my proper mark. We are predestinated to be conformed, not to the law, but to the image of God's Son. We are to be like Him. (See Matt. 5: 21-48; Rom. 8: 29; 1 Cor. 13: 4-8; Rom. 13: 8-10; Gal. 5: 14-26; Eph. 1: 3-5; Phil. 3: 20, 21; Phil. 2: 5; Phil. 4: 8; Col. 3: 1-7)

It may seem a paradox to some to be told that “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us," (Rom. 8: 4) and yet that we cannot be justified by the law, nor make the law our rule of life. Nevertheless, thus it is if we are to form our convictions by the word of God. Nor is there any difficulty to the renewed mind in understanding this blessed doctrine. We are, by nature, “dead in trespasses and sins," and what can a dead man, do? How can a man get life by keeping that which requires life to keep it — a life which he has not? And how do we get life? Christ is our life. We live in Him who died for us; we are blessed in Him who became a curse for us by hanging on a tree; we are righteous in Him who was made sin for us; we are brought nigh in Him who was cast out for us. (Rom. 5: 6-15; Eph. 2: 4-6; Gal. 3: 13.) Having thus life and righteousness in Christ, we are called to walk as He walked, and not merely to walk as a Jew. We are called to purify ourselves even as He is pure; to walk in His footsteps; to show forth His virtues; to manifest His Spirit. (John 13: 14, 15; John 17: 14-19; 1 Peter 2: 21; 1 John 2: 6, 29; 1 John 3: 3.)

We shall close our remarks on this head by suggesting two questions to the reader, namely — Would the Ten Commandments without the New Testament be a sufficient rule of life for the believer? Would the New Testament be a sufficient rule without the Ten

Commandments? Surely that which is insufficient cannot be our rule of life.

We receive the Ten Commandments as part of the canon of inspiration; and, moreover, we believe that the law remains in full force to rule and curse a man as long as he liveth. Let a sinner only try to get life by it, and see where it will put him; and let a believer only shape his way according to it, and see what it will make of him. We are fully convinced that if a man is walking according to the spirit of the gospel, he will not commit murder nor steal; but we are also convinced, that a man, confining himself to the standard of the law of Moses, would fall very far short of the spirit of the gospel.

The subject of “the law" would demand much more elaborate exposition, but the limits of this paper do not admit of it, and we therefore entreat of the reader to look out for the various passages of scripture referred to and ponder them carefully. In this way we feel assured he will arrive at a sound conclusion, and be independent of all human teaching and influence. He will see how that a man is justified freely by the grace of God, through faith in a crucified and risen Christ; that he is made a partaker of divine life, and introduced into a condition of divine and everlasting righteousness, and consequent exemption from all condemnation; that in this holy and elevated position, Christ is his object, his theme, his model, his rule, his hope, his joy, his strength, his all; that the hope which is set before him is to be with Jesus where He is, and to be like Him for ever. And he will also see that if, as a lost sinner, he has found pardon and peace at the foot of the cross, He is not, as an accepted and adopted son, sent back to the foot of Mount Sinai, there to be terrified and repulsed by the

terrible anathemas of a broken law. The Father could not think of ruling with an iron law the prodigal whom He had received to His bosom in purest, deepest, richest grace. Oh! no; “Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace; wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5: 1, 2) The believer is justified not by works, but by faith; he stands not in law, but in grace; and he — waits not for judgement, but for glory.

We now come, in the third place, to treat of the subject of the Christian ministry, in reference to which we have only to say, that we hold it to be a divine institution — its source, its power, its characteristics are all divine and heavenly. We believe that the great Head of the Church received, in resurrection, gifts for His body. He, and not the Church, or any section of the Church, is the reservoir of the gifts. they are vested in Him, and not in the Church. He imparts, them as, and to whom He will. No man, nor body of men, can impart gifts. This is Christ's prerogative, and His alone; and we believe that when He imparts a gift, the man who receives that gift is responsible to exercise the same, whether as an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, quite independently of all human authority.

We do not, by any means, believe that all are endowed with the above gifts, though all have some ministry to fulfil. All are not evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Such precious gifts are only administered according to the sovereign will of the divine Head of the Church. Man has no right to interfere with them Wherever they really exist, it is the place of the assembly to recognise them with devout thankfulness. Christians are exhorted to

remember them that are over them in the Lord, to know them that guide them, and those who addict themselves to the ministry of the saints and those who have spoken to them the word of life. Were they to refuse to do so, they would only be forsaking and rejecting their own mercies, for all things are theirs. (See Rom. 12: 3-8; 1 Cor. 3: 21-23; 1 Cor. 12; 1 Cor. 14; 1 Cor. 16: 15; Gal. 1: 11-17; Eph. 4: 7-16; l Thess. 5: 12, 13; Heb. 13: 7, 17; 1 Peter 4: 10, 11.)

All this is simple enough. We can easily see where a man is divinely qualified for any department of ministry. It is not if a man say he has a gift, but if he in reality has it. A man may say he has a gift on the same principle as he may say he has faith, (James 2: 14) and it may only be, after all, an empty conceit of his own ill-adjusted mind, which a spiritual assembly could not recognise for a moment. God deals in realities. A divinely-gifted evangelist is a reality; a teacher is a reality; a pastor is a reality; and such will be duly recognized, thankfully received, and counted worthy of all esteem and honour for their work's sake.

Now, we hold that unless a man has a bona fide gift imparted to him by the Head of the Church, all the instruction, all the education, and all the training that men could impart to him would not constitute him a Christian minister. If a man has a gift, he is responsible to exercise, to cultivate, and to wait upon his gift. Such an one may, or may not, be extensively read in human literature; he may, or he may not, be able to enlist his extensive reading in the Master's service. But, clearly, if a man has only the qualifications which human literature, human science, and human culture can impart, he is no more competent to be a Christian

minister than a self-constituted quack is entitled to be regarded by the faculty of medicine as a duly-recognized practitioner.

Let us not be misunderstood. We hold that unless a man has a direct gift from Christ, though he had all the learning of a Newton, all the philosophy of a Bacon, all the eloquence of a Demosthenes, he is not a Christian minister. He may be a very gifted and efficient minister of religion, so called; but a minister of religion and a minister of Christ are two different things. And, further, we believe that where the Lord Christ has bestowed a gift, that gift makes the possessor thereof a Christian minister, whom all true Christians are bound to own and receive, quite apart from all human appointment. Whereas, though a man had all the human qualifications, human titles, and human authority, which it is possible to possess, and yet lacked that one grand reality, namely, Christ's gift, he is not a minister of Christ.

Such is our judgement in reference to the divine institution of the ministry; and hence, it is not fair or candid to accuse us of throwing that institution overboard. God forbid! We bless His name for Christian ministry; and we feel assured that there are many truly gifted servants of Christ in the various denominations around us; but they are ministers of Christ, on the ground of possessing His gift, and not, by any means, on the ground of man's ordination. Man cannot add aught to a heaven-bestowed gift. As well might he attempt to add a shade to the rainbow, a tint to the violet, motion to the waves, height to the snow-capped mountains, or daub, with a painter's brush, the peacock's plumage, as attempt to render more efficient, by his puny authority,

the gift which has come down from the risen and glorified Head of the Church. Ah! no; the vine, the olive, and the figtree, in Jotham's parable, (Judges 9) needed not the appointment of the other trees. God had implanted in each its specific virtue. It was only the worthless bramble which hailed with delight an appointment that raised it from the position of a real nothing to be an official something. Thus it is with a divinely-gifted man. He has what God has given him; he wants, he asks, no more. He rises above the narrow enclosures which man's authority would erect around him, and plants his foot upon that elevated ground where prophets and apostles have stood. He feels that it lies not within the range of the schools and colleges of this world, to open to him his proper sphere of action. It appertains not to them to provide a setting for the precious gem which sovereign grace has imparted. The hand which has bestowed the gem can alone provide the proper setting. The grace which has implanted the gift can alone throw open a proper sphere for its exercise. What! can it be possible that those gifts which emanate from the Church's triumphant and glorious Lord are not available for her edification, until they are dragged through the mire of a heathen mythology? Alas! for the heart that can think so. As well might we say that the fatness of the olive and the pure blood of the grape must be mingled with the contents of a quagmire, to render them available for human use.

But, it will be asked, “Were there not elders and deacons in the early Church, and ought we not to have such likewise?" Unquestionably, there were elders and deacons in the early Church. They were appointed by the apostles, or those whom the apostles deputed. That

is to say, they were appointed by the Holy Ghost, the only One who could then, or can now, appoint them. We believe that none but God can make or appoint an elder; and, therefore, for man to set about such work, is but a powerless form, an empty name. Men may, and do, point us to the shadows of their own creation, and call upon us to recognize in those shadows divine realities; but, alas! when we examine them in the light of Holy Scripture, we cannot even trace the outline, to say nothing of the living, speaking, features of the divine original.

We see divinely-appointed elders in the New Testament, and we see humanly-appointed elders in the professing church; but we can, by no means, accept the latter as a substitute for the former. We cannot accept a mere shadow in lieu of the substance. Neither do we believe that men have any divine authority for their act when they set about making and appointing elders. We believe that when Paul, or Timothy, or Titus ordained elders, they did so as acting by the power and under the direct authority of the Holy Ghost; but we deny that any man, or body of men, can so act now. We believe it was the Holy Ghost then, and it must be the Holy Ghost now. Human assumption is perfectly contemptible. If God raises up an elder or a pastor we thankfully own him. He both can and does raise up such. He does raise up men fitted, by His Spirit, to take the oversight of His flock, and to feed His lambs and sheep. His hand is not shortened that He cannot provide those blessings for His Church, even amid its humiliating ruins. The reservoir of spiritual gift in Christ, the Head, is not so exhausted that He cannot shed forth upon His body all that is needed for the edification thereof.

We are of opinion that, were it not for our impatient attempts to provide for ourselves, by making pastors and elders of our own, we should be far more richly endowed with pastors and teachers after God's own heart. We need not marvel that He leaves us to our own resources when, by our unbelief, we limit Him in His. Instead of “proving" Him we “limit" Him; and, therefore, we are shorn of our strength, and left in barrenness and desolation; or, what is worse, we betake ourselves to the miserable provisions of human expediency.

However, we believe it is far better, if we have not God's reality, to remain in the position of real, felt, confessed weakness, than to put forth the hollow assumption of strength; we believe it is better to be real in our poverty than to put on the appearance of wealth. It is infinitely better to wait on God to whatever He may be pleased to bestow, than to limit His grace by our unbelief, or hinder His provision for us by making provision for ourselves.

We ask, where is the Church's warrant for calling, making, or appointing pastors? Where have we an instance in the New Testament of a Church electing its own pastor? Acts 1: 23-26 has been adduced in proof But the very wording of the passage is sufficient to prove that it furnishes no warrant whatsoever. Even the eleven apostles could not elect a brother apostle, but had to commit it to higher authority. Their words are — "Thou, LORD, which knowest the hearts of all, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." This is very plain. They did not attempt to choose. God knew the heart. He had formed the vessel. He had put the treasure therein, and He alone could appoint it to its proper place.

It is very evident, therefore, that the case of the eleven apostles calling upon the Lord to choose a man to fill up their number, affords no precedent whatever for a congregation electing a pastor; it is entirely against any such practice. God alone can make or appoint an apostle or an elder, an evangelist or a pastor. This is our firm belief, and we ask for a Scripture proof of its unsoundness. Human opinion will not avail; tradition will not avail; expediency will not avail. Let us be taught from the word of God, that the early Church ever elected its own pastors or teachers. We positively affirm that there is not so much as a single line of scripture in proof of any such custom. If we could only find direction in the word of God to make and appoint pastors, we should at once seek to carry such direction into effect; but, in the absence of any divine warrant, we could only regard it as a mimicry, on our part, to attempt such a thing. Why was not the Church at Ephesus, or why were not the Churches at Crete, directed to elect or appoint elders? Why was the direction given to Timothy and Titus, without the slightest reference to the Church or to any part of the Church! Because, as we believe, Timothy and Titus acted by the direct power and under the direct authority of God the Holy Ghost, and, hence, their appointment was to be regarded by the Church as divine.

{*We would here offer a remark, in reference to the appointment of Deacons in Acts 6. This case has been adduced in proof of the rightness of a congregation electing its own pastor; but the proof fails in every particular. In the first place, the business of those deacons was “to serve tables." Their functions, as deacons, were temporal, not spiritual. They might

possess spiritual gift, independently altogether of their deaconship. Stephen did possess such.

But more than this. Although the disciples were called upon to look out for men competent to take charge of their temporal affairs, yet the apostles alone could appoint them. Their words are, "Whom we may appoint over this business." In other words, although there is a vast difference between a deacon and a pastor, between taking charge of money and taking the oversight of souls, yet even in the matter of a deacon, the appointment in Acts 6 was entirely divine; and hence it affords no warrant for a Church electing its own pastor.

We might further add, that office and gift? are clearly distinguished in the word of God. There might be, and were many elders and deacons in any given Church, and yet the fullest and freest exercise of gift when the whole Church came together into one place. Elders and deacons might or might not have the gift of teaching or exhortation. Such gift was quite independent of their special office. In 1 Cor. 14, where it is said, “Ye may all prophecy one by one" and where we have a full view of the public assembly, there is not a word about an elder or a president of any kind whatever.}

But where have we anything like this now? Where is the Timothy or the Titus now? Where is there the least intimation in the New Testament that there should be a succession of men invested with the power to ordain elders or pastors? True, the Apostle Paul, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, says, “The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2: 2) But there is not a word here about a

succession of men having power to ordain elders and pastors. Assuredly teaching is not ordination, still less is it imparting the power to ordain. If the inspired apostle had meant to convey to the mind of Timothy that he was to commit to others authority to ordain, and that such authority was to descend by a regular chain of succession, he could and would have done so, and in that case, the passage would have run thus: “The power which has been vested in you, the same do thou vest in faithful men, that they may be able also to ordain others." Such, however, is not the case; and we deny that there is any man, or body of men, now upon earth, possessing power to ordain elders, nor was that power or authority ever committed to the Church. We hold it to be absolutely divine, and, therefore, when God sends an elder or a pastor, an evangelist or a teacher, we thankfully hail the heaven bestowed gift; but we desire to be delivered from all empty pretension. We will have God's reality or nothing. We will have heaven's genuine coin, not earth's counterfeit. Like the Tirshatha of old, who said “that they should not eat of the most holy things till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim," (Ezra 2: 63) so would we say, let us rather, if it must be so, remain without office-bearers, than substitute, for God's realities, the shadows of our own creation. Ezra could not accept the pretensions of men. Men might say they were priests, but if they could not produce the divine warrant and the divine qualifications, they were utterly rejected. In order for a man to be entitled to approach the altar of the God of Israel, he should not only be descended from Aaron, but also be free from every bodily blemish. (See Lev. 21: 16-23) So, now, in order for any man to minister in the Church of God, he must be a regenerated man, and he must have

the necessary spiritual qualifications. Even St. Paul, in his powerful appeal to the conscience and judgement of the Church at Corinth, refers to his spiritual gifts and the fruits of his labour, as the indisputable evidences of his apostleship. (See 2 Cor. 10, 2 Cor. 12)

Before dismissing the subject of the Christian Ministry, we would offer a remark upon the practice of laying on of hands, which is presented in the New Testament in two ways. First, we find it connected with the communication of a positive gift. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (1 Tim. 4: 14.) This is again referred to in the second epistle: “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." (2 Tim. 1: 6.) This latter passage fixes the import of the expression “presbytery," as used in the first epistle. Both passages prove that the act of laying on of hands, in Timothy's case, was connected with the imparting of a gift. But, secondly, we find the laying on of hands adopted simply for the purpose of expressing full fellowship and identification, as in Acts 13: 3. It could not possibly mean ordination in this passage, inasmuch as Paul and Barnabas had been in the ministry long before. It simply gave beautiful expression to the full identification of their brethren in that work unto which the Holy Ghost had called them, and to which He alone could send them forth.

