Matthew - Commentaries by Charles Henry Mackintosh

Christian Truth: Volume 3, Not to Be Seen of Men: Hypocrites

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"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:16.18

The special point in these verses seems to be that we ought not to seek the notice of others in the matter of fasting. "That thou appear not unto men to fast." There is nothing said about trying to hide it from men. In short there should be entire forgetfulness of self and of the thoughts of others in all the great branches of practical righteousness presented in this marvelous discourse; namely, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Hypocrites sought the notice of people in these things; we should not do so, but seek to act before God alone. I cannot help it if my servant happens to see me at prayer, or if a person in the street sees me giving an alms, or if my friends know that I am fasting. But, were I to do any of these things in order to be seen, I should be acting as the hypocrites, and I should have my reward in the praise bestowed upon me for my wonderful piety and benevolence. The grand point is to walk in the immediate presence of God. This will give reality, simplicity, and moral elevation to our entire course, conduct, and character.

Short Papers, Alabaster Box, The: Part 2

There is nothing which so thoroughly tests the heart as the doctrine of the cross—the path of the rejected, crucified Jesus of Nazareth. This probes man’s heart to its deepest depths. If it be merely a question of religiousness, man can go an amazing length; but religiousness is not Christ. We need not travel farther than the opening lines of our chapter (Matt, xxvi.) in order to see a striking proof of this. Look, for a moment, at the palace of the high priest and what do you see? A special meeting of the heads and leaders of the people. “ Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas.”

Here, assuredly, you have religion, and that, too, in a very imposing form. We must remember that these priests, scribes, and elders were looked up to, by the professed people of God, as the great depositaries of sacred learning, as the sole authority in all matters of religion, and as holding office under God, in that system which had been set up of God in the days of Moses. The assembly in the palace of Caiaphas was not composed of the pagan priests and augurs of Greece and Rome, but of the professed leaders and guides of the Jewish nation. And what were they doing in their solemn conclave? They were “ consulting that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him.”

Reader, ponder this. Here were religious men, and men of learning, men of weight, no doubt, and influence among the people; and yet these men hated Jesus, and they were met in council, in order to plot His death—to take Him craftily and kill Him. Now those men could have talked to you about God and His worship—about Moses and the law—about the Sabbath and all the great ordinances and solemnities of the Jewish religion. But they hated Christ. Remember tins most solemn fact. Men may be very religious; they may be the religious guides and teachers of others, and yet hate the Christ of God. This is one grand lesson to be learned in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. Religiousness is not Christ; on the contrary, the most zealous religionists have often been the most bitter and vehement haters of that blessed One.

But, it may be said, “ Times are changed. Religion is now so intimately associated with the Name of Jesus, that to be a religious man is, of necessity, to be a lover of Jesus. You could not, now, find aught answering to the palace of Caiaphas.” Is this really so? We cannot believe it, for a moment. The Name of Jesus is as thoroughly hated in Christendom, now, as it was in the palace of Caiaphas. And those who seek to follow Jesus will be hated too. We need not go far to prove this. Jesus is still a rejected one, in this world. Where, let us ask, will you hear His Name? Where is He a welcome theme? Speak of Him where you will, in the drawing-rooms of the wealthy and the fashionable, in the railway carriage, in the saloon of a steam-boat, in the coffee-room, or the dining-hall, in short, in any of the resorts of men, and you will, in almost every case, be told that such a theme is out of place. You may speak of anything else, politics, money, business, pleasure, nonsense. These things are always in place, everywhere; Jesus is never in place anywhere. We have seen in our streets, times without number, the public thoroughfares interrupted by German bands, ballad-singers, and puppet-shows, and they have never been molested, reproved, or told to move on; but let a man stand, in such places, to speak of Jesus, and he will be insulted, or told to move on and not stop a thoroughfare. In plane language, there is room everywhere, in this world, for the devil, but no room for the Christ of God. The world’s motto as to Christ is, “ Oh! breathe not Ms Name.”

But, thank God, if we see around us much that answers to the palace of the high priest, we can also see, here and there, that which corresponds with the house of Simon the leper. There are, blessed be God, those who love the Name of Jesus, and who count Him worthy of the alabaster box. There are those who are not ashamed of His precious cross—those who find their absorbing object in Him and who count it their chief joy and highest honor to spend and be spent for Him, in any little way. It is not with them a question of work, of religious machinery, of running hither and thither, of doing this or that: No; it is Christ, it is being near Him, and being occupied with Him; it is sitting at His feet, and pouring the precious ointment of the heart’s true devotion upon Him.

Reader, be thou well assured that this is the true secret of power both in service and testimony. A just appreciation of a crucified Christ is the living spring of all that is acceptable to God, whether in the life and conduct of an individual Christian, or in all that goes on in our public assemblies. Genuine attachment to Christ and occupation with Him must characterize us personally and congregationally, else our life and history will prove of little worth in the judgment of heaven, however it may be in the judgment of earth. We know of nothing which imparts such moral power to the individual walk and character as intense devotion to the Person of Christ. It is not merely being a man of great faith,

a man of prayer, a deeply taught student of Scripture or a scholar, a gifted preacher or a powerful writer. No; it is being a lover of Christ.

And so, as to the assembly; what is the true secret of power? Is it gift, eloquence, fine music, or an imposing ceremonial? No; it is the enjoyment of a present Christ. Where He is, all is light, life, and power. Where He is not, all is darkness, death, and desolation. An assembly where Jesus is not, is a sepulcher, though there be all the fascination of oratory, all the resistless attraction of fine music, and all the influence of an impressive ritual. All these things may exist in perfection, and yet the devoted lover of Jesus may have to cry out, " Alas! they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." But, on the other hand, where the presence of Jesus is realized—where His voice is heard, and his very touch felt by the soul, there is power and blessing, though, to man's view, all may seem the most thorough weakness.

Let Christians remember these things; let them ponder them; let them see to it that they realize the Lord's presence in their public assemblies; and if they cannot say, with full confidence, of their meetings that the Lord is there, let them humble themselves and wait upon Him, for there must be a cause. He has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." But let us never forget that, in order to reach the divine result, there must be the divine condition.

Short Papers, Alabaster Box, The: Part 1

It is very needful to bear in mind, in this day of busy doing and restless activity, that God looks at everything from one standpoint, measures everything by one rule, tries everything by one touchstone, and that touchstone, that rule, that standpoint is Christ. He values things just so far as they stand connected with the Son of His love, and no farther. Whatever is done to Christ, whatever is done for Him, is precious to God. All beside is valueless. A large amount of work may be done, and a great deal of praise drawn forth thereby, from human lips; but when God comes to examine it, He will simply look for one thing, and that is, the measure in which it stands connected with Christ. His great question will be, Has it been done in, and to, the Name of Jesus? If it has, it will stand approved, and be rewarded; if not, it will be rejected and burnt up.

It does not matter in the least what men's thoughts may be about any particular piece of work. They may laud a person to the skies, for something he is doing; they may parade his name in the public journals of the day; they may make him the subject of discourse in their drawing room circle; he may have a great name as a preacher, a teacher, a writer, a philanthropist, a moral reformer; but, if he cannot connect his work with the name of Jesus—if it is not done to Him and to His glory—if it is not the fruit of the constraining love of Christ, it will all be blown away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and sunk into eternal oblivion.

On the contrary, a man may pursue a quiet, humble, lowly path of service, unknown and unnoticed. His name may never be heard, his work may never be thought of; but what has been done, has been done in simple love to Christ. He has wrought, in obscurity, with his eye on his Master. The smile of his Lord has been quite enough for him. He has never thought, for one moment, of seeking man's approval; he has never sought to catch his smile or shim his frown; he has pursued the even tenor of his way, simply looking to Christ, and acting for Him. His work will stand. It will he remembered and rewarded, though he did not do it for remembrance or reward, but from simple love to Jesus. It is work of the right stamp—genuine coin which will abide the fire of the day of the Lord.

The thought of all this is very solemn, yet very consolatory—solemn for those who are working, in any measure, under the eye of their fellows—consolatory for all those who are working beneath the eye of their Lord. It is an unspeakable mercy to be delivered from the time-serving, men-pleasing, spirit of the present day; and to be enabled to walk, ever and only, before the Lord—to have " all our works begun, continued, and ended in Him."

Let us look, for a few moments, at the lovely and most touching illustration of this, presented to us in " the house of Simon, the leper," and recorded in Matthew xxvi. " Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat."

Now, if we inquire as to this woman's object, as she bent her steps to Simon's house, what was it? was it to display the exquisite perfume of her ointment, or the material and form of her alabaster box? Was it to obtain the praise of men for her act? Was it to get a name for extraordinary devotedness to Christ, in the midst of a little knot of personal friends of the Savior? No, reader, it was none of these things. How do we know? Because, the Most High God, the Creator of all things, who knows the deepest secrets of all hearts, and the true motive spring of every action—He was there in the person of Jesus of Nazareth—He, the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed, was present; and He weighed her action, in the balances of the sanctuary, and affixed to it the seal of His approval. He sent it forth as genuine coin of the realm. He would not, He could not, have done this, if there had been any alloy, any admixture of base metal, any false motive, any under current. His holy and all-penetrating eye went right down into the very depths of this woman's soul. He knew, not only what she had done, but, how and why she had done it; and He declared, " She hath wrought a good work upon me."

In a word, then, Christ Himself was the immediate object of this woman's soul; and it was this which gave value to her act, and sent the odor of her ointment straight up to the throne of God. Little did she know or think that untold millions would read the record of her deep-toned personal devotedness. Little did she imagine that her act would be stereotyped, by the Master's hand, on the very pages of eternity, and never be obliterated. She thought not of this. She sought not, nor dreamed of such marvelous notoriety; had she done so, it would have robbed her act of all its charms, and deprived her sacrifice of all its fragrance.

But the blessed Lord to whom the act was done, took care that it should not be forgotten. He not only vindicated it, at the moment, but handed it down into the future. This was quite enough for the heart of this woman. Having the approval of her Lord, she could well afford to bear the " indignation" even of " the disciples," and to hear her act pronounced "waste." It was sufficient for her that His heart had been refreshed. All the rest might go for what it was worth. She had never thought of securing man's praise, or of avoiding his scorn. Her one undivided object, from first to last, was Christ. From the moment she laid her hand upon that alabaster box, until she broke it, and poured its contents upon His sacred Person, it was of Himself alone she thought. She had a kind of intuitive perception of what would be suitable and grateful to her Lord, in the solemn circumstances in which He was placed at the moment, and, with exquisite tact, she did that thing. She had

never thought of what the ointment might fetch; or, if she had, she felt that He was worth ten thousand times as much. As to “the poor,” they had their place, no doubt, and their claims also; but she felt that Jesus was more to her than all the poor in the world.

In short, the woman’s heart was filled with Christ, and it was this that gave character to her action. Others might pronounce it “ waste;” but we may rest assured that nothing is wasted which is spent for Christ. So the woman judged: and she was right. To put honor upon Him, at the very moment when earth and hell were rising up against Him, was the very highest act of service that man or angel could perform. He was going to be offered up. The shadows were lengthening, the gloom was deepening, the darkness thickening. The cross—with all its horrors—was at hand; and this woman anticipated it all, and came, beforehand, to anoint the body of her adorable Lord.

And mark the result. See how immediately the blessed Lord enters upon her defense, and shields her from the indignation and scorn of those who ought to have known better. “ When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”

Here was a glorious vindication, in the presence of which all human indignation, scorn, and misunderstanding must pass away, like the vapor of the morning before the beams of the rising sun. “ Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.” It was this that stamped the act—“ a good work upon me.” This marked it off from all beside. Everything must be valued according to its connection with Christ. A man may traverse the wide wide world, in order to carry out the noble objects of philanthropy; he may scatter, with a princely hand, the fruits of a large-hearted benevolence; he may give all his goods to feed the poor; he may go to the utmost possible length, in the wide range of religiousness and morality, and yet he may never have done one single thing of which Christ can say, “ It is a good work upon me.”