Now, we believe that the laying on of hands as expressing ordination, if there be not the power to impart a gift, is worth nothing, if indeed it be not mere assumption; but if it be merely adopted as the expression of full fellowship in any special work or

mission, we should quite rejoice in it. For example, if two or three brethren felt themselves called of God to go on an evangelistic mission to the United States of America, and that those with whom they were in communion perceived in them the needed gift and grace for such a work, we should deem it exceedingly happy were they to set forth their unqualified approval and their brotherly fellowship by the act of laying on of hands. Beyond this we can see no value whatever in that act.

Having thus, so far as our limits would permit, treated of the questions of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian ministry — having shown that we honour and observe the Lord's day, that we give the Law its divinely-appointed place, and, finally, that we hold the sacred and precious institution of the Christian Ministry, we might close this paper, did we not feel called upon to meet another charge which is frequently preferred against us — viz., the maintenance of a Jesuitical reserve in reference to our peculiar opinions until such time as we have persons under our influence. This charge is totally unfounded. In our general teaching and preaching, we seek to set forth the fundamental truths of the gospel, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the eternal Sonship, the personality of the Holy Ghost, the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, the eternal counsels of God in reference to His elect, and yet the fullest and freest presentation of His love to a lost world; the solemn responsibility of every one who heard the glad tidings of salvation to accept the same; man's total ruin by nature and by practice; his inability to help himself in thought, word, or deed; the utter corruption of his will; Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection;

His absolute deity and perfect humanity in one person; the perfect efficacy of His blood to cleanse from all sin; perfect justification and sanctification by faith in Christ, through the operation of God the Holy Ghost; the eternal security of all true believers; the entire separation of the Church in calling, standing, and hope, from this present world.

Then, again, we hold, in common with many of our brethren in the Church of England and in the Free Church of Scotland, that the hope of the believer is set forth in these words of Christ: “I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14: 3) We believe that the early Christians were converted to “that blessed hope;" that it was the common hope of Christians in apostolic times. To adduce proofs would swell this paper into a volume.

Furthermore, we believe that all disciples should meet on the first day of the week to break bread, (Acts 20: 7) and when so met, they should look to the Head of the Church to furnish the needed gifts, and to the Holy Ghost to guide in the due administration of these gifts.

As to the scriptural ordinance of baptism, we look upon it as a beautiful exhibition of the truth that the believer is associated with Christ in death and resurrection. (See Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38, 41; Acts 8: 38; Acts 10: 47, 48; Acts 16: 33; Rom. 6: 3, 4.)

As regards the precious institution of the Lord's Supper, we believe that Christians should celebrate it on every Lord's day, and that, in so doing, they commemorate the Lord's death until He come. We believe that, as baptism sets forth our death with Christ, so the Lord's Supper sets forth Christ's death for us. We do not see any

authority in the word of God for regarding the Lord's Supper as "a sacrifice," “a sacrament," or "a covenant." The word is, “This do in remembrance of me." (See Matt. 26: 26, 28; Mark 14: 22- 24; Luke 22: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26.)

The above is a very brief but explicit statement of our opinions and our practice, and we affectionately ask the candid and judicious reader where is there aught of the Jesuit therein? We meet in public, our worship meetings, our prayer meetings, our reading meetings, our lectures, our gospel preachings, are all open to the public.

No intelligent person could suppose that we ought, in preaching the gospel to the unconverted, to introduce the deeper mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, or the Church of God. The Lord Jesus spake the word to the people “as they were able to hear it." (Mark 4: 33) The Holy Ghost, by the apostle, did the same. (1 Cor. 3: 1, 2; Heb. 5: 11-14.) Should not every judicious teacher adapt his instructions to the condition of the taught? Who would teach conic sections or Euclid's elements to a child who had only learnt his alphabet? It must, at all times, be a question of spiritual wisdom as to what character of truth one ought to bring before those with whom he comes in contact; and it may sometimes be a question of grace to withhold a topic which would only produce controversy and hinder Christian fellowship; but surely wisdom and grace ought not to be dubbed with the opprobrious epithet of Jesuitical reserve.

But we have done. We would, in this closing line, entreat the reader to "search the Scriptures." Let him try everything by that standard. Let him see to it that he has plain Scripture for everything with which he stands

connected. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8: 20)

We can honestly say we love, with all our hearts, all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and wherever there is one who preaches a full, free and an everlasting salvation to perishing sinners, through the blood of the Lamb, we wish him God speed, in the name of the Lord.

We now commend the reader to the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. If he be a true believer, we pray that, in his course down here, he may be a bright and faithful witness for his absent Lord. But if he be one who has not yet found peace in Jesus, we would say to him, with solemn emphasis and earnest affection, “BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD." (John 1: 29)

4 CHURCH STREET, COLERAINE, October 1857.

Thou and thy house

"Thou and thy house."

C. H. Mackintosh.

Preface.

Nothing can be more truly beneficial for the soul than to be brought under the searching power of the word of God, — to have our treacherous hearts examined by its sure light, and all our ways fairly tested by its holy precepts. “The law of the Lord is perfect." It is God's means of effectually dealing with His people, and accomplishing in them the purposes of His love.

Hence, if the soul be in a healthful moral condition, it will truthfully respond to the action of the word; and thus happy and blessed communion will be the result. Increased felt nearness to God, and joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. But if we cannot say with the apostle, “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world" (2 Cor. 1: 12), we will be sure to feel its keen edge rather sharper than we can well bear, and its penetrating light too strong for our dark worldly ways. It is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," and whatever has been allowed or indulged in by us, which savours of "fleshly wisdom,'' and not of “simplicity and godly sincerity," must meet its condemnation in that word. By this means the mistakes and errors of our course are to be corrected, and the soul of the saint maintained in happy fellowship with the living God. “By the word of thy lips I have kept me from

the paths of the destroyer." And surely it is a great mercy, from "the Father of Mercies," to have His own word brought home and applied to our consciences, in the light and power of the Holy Ghost. It may break down much that we have been seeking satisfaction in, when out of communion, but, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the same word reveals to us "the riches of His grace," which not only builds up, but builds up "in Him."

Truth may cover our faces with "shame and confusion," under a deep sense of our shortcomings; but grace is the restorer of paths, and of souls to walk in them. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is the only true position for a smitten conscience to take. Here, and here alone, we gain a complete victory over all our sad failures, when in full confession of all our sins and shortcomings, we cast ourselves on the boundless grace of our God, owning the authority of His truth, and submitting ourselves to it, through whatever channel it may come. Every soul thus exercised, will certainly be led by the Spirit, “that other Comforter," from the "word of God which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," up to the "throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

There, by faith, we find the living Saviour, in all the gracious activities of His priestly ministry meeting for us ALL the claims of divine holiness and all the deep necessities of His poor erring people down here, and maintaining our souls, notwithstanding all our failures, without spot or blemish, in the holy presence of our God.

This dear render, is the true grace of God wherein we stand. May we never for a moment lose sight of it.

These few prefatory lines have been suggested by reading the following most important paper in MS. SELF-JUDGMENT is evidently the writer's desire. The line of truth therein presented led my soul into deep exercise before God. “Thou and thy house," sounded very like “Thou art the man." Sure I am, our hearts need stirring up on this deeply practical subject. The accompanying tract I believe to be fitted, and by the Lord designed, for this end.

That we are to bring our children up for the Lord, is plainly the teaching of this word, "But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To do this rightly, we must ourselves be daily walking, before our children, in the practical exhibition of His character, and counting much on the sympathies and grace of His heart: remembering that He says to us, “Without me ye can do nothing."

It is also our duty to teach our children, in due time, some useful occupation for "necessary uses." “And let ours also learn to maintain good works (or, profess honest trades, margin), for necessary uses." Compare Ephesians 6: 4; Titus 3: 14. These are the points which do severely test our practical Christianity. If the first and all-important duty has not been faith fully discharged, before it is needful to press the second, deep trial must come in, and who can tell how long we may have to endure it, before the Lord Himself appears for our help?

May the "God of all grace" lead us all to know more fully, and value more highly, our blessed privileges, and be

more faithful to our great responsibilities as His servants in connection with our families at home.

C. H M.

Preface.

In sending forth a new edition of the following tract, the writer has only to say that twelve months' close and prayerful consideration of the doctrine therein contained, has tended to strengthen his convictions of its truth and importance. He believes the tract to be, in the main, according to the revealed mind of God. That there are imperfections, in detail, he most fully admits; but he would earnestly entreat the Christian reader to look at the tract as a whole, and not to allow his judgement to be warped by attached passages which, it may be, through the infirmity of the writer, are imperfectly expressed; or, through that of the reader, are imperfectly understood. We are all feeble, erring mortals, and, hence, we would need the constant exercise of patience and forbearance; and, although we may not be able, conscientiously, to agree with all the principles contained in a book or tract, we should, nevertheless, hold ourselves in readiness to receive and profit by whatever truth it may set before us. To reject, or treat with indifference, an entire document, because of some clause therein which we cannot understand or adopt, argues a narrow mind, or a warped judgment, either of which is utterly unworthy of one who has been endowed, by grace divine, with “the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1: 7) We are called to “try the things that differ," and to “hold fast that which is good." But while the reader will need to exercise an impartial judgement, the writer feels it

imperative upon him to remove, so far as in him lies, every stumbling-block out of the way. This he has earnestly sought to do, in the preparation of this edition, by removing or altering expressions which seemed likely to be misunderstood, and which, indeed, have been interpreted in a way which he never intended. He has, also, in a note or two, ventured to offer a few additional suggestions to those who are called of God to the solemn and important ministry of training the young, in which he sincerely desires, according to his measure, to be their fellow-helper.

May the Lord pour out His rich blessing upon all Christian parents, teachers, and guardians, that they may be enabled to discharge their interesting: functions, in His presence, through His grace, and to His glory; and that their hearts may be encouraged by seeing abundant fruit amongst those over whom they are placed. Blessed be His name, He has, during the past year or two, given many Christian parents to say, in reference to their household, “He hath been mindful of us; and He will bless us."

May our hearts be filled with praise for the past, and confidence for the future C. H. M.

"THOU AND THY HOUSE."

There are two houses which occupy a very prominent place on the page of inspiration, and these are, the house of God, and the house of God's servant. God attaches immense importance to His house; and justly so, because it is His. His truth, His honour, His character, His glory, are all involved in the character of His house; and hence it is His desire that the impress of what He is should plainly appear on that which belongs

to Him. If God has a house, it assuredly should be a godly house, a holy house, a spiritual house, an elevated house, a pure and heavenly house. It should be all this, not merely in abstract position and principle, but practically and characteristically. Its abstract position is founded upon what God has made it, and where He has set it; but its practical character is founded upon the actual walk of those who form its constituent parts down here upon this earth.

Now, while many minds may be prepared to enter into the truth and importance of all the principles connected with God's house, there may be but few, comparatively, who are disposed to give a due measure of attention to those connected with the house of God's servant; although, if one were asked the question, What house stands next in order to the house of God? he should, undoubtedly, reply, The house of His servant. However, as there is nothing like bringing the holy authority of God's word to bear upon the conscience, I shall quote a few passages of scripture, which will tend to show, in a clear and forcible point of view, what are God's thoughts about the house of one holding connection with Him.

When the iniquity of the antediluvian world had risen to a head, and the end of all flesh had come before a righteous God, who was about to roll the heavy tide of judgement over the corrupted scene, these sweet words fell upon Noah's ear, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." (Gen. 7: 1) Now, it will be said, that Noah was a type of Christ — the righteous head of a saved family — saved in virtue of their association with him. All this is fully granted: but Noah's typical character does not, in any wise, interfere with the principle which

I seek to deduce from this and kindred passages — which principle, I shall here, at the outset, distinctly lay down: it is this — the house of every servant of God is, in virtue of its connection with him, brought into a position of privilege and consequent responsibility.*

{*The reader will not, I trust, imagine that the necessity for the work of the Holy Ghost. in the regeneration of the children of Christian parents, is denied or interfered with. God forbid. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is as true of a Christian's child as of every one else. Grace is not hereditary. The sum of what I would press upon Christian parents is, that scripture inseparably links a man with his house, and that the Christian parent is warranted in counting upon God for his children, and responsible to train his children for God. Let any one who denies this interpret Ephesians 6: 4}

That this is a principle involving vast practical consequences, we shall, with God's blessing and grace, see, ere we close this paper; but we must first seek to establish its truth from the word of God Were we merely left to argue from analogy, our thesis might be easily proved; for it could never be supposed, by any mind at all acquainted with the character and ways of God, that He would attach such unspeakable importance to His own house, and attach none at all, or almost none, to that of His servant. This were impossible; it would be utterly unlike God; and God must always act like Himself But we are not left to analogy on this most important and deeply practical question; and the passage just quoted forms one of the first of a series of direct and positive proofs. In it we find those immensely significant words, “Thou and thy house," inseparably linked

together. God did not reveal a salvation for Noah which was of no avail to Noah's house. He never contemplated such a thing.

The same ark that lay open to him lay open to them also. Why? Was it because they had faith? No; but because he had, and they were connected with him. God gave him a blank cheque for himself and his family, and it devolved upon him to fill it up by bringing them in along with him. I repeat it, this does not in the least interfere with Noah's typical character. I look at him typically; but I look at him personally also. Nor can I, under any circumstances separate a man from his house. The house of God is brought into blessing and responsibility because of its connection with Him; and the house of the servant of God is brought into blessing and responsibility because of its connection with him. This is our thesis.

The next passage to which I shall refer occurs in the life of Abraham. “And the Lord said, Shall I hide from — Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18: 17-19) Here it is not a question of salvation, but of communion with the mind and purposes of God; and let the Christian parent note and solemnly ponder the fact, that when God was seeking out a man to whom He could disclose His secret counsels, He selected one possessing the simple characteristic of "commanding his children and his household."

This, to a tender conscience, cannot fail to prove a most pungent principle. If there is one point above another in which Christians have failed, it is in this very point of commanding their children and household. They surely have not set God before them in this particular; for, if I look at the entire record of God's dealings with His house, I find them invariably characterised by the exercise of power on the principle of righteousness. He has firmly established and unflinchingly carried out His holy authority. It matters not what the outward aspect or character of His house may be, the essential principle of His dealing with it is immutable. “Thy testimonies are very sure, holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." Now, the servant must ever take his Master as his model; and if God rules His house with power exercised in righteousness, so must I; for if I am, in any one particular of my conduct, different from Him, I must, in that particular, be wrong. This is plain.

But not only does God so rule His house: He likewise loves, approves of, and treats with His marked and honoured confidence, those who do the same. In the above passage, we find Him saying, "I cannot hide my purposes from Abraham." Why? Is it because of his personal grace or faith? No; but simply because “he will command his children and his household." A man who knows how to command his house is worthy of God's confidence. 'This is a stupendous truth, the edge of which should pierce the conscience of many a Christian parent. Many of us, alas! with our eye resting on Genesis 18: 19, may well prostrate ourselves before the One who uttered and penned that word, and cry out Failure! failure! shameful, humiliating failure! And why is this? Why have we failed to meet the solemn

responsibility devolving upon us in reference to the due command of our households? I believe there is but one reply, viz., because we have failed to realise, by faith, the privilege conferred upon those households, in virtue of their association with us. It is remarkable that our two earliest proofs should present to our view, with such accuracy, the two grand divisions of our question, namely, privilege and responsibility. In Noah's case, the word was, “Thou and thy house" in the place of salvation. In Abraham's case, it was “Thou and thy house," in the place of moral government. The connection is at once marked and beautiful, and the man who fails in faith to appropriate the privilege will fail in moral power to answer the responsibility. God looks upon a man's house as part of himself, and he cannot, in the smallest degree, whether in principle or practice, disregard the connection without suffering serious damage, and also marring the testimony.

Now, the question for the Christian parent's conscience really is, "am I counting upon God for my house, and ruling my house for God?" A solemn question, surely; yet, it is to be feared, very few feel its magnitude and power. And here, perhaps, my reader may feel disposed to demand fuller scripture proof than has yet been adduced, as to our warrant for counting upon God for our houses. I shall, therefore, proceed with the scripture quotations. I give one from the history of Jacob. “And God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel." This would seem to have been addressed to Jacob personally; but he never thought, for a moment, of disconnecting himself from his family, either as to privilege or responsibility; wherefore it is immediately added: “Jacob said unto 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; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel." (Gen. 35: 1-3) Here we see that a call to Jacob put Jacob's house under responsibility. He was called to go up to God's house, and the question immediately suggested itself to his conscience whether his own house were it a fit condition to respond to such a call.

We now turn to the opening chapters of the book of Exodus, where we find that one of Pharaoh's four objections to the full deliverance and separation of Israel, had specific reference to “the little ones." “And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh; and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons, and with our daughters, with our flocks, and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." (Ex. 10: 8, 9)

The reason why they should take the little ones and all with them, was because they were going to hold a feast unto the Lord. Nature might say, Oh! what can these little creatures know about a feast unto the Lord? Are you not afraid of making them formalists? The reply of Moses is simple and decisive, “we will go with our young...for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." They had no idea of seeking one thing for themselves, and another for their children. they dreamed not of Canaan for themselves and Egypt for their children. How could they taste the manna of the wilderness, or the old corn of the land, while their children were feeding upon the leeks, the onions, and the garlic of Egypt? Impossible. Moses and Aaron understood not such acting. They felt that God's call to them was a call to their little ones;

and, moreover, were it not fully carried out, they would no sooner have gone forth from Egypt by one road than their children would draw them back by another. That such would have been the case, Satan was but too well aware, and hence appears the reason of the objection, “Not so, go now, ye that are men." This is the very thing which so many professing Christians are doing (or attempting rather to do) at this present time. They profess to go forth themselves to serve the Lord, but their little ones are in Egypt. They profess to have taken “three days' journey into the wilderness;" in other words, they profess to have left the world, they profess to be dead to it, and risen with Christ, as the possessors of a heavenly life, and the heirs and expectants of a heavenly glory; but they leave their little ones behind, in the hands of Pharaoh, or rather of Satan.* They have given up the world for themselves, but they cannot do so for their children. Hence, on Lord's-day, the professed position of strangers and pilgrims is taken; hymns are sung, prayers uttered, and principles taught, which bespeak a people far advanced in the heavenly life, and just on the borders of Canaan, in actual experience (in spirit, of course, they are already there), but alas! on Monday morning, every act, every habit, every pursuit, every object, contradicts all this. The little ones are trained for the world. The scope, aim, object, and entire character of their education is worldly, in the truest and strictest sense of the word. Moses and Aaron would not have understood such actings; and neither indeed should any moral]y honest heart, or upright mind, understand them. I should have no other principle, portion, or prospect, for my children, but what I have for myself; nor should I train them with a view to any other. If Christ and heavenly glory are sufficient for me, they

are sufficient for them likewise; but then the proof that they are really sufficient for me, should be unequivocal. The tone of the parent's character should be such as to afford not a shadow of a doubt as to the real deep-seated purpose and object of his soul.

{*It will be said that there cannot be any analogy between the actual removal of people from one country to another, and the training of our children. I reply, the analogy only applies in principle. It is perfectly evident that we cannot take our children to heaven, in the sense in which the Israelites took theirs to Canaan. God alone can fit our children for heaven, by implanting in them the life of His own Son; and He alone can bring them to heaven, in His own time. But, then, although we can neither fit our children for, nor bring them to, heaven, we can, nevertheless, by faith, train them for it; and it is not merely our duty (a poor, cold, and unworthy expression) but our high and holy privilege so to do. Hence, therefore, if the principle on which, and the object with which, we train our children are manifestly worldly, we do, virtually, and so far as in us lies, leave them in the world. And, on the other hand, if our principle and object are, unequivocally, heavenly, then do we, so far as in us lies, train them for heaven. This, my beloved reader, is all that is meant, in this tract, by leaving our children in Egypt or taking them to Canaan. We are responsible to train our children, though we cannot convert them; and God will assuredly bless the faithful training of those whom He has graciously given us.}

But what shall my child say to me, if I tell him that I am earnestly seeking Christ and heaven for him while, at the same time, I am educating him for the world? Which

will he believe? Which will exert the more powerful practical influence on his heart and life — my words, or my acts. Let conscience reply; and oh! let it be an honest reply, a reply emanating from its deepest depths, a reply which will unanswerably demonstrate that the question is understood in all its pungency and power. I verily believe the time is come for plain dealing with one another's conscience. It must be apparent to every prayerful and attentive observer of the Christianity of the present day, that it wears a most sickly aspect; that the tone is miserably low; and, in a word, that there must be something radically wrong. As to testimony for the Son of God, it is rarely — alas, how rarely! — thought of. Personal salvation seems to form the very highest object with ninety-nine out of every hundred professing Christians, as if we were left here to be saved; and not, as saved ones, to glorify Christ.

Now, I would affectionately, yet faithfully, suggest the question, whether much of the failure in practical testimony for Christ is not justly traceable to the neglect of the principle involved in the expression, “Thou and thy house." I cannot but think it has much to do with it. One thing is certain, that a quantity of worldliness, confusion, and moral evil has crept in amongst us, through our little ones having been left in Egypt. We see many who, it may be, ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago, took a prominent place in testimony and service, and seemed to have their hearts much in the work, are now gone back lamentably, not having power to keep their own heads above water, much less to help any one else. All this utters a warning voice for Christian parents having rising families; and the utterance is, “BEWARE OF LEAVING YOUR LITTLE ONES IN EGYPT." Many a

heart-broken father, at the present moment, is left to weep and groan over his fatal mistake, in reference to his household. He left them in Egypt, in an evil hour, and under a gross delusion, and now when he ventures, it may he in real faithfulness and earnest affection, to drop a word into the ear of those who have grown up around him, they meet it with a deaf ear, and an indifferent heart, while they cling with vigour and decision to that Egypt in which he faithlessly and inconsistently left them. This is a stern fact, the statement of which may send a pang to many a heart; but truth must be told, in order that, though it wounds some, it may prove a salutary warning to others. But I must proceed with the proofs.

{There is, I should say, a very serious error involved in a Christian parent's committing the training of his children to unconverted persons, or even to those whose hearts are not one with him as to separation from the world. It is natural that a child should look up to, and follow the example of, one who has the training and management of him. Now, what can a teacher make of a child, save what he is himself? Whither can he lead him but to where he is himself? What principles can he instil save those which govern his own mind, and form the basis of his own character? Well, if I see a man governed by worldly principles — if I see plainly, from his whole course and character, that he is an unconverted persons shall I commit to him the training or instruction of my children, or the formation of their characters? It would be the height of folly and inconsistency so to do. As well might a man who desired to make an oval-shaped bullet cast the melted lead into a circular mould. The same principle applies to the reading of books. A book is

decidedly a silent teacher and former of the mind and character; and if I am called to look well to the character and principles of the living teacher, I am equally so to look to those of a silent teacher. I am quite convinced that, in reference both to books and teachers, we need to have our consciences stirred and instructed.}

In the book of Numbers “the little ones" are again introduced to our notice. We have just seen that the real purpose of a soul in communion with God was to go up with the little ones out of Egypt. They must be brought forth from thence at all cost; but neither faith nor faithfulness will rest here. We must not only count upon God to bring them up out of Egypt, but also to bring them on into Canaan. Here Israel signally failed. After the return of the spies, the congregation, on hearing their discouraging report, gave utterance to these fatal accents, “Wherefore hath the Lord brought us Unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" (Num. 14) This was terrible. It was, in reality, so far as in them lay, verifying Pharaoh's wily prediction in reference to these very little ones, “Look to it now, for evil is before you." Unbelief always justifies Satan, and makes God a liar, while faith always justifies God, and proves Satan a liar; and as it is invariably true, that according to your faith so shall it be unto you; so we find, on the other hand, that unbelief reaps as it sows. Thus it was with unhappy, because unbelieving, Israel. “As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old

and upward, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in the wilderness." (Ver. 28-32) "They limited the Holy One of Israel," as to their little ones. This was a grievous sin, and it has been recorded for our admonition. How constantly does the heart of the Christian parent reason, in reference to the mode of dealing with children, instead of simply taking God's ground about them. It may be said, We cannot make Christians of our children. This is not the question. We are not called to “make “anything of them. This is God's work, and His only; but if He says, “Bring your little ones with you," shall we refuse? I would not make a formalist of my child, and I could not make him a real Christian; but if God, in infinite grace, says to me, “I look upon your house as part of yourself, and, in blessing you, I bless it," shall I, in gross unbelief of heart, refuse this blessing, lest I should minister to formalism, or because I cannot impart reality? God forbid. Yea, rather, let me rejoice with deep unfeigned joy, that God has blessed me with a blessing so divinely rich and full that it extends not only to me, but also to all who belong to me; and, seeing that grace has given me the blessing, let faith take it up and appropriate it.

{Very many content themselves with the assurance that, at some time or other, their children will be converted. But this is not taking God's ground with them now. If we have the assurance that they are within the range of

God's purpose, why do we not act upon that assurance? If we are waiting to see certain evidences of conversion in them, before we act as Scripture directs, it is plain that we are looking at something besides God's promise. This is not faith The Christian parent is privileged to look upon his child now, as one to be trained for the Lord. He is bound to take this ground, in faith, and train Him thus, looking to God, in the fullest assurance, for the result. If I wait to see fruits, this is not faith. Besides the question arises, what are my children now? They may be going about like idle, wilful vagrants, bringing sad dishonour on the name and truth of Christ, and yet, all the while, I satisfy myself by saying. I know they will be converted yet. This will never do. My children should be now. a testimony for God; and they can only be this by my taking God's ground with them, and going on with Him about them.}

But, let us remember, that the way to prove our entrance into the blessing is by fulfilling the responsibility. To say that I am counting upon God to bring my children to Canaan, and yet, all the while, educating them for Egypt, is a deadly delusion. My conduct proves my profession to be a lie, and I am not to wonder if, in the righteous dealings of God, I am allowed to be filled with the fruit of my own doings. Conduct will ever prove the reality of our convictions; and, in this, as in everything else, that word of the Lord is most solemnly true, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." We often want to know the doctrine before we do the will, and the consequence is, we are left in the most profound ignorance. Now, to do the will of God in reference to our children, is to treat them as He does, by regarding them as part of ourselves, and

training them accordingly. It is not merely by hoping they may ultimately prove to be the children of God, but by regarding them as those who are already brought into a place of privilege, and dealing with them upon this ground in reference to everything. According to the thoughts and acting's of many parents, it would seem as though they regarded their children in the light of heathens, who had no present interest in Christ, or relationship to God at all. This is, assuredly, falling grievously short of the divine mark. Nor is this a question, as it is too often made, of infant or adult baptism. No; it is simply and entirely a question of faith in the power and extent of that peculiarly gracious word, “Thou and thy house" — a word, the force and beauty of which we shall see more and more fully as we proceed.

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, the children of Israel are, again and again, instructed to set the commandments, the statutes, the judgements, and precepts of the law before their little ones; and these same little ones are contemplated as enquiring into the nature and object of various ordinances and institutions. The reader can easily run through the, various passages.

I now pass on to that truly memorable resolution of Joshua, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve..... but as for me and my houses we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24: 15) Observe, “Me and my house." He felt it was not sufficient that he himself should be personally pure from all contact with the defilements and abominations of idolatry; he had also to look well to the moral character and practical condition of his house. Though Joshua were not to worship idols, yet, if his children did so, would he be guiltless? Certainly not. Moreover, the testimony of the truth would have been as

effectual marred by the idolatry of Joshua's house as by the idolatry of Joshua himself; and judgement would have been executed accordingly. It is well to see this distinctly. The opening of the first book of Samuel affords most solemn demonstration of the truth of this: "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day l will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; BECAUSE HIS SONS MADE THEMSELVES VILE AND HE RESTRAINED THEM NOT." (1 Sam. 3: 11-13)

Here we see that, no matter what the personal character of the servant of God may be, yet, if he fail in the due regulation of his house, God will not hold him guiltless. Eli should have restrained his sons. It was his privilege, as it is ours, to be able to count upon the specific power of God in the subjugation of every element in his house which was calculated to mar the testimony; but he did not do this, and, hence, his terrible end was, that he broke his neck about the house of God, because he had not broken his heart about his own house. Had he waited upon God about his wilful sons — had he acted faithfully — had he discharged the holy responsibilities devolving upon him, the house of God would never have been desecrated, and the ark of God would not have been taken. In a word, had he treated his house as part of himself, and made it what it ought to be, he would not have called down upon himself the heavy judgement of him whose principle it is, never to separate the words, “Thou and thy house."

But, how many parents have since trodden in Eli's footsteps! Through an utterly false idea in reference to the entire basis and character of parental relationship, they have allowed their children, from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to manhood, in the unrestrained indulgence of the will. Not having faith to take divine ground, they have failed in moral power to take even the human ground of making their children respect and obey them, and the issue has presented to view the most fearful picture of lawless extravagance and wild confusion. The highest object for the servant of God to set before him in the management of his house, is the testimony therein afforded to the honour of Him to whose house he himself belongs. This is really the proper ground of action. I must not seek to have my children in order because it would be an annoyance and inconvenience to me to have them otherwise, but because the honour of God is concerned in the god]y order of the households of all those who form constituent parts of His house.

Here, however it may be objected that, up to this point, we have been breathing only the atmosphere of Old Testament scripture, and that the principles and proofs have been only thence deduced; now, on the contrary, God's principle of action is grace according to election, and this leads to the calling out of a man, irrespective of all domestic ties and relationships, so that you may find a most godly, devoted, heavenly minded saint at the head of a most ungodly, irregular, worldly family. I maintain, in opposition to this, that the principles of God's moral government are eternal, and, therefore, whether developed in one age or another, they must be the same. He cannot, at one time, teach that a man and

his house are one, and commend him for ruling it properly, and, at another time, teach that they are not one, but permit him to rule his house as he pleases. This is impossible.

God's approval or disapproval of things, flows out of what He is in Himself; and, in this matter, in particular, inasmuch as God rules His own house according to what He is Himself, He commands His servants to rule their houses upon the same principle. Has the dispensation of grace or of Christianity come in to upset this lovely moral order? God forbid! Nay, it has rather, if possible, added new traits of beauty thereto. Was the house of a Jew looked at as a part of himself, and shall the house of a Christian be different? Truly not. It would be a sad abuse, and an anomalous application of that heavenly word. Grace, to apply it to the misrule and demoralisation that prevail in the houses of numberless Christians of the present day. Is it grace to allow the will to ride rampant? Is it grace to have all the passions, tempers, whims, and appetites of a corrupt nature indulged? Alas! call it not grace, lest our souls should lose the real meaning of the word, and begin to imagine it to be what we have called it. Call it by its proper names — a monstrous abuse — a denial of God, not only as the Ruler of His own house, but as the Moral Administrator of the universe — a flagrant contradiction of all the precepts of inspiration on this deeply-important subject.