Reader, whoever you are, or however you are engaged, ponder this. See that you keep your eye directly upon the Master, in all you do. Make Jesus the immediate object of every little act of service, no matter what. Seek so to do your every work as that He may be able to say, “ It is a good work upon me.” Do not be occupied with the thoughts of men as to your path or as to your work. Do not mind their indignation or their misunderstanding, but pour your alabaster box of ointment upon the person of your Lord. See that your every act of service is the fruit of your heart’s appreciation of Him; and be assured He will appreciate your work and vindicate you before assembled myriads. Thus it was with the woman of whom we have been reading. She took her alabaster box, and made her way to the house of Simon the leper, with one object in her heart, namely, Jesus and what was before Him. She was absorbed in Him. She thought of none beside, but poured her precious ointment on His head. And note the blessed issue. Her act has come down to us, in the gospel record, coupled with His blessed Name. No one can read the gospel without reading also the memorial of her personal devotedness. Empires have risen, flourished, and passed away into the region of silence and oblivion. Monuments have been erected to commemorate human genius, greatness, and philanthropy—and these monuments have crumbled into dust; but the act of this woman still lives, and shall live forever. The hand of the Master has erected a monument to her, winch shall never, no never, perish. May we have grace to imitate her; and, in this day, when there is so much of human effort in the way of philanthropy, may our works, whatever they are, be the fruit of our heart’s appreciation of an absent, rejected, crucified Lord!

(To be continued, if the lord will.)

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 73. Matthew 25:34

“T. P.,” Faversham. The persons referred to in Matthew 25:34, are the saved Gentiles, who shall be brought into millennial blessedness, on the ground of their treatment of “these my brethren,” who, we believe, are Jews. The entire scene presents the pre-millennial judgment of Gentile nations. The sheep and the goats are the two classes of “nations.” “These my brethren” are Jews. The Church is distinct from all, and does not appear in the scene, as a subject of judgment.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 2, Lord's Coming, Papers on the: The Judgment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If then it be true that Israel is not included in the judgment of Matt. 25 then, without proceeding one step further, the idea of its being a general judgment must be abandoned. It cannot be general, if all are not included; but Israel is never included under the term " Gentiles." Scripture speaks of three distinct classes, namely, " The Jew, and the Gentile, and the Church of God," and these three are never confounded. But, further, we have to remark that the Church of God is not included in the judgment of Matt. 25 Nor is this statement based merely upon the fact which has been already gone into of the Church's necessary exemption from judgment; but also upon the grand truth that the Church

is taken from among the nations, as Peter declared in the council at Jerusalem. " God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." If then the Church be taken out of the nations, it cannot be reckoned among them; and thus we have additional evidence against the theory of a general judgment in Matt. 25 The Jew is not there; the Church is not there; and therefore the idea of a general judgment must be abandoned as something wholly untenable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 2, Lord's Coming, Papers on the: The Ten Virgins

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

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

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

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

Let us apply our hearts thereto.

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

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

It is impossible to read the epistles to the various churches and not see that the hope of the Lord's sure and speedy return governed the hearts of the Lord's dear people, in early days. " They waited for the Son from heaven." They knew He was to come and take them away to be with Himself forever; and the knowledge and power of this hope had the effect of detaching their hearts from present things. Their bright, heavenly hope caused them to sit loose to the things of earth. " They looked for the Savior." They believed that He might come at any moment, and hence the concerns of this life were just to be taken up and attended to for the moment—property, thoroughly attended to, no doubt—but only as it were on the very tip-toe of expectation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

No, reader, the parable of the ten virgins teaches, beyond all question, that when the Bridegroom comes, there will be foolish virgins on the scene; and, clearly, if there are foolish virgins, all cannot have been previously converted. A child can understand this. We cannot see how it is possible, in the face of even this one parable, to maintain the theory of a world converted before the coming of the Bridegroom.

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

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

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

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

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

" Our lamps are going out." Terrible discovery! " The Bridegroom is at hand, and our lamps are going out. Our hollow profession is being made manifest by the light of His coming. We thought we were all right. We professed the same faith, had the same shaped lamp, the same kind of wick; but alas! we now find to our unspeakable horror, that we have been deceiving ourselves, that we lack the one thing needful, the spirit of life in Christ, the unction from the Holy One, the living link with the Bridegroom. Whatever shall we do? Oh! ye wise virgins, take pity upon us, and share with us your oil. Do, do, for mercy's sake, give us a little, even one drop of that all essential thing, that we may not perish forever."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The dark stream of evil is flowing apace;

Awake, and be doing, ye children of grace.

Let's seek with compassion the souls that are lost,

Well knowing the price their redemption has cost.

While singing with rapture the Savior's great love,

And waiting for Him to translate us above -

" It may be to-morrow, or even to-night" -

Let our loins be well girded, and lamps burning bright.

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 2, Lord's Coming, Papers on the: Christendom

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nor was this principle of divine appointment confined to the high and holy office of the tabernacle. No man dare put his hand to the most insignificant part of that sacred structure unless by Jehovah's direct authority. " The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See / have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah." Nor could Bezaleel choose his companions in labor, or appoint whom he would to the work, any more than he could choose or appoint himself. No; this, too, was divine. " And I," says Jehovah, " behold 1 have given with him Aholiab." Thus Aholiab, as well as Bezaleel, held his commission immediately from Jehovah Himself, the only true source of all ministerial authority.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This must be carefully guarded against. We have ever to bear in mind that ministry in the Church is of God. Its source is divine. Its nature is heavenly and spiritual. Its object is the calling out, the building up of the Church of God. Our Lord Christ imparts the varied gifts, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He holds the great reservoir of spiritual gifts. He has never given it up, and He never will. Spite of all that Satan has wrought in the professing church; spite of all the actings of "that evil servant;" spite of all man's daring assumption of authority which, in no wise, belongs to. him; spite of all these things, our risen and glorified Lord "hath the seven stars." He possesses all ministerial gift, power, and authority. It is He alone who can make anyone a minister. Unless He impart a gift, there can be no true ministry. There may be hollow assumption—guilty usurpation—empty affectation—worthless talking; but not one atom of true, loving, divine ministry can there be unless where our sovereign Lord is pleased to bestow the gift. And even where He does bestow the gift, that gift must be " stirred up," and diligently cultivated, else " the profiting" will not " appear unto all." The gift must be exercised, in the power of the Holy Ghost, else it will not promote the divinely appointed end.

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

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 2, Lord's Coming, Papers on the: The Jewish Remnant

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

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

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

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

At the close of Matt. 23 our Lord sums up His appeal to the leaders of the Jewish nation with the following words of awful solemnity: " Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of

righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Ver. 32-39.

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

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

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

Thus, with slow and measured pace did the glory of the God of Israel take its departure from the house at Jerusalem. Jehovah lingered near the spot, reluctant to depart.1 He had come, with loving alacrity, with His whole heart and with His whole soul, to dwell in the midst of His people, to find a home in the very bosom of His assembly; but He was forced away by their sins and iniquities. He would fain have remained; but it was impossible; and yet He proved, by the very mode of His departure, how unwilling He was to go.

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

But, until that bright day dawn, darkness, desolation, and ruin, make up the sum of Israel's history. The very thing which the leaders sought, by the rejection of Christ, to avert, came upon them, in stern and awful reality. " The Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation." How literally, how solemnly was this fulfilled! Alas their place and their nation were gone already, and the significant movement of Jesus, in Matt. 24:1, was but the passing sentence, and writing desolation upon the whole Jewish system. "Jesus went out and departed from the temple." The case was hopeless. All must be given up. A long period of darkness and dreariness must pass over the infatuated nation—a period which shall culminate in that " great tribulation " which must precede the hour of final deliverance.

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

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

" And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not he left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (or age, .)

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

But they understood Him not. Such sayings seemed dark, hard, and incomprehensible; and their hearts still fondly clung to the hope of national restoration and blessing. They longed to see the star of Jacob in the ascendant. Their minds were full of expectancy as to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. As yet, they knew nothing—how could they?—of that which was to spring out of the rejection and death

of the Messiah. The Lord had no doubt spoken of building an assembly; but as to the position and privileges of that assembly, its calling, its standing, its hopes, they knew absolutely nothing. The thought of a body composed of Jew and Gentile, united by the Holy Ghost to a living and glorified Head in the heavens, had never entered—how could it have entered?—their minds. The middle wall of partition was still standing; and one of their number—the very foremost amongst them—had, long after, to be taught, with much difficulty, to take in the idea of even admitting the Gentiles into the kingdom.

All this, we repeat, must be taken into account, if we would read aright our Lord's reply to the inquiry as to His coming and the end of the age. There is not a single syllable about the Church, as such, from beginning to end of that reply. Up to verse 14, He passes on to the end, giving a rapid survey of the events which should transpire amongst the nations. " Take heed," He says, " that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But 11« that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached it all the world for a witness unto all nations: and thee shall the end come."

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

But we must proceed with our Lord's discourse.

At verse 15, He seems to call His hearers back a little, as it were, to something very specific—something with which a Jewish believer would be familiar from the fact of Daniel's allusion to it. " When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand): then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.... But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

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

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

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

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

Some may perhaps feel a difficulty in understanding verse 34: " This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." But we must remember that the word " generation " is constantly used in scripture in a moral sense. It is not to be confined to a certain number of persons actually living at the time, but takes in the race. In the passage before us, it simply applies to the Jewish race; but the wording is such as to leave the question of time entirely open, so that the heart might ever be kept in readiness for the Lord's coming, There is nothing in scripture, to interfere with the constant expectation of that grand event. On the contrary, every parable, every figure, every allusion is so worded as to warrant each one to look for the Lord's return in his own lifetime, and yet to leave ample margin for the elongation of the time according to the long-suffering grace of a Savior God.

If we turn to Matt. 21:22, we shall find another of the essential conditions of effectual prayer. " And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." This is a truly marvelous statement. It opens the very treasury of heaven to faith. There is absolutely no limit. Our blessed Lord assures us that we shall receive whatsoever we ask in simple faith.

The apostle James, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, gives us a similar assurance, in reference to the matter of asking for wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But"—here is the moral condition—"let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall obtain anything of the Lord."

From both these passages we learn that if our prayers are to have an answer, they must be prayers of faith. It is one thing to utter words in the form of prayer, and another thing altogether to pray in simple faith, in the full, clear, and settled assurance that we shall have what we are asking for. It is greatly to be feared that many of our so-called prayers never go beyond the ceiling of the room. In order to reach the throne of God, they must be borne on the wings of faith, and proceed from hearts united and minds agreed, in one holy purpose, to wait on our God for the things which we really require.

Now, the question is, are not our prayers and prayer-meetings sadly deficient on this point? Is not the deficiency manifest from the fact that we see so little re-suit from our prayers? Ought we not to examine ourselves as to how far we really understand these two conditions of prayer, namely, unanimity and confidence? If it be true—and it is true, for Christ has said it—that two persons agreed to ask in faith can have whatsoever they ask, why do we not see more abundant answers to our prayers? Must not the fault be in us? Are we not deficient in concord and confidence?

Our Lord, in Matt. 18:19, comes down, as we say, to the very smallest plurality—the smallest congregation—even to "two;" but, of course, the promise applies to dozens, scores, or hundreds. The grand point is to be thoroughly agreed, and fully persuaded, that we shall get what we are asking for. This would give a different tone and character altogether to our reunions for prayer. It would make them very much more real than our ordinary prayer-meeting, which, alas! alas! is often poor, cold, dead, objectless, and desultory, exhibiting anything but cordial agreement and unwavering faith.

How vastly different it would be if our prayer-meetings were the result of a cordial agreement on the part of two or more believing souls, to come together, and wait upon God for a certain thing, and to persevere in prayer until they receive an answer. How little we see of this! We attend the prayer-meeting from week to week—and very right we should;—but ought we not to be exercised before God as to how far we are agreed in reference to the object or objects which are to be laid before the throne? The answer to this question links itself on to another of the moral conditions of prayer.

Let us turn to Luke 11 " And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Verse 5-10.

These words are of the very highest possible importance, inasmuch as they contain part of our Lord's reply to the request of His disciples, " Lord, teach us to pray." Let no one imagine for a moment that we would dare to take it upon ourselves to teach people how to pray. God forbid! Nothing is further from our thoughts. We are merely seeking to bring the souls of our readers into direct contact with the word of God—the veritable sayings of our blessed Lord and Master—so that, in the light of those sayings, they may judge for themselves as to how far our prayers and our prayer-meetings come up to the divine standard.

What, then, do we learn from Luke 11? What are the moral conditions which it sets before us? In the first place, it teaches us to be definite in our prayers. "Friend, lend me three loaves." There is a positive need felt and expressed. There is the one thing before the mind, and on the heart; and to this one thing he confines himself. It is not a long, rambling, desultory statement about all sorts of things. It is distinct, direct, and pointed. I want three loaves; I cannot do without them; I must have them; I am shut up; the case is urgent; the time of night—all the circumstances give definiteness and earnestness to the appeal. He cannot wander from the one point, " Friend, lend me three loaves."