But let us turn to the New Testament and see if we cannot find in its sacred pages ample proof of our thesis. Does the Holy Ghost, in this grand section of His book, exclude a man's house from the privileges and responsibilities attached thereto in the Old Testament?

We shall see, very plainly, that He does no such thing. Let us have the proofs. In Christ's commission to His Apostles, we find these words, “And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house (not merely the master) be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you again." (Matt. 10: 11-13) Again, “And Jesus said unto Zacchaeus, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19: 9, 10) So in the case of Cornelius: “Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11: 13, 14) So also to the jailer at Philippi: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." (Acts 16: 31) Then we have the practical result: “And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Ver. 34) In the same chapter, Lydia says, “If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide." (Ver. 15.) “The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus." Why? was it because of its actings toward him? No; but “because he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." (2 Tim. 1: 16) "A bishop must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim 3: 4)

In all these scriptures, we find the same great truth maintained, namely, that when God visits a man with

blessings and responsibilities, He visits His house with the same. We may range through the entire canon of inspiration, and see this practical principle maintained throughout. It is worthy of God to teach His children this. But alas! brethren, beloved in the Lord, we have grievously failed in this very thing. As serious a blow has been given to the testimony to God's Son, in these last times, by our failure in this particular, as in anything else. True, there have been varied forms of evil — pride, vanity, worldliness, carnality, mixed motives, unhallowed traffic in unfelt truth, attempts to minister out of the presence of God, ungodly display of mere fleshly or intellectual energy, a making use of the precious word of God as a pedestal on which to show off ourselves, miserable figuring before men, the basest assumption of position and affectation of gift, a dishonest putting forth of principles of which our own consciences had never duly felt the sharp edge, a holding up, before others, scales in which we had never weighed ourselves in the presence of God, lamentable deficiency in a well-adjusted conscience, which would have led us to see the manifest inconsistency between the principles professed and the practices adopted.

In all these things, as well as in many others, there has been the deepest and most marked failure — failure which has grieved that Holy Spirit of God whereby we profess to be sealed, and which has brought dishonour upon that holy name by which we are called. The thought of this should put us in the place of sackcloth and ashes, the place of shame and confusion of face, the place of humiliation and confession — put us there, not merely for a passing moment, a day or a week, but until God Himself take us out of it. Alas I brethren, we attend

meetings for prayer and humiliation, and no sooner do we rise from our knees, than we prove, by the detestable levity of our spirit and deportment, how marvellously little we have entered into the truth and reality of our position and state before God. This will never do, never reach the deep and far-spread root of our disease. The furrows of conscience must be laid as deep as the ploughshare of divine truth can lay them, for there alone can the seeds of divine truth be sown. God has His implement for ploughing and sowing at the same moment, and that implement is TRUTH. But, then, we must present to the action of this truth “an honest and good heart," a tender conscience, and an upright mind. Now, if truth acts upon us, in this way, what will it reveal? What is our condition? What aspect do we present in the midst of that very sphere in which the Master has commanded us to "occupy till he come." The answer to these enquiries cannot be gathered from the pages of our books, our tracts, or our periodicals; for truly one has learnt that it is a much easier thing to scribble truth on paper, than to imprint it on the conscience, and exhibit it in the ten thousand details and varied relationships of actual life. Our writings, therefore, are not exactly the thing; though even they, if examined with a calm, chastened, matured, and spiritual judgement, beneath the searching eye of a righteous God, would be found to contain much crude speculation, much unintelligible and profitless matter, if not much positive unsoundness, calling for profound sorrow and humiliation of heart before our God.

But, if our writings are not the thing, what shall we say of our public meetings — meetings for worship, meetings for prayer, meetings for general edification?

What of these? Where is their power, unction, freshness, and elevated tone? Is it not well known and painfully felt by hundreds that, with few exceptions, the meetings are dull, flat, heavy, and unprofitable? Why is this? The promise of Christ remains true. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Now, where His presence is realized, there must be power; but He will not vouchsafe His presence unless our hearts are true to Him as the specific object of our assembly. If we have any lower object than Himself before us, we cannot be said to be gathered in His name, and as a consequence, His presence will not be realized. How many there are who attend meetings without having Christ as their direct and primary object. Some go to hear sermons in order that they may be edified. With such, edification, and not Christ, is the object to which they are gathered. It will not do to say it is Christ and edification, for I cannot possibly have two objects before my mind at the same time; hence, if my object be edification, I am not gathered in the name of Christ, and, therefore, I cannot have that clear, distinct sense of His presence which Matthew 18: 20 warrants. There may be many pious emotions and aspirations, much religious feeling, much intellectual interest in, and occupation about, the letter of scripture, or points of truth; but all these may exist without the slightest realisation of Christ's holy and elevating presence.

Some there are who present themselves in the assembly with their hearts big with thoughts about something they are going to do or say. They have a chapter to read, a hymn to give out, some remarks to make, or they intend to pray, and they are watching for a convenient opportunity to push themselves forward and carry out

their intention. With such, it is painfully manifest that Christ is not the object, but self and its miserable doings and sayings. Such persons do a vast deal to rob the assembly of its distinctive holiness, power, and elevation. With them it is not Christ presiding, but the flesh figuring, and this, too, under the most awful circumstances. Flesh may act at an Orange lodge, or on a political platform; but, at an assembly of saints, it should be as though it did not exist. I have no right to present myself before the Lord. in the assembly of His people, with my ready-made discourse, my pre-arranged chapter, or selected hymn. I should go thither to sit in His presence and yield myself to His sovereign rule. In a word, I should go in His name; I should have Him alone as my object; I should forget all in comparison with Him. It is not that, having Him as my object, I may not impart or receive edification; quite the reverse: nay, it is only when I set Him before me, that 1 shall really do either the one or the other. The less is always included in the greater. If I have Christ, I shall surely have edification; but if I seek the latter instead of the former — if I make it my object, I shall lose both.

But, further, how many there are who attend Christian assemblies with unpurged consciences, unjudged hearts, and unmortified flesh! Prayerless and faithless, cold and barren, they take their seats on the benches, without any object at all. They go mechanically, because it is customary to go, but they are not governed by any distinct object. To such, the assembly is the merest religious formality, and they themselves act as a drain upon others. They are actually in the way — a most positive hindrance to general blessing and freshness.

Thus, we see, there are various causes conspiring to sap the springs of life and vigour in the public meetings, and various reasons for the generally low tone and enfeebled testimony amongst us. To get at the bottom of these, there should be a very deep work of conscience. The enquiry, "Lord, is it I?" should come forth from many a heart. It is perfectly vain to hope for any permanent blessing or restoration until we are all brought thoroughly down into the place of true contrition and self-judgment. If ever we are to start again upon a course of testimony for Christ, we must start from His very feet, having taken our place there in the genuine sense of what we are, and where we have failed and come short. Not one can throw stones at another. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and the testimony of God's Son. We have all contributed, according to our mode and measure, to the woefully death-like condition of things around us.

Nor is it a mere church question — a mere difference of judgement as to points of truth, however important in themselves. No, brethren; the world, the flesh, and the devil are at the bottom of our present sorrowful condition and we are each called upon, by every argument which the love of Christ can put before us, to judge ourselves individually — judge ourselves thoroughly in the presence of God; and I am convinced that when this process of judgement has gone on, we shall find that one of the most fruitful sources of weakness and failure will be suggested by the expression, "Thou and thy house; or the Christian at home." I never can form a correct judgement of a man from seeing him or hearing him in a meeting. He may seem a very spiritual person, and teach very beautiful

and very true things; but let me go home with him, and there I learn the true state of things. He may speak like an angel from heaven, but if his house be not ruled according to the mind of God, he will not be a real witness for Christ.

Now, under the term “house," three things are included, viz., the house itself, the children, and the servants. All these, whether taken together or separately, should bear the distinct stamp of God. The house of a man of God should be ruled for God, in His name and for His glory. The head of a Christian household is the representative of God. Whether as a father, or as a master, he is, to his household an expression of the power of God; and he is bound to walk in the intelligent recognition and practical development of this fact. It is on this principle he is to provide for and govern the whole. Hence, If any provide not for his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." By neglecting the sphere over which God has set him, he proves his ignorance of, and unlikeness to, the One whom he is called to represent.

This is plain enough. If I want to know how I am to provide for and rule my house, I have only carefully to study the way in which God provides for and rules His house. This is the true way to learn. Nor is it here a question as to the actual conversion of the constituent parts of the household. Not at all; what I desire to press upon all Christian heads of houses is, that the whole affair, from one end to the other, should distinctly wear the stamp of God's presence and God's authority — that there should be a clear acknowledgement of God on the part of every member. That everything should be so conducted as to elicit the confession, “God is here;" and

all this not that the head of the house may be praised for his moral influence and judicious management, but simply that God may be glorified. This is not too much to aim at; yea, we should never rest satisfied with anything less. A Christian's house should be but a miniature representation of the house of God, not so much in the actual condition of individual members, as in the moral order and godly arrangement of the whole.

Some may shake their heads and say, This is all very fine, but where will you get it? I only ask, Does the word of God teach a Christian man so to rule his house? If so, woe be to me if I refuse or fail to do so. That there has been the most grievous failure in the management of our houses, every honest conscience must admit; but nothing can be more shameful than for a man calmly and deliberately to sit down satisfied with a disordered condition of his house because he cannot attain to the standard which God has set before him. All I have to do is to follow the line which scripture has laid down, and the blessing must assuredly follow, for God cannot deny Himself. But if I, in unbelief of heart, say I cannot reach the blessing, of course I never shall. Every field of blessing or privilege which God opens before us, demands an energy of faith to enter. Like Canaan of old, to the children of Israel; there it lay, but they had to go thither, for the word was, “every place that thy foot shall tread upon." Thus it is ever. Faith takes possession of what God gives. We should aim at everything which tends to glorify Him who has made us all we are or ever shall be.

But what can be more dishonouring to God than to see the house of His servant the very reverse of what He would have it? And yet, were we to judge from what

constantly meets our view, it would seem as if many Christians thought that their houses had nothing whatever to do with their testimony. Most humbling is it to meet with some who, so far as they are personally concerned, seem nice Christians, but who entirely fail in the management of their houses. They speak of separation from the world, but their houses present the most distressingly worldly appearance. They speak of the world being crucified to them, and of their being crucified to the world, and yet the world is stamped on the very face of their whole establishment. Everything seems designed to minister to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Magnificent pier-glasses to reflect the flesh; sumptuous carpets, sofas, and loungers for the ease of the flesh; glittering chandeliers for the pride and vanity of the flesh. But it may be said, it is taking low ground to descend to such particulars. I reply, the daughters of Zion might just as well have passed the same comment upon the following solemn appeal: "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils." (Isa. 3: 18-23.)

This was descending to very minute particulars. The same might be said of the following passage from Amos: “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion..... that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the

calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David." (Amos 6: 1-5.) The Spirit of God can descend to particulars when the particulars are there to be descended to. But, it may be further objected, “We must furnish our houses according to our rank in life." Wherever this objection is urged, it reveals very fully the real ground of the objector's soul. That ground is the world, unquestionably. “Our rank in life!" What does this really mean, as applied to those who profess to be dead? To talk of our rank in life, is to deny the very foundations of Christianity. If we have rank in life, then it follows that we must be alive as men in the flesh — men according to nature, and then the law has its full force against us, “For the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth." Hence this rank in life becomes a most serious matter.

But, let me ask, how did we get rank in life? or, in what life is it? If it be in this life, then we are liars whenever we talk of being “crucified with Christ" — "dead with Christ" — "buried with Christ'' — "risen with Christ" — "outside the camp with Christ" — "not in the flesh" — "not of the world that fadeth away." All these are so many splendid lies to those possessing, or pretending to, a rank in this life. This is the real truth of the matter; and we must allow the truth to reach and act upon our consciences, that it may influence our lives. What, then, is the only life in which we have a rank? The resurrection life of Christ. Redeeming love has given us a rank in this life, and truly we know that worldly furniture, costly array, ridiculous parade and retinue, have nothing to do with rank in this life. Ah! no; the circumstances which comport with rank in heavenly life

are, holiness of character, purity of life, spiritual power, profound humility, separation from everything which directly savours of the flesh and the world. To furnish our persons and our houses with these things, would be furnishing them “according to our rank in life." But in point of fact, this objection does really bring out the true principle at the heart's core. It has already been remarked that the house reveals the moral condition of the man; and this objection confirms that statement. People who talk, or even think, of rank in life, have, “in their hearts, turned back again into Egypt." And what does God say will be the end of such? “I will carry you away beyond Babylon." Yes, it is greatly to be feared, that the great millstone of Revelation 18 presents but too true a picture of the end of much of the sickly, spurious, hollow Christianity of the present day.

It may, however, be further urged that Christianity affords no warrant for filthy and irregular houses. This is most true. I know few things more distressing and dishonouring, than to see the house of a Christian characterised by filth and confusion. Such things could never exist in connection with a really spiritual or even a well-adjusted mind. You may set it down that there must be something radically wrong wherever such things exist. Here, in an especial manner, the house of God presents itself before us as a blessed model. Over the door of that house may be seen inscribed this wholesome motto, “Let all things be done decently, and in order;" and all who love God and His house will desire to carry out this precept at home.

The next point suggested by the expression, “Thou and thy house," is the management of our children. This is a sore and deeply-humbling point to many of us, inasmuch

as it discloses a fearful amount of failure. The condition of the children tends, more than anything, to bring out the condition of the parent. The real measure of my surrender of the world, and my subjugation of nature, will constantly be shown in my thoughts about and treatment of my children. I profess to have given up the world, so far as I am personally concerned; but then I have children. Have I given up the world for them as well? Some may say, How can I? They are in nature, and must have the world. Here again the true moral condition of the heart is revealed. The world is really not given up, and my children are made an excuse for grasping again what I professed to have given up, but my heart retained all the while. Are my children part of myself, or are they not? Part of myself, assuredly. Well, then, if I profess to have relinquished the world for myself, and yet am seeking it for them, what is it but the wretched anomaly of a man half in Egypt and half in Canaan? We know where such an one is wholly, and in reality. He is wholly and really in Egypt. Yes, my brethren, here is where we have to judge ourselves. Our children tell a tale. The music master, and the dancing master, are surely not the agents which the Spirit of God would select to help our children along, nor do they, by any means, comport with that high-toned Nazariteship to which we are called. These things prove that Christ is not the chosen and amply sufficient portion of our souls. What is sufficient for me, is sufficient for those who are part of me. And shall I be so base as to train my children for the devil and the world? Shall I minister to and pamper that in them which I profess to mortify in myself? It is a grievous mistake, and we shall find it so. If my children are in Egypt, I am there myself. If my children savour of Babylon, I savour of it myself: If my

children belong to a corrupt worldly religious system, I belong to it myself, in principle. “Thou and thy house" are one; God has made them one; and "what he has joined together, let no man put asunder."