No doubt it seems a very untoward time to come—"midnight." Everything looks discouraging. The friend has retired for the night—the door is shut—his children are with him in bed—he cannot rise. All this is very depressing; but still the definite need is pressed. He must have the three loaves.

Now, we cannot but judge that there is a great practical lesson here which may be applied, with immense profit, to our prayers and our prayer-meetings. Must we not admit that our reunions for prayer suffer sadly from long, rambling, desultory prayers? Do we not frequently give utterance to a whole host of things of which we do not really feel the need, and which we have no notion of waiting for at all? Should we not sometimes be taken very much aback were the Lord to appear to us, at the close of our prayer-meeting, and ask us, "What do you really want me to give or to do?"

We feel most thoroughly persuaded that all this demands our serious consideration. We believe it would impart great earnestness, freshness, glow, depth, reality, and power to our prayer-meetings, were we to attend with something definite on our hearts, as to which we could invite the fellowship of our brethren. Some of us seem to think it necessary to make one long prayer about all sorts of things—many of them very right and very good, no doubt—but the mind gets bewildered by the multiplicity of subjects. How much better to bring some one object before the throne, earnestly urge it, and pause, so that the Holy Spirit may lead out others, in like manner, either for this same thing, or something else equally definite.

Long prayers are terribly wearisome; indeed, in many cases, they are a positive infliction. It will, perhaps, be said that we must not prescribe any time to the Holy Spirit. Far away be the monstrous thought! Who would venture upon such a piece of daring blasphemy? But how is it that

we never find long prayers in scripture? The most marvelous prayer that ever was uttered in this world can be slowly, calmly, and impressively read in less than five minutes. We refer to the Lord's prayer, in John 17 And as to the prayer which our Lord taught His disciples, it can be uttered in less than a minute. See also the comprehensive prayer of the disciples, in Acts 4:24-30; and those two marvelous prayers of the inspired apostle, in Eph. 1; 3 Indeed, we may say, without exaggeration, that if all the prayers recorded in the New Testament were read consecutively, they would not occupy nearly so much time as we have frequently known to be occupied by a single prayer in some of our so-called prayer-meetings.

Are we presuming to dictate to the Holy Ghost? Again we emphatically exclaim, "Far away be the horrible idea!" We are simply comparing what we find in scripture with what we too often—not always, thank God!—find in our prayer-meetings.

Let it, then, be distinctly borne in mind, that "long prayers" are not to be found in scripture. They are referred to, no doubt, but it is in terms of withering disapproval. And we may further add, that, during very many years of close observation, we have invariably noticed that the prayers of our most spiritual, devoted, intelligent, and experienced brethren have been characterized by brevity, definiteness, and simplicity. This is right and good. It is according to scripture, and it tends to edification, comfort, and blessing. Brief, fervent, pointed prayers impart great freshness and interest to the prayer-meeting; but, on the other hand, as a general rule, long and desultory prayers exert a most depressing influence upon all.

But there is another very important moral condition set forth in our Lord's teaching, in Luke 11, and that is "importunity" He tells us that the man succeeds in gaining his object simply by his importunate earnestness. He is not to be put off; he must get the three loaves. Importunity prevails even where the claims of friendship prove inoperative. The man is bent on his object; he has no alternative. There is a demand, and he has nothing to meet it: "I have nothing to set before my traveling friend." In short, he will not take a refusal.

Now the question is, how far do we understand this great lesson? It is not, blessed be God, that He will ever answer us " from within." He will never say to us, " Trouble me not"—" I cannot rise and give thee." He is ever our true and ready " Friend"—" a cheerful, liberal, and un-upbraiding Giver." All praise to His holy name! Still, He encourages importunity, and we need to ponder His teaching. There is a sad lack of it in our prayer-meetings. Indeed, it will be found that in proportion to the lack of definiteness is the lack of importunity. The two go very much together. Where the thing sought is as definite as the "three loaves," there will generally be the importunate asking for it, and the firm purpose to get it.

The simple fact is, we are too vague and, as a consequence, too indifferent in our prayers and prayer-meetings. We do not seem like people asking for what they want, and waiting for what they ask. This is what destroys our prayer-meetings, rendering them pithless, pointless, powerless; turning them into teaching or talking meetings, rather than deep-toned, earnest prayer-meetings. We feel convinced that the whole church of God needs to be thoroughly aroused in reference to this great question; and this conviction it is which compels us to offer these hints and suggestions, with which we are not yet done.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Christian Truth: Volume 24, Wisdom and Knowledge of God, The

It was essentially necessary that our blessed Lord should be legally the son of Joseph; virtually the son of Mary; really the Son of God; and all three meet in Matthew 1, in such a way as to evoke from our souls accents of wonder, love, and praise. We can only exclaim as we read such a record, "0 the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." If our Lord were not legally the son of Joseph, He could not claim the throne of David. If He were really his son, He could claim nothing at all.

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 74. Salvation of Departed Infants

“J. A. F.,” Trowbridge. We have, in a former number of this Magazine, given expression to our decided conviction as to the salvation of all who die in infancy. We consider Matthew 18:1-11 perfectly conclusive on this most interesting question. With regard to a Christian parent’s teaching his children to pray, we believe that if the children of Christians are properly trained—if they are brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” they will feel it to be their happy privilege to wait on God in prayer, without being exactly taught to pray. The Spirit alone can teach any one, old or young, to pray. We must beware of making our children formalists. We should seek to cast them upon God for spiritual power and intelligence.

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 33. Salvation of Infants

An anonymous correspondent inquires, “What ground have you in scripture for the hope that infants do not perish?” We consider Matthew 18:10-11 perfectly conclusive as to this interesting point. We believe it to be in full keeping with the nature and actings of the God of all grace, that inasmuch as infants undergo the penalty of Adam’s sin, in the death of the body, they should participate in the benefits of Christ’s atonement, in the salvation of the soul. In a word, we heartily believe that all who die in infancy are saved through the blood of the Lamb.

Short Papers, Self-Emptiness

The fullness of God ever waits upon an empty vessel. This is a grand practical truth, very easily stated, but involving a great deal more than one might, at first sight, imagine. The entire Book of God illustrates this truth. The history of the people of God illustrates it; and the experience of each believer illustrates it. Whether we study the Book of God, or the ways of God-His ways with all-His ways with each, we have this most precious truth, that “the fullness of God ever waits on an empty vessel.”

This holds good with respect to the sinner, in his first coming to Christ; and it holds good with respect to the believer, at every stage of his career, from the starting post to the goal.

I. In the first place, as regards the sinner in his first coming to Christ, what is this but the fullness of God, in redeeming love and pardoning mercy, waiting upon an empty vessel? The real matter is to get the sinner to take the place of an empty vessel. Once there, the whole question is settled. But, ah! what exercise, what struggling, what toil, what conflict, what fruitless efforts, what ups and downs, what vows and resolutions, in hundreds and thousands of cases, ere the sinner is really brought to take the place of an empty vessel, and he filled with God’s salvation! How marvelously difficult it is to get the poor legal heart emptied of its legality, that it may be filled with Christ! It will have something of its own to lean upon and cling to. Here lies the root of the difficulty. We can never “ draw water from the wells of salvation “ until we come thither with empty vessels.

This is difficult work. Many spend years of legal effort ere they reach the grand moral point of self-emptiness, even in its reference to the simple question of righteousness before God. When once they have reached that point, the matter is found to be so simple that the wonder is how they could have spent so long in getting hold of it, and why they had never got hold of it before. There is never any difficulty found, when the sinner really takes the ground of self-emptiness. The question, “ Who shall deliver me? “ is sure to be followed immediately by the reply, “ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 7

Now, it will always be found that the more completely the sinner gets emptied of himself, the more settled his peace will be. If self and its doings, its feelings and its reasonings, be not emptied out, there will assuredly be doubts and fears, ups and downs, wavering and fluctuation, seasons of darkness and cloudiness afterward. Hence the vital importance of seeking to make a clean riddance of self, so that Christ, “ the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” may be known and enjoyed. It is the one who can most truthfully and experimentally say,

“ I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,”

that can also adopt as his own that additional line,

“ But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

It is ever thus. A full Christ is for an empty sinner, and an empty sinner for a full Christ. They are morally fitted to each other; and the more I experience the emptiness, the more I shall enjoy the fullness. So long as I am full of self-confidence, so long as I am full of trust in my morality, my benevolence, my amiability, my religiousness, my righteousness, I have no room for Christ. All these things must be thrown overboard, ere a full Christ can be apprehended. It cannot be partly self and partly Christ. It must be either the one or the other; and one reason why so many are tossed up and down “ in dark uncertainty “ is, because they are still cleaving to some little bit of self. It may be a very little bit. They may not, perhaps, be trusting in any works of righteousness that they have done; but still there is something of self retained and trusted in. It may be the very smallest possible atom of the creature-its state, its feelings, its mode of appropriating, its experiences, something or other of the creature kept in which keeps Christ out. In short, it must be so, for if a full Christ were received, a full peace would be enjoyed; and if a full peace be not enjoyed, it is only because a full Christ has not been received. This makes the matter as simple as possible.

Reader, do you fully understand this? Have you, as an empty sinner, come to Christ to be filled with His fullness, to be satisfied with His all-sufficiency, to find the solid rest of your heart and conscience in Him alone? Say, are you, now, fully satisfied with Christ? I earnestly pray you to get this point settled, now. Is Christ enough for your heart, enough for your conscience, enough for your whole moral being? See that you make earnest, real, hearty work of it now. Are you resting wholly in Christ? Which is it, Christ alone, or Christ and something else? Are you, in some secret chamber of your heart, hiding a little fragment of legality-some little atom of creature confidence—some element of self-righteousness? If so, you cannot enjoy true gospel peace. It cannot be. Gospel peace is the result of receiving a full Christ into a heart that has learned its own emptiness. Christ is our peace. True peace is not a mere feeling in the mind. It is found in a divine, living, real Person, even Christ Himself, who, having made peace by the blood of His cross, has become oar peace in the presence of God. This peace can never be disturbed, inasmuch as He who is our peace, is “ the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.” (Heb. 13) Were it a mere feeling in the mind, it would prove as variable as the mercury in a barometer. If I am occupied with my feelings, I am not self-emptied, and, as a consequence, I cannot know the joy and peace which flow from being occupied only with Christ, for the fullness of God ever waits upon an empty vessel.

Thus much as to the application of our thesis to the case of a sinner in his first coming to Christ.

II. Let us, now, see how it applies to a believer at every stage of his career. This is a deeply practical branch of the subject. We have very little idea at times of bow full we are of self and the world. Hence it is that in one way or another, we have to be emptied from vessel to vessel. Like Jacob of old, we struggle hard, and hold fast our confidence in the flesh, until at length the source of our strength is dried up, and the ground of our confidence swept from under us, and then we are constrained to cry out,

There can be no greater barrier to our peace and habitual enjoyment of God than our being filled with self-confidence. “We must be emptied and humbled. God cannot divide the house with the creature. It is vain to expect it. Jacob had the hollow of his thigh touched, in order that he might learn to lean upon God. The halting Jacob found his sure resource in Jehovah, who only empties us of nature that we may be filled with Himself. He knows that just in so far as we are filled with self-confidence, or creature-confidence, we are robbed of the deep blessedness of being filled with His fullness. Hence, in His great grace and mercy, He empties us out, that we may learn to cling, in childlike confidence, to Him. This is our only place of strength, of victory, and repose.

Some one has said, “ I never was truly happy until I ceased to wish to be great.” This is a fine moral truth. “When we cease to wish to be anything, when we are content to be nothing, then it is we taste what true greatness-true elevation—true happiness—true peace, really is. The restless desire to be something or somebody, is destructive of the soul’s tranquility. The proud heart and ambitious spirit may pronounce this a poor, low, mean, contemptible sentiment; but ah! when we have taken our place on the forms of the school of Christ-when we have

begun to learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart-when we have drunk, in any measure, into the spirit of Him who made Himself of no reputation, we then see things quite differently. “ He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” The way to get up is to go down. This is the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine which fell from His lips and is inscribed on His life. “ And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:2-4.) This is the doctrine of heaven-the doctrine of self-emptiness. How unlike to all that obtains down here in this scene of self-seeking and self-exaltation!

We have, in the person of John the Baptist, a fine example of one who entered, in some degree, into the real meaning of self-emptiness. The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “ Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?” What was his reply? A self-emptied one. He said he was just “ a voice.” This was taking his true place. u A voice” had not much to glory in. He did not say, “1 am one crying in the wilderness.” No; he was merely “ the voice of one.” He had no ambition to be anything more. This was self-emptiness. And, observe the result. He found his engrossing object in Christ. “Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” What was all this, but the fullness of God waiting on an empty vessel! John was nothing, Christ was ail; and hence, when John’s disciples left his side to follow Jesus, we may feel assured that no murmuring word, no accent of disappointed ambition or wounded pride escaped his lips. There is no envy or jealousy in a self-emptied heart. There is nothing touchy, nothing tenacious, about one who has learned to take his true place. Had John been seeking his own things, he might have complained when he saw himself abandoned; but, ah! my reader, when a man has found his satisfying object in “ the Lamb of God,” he does not care much about losing a few disciples.

We have a further exhibition of the Baptist’s self-emptied spirit in the third chapter of John. “And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all come to him.” Here was a communication quite calculated to draw out the envy and jealousy of the poor human heart. But mark the reply, the noble reply, of the Baptist: “ A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.....He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is ABOVE ALL.” Precious testimony this! A testimony to his own utter nothingness, and Christ’s fullness, glory, and peerless excellence! “ A voice” was “ nothing.” Christ was “ high over all.”

Oh! for a self-emptied spirit-” A heart at leisure from itself”—a mind delivered from all anxiety about one’s own things! May we be more thoroughly delivered from self in all its detestable windings and workings! Then could the Master use us, own us, and bless us. Hearken to His testimony to John-the one who said of himself that he was nothing but a voice. “ Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” (Matt. 11:11.) How much better to hear this from the Master than from the servant! John said, “ I am a voice.” Christ said he was the greatest of prophets. Simon Magus “ gave out that himself was some great one.” Such is the way of the world-the manner of man. John the Baptist, the greatest of prophets, gave out that himself was nothing-that Christ was “ above all,” What a contrast!

May we be kept lowly and self-emptied, that. be continually filled with Christ. This is true wt-true blessedness. May the language of our hearts, and the distinct utterance of our lives ever be, “ Behold the Lamb of God.”

Prayer and the Prayer Meeting, Prayer and the Prayer Meeting: Part 2

We shall now proceed to consider, in the light of holy scripture, the moral conditions or attributes of prayer. There is nothing like having the authority of the divine word for everything in the entire range of our practical christian life. Scripture must be our one grand and conclusive referee in all our questions. Let us never forget this.

What, then, saith the scripture as to the necessary moral conditions of prayer? Turn to Matt. 18:19: " 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."

Here we learn that one necessary condition of our prayers is unanimity—cordial agreement—thorough oneness of mind. The true force of the words is, "If two of you shall symphonize"—shall make one common sound. There must be no jarring note, no discordant element.

If, for example, we come together to pray about the progress of the gospel—the conversion of souls, we must be of one mind in the matter. We must make one common sound before our God. It will not do for each to have some special thought of his own to carry out. We must come before the throne of grace in holy harmony of mind and spirit, else we cannot claim an answer, on the ground of Matt. 18:19.

Now, this is a point of immense moral weight. Its importance, as bearing upon the tone and character of our prayer-meetings, cannot possibly be over-estimated. It is very questionable indeed whether any of us have given sufficient attention to it. Have we not to deplore the objectless character of our prayer-meetings? Ought we not to come together more with some definite object on our hearts, as to which we are going to wait together upon God? We read, in the first chapter of Acts, in reference to the early disciples, " These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."1 And again, in the second chapter, we read, " When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place"

They were waiting, according to our Lord's instructions, for the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost. They had the sure word of promise. The Comforter was, without fail, to come; but this, so far from dispensing with prayer, was the very ground of its blessed exercise. They prayed; they prayed in one place; they prayed with? one accord. They were thoroughly agreed. They all, without exception, had one definite object before their hearts. They were waiting for the promised Spirit; they continued to wt; and they waited with one accord, until He came. Men and women absorbed with one object, waited in holy concord, in happy symphony—waited on, day after day, earnestly, fervently, harmoniously waited until they were endued with the promised power from on high.

Should not we go and do likewise? Is there not a sad lack of this "one accord"—"one place"—principle in our midst? True it is, blessed be God, we have not to ask for the Holy Ghost to come. He has come. We have not to ask for the out-pouring of the Spirit. He has been poured out.

But we have to ask for the display of His blessed power in our midst. Supposing our lot is cast in a place where spiritual death and darkness reign. There is not so much as a single breath of life, not a leaf stirring; the heaven above seems like brass; the earth beneath, from such a thing as a conversion is never heard of. A withering formalism seems to have settled down upon the entire place. Powerless profession—dead routine—stupefying mechanical religiousness are the order of the day. What is to be done? Are we to allow ourselves to fall under the fatal influence of the surrounding malaria? Are we to yield to the paralyzing power of the atmosphere that enwraps the place? Assuredly not.

If not, what then? Let us, even if there be but two who really feel the condition of things, get together, with one accord, and pour out our hearts to God. Let us wait on Him, in holy concord, with united, firm purpose, until He send a copious shower of blessing upon the barren spot. Let us not fold our arms and vainly say, " The time is not come." Let us not yield to that pernicious offshoot of a one-sided theology, which is rightly called fatalism, and say, " God is sovereign, and He works according to His own will. We must wait His time. Human effort is in vain. We cannot get up a revival. We must beware of mere excitement."

All this seems very plausible; and the more so because there is a measure of truth in it; indeed it is all true, so far as it goes. But it is only one side of the truth. It is truth, and nothing but the truth; but it is not the whole truth. Hence its mischievous tendency. There is nothing more to be dreaded than one-sided truth; it is far more dangerous than positive, palpable error. Many an earnest soul has been stumbled and turned completely out of the way by one-sided or misapplied truth. Many a true-hearted and useful workman has been chilled, repulsed, and driven out of the harvest field, by the injudicious enforcement of certain doctrines having a measure of truth, but not the full truth of God.

Nothing, however, can touch the truth, or weaken the force of Matt. 18:19. It stands in all its blessed fullness, freeness, and preciousness before the eye of faith; its terms are clear and unmistakable. "If two of you shall agree upon earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Here is our warrant for coming together to pray for anything that may be laid on our hearts. Do we mourn over the coldness, barrenness, and death around us? Are we discouraged by the little apparent fruit from the preaching of the gospel—the lack of power in the preaching itself, and the total absence of practical result? Are our souls cast down by the barrenness, dullness, heaviness and low tone of all our reunions, whether at the table of our Lord, before the mercy-seat, or around the fountain of holy scripture?

What are we to do? Fold our arms in cold indifference? Give up in despair? Or give vent to complaining, murmuring, fretfulness or irritation? God forbid! What then? Come together, " with one accord in one place." Get down on our faces before our God, and pour out our hearts, as the heart of one man, pleading Matt. 18:19.

This, we may rest assured, is the grand remedy—the unfailing resource. It is perfectly true that é ' God is sovereign;" and this is the very reason why we should wait on Him. Perfectly true that "Human effort is in vain;" and that is the very reason for seeking divine power. Perfectly true that " We cannot get up a revival;" and that is the very reason for seeking to get it down. Perfectly true that " We must beware of mere excitement.' Equally true that we must beware of coldness, deadness, and selfish indifference.

The simple fact is, there is no excuse whatever—so long as Christ is at the right hand of God—so long as God the Holy Ghost is in our midst and in our hearts—so long as we have the word of God in our hands—so long as Matt. 18:19 shines before our eyes—there is, we repeat, no excuse whatever for barrenness, deadness, coldness, and indifference—no excuse for heavy and unprofitable meetings—no excuse whatever for lack of freshness in our reunions or of fruitfulness in our service. Let us wait on God, in holy concord, and the blessing is sure to come.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 4, Conversion: What Is It? Part 2

In our paper for January, we sought to set forth the absolute need, in every case, of conversion. Scripture establishes this point in such a way as to leave no possible ground of objection for any one who bows to its holy authority. " Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18:3.

This applies, in all its moral force and deep solemnity, to every son and daughter of fallen Adam. There is not so much as a solitary exception, throughout the thousand millions that people this globe. Without conversion, there is—there can be no entrance into the kingdom of God. Every unconverted soul is outside the kingdom of God. It matters not, in the smallest degree, who I am, or what I am; if I am unconverted, I am in "the kingdom of darkness," under the power of Satan, in my sins, and on the way to hell.

I may be a person of blameless morals; of spotless reputation; a high professor of religion; a worker in the vineyard; a Sunday School teacher; an office-bearer in some branch of the professing church; an ordained minister; a deacon, elder, pastor or bishop; a most charitable individual; a munificent donor to religious and benevolent institutions; looked up to, sought after, and reverenced by all because of my personal worth and moral influence. I may be all this and more; I may be, and I may have, all that it is possible for a human being to be or to have, and yet be unconverted, and hence outside the kingdom of God, and in the kingdom of Satan, in my guilt, and on the broad road that leads straight down to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Such is the plain and obvious meaning and force of our Lord's words in Matt. 18:3. There is no possibility of evading it. The words are as clear as a sunbeam. We cannot get over them. They bear down, with what we may truly call tremendous solemnity, upon every unconverted soul on the face of the earth. "Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." This applies, with equal force, to the degraded drunkard that rolls along the street, worse than a beast, and to the unconverted good templar or teetotaler who prides himself on his sobriety, and is perpetually boasting of the number of days, weeks, months or years during which he has refrained from all intoxicating drink. They are both alike outside the kingdom of God; both in their sins; both on the way to eternal destruction.

True it is that the one has been converted from drunkenness to sobriety—a very great blessing indeed, in a moral and social point of view—but conversion from drunkenness to a temperance society is not conversion to God; it is not turning from darkness to light; it is not entering the kingdom of God's dear Son. There is just this difference between the two, that the teetotaler may be building upon his temperance, pluming himself upon his morality, and thus deceiving himself into the vain notion that he is all right, whereas, in reality, he is all

wrong. The drunkard is palpably and unmistakably wrong. Every body knows that a drunkard is going headlong, and with awfully rapid strides, to that place where he will not find one drop of water to cool his tongue. It is clear that no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of God; and neither can an unconverted teetotaler. Both are outside. Conversion to God is absolutely indispensable for the one as well as the other; and the same may be said of all classes, all grades, all shades, all castes and conditions of men under the sun. There is no difference as to this great question. It holds good as to all alike, be their outward character or social status what it may—"Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

How important, then—yea, how momentous the question for each one, " Am I converted?" It is not possible for human language to set forth the magnitude and solemnity of this inquiry. For any one to think of going on, from day to day, and year to year, without a clear and thorough settlement of this most weighty question, can only be regarded as the most egregious folly of which a human being can be guilty. If a man were to leave his earthly affairs in an uncertain, unsettled condition, he would lay himself open to the charge of the grossest and most culpable neglect and carelessness. But what are the most urgent and weighty temporal affairs when compared with the salvation of the soul? All the concerns of time are but as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, when compared with the interests of the immortal soul—the grand realities of eternity.

Hence it is, in the very highest degree, irrational for any one to rest for a single hour without a clear and settled assurance that he is truly converted to God. A converted soul has crossed the boundary line that separates the saved from the unsaved—the children of light from the children of darkness—the church of God from this present evil world. The converted soul has death and judgment behind him, and glory before him. He is as sure of being in heaven as though he were already there; indeed he is there already in spirit. He has a title without a blot, and a prospect without a cloud. He knows Christ as his Savior and Lord; God as his Father and Friend; the Holy Ghost as his blessed Comforter, Guide and Teacher; heaven as his bright and happy home. Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of being converted. Who can utter it? "Eye hath not seen, or ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us [believers] by His Spirit; for the Spirit search-eth all things, yea the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

And now let us inquire what this conversion is, whereof we speak. Well, indeed, will it be for us to he divinely instructed as to this. An error here will; prove disastrous in proportion to the interests at stake.