This is a solemn and searching truth, in the light of which we may clearly see the evil of urging our children along a path upon which we profess to have for ever turned our backs, as believing firmly that it terminates in hell fire. We profess to count the world's literature, its honours, its riches, its distinctions, its pleasures, all "dung and dross," yet these very things, which we have declared to be only hindrances to us in our Christian course, and which, as such, we have professed to cast aside, we are diligently setting before our children as things perfectly essential to their progress. In so doing, we entirely forget that things which act as clogs to us, cannot possibly act as helps to our children.* It were infinitely better to throw off the mask, and declare plainly, that we have not given up the world at all; and nothing ever made this thoroughly manifest but our children. The Lord, I believe, in righteous judgement, is taking up the families of brethren, to show in them the actual condition of the testimony amongst us. In many cases, it is well known, that the children of Christians are the wildest and most ungodly in the neighbourhood. Should this be so? Would God accept a testimony at the hand of those who have it so? Would it be thus if we were walking faithfully before God as to our houses? These enquiries must be answered in the negative. If only I get the principle of “Thou and thy house" firmly fixed in my conscience, and intelligently wrought into my mind, I shall see it to be my place to count upon God, and cry to Him, just as much for the testimony of my

house as for my own testimony. In reality I cannot separate them. I may attempt it, but it is vain. How often has one felt a pang at hearing such words as these, “Such an one is a very dear, godly, devoted brother; but, oh! he has the boldest and wildest children in the neighbourhood, and his house is a sad mess of misrule and confusion." I ask, what is the testimony of such an one worth, in the judgement of God? Little indeed. Saved he may be; but is salvation all we want? Is there no testimony to be given? and if there is, what is it? and where is it to be seen? Is it confined to the benches of a meeting room, or is it to be seen in the midst of a man's house? The heart can answer.

{*The Christian parent may ask, What am I to teach my child? The answer is simple. Teach him only such things as will prove useful to him as a servant of Christ. Do not teach him aught which you know would prove a positive source of defilement or weakness to him; should he remain here. We are seldom at a loss to know what kind of food to give our children. We are tolerably well aware of what would prove nourishing and what would prove the reverse. Now, were the instincts of the new nature as true and as energetic in us, as those of the old, we should, I am persuaded, be at as little loss to decide in reference to what we should teach our children. In this, as in everything else, it may be said, "If thine eye he single, thy whole body shall be full of light." If we have a deep sense of Christ's glory, and a sincere desire to promote it, we shall not be left in perplexity; but if our body is not "full of light," we may be assured our “eye" is not “single."}

But it may be urged, Our children will crave a little worldly enjoyment, and we must indulge them. We

cannot put old heads upon young shoulders. I reply, our own hearts often crave a little of the world likewise. Shall we indulge their craving? No; but judge it. Exactly so. Do the same in reference to your children's craving. If I find my children going out after the world, I should immediately judge and chasten myself before God, crying to Him to enable me to put it down, so that the testimony may not suffer. But I cannot but believe that, if the parent's heart is, from its centre to its circumference, purged of the world, its principles, and its lusts, it will exert a mighty influence upon his whole house. This is what makes this entire question one of such vast magnitude and practical weight. Is my house a just criterion by which to judge of my real condition? I believe the whole teaching of scripture is in favour of an affirmative. This makes the matter peculiarly solemn. How am I walking before my family? Is my whole course and character so unequivocal that all can see that my one supreme object is Christ, and that I would just as soon, if I could, unlock the portals of hell, and let my children in, as educate them for the world, or seek the world for them?

This I feel to be a startling inquiry; yet it is one which we are bound to follow up to the uttermost. What has called into existence, in many cases, that awful profanity, that disposition to scoff at sacred things, that utter distaste for the scriptures, and for meetings where the scriptures are brought forward, that sceptical and infidel spirit, so sadly apparent in the children of Christian professors? Will any one undertake to say that the parents have nothing to do with this, in the judgement of God? May not much of this be justly traced to the sad incongruity between the professed principles

and the actual practices of the parents? I believe it may. Children are shrewd observers. They very soon begin to discover what their parents are really at. They will gather this, too, much more speedily and accurately from their doings, than from their prayings or their sayings; and, although the parents may teach that the world and its ways are bad, and though they may pray that their children may know the Lord, yet, inasmuch as they are educating them for the world, and seeking most industriously to push them on in it, grasping at, and getting in by, every opening, and congratulating themselves when they have succeeded in settling them there, it necessarily follows that the children begin to say in their hearts, “The world is a good place after all, for my parents thank God on getting me a berth in it, and look upon it as a most marked opening of Providence. All that peculiar talk of theirs, therefore, about being dead to the world, and being risen with Christ — the world's being under judgement, and their being strangers and pilgrims therein — all this must be rank nonsense, or else Christians, so called, must be rank deceivers." Will any one say that such reasoning as this has not passed through the mind of many a professor's child? I cannot doubt it. The grace of God, no doubt, is sovereign, and often triumphs over all our errors and failures; but oh! let us think of the testimony, and let us see that our houses are really ordered for God and not for Satan.

{I would, however, desire to remind the children of Christian parents that they are solemnly responsible to hearken to God's holy word, quite irrespective of the conduct of their parents. God's truth is not affected by the actings of men; and wherever one has heard the

testimony of God's love, in the death and resurrection of Christ, he is responsible for the use he makes thereof, even though he should not have seen its sacred influence and power exemplified in the life of his parents. I would press these facts upon the serious attention of all children of Christian parents.}

But it will be said, How are our children to get on? must they not earn their bread? Unquestionably. God formed us for work. The very fact of my having a pair of hands proves that I am not to be idle. But I need not push my son back into that world which I have left, in order to give him employment. The Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, had one Son, His only begotten, the Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; He did not take up any of the learned professions, but was known as “the carpenter." Has this no voice for us? Christ has gone up on high and taken His seat at God's right hand. As thus risen, He is our Head, Representative, and Model; but He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Are we following His steps in seeking to push our children on in that very world which crucified Him? Surely not: we are adopting the very opposite course; and the end will be accordingly. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." As we sow, in reference to our children, so shall we also reap. If we sow to the flesh and the world, we cannot expect to reap otherwise. But I would not, by any means, be understood to teach that a Christian parent ought to place his child below the level on which the Lord has placed himself I do not believe he would be warranted in so doing. If my calling be a godly one, it may suit my child as well as it suits myself. All cannot be carpenters,

it is true; yet one feels that, in an age of progress like the present, where “onward and upward in the world" seems to be the great motto, there is a deep moral for the heart in the fact that the Son of God — the Creator and Sustainer of the universe — was only known amongst men, as "the carpenter." It, assuredly, teaches, that Christians should not be found seeking “great things" for their children.

However, it is not merely in reference to the object set forth in our children's education that we have failed, and so marred the testimony; but also in the matter of keeping them in general subjection to parental authority. On this point, there has been great deficiency amongst Christian parents. The spirit of the present age is that of insubordination. “Disobedient to parents" forms a trait in the apostasy of the last days; and we have specially helped on its development by an entirely false application of the principle of grace, as also by not seeing that there is involved in the parental relationship a principle of power exercised in righteousness, without which our houses must prove to be scenes of lawlessness and wild confusion. It is no grace to pamper an unsanctified will. We mourn over our own lack of a broken will, and yet we are strengthening the will in our children. It is always to my mind a manifest proof of the weakness of parental authority, as well as of ignorance of the way in which the servant of God should rule his house, to hear a parent say to a child, “Will you do so and so?" This question, simple as it seems, tends directly to create or minister to the very thing which you ought to put down, by every means in your power, and that is, the exercise of the child's will. Instead, therefore, of asking the child, “Will you do?" just tell him what he is

to do, and let there not be in his mind the idea of calling in question your authority. The parent's will should be supreme with a child, because the parent stands in the place of God. All power belongs to God, and He has invested His servant with power, both as a father and a master. If, therefore, the child or the servant resist this power, it is resistance of God.

{“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6: 4.) There is great danger of provoking our children to wrath by inordinate strictness and arbitrary treatment. We may constantly find ourselves seeking to mould and fashion our children according to our own tastes and peculiarities, rather than to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This is a very great mistake, and will surely issue in failure and confusion. We shall gain nothing, in the way of testimony for Christ, by moulding and fashioning nature into the most exquisite shapes. Moreover, it does not require faith to train and cultivate nature; but it does require it to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Some. however, may say that the apostle in the above passage, is speaking of converted children. To this I reply, that there is nothing about conversion in the passage. It is not said, “Bring up your converted children," &c. Were it thus, it would settle the whole question. But it is simply said, “your children," which surely must mean all our children. Now, if l am to bring up all my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, when am I to commence? Am I to wait till they grow up to be almost men and women? or am I to begin where all right-minded people begin the work, namely,

at the beginning? Am I to allow them to run on in nature's folly and wildness, during the most important part of their career, without ever seeking to bring their consciences into the presence of God, as to their solemn responsibilities? Am I to suffer them to spend, in utter thoughtlessness, that period of life in which the elements of their future character are imparted? This would be the most refined cruelty What should we say to a gardener who would allow the branches of his fruit-trees to assume all sorts of crooked and fantastic shapes ere he thought of commencing a proper system of training? We should, doubtless, pronounce him a fool and a madman. And yet such an one is wise in comparison with a parent who suspends the nurture and admonition of the Lord, until his children have made manifest progress in the nurture and admonition of the enemy.

But, it may be said, We must wait for evidences of conversion. To this I reply, that faith never waits for evidences, but acts on God's word, and the evidences are sure to follow. It is always a manifest proof of infidelity to wait for signs when God gives a command. If Israel had waited for a sign when God said, “Go forward," it would have been plain disobedience; and if the man with the withered hand had waited for some evidence of strength when Christ commanded him to stretch forth his hand, he might have carried his withered hand to the grave with him. So is it with parents. If they wait for signs and evidences before they obey God's word in Ephesians 6: 4, they are certainly not walking by faith, but by sight. Besides, if we are to begin at the beginning to train our children, we must

evidently begin before they are capable of giving what we might regard as evidences of conversion.

In this, as in everything else, our place is to obey, and leave results with God. The moral condition of the soul may be tested by the command; but where there is the disposition to obey, the power to do so will surely accompany the command, and the fruits of obedience will follow, “in due season, if we faint not."}

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." Observe, it is “God and his doctrine." Why? Because it is a question of power. The name of Christ and His doctrine would put the master and servant on a level, as members of one body. In Christ Jesus there is no distinction; but when I go abroad in the world, I encounter God's moral government, which makes one a master and another a servant; and any infringement upon that government will meet with certain judgement. Now it is of immense importance to have a clear understanding of the doctrine of God's moral government. It would settle many a difficulty, and solve many a question. This government is carried on with a righteous decision, which is peculiarly Solemnising. If we look through scripture, in reference to this subject, we shall find that, in every instance in which there has been error or failure, it has inevitably produced its own results. Adam took of the forbidden fruit, and he was instantly thrust forth from the garden, into a world groaning beneath the curse and weight of his sin. Nor was he ever replaced in Paradise. True, grace came in, and gave him a promise of a Deliverer; moreover, it clothed his naked shoulders. Nevertheless, his sin produced its own result.

He made a false step, and he never recovered it. Again, Moses, at the waters of Meribah, uttered a hasty word, and immediately a righteous God forbad his entrance into Canaan. In his case, likewise, grace came in, and gave him something better; for it was much better from the top of Pisgah, to inspect the plains of Palestine in company with Jehovah, than to inhabit them in company with Israel. So also in David's case. He committed a sin, and the solemn denunciation was immediately issued, “The sword shall never depart from thy house." In his case, too, grace abounded, and he enjoyed a more profound sense of grace as he ascended the side of Mount Olivet with bare feet and covered head, than he ever had enjoyed amid the splendours of a throne; nevertheless, his sin produced its own result. He made a false step, and he never recovered it.

Nor is the exemplification of this principle confined merely to Old Testament times. By no means. Look at the case of Barnabas. He gave utterance to the seemingly amiable desire to have the company of his nephew Mark, and, from that moment, he loses his honourable place in the records of the Holy Ghost. He is never heard of afterwards, and his place was supplied with a more wholly devoted heart.* Hence, God's moral government is a most momentous truth. It is such that, as surely as one does wrong, he will reap the fruit of it, no matter who he is, believer or unbeliever, saint or sinner. Grace may forgive the sin, and will, where it is confessed and judged; but, inasmuch as the principles of God's moral government have been interfered with, the offender must be made to feel his mistake. He has missed a step of the wheel, and he shall assuredly feel the consequences. This is a most solemn but specially

wholesome truth, the action of which has been sadly clogged by false notions about grace. God never allows His grace to interfere with His moral government. He could not do so, because it would produce confusion, and “God is not the author of confusion."

{*It was nature in Barnabas that led him to wish for the company of one who "departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." It was amiable nature, yet it was nature, and it triumphed, for he took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, his native country, where, in the freshness of his Christian course, he had sold his property, in order to be a more unshackled follower of Him who had not where to lay His, head. (See Acts 4: 36-37.) This is no uncommon case. Many set out with a surrender of heart! and nature with their respective claims. The blossom on the tree of Christian profession looks fair, and emits a fragrant perfume; but: alas! it is not followed by the rich and mellow fruit of autumn. The influences of earth and nature gather around the soul, and nip its beauteous blossoms, and all ends in barrenness and disappointment. This is very sad, and is always attended with the very worst moral effect upon the testimony. It is not at all a question of ceasing to be a saved person. Barnabas was a saved person. The influences of Mark and Cyprus could not blot out his name from the Lamb's book of life, but they did most thoroughly blot out His name from the records of testimony and service here below. And was not this something to be lamented? Is there nought to be deplored or dreaded, save the loss of personal salvation? Most despicable is the selfishness that can think so. For what purpose does the blessed God take so much pains and trouble in maintaining His people here? Is it that

they may be saved and made meet for glory? No such thing. Saved they are already, by the accomplished redemption of Christ and, therefore, meet for glory. There is no middle step between justification and glory, for "whom he justified them he also glorified." Why, therefore, does God leave us here? That we may be a testimony for Christ. Were it not for this, we might just as well be taken to heaven the moment of our conversion. May we have grace to understand this point, in all its fullness and practical power!}

It is here there has been So much failure in the management of our houses. We have forgotten the principle of righteous rule which God has set before us, and in the exercise of which He has given us an example. My reader must not confound the principle of God's government with the aspect of His character.* The two things are distinct. The former is righteousness, the latter is grace; but what I here desire to bring out is the fact that there is a principle of righteousness involved in the relationship of father and master, and if this principle receive not its due place in the management of the family, there must be confusion. If I see a strange child doing wrong, I have no divine authority to exercise righteous discipline towards him; but the moment I see my own child doing so, I put him under discipline. Why? because I am his father.

{*The epistles of Peter develop the doctrine of God's moral government. He it is who asks the question, “Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" Now, some may find a difficulty in reconciling this enquiry with Paul's statement, “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It were needless to say that the two ideas are in perfect and

beautiful harmony. The Lord Jesus Himself, who was the only perfect and unwavering follower of that which is good, who, from first to last, “went about doing good," found, in the end, the cross, the spear, the borrowed grave. The apostle Paul, who, beyond all other men kept close to the Great Original which was set before him, was called to drink an unusually large cup of privation and persecution. And, to this moment, the more like Christ, and the more devoted to Him any one is, the more privation and persecution he will suffer. Were any one, in true devotedness to Christ and love to souls, to take his stand publicly in some Roman Catholic district, and there preach Christ, his life would be in imminent danger. Do all these facts interfere with Peter's enquiry? By no means. The direct tendency of God's moral government is to protect from injury all who are "followers of that which is good," and to bring down punishment upon all who are the reverse; but it never interferes with the higher path of ardent discipleship, or deprives any one of the privilege and dignity of being as like Christ as he will; “For unto you it is given, on behalf of Christ (to uper Cristou), not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him (uper autou) having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear in me." (Phil. 1: 29, 30.) Here we are taught that it is an actual gift conferred upon us to be allowed to suffer for Christ, and this in the midst of a scene in which, on the ground of God's moral government, it can be said, "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" To recognize and be a subject of God's government is one thing, and to be a follower of a rejected and crucified Christ, is quite another. Even in Peter's epistle, which, as we have remarked, has, as its special theme, the doctrine of God's government, we read, “But, if

doing well and suffering for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God. For unto this were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." And again, “If any suffer as a Christian (from being morally like Christ), let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this matter."}

But it may be said, The parental relationship is one of love. True; it is founded in love: “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God." But, although the relationship is founded in love, it is exercised in righteousness, for “The time is come when judgement must begin at the house of God." So also in Hebrews 12, we are taught that the very fact of our being genuine sons, brings us under the righteous discipline of the Father's hand. In John 17, too, the church is committed to the care of the Holy Father to be kept by Him through His own name.