Many are the mistaken notions in reference to conversion. Indeed we might conclude, from the very fact of the vast importance of the subject, that the great enemy of our souls and of the Christ of God would seek, in every possible way, to plunge us into error respecting it. If tie cannot succeed in keeping people in utter carelessness as to the subject of conversion, he will endeavor to blind their eyes as to its true nature. If, for example, a person has been roused, by some means or other, to a sense of the utter vanity and unsatisfactoriness of worldly amusements, and the urgent necessity of a change of life, the arch-deceiver will seek to persuade such an one to become religious, to busy himself with ordinances, rites and ceremonies, to give up balls and parties, theaters and concerts, drinking, gambling, hunting and horse-racing; in a word, to give up all sorts of gaiety and amusement, and engage in what is -called a religious life, to be diligent in attending the public ordinances of religion, to read the Bible, say prayers, and give alms, to contribute to the support of the great religious and benevolent institutions of the country.

Now, this is not conversion. A person may do all this, and yet be wholly unconverted. A religious devotee whose whole life is spent in vigils, fastings, prayers, self-mortifications and alms deeds, may be as thoroughly unconverted, as far from the kingdom of God as the thoughtless pleasure hunter, whose whole life is spent in the pursuit of objects, as worthless as the withered leaf or the faded flower. The two characters, no doubt, differ widely—as widely perhaps, as any two could differ. But they are both unconverted, both outside the blessed circle of God's salvation, both in their sins. True, the one is engaged in " wicked works," and the other in "dead works;" they are both out of Christ; they are unsaved; they are on the way to hopeless, endless misery. The one, just as surely as the other, if not savingly converted, will find his portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Again, conversion is not a turning from one religious system to another. A man may turn from Judaism, Paganism, Mahometanism, or Popery, to Protestantism, and yet be wholly unconverted. No doubt, looked at from a social, moral, or intellectual standpoint, it is much better to be a Protestant than a Mahometan; but as regards our present thesis, they are both on one common platform, both unconverted. Of one, just as truly as the other, it can be said, unless he is converted, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Conversion is not joining a religious system, be that system ever so pure, ever so sound, ever so orthodox. A man may be a member of the most respectable religious body throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, and yet be an unconverted, unsaved man, on his way to eternal perdition.

So also as to theological creeds. A man may subscribe any of the great standards of religious belief, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Westminster Confession, John Wesley's Sermons, Fox and Barclay, or any other creed, and yet be wholly unconverted, dead in trespasses and sins, on his way to that place where a single ray of hope can never break in upon the awful gloom of eternity.

Of what use, we may lawfully inquire, is a religious system or a theological creed to a man who has not a single spark of divine life? Systems and creeds cannot quicken, cannot save, cannot give eternal life. A man may work on in religious machinery like a horse in a mill, going round and round, from one year's end to another, leaving off just where he began, in a dreary monotony of dead works. What is it all worth? what does it all come to? where does it all end? Death! Yes; and what then? Ah! that is the question. Would to God the weight and seriousness of this question were more fully realized!

But further, Christianity itself, in all its full-orbed light, may be embraced as a system of religious belief. A person may be intellectually delighted—almost entranced with the glorious doctrines of grace, a full, free gospel, salvation without works, justification by faith; in short, all that goes to make up our glorious New Testament Christianity. A person may profess to believe and delight in this; he may even become a powerful writer in defense of christian doctrine, an earnest eloquent preacher of the gospel. All this may be true, and yet the man be wholly unconverted, dead in trespasses and sins, hardened, deceived and destroyed by his very familiarity with the precious truths of the gospel—truths that have never gone beyond the region of his understanding—never reached his conscience, never touched his heart, never converted his soul.

This is about the most appalling case of all. Nothing can be more awful, more terrible, than the case of a man professing to believe and delight in, yea, actually preaching the gospel of God, in all its fullness, and teaching all the grand characteristic truths of Christianity, and yet wholly unconverted, unsaved, and on his way to an eternity of ineffable misery—misery which must needs be intensified to the very highest

degree, by the remembrance of the fact that he once professed to believe, and actually undertook to preach the most glorious tidings that ever fell on mortal ears.

Oh! reader, whoever thou art, do, we entreat of thee, give thy fixed attention to these things. Rest not, for one hour, until thou art assured of thy genuine unmistakable conversion to God.

(to be continued if the Lord will!)

The Mackintosh Treasury: Vol. 2, Eternal Punishment

We have received a communication on the deeply solemn subject of eternal punishment, from a person whose initials are " C. D. S.," and who would seem to be the exponent of the feelings of a very numerous class. Our correspondent does not, by any means, write as an objector, or a caviler, but as an honest enquirer; and we arc not sorry to be called upon to bear a clear and decided testimony on a point of such grave moment. He asks us to let him know <' what the Holy Ghost has taught us on the subject," and we cheerfully comply.

We believe the word of God most clearly and fully teaches the eternity of punishment. The word which is rendered " everlasting," or " eternal," occurs about seventy times in the New Testament. We shall give some examples. « To be cast into everlasting fire." (Matt, xviii. 8.) " That I may have eternal life." (Matt. 19:16.) " These shall go away into everlasting punishment." (Matt. 25:46.) And in the same verse, " The righteous into life eternal.'' " Is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark 3:29.) " They may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke 14:9.) " In the world to come life everlasting." (Luke 18:39.) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:15, 16, 36; 5:21.) "The commandment of the everlasting God." (Rom. 16:23.) " An exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4:17.) " The things which are not seen are eternal."' (Ver. 18.) "An house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'' (Chap. v. 1.) " They shall be punished with everlasting destruction." (2 Thess. 1:9.) "Hath given us everlasting consolation." (Chap. ii. 16.) "In Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2:10.) " The author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5:9.) " Having obtained eternal redemption." (Chap. ix. 12.) " Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." (Ver. 14.) " The promise of eternal inheritance." (Ver. 16.) "Called us unto Ids eternal glory." (1 Pet. 5:10.) " Into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior." (2 Pet. 1:11.) "This is the true God and eternal life." (1 John 5:20.) " Suffering the vengeance of eternal five." (Jude 7.)

Now, we are aware that the opposers of the doctrine of eternal punishment endeavor to prove that the word everlasting does not mean everlasting in the Greek: and this is one reason why we have quoted such a number of passages in which the Greek word , (aionios,) occurs, and in which the Holy Ghost applies it in such a variety of ways. The word which is applied to the punishment of the wicked is also applied to the life which believers possess, to the salvation and redemption in which they rejoice; to the glory to which they look forward; to those mansions in which they hope to dwell: and to the inheritance which they expect to enjoy. Moreover, it is applied to God, and to the Spirit. If, therefore, it be maintained that the word " everlasting" does not mean everlasting, then applied to the punishment of the wicked, what security have we that it means everlasting when applied to the life, blessedness, and glory of the redeemed? What warrant has any one, be he ever so learned, to single out seven instances from the seventy in which the Greek word aionios is used, and say that in those seven it docs not mean everlasting, but that in all the rest it docs? We believe none whatever. Men may reason as they will about divine benevolence and goodness—about its being inconsistent with the mercy of God to permit such a thing as eternal punishment—as to the strange want of proportion between a few years of sin and an endless eternity of punishment. A single line of holy Scripture is amply sufficient, in our judgment, to sweep away ten thousand such reasonings, even though supported by the learned dogma that everlasting docs not mean everlasting in the Greek. " Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'' (Mark 9:46.) Solemn statement! Let men beware of trifling with it, or reasoning about it. Let them believe it, and flee from the wrath to come—flee, now, to Jesus, who died on Calvary's cursed tree to deliver us from everlasting bummers.

But not only is the eternity of punishment clearly laid down in Scripture—as clearly as the eternity of God Himself, or of anything pertaining to Him; we believe it also flows as a necessary truth from other truths which are generally received without a single question. Take, for instance, the immortality of the soul. Did the fall of man touch this question? We believe not. -Man was made the possessor of an immortal spirit, by the breath of the Almighty; and we have no authority whatsoever to say that his fall made any difference as to this. Immortal he was, as to his soul, immortal he is, and immortal he must be. Yes; he must live forever, somewhere. Tremendous thought! Many do not like it. They would fain be able to say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." They would like to pass away as the beasts that perish; and this very desire, we doubt not, has been, in many cases, the parent of the notion that punishment is non-eternal. "The wish is father to the thought." But, ah! man must face that dreadful reality, ETERNITY. Saved or unsaved, there is no escaping that. He must either deny the immortality of the soul, or admit the eternity of punishment.

Again, take the doctrine of the atonement. If anything less than eternal punishment be due to sin, what need was there of an infinite sacrifice to give deliverance from that punishment? Could nothing less than the peerless, priceless, divine sacrifice of the Son of God deliver any one from hell fire, and that fire not be eternal? Did Jesus shed His precious blood to deliver us from the consequences of our guilt, and those consequences be only temporary? We can never admit any such proposition. Grant us the truth of an infinite sacrifice, and we argue from thence the truth of eternal punishment. We attach no weight whatever to the argument drawn from the lack of proportion between a few years of sin and an eternity of woe. We do not believe that this is the true way to measure the matter. The cross is the only measure by which to reach a true result; and we believe the deniers of eternal punishment offer dishonor to the cross, by lowering it into a means of deliverance from a doom which is not eternal in its duration.

And, now, one word as to the idea of its being incompatible with the character of God to allow such a thing as eternal punishment. Many seem to attach great weight to this. They appear to think that eternal misery could never comport with divine mercy and goodness. But those who urge this plea seem to forget that there is another side of the question which must, be looked at if we would reach a sound conclusion on the point. What about, divine justice, holiness, and truth? Are these things not to be taken into account? Can we base an argument on some of the divine attributes and leave others out? Surely not. We must look at them all. The cross of Christ has harmonized them all in the view of all created intelligences. In that cross God has sot forth His perfect love to the sinner; but He has also set forth His perfect hatred of sin. Now, if a man deliberately rejects that only way of escape—that perfect remedy—that divine provision, what is to be done? God cannot let sin into His

presence. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. Will the deniers of eternal punishment tell us what is to be done? How is this question to be settled? They say by annihilation, that is, by man's perishing like a beast! Ah! this will never do. "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7.) Was this ever revoked? Is there a shadow of foundation, in the entire Book of God, for the theory of annihilation? If there is, let it be produced.

We look upon it as a most miserable subterfuge—a pitiable attempt to get rid of the awful thought of eternity. But it will not do. Let man but cast his eye on the page of inspiration, and there he sees that tremendous word, " Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!" Let him but lend his ear to the voice that issues from the depths of his moral being, and he will hear the same soul-subduing word, "Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!" lie cannot get rid of it He cannot shake it off. He is shut up to the stern fact that he must live forever.

Well, then, what about his sin? That cannot got into God's presence. God and sin can never be together. This is a fixed principle. God is good, no doubt, and the proof of His goodness is the gift of His Son. But the He is holy, and between holiness and sin there must be an eternal separation; so that we arc forced to the same solemn conclusion, namely, that all those who die in their sins—all who die in the rejection of God's infinite provision for the forgiveness of sins, will have to endure the consequences of those sins in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, throughout the countless ages of eternity.

We shall not argue the matter further in this paper; but we would most earnestly beseech the unconverted reader to pause and seriously consider this most momentous question. Let him not be deceived by vain words. Let him not hearken to a false criticism which would fain persuade him that eternal does not moan eternal in this Greek, for oh! most assuredly, it does mean eternal whether in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or English. Eternal can never mean temporal, or temporal eternal, in any language under heaven. And, furthermore, let him not hearken to a false sentimentality which would fain persuade him that God is too kind to consign any of His creatures to hell fire. God was so kind as to " give His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." But God is too holy to let sin into heaven; and hence, instead of feeding himself with the vain hope, if hope it can he called, of annihilation, let him build upon the sure word of God which tells him of full, free, and everlasting salvation through the blood of the Lamb. Our God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner. His long-suffering is salvation, not willing that any should perish bur. that all should come to repentance. There is no reason why the reader should perish. God waits to be gracious. Mercy's door stands wide open, and the sword of judgment is in the scabbard. But the moment is rapidly approaching when all shall be changed, and then all who die in their sins will prove, by bitter experience, that notwithstanding all the arguments founded upon a false criticism and a false sentimentality, the punishment of sin is, and mast be, eternal,

Short Papers, Peter on the Water

(Read Matt. 14:22-33.)

There are two ways in which we may view the interesting portion of scripture given above. In the first place, we may read it from a dispensational stand-point, as bearing upon the subject of God’s dealings with Israel. And, secondly, we may read it as a portion bearing, very directly, on the subject of our own practical walk with God, from day to day.