Now, in every case in which this great truth has been lost sight of by Christian parents, their houses have been thrown into confusion. They have not governed their children; and, as a consequence, their children have, in process of time, governed them, for there will be government somewhere; and if those into whose hands God has put the reins do not hold them properly, they will speedily fall into bad hands; and can there be a more melancholy sight than to see parents governed by their children? I believe, in God's sight, it presents a fearful moral blot, which must bring down His judgement. A parent who lets the reins of government drop from his hands, or who does not hold them steadily, has grievously failed in his high and holy position as the representative of God, and the depository of His power; nor do I believe that any one so failing can ever

thoroughly regain his place, or be a proper witness for God in his day and generation. A subject of grace he may be; but then, a subject of grace, and a witness for God, are two widely different things. This will account for the sorrowful condition of many brethren. They have utterly failed to govern their houses, and hence they have lost their true position and moral influence — their energies are paralysed, their mouths closed, their testimony hushed; and if any such do lift the voice in some feeble way, the finger of scorn is instantly pointed at their families, and this cannot but send a blush to the cheek and a pang to the conscience.

Nor do people always take a correct view of this matter, and trace the failure up to its legitimate source Many are too ready to look upon it as a natural and necessary thing that their children are to grow up wilful and worldly. They say, It is all very well while your children are young, but wait till they grow older, and you will see that you must let them go into the world. Now, I want to know, is it the mind of God that the children of His servants must necessarily grow up wilful and worldly? I never could believe any such thing. Well, then, if it be not His mind that they should so grow up — if He has graciously opened the same path to my house as He has opened to myself — if He has permitted me to select the same portion for my children as I have, through His grace, selected for myself — if, after all this, my children grow up wilful and worldly, what am I to infer? Why, that I have grievously sinned and failed in my parental relationship and responsibilities — that I have wronged my children and dishonoured the Lord. Shall I go and make a general principle of this, and set it down that all the children of Christians must grow up as mine have?

Shall I go and discourage young parents from taking God's ground in reference to their dear children, by setting before them my abominable failure, instead of encouraging them by setting before them God's infallible faithfulness to all who seek Him in the way of His appointment? To act thus would be to follow in the steps of the old prophet of Bethel, who, because he was in the midst of evil himself, sought to drag his brother in also, and had him slain by a lion for disobeying the word of the Lord.

But the sum of the matter is this, the wilfulness of my children reveals the wilfulness of my own heart, and a righteous God is using them to chasten me, because I have not chastened myself. This is a peculiarly solemn view of the case, and one that calls for deep searching of heart. To save myself trouble, I have let things take their course in my family, and now my children have grown up around me to be thorns in my side, because I trained them not for God. This is the history of thousands. We should ever bear in mind that our children, as well as ourselves, should be “set for the defence and confirmation of the gospel." I feel persuaded that, could we only be led to regard our houses as a testimony for God, it would produce an immense reformation in our mode of ruling them. We should then seek a high tone of moral order, not that we might be spared any trouble or vexation, but rather that the testimony might not suffer through any confusion in our families. But let us not forget that, in order to subdue nature in our children, we must subdue it in ourselves. We can never subdue nature by nature. It is only as we have crushed it in ourselves, that we are in a position to crush it in our children. Moreover, there must be the clearest

understanding and the fullest harmony between the father and mother. Their voice, their will, their authority, their influence, should be essentially one — one in the strictest sense of that word. Being themselves “no more twain, but one flesh," they should ever appear before their children in the beauty and power of that oneness. In order to this, they must wait much upon God together — they must be much in His presence, opening up all their hearts, and telling out all their need. Christians do frequently injure one another in this respect. It sometimes happens that one partner really desires to give up the world and subdue nature to an extent for which the other is not prepared, and this produces sad results. It sometimes leads to reserve, to shuffling, to management and generalship, to positive antagonism in the views and principles of husband and wife, so that they cannot really be said to be joined in the Lord. The effect of all this upon the children as they grow up is pernicious beyond all conception; and the influence which it exerts in deranging the entire house is quite incalculable. What the father commands the mother remits; what the father builds up the mother pulls down. Sometimes the father is represented as stern, severe, arbitrary, and exacting. The maternal influence acts outside, and independent of, the paternal; sometimes even it sets it aside altogether, so that the father's position becomes wretched in the extreme, and the whole family presents a most demoralised and ungodly appearance.* This is terrible. Children never could be properly trained under such circumstance; and as to testimony for Christ, the bare thought of it is monstrous. Wherever such a state of things prevails, there should be the deepest sorrow of heart before the Lord on account of it. His mercy is exhaustless, and His tender

compassions fail not; and surely we may hope that, where there is true contrition and confession, God will graciously come in with healing and restoration. One thing is certain, that we should not go on content to have things so; therefore, let the one who feels the sorrow of heart cry mightily to God, day and night — cry to Him on the ground of His own truth and name, which are blasphemed by such things; and, be assured, He will hear and answer.

{*Nothing can be more melancholy than to hear a mother say to a child, “We must not let your father know anything about this." Where such a course of reserve and double dealing is adopted there must be something radically and awfully wrong, and it is a moral impossibility that anything like godly order can prevail, or right discipline be carried out. Either the father must, by inordinate severity or unwarrantable strictness, be "provoking his children to wrath," or the mother must be pampering the child's will at the expense of the father's character and authority In either case there is an effectual barrier to the testimony, and the children suffer grievous injury. Hence, Christian parents should see well to it that they always appear before their children, and also before their servants, in the power of that unity which flows from their being perfectly joined together in the Lord. If, unhappily, any shade of difference should arise in reference to the details of domestic government, let it be made a matter of private conference, prayer, and self-judgment in the presence of God; but never let the subjects of government see such a manifest proof of moral weakness, for it will surely cause them to despise the government.}

But let all be viewed in the light of testimony for God's Son. It is to further this we are left here. We are surely not left here merely to bring up families. We are left here to bring them up for God, with God, by God, and before God. To do all this, we must be much in His presence. A Christian parent should take great care not to punish his children merely to gratify his whims and tempers. He is to represent God in the midst of his family. This, when properly understood, will regulate everything. He is God's steward, likewise, and, in order rightly and intelligently to discharge the functions of his stewardship, he must have frequent, yea, unbroken, intercourse with his Master. He must be constantly betaking himself to His feet, to know what he is to do, and how he is to do it. This will make everything easy and happy. It is often the desire of one's heart to get an abstract rule for this, that, and the other thing, in the details of family arrangement. One may ask what sort of punishments. what sort of rewards, what sort of amusements, should a Christian parent adopt. Actual punishment will, I believe, rarely be called for, if the divine principle of government be carried out from the earliest date; and as to rewards, it would be better to put them in the light of expressions of love and approval. A child must be obedient — unqualifiedly and unhesitatingly obedient — not to get a reward, which is apt to feed emulation, a fruit of the flesh; but because God would have him so; and then, of course, it is quite allowable for the parent to express his approval in the shape of some little present. As to amusement, let it always, if possible, assume the character of some useful occupation. This is most salutary. It is a bad thing to cherish the thought in the mind of a child, that painted toys and gilded baubles minister pleasure. With very

young children, I have constantly found, that they derived more real, and certainly much more simple, pleasure from a piece of stick or paper, made out by themselves, than from the most expensive toy. Finally, let us, in all things, whether punishment, reward, or amusement, keep the eye on Christ, and earnestly seek the subjugation of the flesh in every shape and form. So shall our houses be a testimony for God, and all who enter them be constrained to say, “God is here."

As to the management of servants, in a Christian household, the principle is equally simple. The master, as the head of the house, is the expression of the power of God, and, as such, he must insist upon subjection and obedience. It is not a question of the Christianity of the servants, but simply of the order which should ever be maintained in a Christian household. Here, too, we must be on our guard against the mere indulgence of our own arbitrary temper. We have to remember that we have a Master in heaven, who has taught us to “give unto our servants that which is just and equal." If only we set the Lord before us, from day to day, and seek to exhibit Him in all our dealings with our servants, we shall be kept from error on every side.

I must now close. I have not written, the Lord knows, to wound any one. I feel the truth, importance, and deep solemnity of the points here put forward, and, also, my own lack of ability to bring them out with sufficient distinctness and power. However, I look to God to make them influential, and where He works, the very weakest agency will answer His end. To Him I now commend these pages, which have, I trust, been begun, continued, and ended in His holy presence. The thought has comforted me not a little that, at the very moment in

which it was laid on my conscience to prepare this paper, a number of beloved brethren were actually assembled for humiliation, confession, and prayer, in immediate connection with the testimony of God's Son in these last days. I doubt not that a very leading point of confession has been failure in the government of the house; and if these pages should be used of God's Spirit to produce, even in one conscience, a deeper sense of this failure, and in one heart, a more earnest desire to meet the failure, in God's own way, I shall rejoice, and feel I have not written in vain.

May God Almighty, in His great grace, produce, by His Holy Spirit, in the hearts of all His beloved saints, a more ardent purpose of soul to raise, in this closing hour, a fuller, brighter, more vigorous and decided testimony for Christ, that so, ere the shout of the archangel and the trump of God are heard in the air, there may be a people prepared to meet and welcome the heavenly Bridegroom.

C. H. M.

Now and Then

Now and Then; or, Time and Eternity.

The Substance of a Lecture on Luke 12.

C. H. Mackintosh.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4: 18.

The principles of truth laid down in Luke 12 are of the most solemn and searching character. Their practical bearing is such as to render them, in a day like the present, of the very last importance. Worldly-mindedness and carnality cannot live in the light of the truth here set forth. They are withered up by the roots. If one were asked to give a brief and comprehensive title to this most precious section of inspiration, it might be entitled “Time in the light of Eternity." The Lord evidently designed to set His disciples in the light of that world where everything is the direct opposite of that which obtains here — to bring their hearts under the holy influence of unseen things, and their lives under the power and authority of heavenly principles. Such being the faithful purpose of the Divine Teacher, He lays the solid foundation for His superstructure of doctrine with these searching words, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." There must be no undercurrent in the soul. The deep springs of thought must be laid bare. We must allow the pure beams of heaven's light to penetrate the most profound depths of our moral being. We must not have any discrepancy

between the hidden judgement of the soul and the style of our phraseology: between the bent of the life, and the profession of the lips. In a word, we specially need the grace of “an honest and a good heart," in order to profit by this wondrous compendium of practical truth.

We are too apt to give an indifferent hearing or a cold assent to home truth. We do not like it. We prefer interesting speculations about the mere letter of scripture, points of doctrine, or questions of prophecy, because we can indulge these in immediate connection with all sorts of worldly-mindedness, covetous practices, and self-indulgence. But ponderous principles of truth, bearing down upon the conscience in all their magnitude and flesh-cutting power, who can bear, save those who, through grace, are seeking to purge themselves from “the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy?" This leaven is of a most specious character, takes various shapes, and is, therefore, most dangerous. Indeed, wherever it exists, there is a most positive and insurmountable barrier placed before the soul in its progress in experimental knowledge and practical holiness. If I do not expose my whole soul to the action of divine truth; if I am closing up some corner or crevice from the light thereof; if I am cherishing some secret reserve; if I am dishonestly seeking to accommodate the truth to my own standard of practice, or parry its keen edge from my conscience — then, assuredly, I am defiled by the leaven of hypocrisy; and my growth in likeness to Christ is a moral impossibility. Hence, therefore, it is imperative upon every disciple of Christ to search, and see that nothing of this abominable leaven is allowed in the secret chambers of his heart. Let us, by the grace of God, put and keep it far away, so that we may be able,

on all occasions, to say, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

{The meaning which is generally attached to hypocrisy is a false profession of religion. It assuredly means this; but it means much more. A tacit assent to principles which do not govern the conduct deserves the appellation of hypocrisy. Looking at the subject in this point of view, we may all find occasion of deep humiliation before the Lord. How often do we hearken to truth, and give an apparently full assent thereto, and yet there is no exhibition of the power of it in the life; it does not govern the conduct. If this be not morally connected with the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, it is, at least, a serious evil, and entirely hostile to our progress in the divine life. “If ye know these things, happy arc ye if ye do them."}

But not only is hypocrisy utterly subversive of spiritual progress, it also entirely fails in attaining the object which it proposes to itself; “for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." Every man will find his level; and every thought will be brought to light. What the truth would do now, the judgement-seat will do then. Every grade and shade of hypocrisy will be unmasked by the light which shall shine forth from the judgement seat of Christ. Nothing will be allowed to escape. all will be reality then, though there is so much fallacy now. Moreover, everything will get its proper name then, though it be misnamed now. Worldly-mindedness is called prudence; a grasping, covetous spirit is called foresight; and self-indulgence and personal aggrandisement are called judicious management and laudable diligence in business. Thus it is now; but then it will be quite the reverse. All things

will be seen in their true colours, and called by their true names, before the judgement-seat. Wherefore, it is the wisdom of the disciple to act in the light of that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. As to this, he is placed on a vantage ground, for, says the apostle, “we must all (saints and sinners — though not at the same time, nor on the same ground) be manifested (phanerothenai) before the judgement-seat of Christ." Should this disturb the disciple's mind? Assuredly not, if his heart be so purged of the leaven of hypocrisy and his soul so thoroughly grounded, by the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, in the great foundation truth set forth in this very chapter (2 Cor. 5), namely, that Christ is his life, and Christ his righteousness; that he can say, “we are manifested (pephanerometha, — an inflection of the same word as is used at verse 10), unto God, and I trust also are manifested in your consciences."

But if he be deficient in this peace of conscience and transparent honesty of heart, there is no doubt but that the thought of the judgement-seat will disturb his spirit. Hence we see that in the Lord's teaching, in Luke 12, He sets the consciences of His disciples directly in the light of the judgement-seat. "And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." “The fear of man bringeth a snare," and is closely connected with “the leaven of the Pharisees." But “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and causes a man always so to carry himself — so to think, speak, and act — as in the full blaze of the light of Christ's

judgement seat. This would impart immense dignity and elevation to the character, while it would effectually nip, in the earliest bud, the spirit of haughty independence, by keeping the soul under the searching power of divine light, the effect of which is to make everything and everyone manifest.

There is nothing that so tends to rob the disciple of Christ of the proper dignity of his discipleship, as walking before the eyes or the thoughts of men. So long as we are doing so, we cannot be unshackled followers of our heavenly Master. Moreover, the evil of walking before men is morally allied with the evil of seeking to hide our ways from God. Both partake of “the leaven of the Pharisees," and both will find their proper place before the judgement-seat. Why should we fear men? Why should we regard their opinions? If their opinions will not bear to be tried in His presence, who has power to cast into hell, they are worth nothing; for it is with Him we have to do “With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgement." Man may have a judgement-seat now, but he will not have it then. He may set up his tribunal in time, but he will have no tribunal in eternity. Why, therefore, should we shape our way in reference to a tribunal so frail and evanescent? Oh! let us challenge our hearts as to this, God grant us grace to act more, in reference to then — to carry ourselves here with our eye on hereafter — to look; at time in the light of eternity.