Our Lord, having fed the multitude, and dismissed them, “ went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come, he was there alone.” This answers precisely to His present position with reference to the nation of Israel. He has left them, and gone on high to enter upon the blessed work of intercession. Meanwhile, the disciples—a type of the pious remnant—were tossed on the stormy sea, during the dark watches of the night, deeply tried and exercised, in the absence of their Lord, who however, never, for one moment, lost sight of them—never withdrew His eyes from them; and, when they were brought, as it were, to their wits’ end, He appears for their relief, hushes the wind, calms the sea, and brings them to their desired haven.

‘ Thus much as to the dispensational bearing of this passage of scripture, which, though of the deepest interest, we shall not further pursue, inasmuch as our object, in this brief article, is to present to the heart of the reader the precious truth unfolded in the narrative of Peter on the water—truth, as we have said, bearing directly upon our own individual path, whatever the nature of that path may be.

It demands no stretch of imagination, no effort of fancy, to see, in the case of Peter, a striking figure of the Church of God collectively, or of the individual Christian. Peter left the ship, at the call of Christ. He abandoned all that to which the heart would so fondly cling, find came forth to walk on the stormy water—to pursue a path entirely beyond and above nature—a path of faith—a path in which naught but simple faith could live for a single hour. To all who are called to tread that path it must be either Christ or nothing. Our only spring of power is in keeping the eye of faith firmly fixed on Jesus—“Looking off unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of faith.” (Heb. 12) The moment We take the eye off Him, we begin to sink.

It is not—need we say?—a question of salvation—of reaching the shore in safety. By no means; we are speaking now of the walk of the Christian in this world—of the practical career of one who is called to abandon this world, to give up all that mere nature would lean upon and trust in, to relinquish earthly things, human resources and natural appliances, in order to walk with Jesus above the power and influence of things seen and temporal.

Such is the high calling of the Christian and of the whole Church of God, in contrast with Israel, God’s earthly people. We are called to live by faith; to walk, in calm confidence, above the circumstances of this world altogether; to move, in holy companionship, with Jesus. It was after this that Peter’s soul was breathing when he uttered those words, “ Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” Here was the point: “ If it be thou.” If it were not He, the wildest mistake that Peter could possibly make would be to leave the ship. But, on the other hand, if indeed it was His own very self—that blessed One; that most glorious, most gracious One who was there moving peacefully over the surface of the troubled deep -then, assuredly, the very highest, the very happiest, the very best thing he could do was to abandon every earthly and natural resource, in order to come forth to Jesus, and taste the ineffable blessedness of companionship with Him.

There is immense force, depth, and significance in these three clauses—“ If it be thou”—“ Bid me come unto thee”- “ On the water.” Mark, it is “ unto thee, on the water.” It was not Jesus coming to Peter, in the ship—blessed and precious as that is—but Peter coming to Jesus, on the water. It is one thing to have Jesus coming into the midst of our circumstances, hushing our fears, allaying our anxieties, tranquillizing our

hearts; and it is quite another thing for us to push out from the shore of circumstances, or from the ship of nature's appliances, to walk in calm victory over the circumstances, in order to be with Jesus where He is. The former reminds us somewhat of the Sareptan, in 1 Kings 17 The latter, of the Shunammite, in 2 Kings 4

Is it that we do not appreciate the excellent grace that breathes in those words, " Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid?" Far be the thought. These words are most precious. And, moreover, Peter might have tasted, yea reveled in their sweetness, even though he had never left the ship at all. It is well to distinguish between these two things. They are very often confounded. We are all prone to rest in the thought of having the Lord with us, and His mercies around us, in our daily path. We linger amid the relationships of nature, the joys of earth, such as they are, the blessings winch our gracious God pours so liberally upon us. We cling to circumstances, instead of breathing after more intimate companionship with a rejected Christ. In this way we suffer immense loss.

Yes, we say it advisedly, " immense loss." It is not that we should prize God's blessings and mercies less, but we should prize Himself more. We believe that Peter would have been a loser had he remained in the ship. Some may deem it restlessness and forwardness; we believe it was the fruit of earnest longing after his much loved Lord—an intense desire to be near Him, cost what it might. He beheld his Lord walking on the water and he longed to walk with Him, and his longing was right. It was grateful to the heart of Jesus.

And, besides, had he not the authority of his Lord for leaving the ship? Truly so. That word " come"—a word of mighty moral force—fell on his heart, and drew him forth from the ship to go to Jesus. Christ's word was the authority for entering on that strange mysterious path; and Christ's realized presence was the power to pursue it. Without that word he dare not start; without that presence he could not proceed. It was strange, it was unearthly, it was above and beyond nature, to walk on the sea; but Jesus was walking there, and faith could walk with Him. So Peter thought, and therefore "he came down out of the ship, and walked on the water to go to Jesus."

Now this is a striking figure of the true path of a christian—the path of faith. The warrant for that path is Christ's word. The power to pursue it is to keep the eye fixed on Himself. It is not a question of right or wrong. There was nothing wrong in remaining in the ship. But the question is, " At what do we aim?" Is it the fixed purpose of the soul to get as near as we can to Jesus? Do we desire to taste a deeper, closer, fuller communion with Him? Is He enough for us? Can we give up all that to which mere nature clings, and loan on Jesus only? He beckons us forth to Himself, in His infinite and condescending love. He says, " Come." Shall we refuse? Shall we hesitate and hang back? Shall we cling to the ship, while the voice of Jesus bids us " come?"

It may, perhaps, be said that Peter broke down, and therefore it is better, safer, and wiser to remain in the ship, than to sink in the water. It is better not to take a prominent place, than having taken it, to fail therein. Well, it is quite true that Peter failed; but why? Was it because he left the ship? No, but because he ceased to look to Jesus. " When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid;

and beginning to sink, lie cried, saying, Lord, save me." Thus it was with poor Peter. His mistake was, not in leaving the ship, but in looking at the waves and the winds- looking at his surroundings, in place of looking off unto Jesus. He had entered upon a path which could only be trodden by faith—a path in the which, if he had not Jesus, lie had nothing at all—no ship, no boat, not a spar or a plank to cling to. In a word, it was either Christ or nothing. It was either walking with Jesus on the water, or sinking beneath it without Him. Nothing but faith could sustain the heart in such a course. But faith could sustain; for faith can live amid the roughest waves and the stormiest skies. Faith can walk on the roughest waters; unbelief cannot walk on the smoothest.

But Peter failed. Yes; and what then? Docs that prove that he was wrong in obeying the call of his Lord? Did Jesus reprove him for leaving the ship? 11! no; that would not have been like Him. He could not tell His poor servant to come, and then rebuke him for coming. He knew and could feel for Peter's weakness, and hence we read, that "Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" He does not say, " thou restless forward one, why didst thou leave the ship?" No; but " wherefore didst thou doubt?" Such was the tender reproof. And where was Peter when he heard it? In the arms of his Lord! What a place! What an experience! Was it not well worth leaving the ship to taste such blessedness? No doubt it was. Peter was right in leaving the ship; and although lie broke down in that lofty path on which he had entered, it only led him into a deeper sense of his own weakness and nothingness, and of the grace and love of his Lord.

•Christian reader, what is the moral of all this to us? Simply this. Jesus calls us forth from the things of time and sense, to walk with Him. He summons us to LINES OCCASIONED BY HEAVY DOMESTIC TROUBLES. GO abandon all our earthly hopes and creature confidences—the props and resources on which our poor hearts lean. His voice may be heard far above the din of waves and storms, and that voice says,'" Come!" Oh! let us obey. Let us heartily yield ourselves to His call. "Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." He wants to have us near Himself, walking with and leaning on Him, not looking at circumstances, but looking only and always unto Him.

Handfuls of Pasture: Volume 1, Sympathy and Grace of Jesus, The

Read Matt. 14:1-21; Mark 6:30-44

In these two parallel scriptures we are presented with two distinct conditions of heart, which both find their answer in the sympathy and grace of Jesus. Let us look closely at them, and may the Holy Ghost enable us to gather up and bear away their precious teaching!

It was, no doubt, a moment of deep sorrow to John's disciples when their master had fallen by the sword of Herod -when the one on whom they had been accustomed to lean, and from whose lips they had been wont to drink instruction, was taken from them after such a fashion. This, we may well believe, was indeed a moment of gloom and desolation to the followers of John.

But there was One to whom they could come in their sorrow, and into whose ear they could pour their tale of grief—One of whom their master had spoken, to whom he had pointed, and of whom he had said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." To Him the bereaved disciples betook themselves, as we read, they "came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." Matt. 14:12. This was the very best thing they could have done. There was not another heart on earth in which they could have found such a response as in the heart-the tender, loving heart—of Jesus. His sympathy was perfect. He knew all about their sorrow. He knew their loss and how they were feeling it.

Wherefore, they acted wisely when they "went and told Jesus." His ear was ever open, and His heart ever at leisure to soothe and sympathize. He perfectly exemplified the precept afterward embodied in the words of the Holy Ghost, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom. 12:15.

And oh! who can tell the worth of genuine sympathy? Who can declare the value of having one who can really make your joys and sorrows his own? Thank God! we have such a One in the blessed Lord Jesus Christ; and although we cannot see Him with the bodily eye, yet can faith use Him, in all the preciousness and power of His perfect sympathy. We can, if only our faith is simple and childlike, go from the tomb where we have just deposited the remains of some fondly cherished object, to the feet of Jesus, and there pour out the anguish of a bereaved and desolate heart. We shall there meet no rude repulse, no heartless reproof for our folly and weakness in feeling so deeply. No; nor yet any clumsy effort to say something suitable, an awkward effort to put on some expression of condolence. Ah! no; Jesus knows how to sympathize with a heart that is crushed and bowed down beneath the heavy weight of sorrow. His is a perfect human heart. What a thought! What a privilege to have access, at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, to a perfect, human heart! We may look in vain for this down here. Yes; look in vain, not merely in the world, but even in the Church. There may in many cases be a real desire to sympathize, but a total lack of capacity. I may find myself, in moments of sorrow, in company with one who knows nothing about my sorrow or the source thereof. How could he sympathize? And even though I should tell him, his heart might be so occupied with other things as to have no room and no leisure for me.

Not so with the perfect Man, Christ Jesus. He has both room and leisure for each and for all. No matter when, how, or with what you come, the heart of Jesus is always open. He will never repulse, never fail, never disappoint. If, therefore, we are in sorrow, what should we do? We should just do as the disciples of John did, go and tell Jesus. This, assuredly, is the right thing to do. Let us go straight from the tomb to the feet of Jesus. He will dry up our tears, soothe our sorrows, heal our wounds, and fill up our blanks.

We may now contemplate another condition of heart, as furnished by the twelve apostles on their return from a successful mission. "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught." Mark 6:30. Here we have not a case of sorrow and bereavement, but one of rejoicing and encouragement. The twelve made their way to Jesus to tell him of their success, just as the disciples of John made their way to Him in the moment of their loss. Jesus was equal to both. He could meet the heart that was crushed with sorrow, and He could meet the heart that was flushed with success. He knew how to control, to moderate, and to direct both the one and the other. BLESSINGS FOREVER BE UPON HIS HONORED NAME!

"And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Here then we are conducted to a point at which the moral glories of Christ shine out with uncommon luster and correct the selfishness of our poor narrow hearts. Here we are taught with unmistakable clearness that to make Jesus the depositary of our thoughts and feelings will never produce in us a spirit of haughty self sufficiency and independence, or a feeling of contempt for others. Quite the reverse. The more we have to do with Jesus, the more will our hearts be opened to meet the varied forms of human need which may present themselves to our view from day to day. It is when we come to Jesus and empty our whole hearts to Him, tell Him of our sorrows and our joys, and cast our whole burden at His feet, that we really learn how to feel for others.

There is great beauty and power in the words, "Come ye yourselves apart." He does not say, "Go ye." This would never do. There is no use in going apart into a desert place, if Jesus be not there to go to. To go into solitude without Jesus is but to make our cold, narrow hearts colder and narrower still. I may retire from the scene around me in chagrin and disappointment only to wrap myself up in impenetrable selfishness. I may fancy that my fellows have not made enough of me, and I may retire in order to make much of myself. I may make myself the center of my whole being, and thus become a cold-hearted, contracted, miserable creature. But when Jesus says "Come," the case is totally different. Our finest moral lessons are learned alone with Jesus. We cannot breathe the atmosphere of His presence without having our hearts expanded. If the apostles had gone into the desert without Jesus, they would, no doubt, have eaten the loaves and fishes themselves; but having gone with Jesus, they learned differently. He knew how to meet the need of a hungry multitude, as well as that of a company of sorrowing or rejoicing disciples. The sympathy and grace of Jesus are perfect. He can meet all. If one is sorrowful, he can go to Jesus; if he is happy, he can go to Jesus; if he is hungry, he can go to Jesus. We can bring everything to Jesus, for in Him all fullness dwells; and, blessed be His name, He never sends anyone empty away.

Not so, alas! with His poor disciples. How forbidding is their selfishness when viewed in the light of His magnificent grace! "And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things." He had gone to a desert place to give His disciples rest; but no sooner does human need present itself than the deep flowing tide of compassion rolls forth from His tender heart.

"And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away." What words to drop from the lips of men who had just returned from preaching the gospel! "Send them away." Ah! it is one thing to preach grace, and another thing to act it. No doubt, it is well to preach; but it is also well to act. Indeed, the preaching will be little worth if not combined with acting. It is well to instruct the ignorant, but it is also well to feed the hungry. The latter may involve more self-denial than the former. It may cost us nothing to preach, but it may cost us something to feed; and we do not like to have our private store intruded upon. The heart is ready to put forth its ten thousand objections: "What shall I do for myself? What will become of my family? We must act judiciously." These and similar thoughts the selfish heart can urge when a needy object presents itself.

"Send them away." What made the disciples say this? What was the real source of this selfish request? Simply unbelief. Had they only remembered that they had in their midst the One who of old had fed "six hundred thousand footmen," for forty years in the wilderness, they would have known that He would not send a hungry multitude away. Surely the same hand that had nourished such a host for so long a time could easily furnish a single meal for five thousand. This faith would reason; but, alas! unbelief darkens the understanding and contracts the heart. There is nothing so absurd as unbelief, and nothing which so shuts up the bowels of compassion. Faith and love always go together, and in proportion to the growth of the one is the growth of the other. Faith opens the floodgates of the heart and lets the tide of love flow forth. Thus the Apostle could say to the Thessalonians, "Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity [love] of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." This is the divine rule. A heart that is full of faith can afford to be charitable; an unbelieving heart can afford nothing. Faith places the heart in immediate contact with God's exhaustless treasury, and fills it with the most benevolent affections. Unbelief throws the heart in upon itself and fills it with all manner of selfish fears. Faith conducts us into the soul-expanding atmosphere of heaven. Unbelief

leaves us enwrapped in the withering atmosphere of this heartless world. Faith enables us to hearken to Christ's gracious accents, "Give ye them to eat." Unbelief makes us utter our own heartless words, "Send them [the multitude] away." In a word, there is nothing enlarges the heart like simple faith, and nothing so contracting as unbelief. Oh! that our faith may grow exceedingly, so that our love may abound more and more! May we reap much permanent profit from the contemplation of the sympathy and grace of Jesus!

What a striking contrast between "Send them away," and "Give ye them to eat." Thus it is ever. God's ways are not as our ways, and it is by looking at His ways that we learn to judge our ways—by looking at Him that we learn to judge ourselves. Jesus, in this lovely scene, corrects the selfishness of the disciples—first, by making them the channels through which His grace may flow to the multitude—second, by making them gather up "twelve baskets full of the fragments" for themselves.

Nor is this all. Not merely is selfishness rebuked, but the heart is most blessedly instructed. Nature might say, "What need is there of the five loaves and two fishes at all?

Surely the One who can feed such a multitude with, can as easily feed them without, such an instrumentality." Nature might argue thus; but Jesus teaches us that we are not to despise God's creatures. We are to use what we have, with God's blessing. This is a fine moral lesson for the heart. "What hast thou in the house?" is the question. It is just that and nothing else that God will use. It is easy to be liberal with what we have not; but the thing is to bring out what we have, and, with God's blessing, apply it to the present need.

So also in the gathering up of the fragments. The foolish heart might say, "What need of gathering up those scattered crumbs? Surely the One who has wrought such a miracle can have no need of fragments." Yes; but we are not to waste God's creatures. If in the using of the loaves and fishes we are taught not to despise any creature of God, in the gathering up of the fragments we are taught not to waste it. Let human need be liberally met, but let not a single crumb be wasted. How divinely perfect! How unlike us! Sometimes we are penurious, at other times prodigal.

Jesus was never either the one or the other. "Give ye them to eat." But, let "nothing be lost." Perfect grace! Perfect wisdom! May we adore it, and learn from it! May we rejoice in the assurance that the blessed One who manifested all this wisdom and grace is our life. Christ is our life, and it is the manifestation of this life that constitutes practical Christianity. It is not living by rules and regulations, but simply having Christ dwelling in the heart by faith-Christ the source of perfect sympathy and perfect grace.

In closing we might be interested and profit by a reference to our Lord's allusion to the two occasions of feeding the multitude, as given in Mark 8:19-21. "When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And He said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"

When the multitude was greater and the supply less, they had twelve large baskets of fragments; and, on the other hand, when the multitude was less and the supply greater, they had only seven small baskets. The greater the demand, and the deeper the need, the more the magnificence of divine grace shines out. Eternal and universal homage to the peerless name of our adorable Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 129. The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

“A. M. E.” asks for an explanation of Matthew 12:31-32. We believe this solemn passage, with the entire context, teaches that it was an unpardonable sin to attribute to Satan’s power the miracles which were wrought by the Holy Spirit.

Christian Truth: Volume 25, Matthew 11:28-30

It is a great thing always to submit ourselves meekly under the hand of God. We are sure to reap a rich harvest of blessing from the exercise. It is really taking the yoke of Christ upon us, which, as He Himself assures us, is the true secret of rest. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

What was this yoke? It was absolute and complete subjection to the Father's will. This we see, in perfection, in our adorable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He could say, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Here was the point with Him. "Good in Thy sight." This settled everything. Was His testimony rejected? Did He seem to labor in vain, and spend His strength for naught and in vain? What then? "I thank Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth." It was all right. Whatever pleased the Father, pleased Him. He never had a thought or wish that was not in perfect consonance with the will of God. Hence He, as a man, ever enjoyed perfect rest. He rested in the divine counsels and purposes. The current of His peace was unruffled from first to last.

This was the yoke of Christ; and this is what He, in His infinite grace, invites us to take upon us, in order that we to may find rest to our souls. Let us mark, and seek to understand the words, "Ye shall find rest." We must not confound the "rest" which He gives with the "rest" which we find. When the weary, burdened, heavy laden soul comes to Jesus in simple faith, He gives rest, settled rest, the rest which flows from the full assurance that all is done; sins forever put away; perfect righteousness accomplished, revealed, and possessed; every question divinely and eternally settled; God glorified; Satan silenced; conscience at rest.

Such is the rest which Jesus gives, when we come to Him. But then we have to move through the scenes and circumstances of our daily life. There are trials, difficulties, exercises, buffetings, disappointments, and reverses of all sorts. None of these can in the smallest degree touch the rest which Jesus gives; but they may very seriously interfere with the rest which we are to find. They do not trouble the conscience, but they may greatly trouble the heart; they may make us very restless, very fretful, very impatient. For instance, I want to preach at Glasgow; I am announced to do so; but lo! I am shut up in a sickroom in London. This does not trouble my conscience, but it may greatly trouble my heart; I may be in a perfect fever of restlessness, ready to exclaim, "How tiresome; how terribly disappointing! Whatever am I to do? It is most

untoward!"

And, how is this state of things to be met? How is the troubled heart and the restless mind to be calmed down? What do I want? I want to find rest. How am I to find it? By stooping down and taking Christ's precious yoke upon me -the very yoke which He Himself ever wore in the days of His flesh—the yoke of complete subjection to the will of God. I want to be able to say, without any reserve, to say from the very depths of my heart, Thy will, 0 Lord, be done. I want such a profound sense of His perfect love to me, and of His infinite wisdom in all His dealings with me, that I would not have it otherwise, if I could; yea, that I would not move a finger to alter my position or circumstances, feeling assured that it is very much better for me to be suffering on a sickbed in London, than speaking on a platform in Glasgow.

Here lies the deep and precious secret of rest of heart, as opposed to restlessness. It is the simple ability to thank God for everything, be it ever so contrary to our own will, and utterly subversive of our own plans. It is not a mere assent to the truth that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." It is the positive sense, the actual realization of the divine fact that the thing which God appoints is the very best thing for us. It is perfect repose in the love, wisdom, power, and faithfulness of the One who has graciously undertaken for us in everything, and charged Himself with all that concerns us for time and eternity. We know that love will always do its very best for its object. What must it be to have God doing His very best for us? Where is the heart that would not be satisfied with God's best, if only it knows aught of Him?

But He must be known ere the heart can be satisfied with His will. Eve, in the garden of Eden, beguiled by the serpent, became dissatisfied with the will of God. She wished for something which He had forbidden, and this something the devil undertook to supply. She thought the devil could do better for her than God. She thought to better her circumstances by taking herself out of the hands of God and placing herself in the hands of Satan. Hence it is that no unrenewed heart can ever, by any possibility, rest in the will of God. If we search the human heart to the bottom, if we submit it to a faithful analysis, we shall not find so much as a single thought in unison with the will of God—no, not one. And even in the case of the true Christian, the child of God, it is only as he is enabled, by the grace of God, to mortify his own will, to reckon himself dead, and to walk in the Spirit, that he can delight in the will of God, and give thanks in everything. It is one of the very finest evidences of the new birth to be able, without a single shade of reserve, to say, in respect to every dealing of the hand of God, "Thy will be done." "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." When the heart is in this attitude, Satan can make nothing of it. It is a grand point to be able to tell the devil, and to tell the world- tell them not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth—not merely with the lips, but in the heart and the life—I am perfectly satisfied with the will of God.

This is the way to find rest. Let us see that we understand it. It is the divine remedy for that unrest, that spirit of discontent, that dissatisfaction with our appointed lot and sphere, so sadly prevalent on all hands. It is a perfect cure for that restless ambition so utterly opposed to the mind and Spirit of Christ, but so entirely characteristic of the men of this world.

May we, beloved reader, cultivate with holy diligence that meek and lowly spirit which is, in the sight of God, of great price, which bows to His blessed will in all things, and vindicates His dealings, come what may. Thus shall our peace flow as a river, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be magnified in our course, character, and conduct.

Ere turning from the deeply interesting and practical subject which has been engaging our attention, we would observe that there are three distinct attitudes in which the soul may be found in reference to the dealings of God; namely, subjection, acquiescence, and rejoicing. When the will is broken, there is subjection; when the understanding is enlightened as to the divine object, there is acquiescence; and when the affections are engaged with God Himself, there is positive rejoicing. Hence we read, in the 10th chapter of Luke, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." That blessed One found His perfect delight in all the will of God. It was His meat and drink to carry out that will at all cost. In service or in suffering, in life or in death, He never had any motive but the Father's will. He could say, "I do always those things that please Him." Eternal and universal homage to His peerless name!

Short Papers, Christ and His Yoke

“ Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

In this precious and well-known passage we have two points which are very distinct, and yet intimately connected, namely, Christ and His yoke. We have, first, coming to Christ, and its results; and! secondly, taking His yoke, and its results. “ Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” “ Take my yoke, and ye shall find rest.” These things, being distinct, should never be confounded; and, being intimately connected, should never be separated. To confound them, is to dim the luster of divine grace; to separate them, is to infringe upon the claims of divine holiness. Both these evils should be carefully guarded against.

Many there are who hold up before the eye of the “heavy laden” sinner, the yoke of Christ as something which he must “ take on” ere his burdened heart can taste of that blessed rest which Christ ‘‘gives” to “all” who simply “ come unto him,” just as they are. The passage before us does not teach this. It puts Christ first, and His yoke afterward. It does not hide Christ behind His yoke, but rather places Him, in all His attractive grace, before the heart, as the One who can meet every need, remove every weight, hush every guilty fear, fill up every blank, satisfy every longing desire; in a word, who is able to do as He says He will, even to-”“give rest” There are no conditions proposed, no demands made, no barriers erected. The simple, touching, melting, subduing, inviting, winning word is, “ Come’’ It is not, “Go;” “Do;” “Give;’’ “ Bring;” “ Feel;’’ “ Realize.” No it is, “ Come.” And how are we to “Come?” Just as we are. To whom are we to “ Come? “ To Jesus. When are we to “ Come?” “Now.”