The poor unbelieving heart may, however, inquire, "If I thus rise above human thoughts and human opinions, how shall I get on in a scene where those very thoughts and opinions prevail?" This is a very natural question: but it meets its full and satisfactory answer from the

Master's lips; yea, it would even seem as though He had graciously anticipated this rising element of unbelief, when, having carried His disciples above the hazy mists of time, and set them in the clear, searching, powerful light of eternity, He added, “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Ver. 6, 7) Here the heart is taught not only to fear God, but also to confide in Him — it is not only warned, but also tranquillised. “Fear," and “fear not," may seem a paradox to flesh and blood; but to faith it is no paradox. The man who fears God most will fear circumstances least. The man of faith is, at once, the most dependent and independent man in the world — dependent upon God, independent upon circumstances. The latter is the consequence of the former; real dependence produces real independence.

And mark the ground of the believer's peace. The One who has power to cast into hell, the only One whom he is to fear, has actually taken the trouble to count the hairs of his head. He surely has not taken the trouble for the purpose of letting him perish here or hereafter. By no means. The minuteness of our Father's care should silence every doubt that might arise in our hearts. There is nothing too small, and there can be nothing too great for Him. The countless orbs that move through infinite space, and a falling sparrow, are alike to Him. His infinite mind can take in, with equal facility, the course of everlasting ages, and the hairs of our head. This is the stable foundation on which Christ founds His “fear not," and “take no thought.” We frequently fail in the practical application of this divine principle. We may admire it as

a principle; but it is only in the application of it that its real beauty is seen or felt. If we do not put it in practice, we are but painting sunbeams on canvas, while we famish beneath the chilling influences of our own unbelief.

Now, we find in this scripture before us, that bold and uncompromising testimony for Christ is connected with this holy elevation above men's thoughts, and this calm reliance upon our Father's minute and tender care. If my heart is lifted above the influence of the fear of man, and sweetly tranquillised by the assurance that God takes account of the hairs of my head, then I am in a condition of soul to confess Christ before men. (See ver. 8-10) Nor need I be careful as to the result of this confession, for so long as God wants me here, He will maintain me here. “And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." The only proper ground of testimony for Christ is to be fully delivered from human influence, and established in unqualified confidence in God. So far as I am influenced by, or a debtor to, men, so far am I disqualified for being a servant of Christ; but I can only be effectually delivered from human influence by a lively faith in God. When God fills the heart, there is no room for the creature; and we may be perfectly sure of this, that no man has ever taken the trouble to count the hairs of our head; we have not even taken that trouble ourselves; but God has, and therefore I can trust God more than anyone. God is perfectly sufficient for every exigency, great or small, and we only want to trust Him to know that He is.

True, He may and does use men as instruments; but if we lean on men instead of God — if we lean on instruments instead of on the hand that uses them — we bring down a curse upon us, for it is written, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." (Jer. 17: 5) The Lord used the ravens to feed Elijah; but Elijah never thought of trusting in the ravens. Thus it should be ever. Faith leans on God, counts on Him, clings to Him, trusts in Him, waits for Him, ever leaves a clear stage for Him to act on, does not obstruct His glorious path by any creature-confidence, allows Him to display Himself in all the glorious reality of what He is, leaves everything to Him; and, moreover, if it gets into deep and rough waters, it will always be seen upon the crest of the loftiest billow, and from thence gazing in perfect repose upon God and His powerful actings. Such is faith — that precious principle — the only thing in this world that gives God and man their respective places.

While the Lord Jesus was in the act of pouring forth these unearthly principles, a true child of earth intrudes upon Him with a question about property. "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." How marvellously little did he know of the true character of that heavenly Man who stood before him! He knew nothing of the profound mystery of His being, or the object of His heavenly mission. He surely had not come from the bosom of the Father to settle lawsuits about property, nor to arbitrate between two covetous men. The spirit of covetousness was manifestly in the whole affair. Both defendant and plaintiff were governed by covetousness. One wanted to grasp, and the other

wanted to keep; what was this but covetousness? “And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" It was not a question of which was right or which was wrong, as to the property. According to Christ's pure and heavenly doctrine, they were both wrong. In the light of eternity, a few acres of land were little worth; and as to Christ Himself, He was only teaching principles entirely hostile to all questions of earthly possession; but, in His own person and character, He set an example of the very opposite. He did not go to law about the inheritance. He was “Heir of all things." The land of Israel, the throne of David, and all creation belonged to Him; but man would not own Him, or give Him possession. “The husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and seize upon the inheritance." To this the Heir submitted in perfect patience, but — eternal homage to His glorious name! — by submitting unto death He crushed the enemy's power, and brought “many sons to glory."

Thus we see, in the doctrine and practice of the Heavenly Man, the true exhibition of the principles of the kingdom of God. He would not arbitrate, but yet He taught truth which would entirely do away with the need of arbitration. If the principles of the kingdom of God were dominant, there would be no need for courts of law; for inasmuch as people would not be wronged of their rights, they could have no wrongs to be righted. This would be admitted by all. But then the Christian, being in the kingdom, is bound to be governed by the principles of the kingdom, and to carry them out at all cost; for, in the exact proportion that he fails to exhibit

those principles, he is robbing his own soul of blessing, and marring his testimony.

Hence, then, a person going to law is not governed in so doing by the principles of the kingdom of God, but by the principles of the kingdom of Satan, who is the prince of this world. It is not a question as to his being a Christian, but simply a question as to the principle by which he is governed in the act of going to law, under any circumstances. [How often, alas! does it happen, that people go to law to be righted of their wrongs, and, in the end, find themselves wronged of their rights!] I say nothing of the moral instincts of the divine nature, which would surely lead one to apprehend with accuracy the gross inconsistency of a man who professes to be saved by grace going to law with a fellow-man — of one who, while he owns that if he had his right from the hand of God, he would be burning in hell, nevertheless insists upon exacting his rights from his fellow-man — of one who has been forgiven ten thousand talents, but yet seizes his fellow by the throat for a paltry hundred pence. Upon these things I shall not dwell. I merely look at the question of going to law in the light of the kingdom, in the light of eternity; and if it be true that in the kingdom of God there is no need for courts of law, then I press it solemnly upon my reader's conscience, in the presence of God, that he, as a subject of that kingdom, is totally wrong in going to Law. True, it will lead to loss and suffering; but who is "worthy of the kingdom of God" who is not prepared to “suffer for it?" Let those who are governed by the things of time go to law; but the Christian is, or ought to be, governed by the things of eternity. People go to law Now', but it will not be so then; and the Christian is to act now as if it were

then. He belongs to the kingdom; and it is just because the kingdom of God is not dominant, but the King rejected, that the subjects of the kingdom are called to suffer. Righteousness "suffers" now; it will "reign" in the millennium; and it will “dwell" in the new heavens and the new earth. Now, in going to law, the Christian anticipates the millennial age. He is going before his Master in the assertion of his rights. He is called to suffer patiently all sorts of wrongs and injuries. To resent them is to deny the truth of that kingdom to which he professes to belong. I press this principle upon my reader's conscience. I earnestly implore his serious attention thereto. Let it have its full weight upon his conscience. Let him not trifle with its truth. There is nothing which tends so to hinder the freshness and power, growth and prosperity of the kingdom of God in the heart, as the refusal to carry out the principles of that kingdom in the conduct. [The Christian should be governed by the principles of the kingdom in everything. If he is engaged in business, he should conduct his business as a child of God, and a servant of Christ. He should not have a Christian character on Lords day, and a commercial character on Monday. I should have the Lord with me in my shop, my warehouse, and my counting-house. It is my privilege to depend upon God in my business; but, in order to depend upon Him, my business must be of such a nature, and conducted upon such a principle, as He can own. If I say, I must do business as others do business," I abandon true Christian ground, and get into the current of the world's thoughts. If, for example, I resort to placards, newspaper advertisements, and all such means of puffing and pushing, I am evidently not working in simple dependence upon God, but rather depending

upon the world's principle. But some will say, “How am I to get on in business?" I reply by putting another question, namely, "What is your object? Is it food and raiment. or to hoard up?" If the former God has promised it so that you are in the way of His appointment, you have only to depend upon Him. Faith always puts the soul on a totally different ground from that occupied by the world, no matter what our calling may be. Take, for example, David in the valley of Elah. Why did he not fight like other men? Because he was on the ground of faith. So also Hezekiah. Why did he put on sackcloth when other men put on armour? Because he was on the ground of simple dependence upon God. Just so in the case of a man in trade; he must carry on his trade as a Christian, else he will mar the testimony, and rob his own soul of blessing.]

But some may say, that it is bringing us down from the high ground of the church, as set forth in Paul's Epistles, to press thus the principles of the kingdom. By no means. We belong to the church, but we are in the kingdom; and while we must never confound the two, it is perfectly plain that the ethics — the moral habits and ways — of the church can never be below those of the kingdom. If it be contrary to the spirit and principles of the kingdom to assert my rights and go to law, it must, if possible, be still more contrary to the spirit and principles of the church. This cannot be questioned. The higher my position, the higher should be my code of ethics, and tone of character. I fully believe, and desire firmly to hold, experimentally to enter into, and practically to exhibit, the truth of the church as the body and bride of Christ — the possessor of a heavenly standing, and the expectant of heavenly glory, by virtue

of her oneness with Christ; but I cannot see how my being a member of that highly-privileged body can make my practice lower than if I were merely a subject or member of the kingdom. What is the difference, as regards present conduct and character, between belonging to the body of a rejected Head, and belonging to the kingdom of a rejected King? Assuredly it cannot be to lower the tone in the former case. The higher and more intimate my relationship to the rejected One, the more intense should be my separation from that which rejects Him, and the more complete should be my assimilation to His character, and the more precise and accurate my walk in His footsteps, in the midst of that scene from which He is rejected.

But the simple fact is, WE WANT CONSCIENCE. Yes, beloved reader, a tender, exercised, honest conscience, which will truly and accurately respond to the appeals of God's pure and holy word, is, I verily believe, the grand desideratum — the pressing want of the present moment. It is not so much principles we want, as the grace, the energy, the holy decision, that will carry them out, cost what it may. We admit the truth of principles, which most plainly cut at the very things which we ourselves are either directly or indirectly doing. We admit the principle of grace, and yet we live by the strict maintenance of righteousness. For example, how often does it happen that persons are preaching, teaching, and professing to enjoy grace, while at the very moment they are insisting upon their rights in reference to their tenants; and, either directly themselves, or indirectly by means of their agents, dispossessing poor people, unroofing their houses, and sending them out, in destitution and misery, upon a cold, heartless world!

This is a plain, palpable case, of which, alas! there have been too many painful illustrations in the world within the last ten years.

And why put cases? Because one finds such melancholy deficiency in sensibility of conscience, at the present day, that unless the thing is brought home plainly to oneself it will not be understood. Like David, our indignation is wrought up to the highest pitch by a picture of moral turpitude, so long as we do not see self in that picture. It needs some Nathan to sound in our ears, “Thou art the man," in order to prostrate us in the dust, with a smitten conscience, and true self-abhorrence. Thus, at the present day, eloquent sermons are preached, eloquent lectures delivered, and elaborate treatises written about the principles of grace, and yet the courts of law are frequented, attorneys, lawyers, sheriffs, agents, and sub-agents, are called into requisition, with all their terrible machinery, in order to assert our rights; but we feel it not, because we are not present to witness the distress, and hear the groans and execrations of houseless mothers and children. Need we wonder, therefore, that true practical Christianity is at a low ebb amongst us? Is it any marvel that leanness, barrenness, drought, and poverty, coldness and deadness, darkness, ignorance, and spiritual depression should be found amongst us? What else could be expected, when the principles of the kingdom of God are openly violated?

But is it unrighteous to seek to get our own, and to make use of the machinery within our reach, in order to do so? Surely not. What is here maintained is, that no matter how well defined and clearly established the right may be, the assertion thereof is diametrically opposed to the

kingdom of God. The servant in Matthew 18 was called “a wicked servant," and “delivered to the tormentors," not because he acted unrighteously in enforcing the payment of a lawful debt, but because he did not act in grace and remit that debt. Let this fact be solemnly weighed. A man who fails to act in grace will lose the sense of grace; a man who fails to carry out the principles of the kingdom of God will lose the enjoyment of those principles in his own soul. This is the moral of the wicked servant. Well, therefore, might the Lord Jesus sound in His disciples' ears this warning voice, “Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

But how difficult to define this “covetousness!" How hard to bring it home to the conscience! It is, as some one has said of worldliness, “shaded off gradually from white to jet black;" so that it is only as we are imbued with the spirit and mind of heaven, and thoroughly schooled in the principles of eternity, that we shall be able to detect its working. And not only so, but our hearts must, in this also, be purged from the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. The Pharisees were covetous, and could only turn Christ's doctrine into ridicule (see Luke 16: 14); and so will it be with all those who are tainted by their leaven. They will not see the just application of truth, either as to covetousness or anything else. They will seek to define it in such a way as will suit themselves. They will interpret, modify, pare down accommodate, until they have fully succeeded in getting their conscience from under the edge of God's truth; and thus they get into the power and under the influence of the enemy. I must either be governed by the

pure truth of the word, or by the impure principles of the world, which, as we very well know, are forged in Satan's workshop, and brought into the world to be used in doing his work.

In the parable of the rich man, which the Lord here puts forth, in illustration of covetousness, we see a character which the world respects and admires. But in this, as in everything else brought forward in this searching chapter, we see the difference between now and then, — between “time and eternity." All depends upon the light in which you look at men and things. If you merely look at them now; it may be all very well to get on in trade, and enlarge one's concerns, and make provision for the future. The man who does this is counted wise now; but he will be a “fool" then. Title-deeds, debentures, bank receipts, insurance policies, are current coin now, but they will be rejected then; they are genuine now, they will be spurious then. Thus it is; and, my reader, let us remember, that we must make God's then to be our now; we must look at the things of time in the light of eternity; the things of earth in the light of heaven. This is true wisdom which does not confine the heart to that system of things which obtains “under the sun," but conducts it into the light, and leaves it under the power of “that [unseen] world" where the principles of the kingdom of God bear sway. What should we think of courts of law, banks, and insurance offices, if we look at them in the light of eternity. [It should be a serious question with a child of God, ere he avails himself of an assurance company, whether in the matter of fire or life, “Am I, hereby, distrusting God? or, am I seeking by human agency to counteract divine visitations? There is something sadly anomalous in a Christian's insuring his

life. He professes to be dead, and that Christ is his life: why then talk of insuring his life? But many will say, “We cannot bring Christianity into such things." I ask, Where are we to leave it? Is Christianity a convenient sort of garment, which we put on on Lord's day, and at the close of that day take it off, fold it carefully up, and lay it on the shelf till the following Lord's day? It is too often thus. People have two characters; and what is this but the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy? Insurance offices are all very well for the men of this world, who should certainly avail themselves of them, inasmuch as everything around and within is so uncertain. but to the child of God, all is sure. God has insured his life for ever; and, hence, he should regard insurance offices as so many depots of unbelief.] These things do very well for men who are only governed by now; but the disciple of Christ is to be governed by then. This makes all the difference; and truly it is a serious difference.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." What sin is there in being a successful agriculturist or merchant? If God bless a man's labour, should he not rejoice? Truly so; but mark the moral progress of a covetous heart. "He thought within himself." He did not think in the presence of God; he did not think under the mighty influences of the eternal world. No; “he thought within himself" — within the narrow compass of his selfish heart. Such was his range; and, therefore, we need not marvel at his practical conclusion. “What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" What! Was there no way of using his resources with a view to God's future? Alas! no. Man has a future, or thinks he has, on which he

counts, and for which he makes provision; but self is the only object which figures in that future, — self whether in my own person, or that of my wife or child, which is, morally, the same thing.

The grand object in God's future is Christ; and true wisdom will lead us to fix our eye on Him and make Him our undivided object for time and eternity, now and then. But this, in the judgement of a worldly man, is nonsense. Yes, heaven's wisdom is nonsense in the judgement of earth. Hearken to the wisdom of earth, and the wisdom of those who are under the influence of earthly maxims and habits. “And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods." Thus we have what he "thought," what he “said," and what he “did;" and there is a melancholy consistency between his thoughts, his words, and his acts. “There," in my self-built storehouse, "will I bestow all." Miserable treasure-house to contain the “all" of an immortal soul! God was not an item in the catalogue. God was neither his treasury nor his treasure. This is plain; and it is always thus with a mere man of the world. “And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Thus we see that a worldly man's provision is only “for many years." Make the best of it, it cannot go beyond that narrow limit. It cannot, even in his own thought about it, reach into that boundless eternity, which stretches beyond this contracted span of time And this provision he offers to his never-dying soul, as the basis of its “ease and merriment." Miserable fatuity! Senseless calculation!

How different is the address which a believer may present to his soul! He, too, may say to his soul, “Soul,

take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; eat of the fatness of God's storehouse, and drink of the river of His pleasures, and of the wine of His kingdom; and be glad in His accomplished salvation; for thou hast much goods, yea, unsearchable riches, untold wealth, laid up, not merely for many years, but for eternity. Christ's finished work is the ground of thine eternal peace, and His coming glory the sure and certain object of thy hope." This is a different character of address, my reader. This shows the difference between now and then. It is a fatal mistake not to make Christ the Crucified, Christ the Risen, Christ the Glorified, the Alpha and Omega of all our calculations. To paint a future, and not to place Christ in the foreground, is extravagance of the wildest character; for the moment God enters the scene, the picture is hopelessly marred.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: THEN whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" And, then, mark the moral of all this. “So is he," no matter who, saint or sinner, "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." The man who hoards up is virtually making a god of his hoard. His mind is tranquillised as to the future when he thinks of his hoard, for if he had not that hoard he would be uneasy. It is sufficient to put a natural man entirely out of his reason to give him nought but God to depend upon. Anything but that for him. Give him old pieces of parchment in the shape of title deeds, in which some clever lawyer will finally pick a hole, and prove worthless. He will lean on them, yea, die in peace, if he can leave such to his heirs. Give him an insurance policy — anything, in short, but God for the natural heart. ALL IS REALITY SAVE THE ONLY

REALITY, in the judgement of nature. This proves what nature's true condition is. It cannot trust God. It talks about Him, but it cannot trust Him. The very basis of man's moral constitution is distrust of God; and one of the fairest fruits of regeneration is the capacity to confide in God for everything. “They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." None else can.

However, my main object in this paper is to deal with Christian consciences. I ask the Christian reader, therefore, in plain terms, is it in keeping with Christ's doctrine, as set forth in the Gospel, for His disciples to lay up for themselves treasure on the earth? It would seem almost an absurdity to put such a question in the face of Luke 12 and parallel scriptures. "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." This is plain enough, and only wants an honest conscience to apply it, in order to produce its proper results. It is directly contrary to the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and perfectly incompatible with true discipleship, to lay up “treasure," in any shape or form, “on the earth“ In this, as in the matter of going to law, we have only to remember that we are in the kingdom of God, in order to know how we should act. The principles of that kingdom are eternal and binding upon every disciple of Christ.

"And he said unto his disciples, Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Observe, “take NO thought." This needs no

interpretation or accommodation. Persons may say it means “anxious thought," but there is nothing about “anxious" in the passage. It is simply said, "no thought;" and that, too, in reference to all that man can really want, namely, food and raiment, in both of which the ravens and the lilies are set before us as an example; for the former are fed, and the latter are clothed, without thought. If the Lord Jesus meant "anxious thought," He would have said so. Nor is this merely true in reference to those who are only in the kingdom; it is also true as to the members of the church. “Be careful for nothing," says the Spirit by the apostle. Why? Because God is caring for you. There is no use in two thinking about the same thing, when One can do everything, and the other can do nothing. “In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison (phrouresei) your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." This is the solid foundation of peace of heart, which so few really enjoy. Many have gotten peace of conscience through faith in the sufficiency of Christ's work, who do not enjoy peace of heart through faith in the sufficiency of God's care. And often times we go to pray about our difficulties and trials, and we rise from our knees as troubled as we knelt down. We profess to put our affairs into the hands of God, but we have no notion of leaving them there; and, consequently, we do not enjoy peace of heart. Thus it was with Jacob, in Genesis 32. He asked God to deliver him from the hand of Esau; but, no sooner did he rise from his knees than he set forth the real ground of his soul's dependence, by saying, “I will appease him by a present." It is clear he had much more confidence in the “present" than in God. This is a

common error amongst the children of God. We profess to be looking to the Eternal Fountain; but the eye of the soul is askance upon some creature stream. Thus God is practically shut out; our souls are not delivered, and we have not got peace of heart.

The apostle then goes on, in Philippians 4: 8, to give a catalogue of those things about which we ought to think; and we find that self, or its affairs, is not once alluded to. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable (semna) whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things And the God of peace shall be with you." Thus, when I know and believe that God is thinking about me, I have “the peace of God;" and when I am thinking about Him and the things belonging to Him, I have “the God of peace." This, as might be expected, harmonises precisely with Christ's doctrine in Luke 12. After relieving the minds of His disciples in reference to present supplies and future treasure, He says, “But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." That is, I am not to seek the kingdom with the latent thought in my mind that my wants will be supplied in consequence. That would not be true discipleship. A true disciple never thinks of aught but the Master and His kingdom; and the Master will assuredly think of him and his wants. Thus it stands, my beloved reader, between a faithful servant and an All-powerful and All-gracious Master. That servant may therefore be free, perfectly free, from care.

But there is another ground on which we are exhorted to be free from care, and that is, the utter worthlessness of

that care. “Which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" We gain nothing by our care; and by indulging therein we only unfit ourselves for seeking the kingdom of God, and place a barrier, by our unbelief, in the way of His acting for us. It is always true in reference to us, "He could there do no mighty work, because of their unbelief." Unbelief is the great hindrance to the display of God's mighty works on our behalf. If we take our affairs into our own hands, it is clear that we do not want God. Thus we are left to the depressing influence of our own perplexing thoughts, and, finally, we take refuge in some human resource, and make shipwreck of faith.

It is important to understand that we are either leaning on God, or on circumstances. It will not do, by any means, to say that we are leaning on God. and circumstances. It must be God only, or not at all. It is all very well to talk of faith when our hearts are, in reality, leaning on the creature, in some shape or form. We should sift and try our ways closely as to this; for, inasmuch as absolute dependence upon God is one of the special characteristics of the divine life, and one of the fundamental principles of the kingdom, it surely becomes us to look well to it, that we are not presenting any barrier to our progress in that heavenly quality. True, it is most trying to flesh and blood to have no settled thing to lean upon. The heart will quiver as we stand upon the shore of circumstances, and look forth upon that unknown ocean — unknown to all but faith, and where nought but simple faith can live for an hour. We may feel disposed, like Lot, to cry out, “Is it not a

little one? and my soul shall live." The heart longs for some shred of the creature, some plank from the raft of circumstances, anything but absolute dependence upon God. But oh! let God only be known, and He must be trusted; let Him be trusted, and He must be known.

Still the poor heart will yearn after something settled, something tangible. If it be a question of maintenance, it will earnestly desire some settled income, a certain sum in the funds, a certain amount of landed property, or a fixed jointure or annuity of some kind or other. Then, if it be a question of public testimony or ministry of any kind, it will be the same thing. If a man is going to preach or lecture, he will like to have something to lean upon; if not a written sermon, at least, some notes, or some kind of previous preparation; anything but unqualified, self-emptied dependence upon God. Hence it is that worldliness prevails to such a fearful extent amongst Christians. Faith alone can overcome the world, and purify the heart. It brings the soul from under the influence of time, and keeps it habitually in the light of eternity. It is occupied not with now, but with then; not with here, but hereafter; not with earth, but with heaven. Thus it overcomes the world, and purifies the heart. It hears and believes Christ's word, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Now, if "the kingdom" fills my soul's vision, I have no room for aught beside. I can let go present shadows in the prospect of future realities. I can give up an evanescent now, in the prospect of an eternal then.

Wherefore, the Lord immediately adds, “Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not, where

no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will the heart be also." If I have treasure on earth, no matter in what shape, my heart will be there also, and I shall be a downright worldly man. How shall I most effectually empty my heart of the world? By getting it filled with Christ. He is the true treasure which neither the world's “bags," nor its “storehouses," can contain. The world has its “barns" and its “bags," in which it hoards its “goods;" but its barns will fall, and its bags will wax old; and then, what will become of the treasure? Truly, “they build too low that build beneath the skies."

Yet, people will build and hoard up, if not for themselves, at least for their children; or, in other words, their second selves. If I hoard for my children, I am hoarding for myself; and not only so, but in numberless cases, the hoard, in place of proving a blessing, proves a positive curse to the child, by taking him off the proper ground appointed for him, as well as for all, in God's moral government, namely, “working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have [not to hoard up for himself, or for his second self, but] to give to him that needeth." This is God's appointed ground, for every man; and, therefore, if I hoard for my child, I am taking both myself and him off the divine ground, and the consequence will be a forfeiture of blessing. Do I taste the surpassing sweetness of obedience to, and dependence upon God, and shall I deprive my child thereof? Shall I rob him, virtually, and so far as in me lies, of God, and give him, as a substitute, a few “old bags," an insurance policy, or some musty parchments? Would this be acting a father's part? Surely not. It would be selling then for now. It would be like the

profane and sensual Esau, selling the birthright for a morsel of meat; it would be giving up God's future for man's present.

But why need I hoard up for my children? If I can trust God for myself, why not trust Him for them likewise? Cannot the One who has fed and clothed me, feed and clothe them also? Is His hand shortened, or His treasury exhausted? Shall I make them idlers, or give them money instead of God? Ah! my reader, let us bear in mind this simple fact, that if we cannot trust God for our little ones, we do not trust Him for ourselves. The moment I begin to hoard up a sixpence, I have, in principle, departed from the life of faith. I may call my hoard by all the fair names that were ever invented by worldly minds or unbelieving hearts; but the unvarnished truth of the matter is this. MY HOARD IS MY GOD. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Let not the truth be misunderstood or misinterpreted. I am bound, by the powerful obligations of the word and example of God, to provide for my own; for, “if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5: 8.) This is plain enough. And, moreover, I am bound to fit my children, so far as God's principles admit, and my province extends, for any service to which He may be graciously pleased to call them. But I am nowhere instructed in the word of God to give my children a hoard in place of an honest occupation, with simple dependence upon a heavenly Father. As a matter of actual fact, few children ever thank their fathers for inherited wealth; whereas they will ever remember, with gratitude and veneration,

having been led, by parental care and management, into a godly course of action for themselves.

I do not, however, forget a passage which has often been used, or rather abused, to defend the worldly, unbelieving practice of hoarding up. I allude to 2 Corinthians 12: 14. “Behold the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." How glad people are when they get a semblance of scripture authority for their worldliness! In this passage it is but a semblance of authority; for the apostle is certainly not teaching Christians to hoard up — he is not teaching heavenly men to lay up treasure upon the earth, for any object. He simply refers to a common practice in the world and to a common feeling in nature, in order to illustrate his own mode of dealing with the Corinthians, who were his children in the faith. He had not burdened them, and he would not burden them, for he was the parent. Now, if the saints of God are satisfied to go back to the world and its maxims, to nature and its ways, then let them hoard up with all diligence — let them “heap treasure together for the last days;" but let them remember that the moth, the canker-worm, and the rust, will be the end of it all. Oh! for a heart to value those immortal “bags" in which faith lays up its "unfading treasure," those heavenly storehouses where faith “bestows all its fruits and its goods." Then shall we pursue a holy and an elevated path through this present evil world — then, too, shall we be lifted upon faith's vigorous pinion above the dark atmosphere which enwraps this Christ-rejecting, God-hating world, and

which is impregnated and polluted by those two elements, namely, hatred of God, and love of gold.

I shall only add, ere closing this paper, that the Lord Jesus — the Adorable, the Divine, the Heavenly Teacher, having sought to raise, by His unearthly principles, the thoughts and affections of His disciples to their proper centre and level, gives them two things to do; and these two things may be expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, "to serve the living and true God; and wait for his Son from heaven." The entire of the teaching of Luke 12 from verse 35 to the end, may be ranged under the above comprehensive heads, to which I call the Christian reader's prayerful attention. We have no one else to serve but “the living God;" and nothing to wait for — nothing worth waiting for, but "his Son." May the Holy Ghost clothe His own word with heavenly power, so that it may come home to the heart and conscience, and tell upon the life of every child of God, that the name of the Lord Christ may be magnified, and His truth vindicated in the conduct of those that belong to Him. May the grace of an honest heart, and a tender, upright, well-adjusted conscience, be largely ministered to each and all of us, so that we may be like a well-tuned instrument, yielding a true tone when touched by the Master's hand, and harmonising with His heavenly voice.

Finally, if this paper should fall into the hands of one who has not yet found rest of conscience in the perfected atonement of the Son of God, I would say to such a one, you will surely lay this paper down, and say, “This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" You may be disposed to ask, “What would the world come to, if such principles were universally dominant?" I reply, it would

cease to be governed by Satan, and would be “the kingdom of God." But let me ask you, my friend, “To which kingdom do you belong? Which is it — now or then — with you? Are you living for time or eternity, earth or heaven, Satan or Christ?" Do, I affectionately implore of you, be thoroughly honest with yourself in the presence of God. Remember, “there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." The judgement-seat will bring all to light. Therefore, I say, be honest with yourself, and now ask your heart, “Where am I? How do I stand? What is the ground of my peace? What are my prospects for eternity?" Do not imagine that God wants you to buy heaven with a surrender of earth. No; He points you to Christ, who, by bearing sin in His own body on the cross, has opened the way for the believing sinner to come into the presence of God in the power of divine righteousness. You are not asked to do or to be anything; but the gospel tells you what Jesus is, and what He has done; and if you believe this in your heart, and confess it with your mouth, you shall be saved. Christ — God's Eternal Son — God manifest in the flesh — co-equal with the Father, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of a woman, took upon Him a body prepared by the power of the Highest — and thus became a REAL MAN — very God and very man — He, having lived a life of perfect obedience, died upon the cross, being made sin and a curse, and having exhausted the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath, endured the sting of death, spoiled the grave of its victory, and destroyed him that had the power of death, He went up into heaven, and took His seat at the right hand of God. Such is the infinite merit of His perfect sacrifice, that all who believe are justified from ALL THINGS — yea, are accepted in Him — stand in His acceptableness before

God, and can never come into condemnation, but have passed from death into life. This is the gospel — the glad tidings of salvation, which God the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to preach to every creature. My reader, let me exhort you, in this concluding line, to “behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." BELIEVE AND LIVE C.H.M.