Observe, then, we are to come just as we are. We are not to wait for the purpose of altering a single jot or tittle of our state, condition, or character. To do this, would he to “ come “ to some alteration or improvement in ourselves; whereas Christ distinctly and emphatically says, “ Come unto me.” Many souls err on this point. They think they must amend their ways, alter their course, or improve their moral condition, ere they come to Christ; whereas, in point of fact, until they really do come to Christ they cannot amend, 01Î alter, or improve anything. There is

no warrant whatever for any one to believe that he will be a single whit better, an hour, a day, a month, or a year hence, than he is this moment. And even were he better, he would not, on that account, be a whit more welcome to Christ than he is now. There is no such thing as an offer of salvation, to-morrow. The word is, " To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 3:15.) " Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2.

There is nothing more certain than that all who have ever tried the self-improvement plan have found it an utter failure. They have begun in darkness, continued in misery, and ended in despair. And yet, strange to say, in view of the numberless beacons which are ranged before us, in terrible array, to warn us of the folly and danger of traveling that road, we are sure, at the first, to adopt it. In some way or another, self is looked to, and wrought upon* in order to procure a warrant to come to Christ. "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:3.) Nothing can possibly be a more dreary, depressing, hopeless task, than " going about to establish one's own righteousness.'' Indeed, the dreariness of the task must ever be commensurate with the earnestness and sincerity of the soul that undertakes it. Such an one will, assuredly, have, sooner or later, to give utterance to the cry, " wretched man that I am! and also to ask the question, " Who shall deliver me?" (Rom. 7:21.) There can be no exception. All with whom the Spirit of God has ever wrought, have, in one way or another, been constrained to own the hopelessness of seeking to work out a righteousness for themselves. Christ must be all; self, nothing. This doctrine 13 easily stated; but oh, the experience!

The same is true, in reference to the grand reality of sanctification. Many who have come to Christ for righteousness have not practically and experimentally laid hold of Him as their sanctification. Whereas He is made of God, unto us, the one as well as the other. " But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption: that" -how deeply important, how cogent the reason! "according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (Cor. i. 30, 31.) The believer is just as powerless in the work of sanctification as in the work of righteousness. If it were not so, some flesh might glory in the divine presence. I could no more subdue a single lust, or trample under foot a single passion, or gain the mastery over a single temper, than I could open the kingdom of heaven, or establish my own righteousness before God. This is not sufficiently understood; and hence it is that many true Christians constantly suffer the most humiliating defeats in their practical career. They know that Christ is their righteousness, that their sins are forgiven, that they are children of God; but, then, they are sorely put about by their constant failure in personal holiness, in practical sanctification. Again and again, they enter the lists with some unhallowed desire or unsanctified temper; and, again and again, they are compelled to retire with shame and confusion of face. A person or a circumstance crossed their path yesterday, and caused them to lose their temper, and, having to meet the same today, they resolve to do better; but, alas! they are again forced to retreat in disappointment and humiliation.

Now, it is not that such persons may not pray earnestly for the grace of the Holy Spirit to enable them to conquer both themselves and the influences which surround them. This is not the point. They have not yet learned practically, and, oh! how worthless the mere theory! that they are as completely "without strength" in the matter of " sanctification " as they are in the matter of " righteousness," and, that as regards both the one and the other, Christ must be all; self, nothing. In a word, they have not yet entered into the meaning of the words, " Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Here lies the source of their failure. They are as thoroughly powerless in the most trivial matter connected with practical sanctification, as they are in the entire question of their standing before God; and they must be brought to believe this, ere they can know the fullness of the " rest" which Christ gives. It is impossible that I can enjoy rest amid incessant defeats in my practical, daily life.

True, I can come, over and over again, and pour into my Heavenly Father's ear the humiliating tale of my failure and overthrow. I can confess my sins and find Him ever " faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) But, then, we must learn Christ as the Lord our sanctification, as well as "The Lord our righteousness;" and, moreover, it is by faith and not by effort, we are to enter into both the one and the other. We look to Christ for righteousness, because we have none of our own; and we look to Christ for practical sanctification, because we have none of our own. It needed no personal effort on our part to get righteousness, because Christ is our righteousness; and it needs no personal effort on our part to get sanctification, because Christ is our sanctification.

It seems strange that, while the inspired apostle distinctly tells us that Christ is " made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," we, nevertheless, should attach the idea of personal effort to one out of the four things which he enumerates. Can we guide ourselves in the ten thousand difficulties and details of our Christian course by our own wisdom or sagacity? Surely not. Ought we to make an effort? By no means. Why not? Because God has made Christ to be our " wisdom," and therefore it is our precious privilege, having been brought to our " wits' end," to look to Christ for wisdom. In other words, when Christ says, " Come unto me," He means that we are to come unto Him for wisdom as well as for all else; and, clearly, we cannot come to Christ, and to our own efforts, at the same time. Nay, so long as we are making efforts, we must be strangers to " rest."

The same holds good with respect to righteousness." Can we work out a righteousness for ourselves? Surely not. Ought we not to make an effort? By no means. Why not? Because God has made Christ to be unto us "righteousness," and that righteousness is "to him that worketh not." Rom. 4:5.

So also in the matter of "redemption," which is put last in 1 Cor. 1:30, because it includes the final deliverance of the body of the believer from under the power of death. Could we, by personal effort, deliver our bodies from the dominion of mortality? Surely not. Ought we not to try? The thought were monstrous, yea impious. Why? Because God has made Christ to be unto us " redemption," as regards both soul and body, and He who has already applied, by the power of His Spirit, that glorious redemption to our souls, will, ere long, apply it to our bodies.

Why, then, let me ask, should "sanctification" be singled out from the precious category, and saddled with the legal and depressing idea of personal effort? If we cannot by our own efforts, get " wisdom, righteousness, and redemption," are we a whit more likely to succeed in getting " sanctification? " Clearly not. And have we not proved this, times without number? Have not our closet walls witnessed our tears and groans evoked by the painful sense of failure after failure in our own efforts to tread with steady step and erect carriage, the lofty walks of personal sanctity? Will the reader deny this? I trust not. I would fain hope he has responded to the call of Jesus, " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is vain to " labor " in our own strength, after sanctification. We must come to Jesus for that as well as for everything else. And, having come to Jesus, we shall find that there is no lust which He cannot slay, no temper that He cannot subdue, no passion that He cannot overcome. The self-same hand that has canceled our sins, that guides us in our difficulties, and that will, by and by, deliver our bodies from the power of death, can give us complete victory over all our personal infirmities and besetments, and fill our hearts with His sacred rest.

It is, I believe, immensely important to have a clear understanding of the question of sanctification. Hundreds have gone on “laboring and heavy laden” for years, endeavoring to work out in one way or another, their sanctification; and, not having succeeded to their satisfaction-for who ever did, or ever could?-they have been tempted to question if they were ever converted at all. Many, were they to tell out “ all the truth,’’ could adopt as their own, the mournful lines of the poet,

Such persons have clear views of gospel truth. They could, with scriptural accuracy, tell an inquirer after righteousness how, where, and when he could get it. And yet, if that self-same inquirer were to ask them, about their own real state of heart before God, they could give but a sorry answer. Why is this? Simply because they have not laid hold of Christ as their sanctification, as well as their righteousness. They have been endeavoring, partly in their own strength, and partly by praying for the influences of the Holy Spirit, to stumble along the path of sanctification. They would, doubtless, deem a person very ignorant of what is called “ the plan of salvation,” if they found him “going about to establish his own righteousness but they do not see that they themselves exhibit, in another way, ignorance of that “plan” by going about to establish their own sanctification. And truly if, in the one case, it is a sorry righteousness which is wrought out, so, in the other case, it is a lame sanctification. For if it be true that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” it is equally true that all our sanctifications are as filthy rags. Whatever has the word “our” attached to it must be altogether imperfect. Christ is God’s righteousness, and Christ is God’s sanctification. Both the one and the other are to be had by simply coming, looking, clinging, trusting to Christ. I need hardly say, it is by the power of the Spirit, and through the Holy Scriptures that Christ is applied to us, both as our righteousness and oar sanctification. But all this only takes the matter more and more out of our hands, and leaves us nothing to glory in. If we could conquer an evil temper, we might indeed think ourselves clever; but as we are not asked to pick up a feather in order to add to our righteousness, or our wisdom, or our redemption, so neither are we asked to pick up a feather in order to add to our sanctification. In this, as in those, Christ is all: self, nothing. This doctrine is easily stated; but oh, the experience!

And, now, will any one say that the writer of this article is doing away with sanctification? If so, he may just as well say that he is doing away with “righteousness,” “wisdom” or “redemption.” Who will contend for self-righteousness, self-wisdom or self-redemption? Who but the man that contends for self-sanctification? Who is likely to attain and exhibit the more elevated standard of personal sanctity? Is it the man who is perpetually floundering amid his own imperfect struggles and cobweb-resolutions, or he who is daily, hourly, and momentarily clinging to Christ as his sanctification? The answer is simple. The sanctification which we get in Christ is as perfect as the righteousness, the wisdom, and the redemption. Am I doing away with “ wisdom,” because I say I am foolish? Am I doing away with “righteousness,” because I say, I am guilty? Am I doing away with “ redemption,” because I say, I am mortal? Am I doing away with “ sanctification,” because I say, I am vile? Yes, I am doing away with all these things so far as “I” am concerned, in order that I may find them all in Christ. This is the point. All-all in Christ!

Oh! when shall we learn to get to the end of self, and cling simply to Christ? When shall we enter into the depth and power of those words “Come unto me?” He does not say, “come unto my yoke.” No; but, “come unto me.” We must cease from our own works, in every shape and form, and come to Christ,-come, just as we are- come, now. We come to Christ and get rest from and in Him before ever we hear a word about the “ yoke.” To put the yoke first is to displace everything. If a “ heavy laden “ sinner thinks of the yoke, he must be overwhelmed by the thought of his own total inability to take it upon him or carry it. But when he comes to Jesus and enters into His precious rest, he finds the “ yoke is easy and the burden light.”

II. This conducts us to the second point in our subject, namely, “ the yoke.” It has been already observed that we must keep the two things distinct. To confound them, is to tarnish the heavenly luster of the grace of Christ, and to put a yoke upon the sinner’s neck and a burden upon his shoulder which he, as being “without strength,” is wholly unable to bear. But, then, they are morally connected. All who come to Christ, must take His yoke upon them and learn of Him, if they would “find rest unto their souls “ To come to Christ is one thing; to walk with Him, or learn of Him, is quite another. Christ was “ meek and lowly in heart.” He could meet the most adverse and discouraging circumstances with an “ even so, Father.” The Baptist’s heart might fail amid the heavy clouds which gathered around him in Herod’s dungeon; the men of that generation might refuse the double testimony of righteousness and grace, as furnished by the ministry of John and of our Lord Himself; Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum might refuse the testimony of His mighty works-a torrent of evidence which one might suppose would sweep away every opposing barrier; all these things, and many more might cross the path of the Divine Workman; but, being “meek and lowly in heart,” He could say, “ I thank thee, Father-even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” His “ rest” in the Father’s counsels was profound and perfect; and He invites us to take His yoke, to learn of Him, to drink into His spirit, to know the practical results of a subject mind, that so we may find rest unto our souls.” A broken will is the real ground of the rest which we are to “ find,” after we have come to Christ. If God wills one thing, and we will another, we cannot find rest in that. It matters not what the scene or circumstance may be. We may swell a list of things, to any imaginable extent, in which our will may run counter to the will of God; but, in whatever it is, we cannot find rest so long as our will is unbroken. We must get to the end of self in the matter of will, as well as in the matter of “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption,” else we shall not “find rest.”

This, my beloved reader, is deep, real, earnest, personal work. Moreover, it is a daily thing. It is a continual taking of Christ’s yoke upon us, and learning of Him. It is not that we take the yoke in order to come to Christ. No; but we come to Christ first, and then, when His love fills and satisfies our souls, when His rest refreshes our spirits, when we can gaze, by faith, upon His gracious countenance, and see Him stooping down to confer upon us the high and holy privilege of wearing His yoke and learning His lesson, we find that His yoke is indeed easy, and His burden light. Unsubdued, unjudged, unmortified nature could never wear that yoke or bear that burden. The first thing is, “ Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” The second thing is, “Take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest.”

We must never reverse these things-never confound them-never displace them-never separate them. To call upon a sinner to take Christ’s yoke before he has gotten Christ’s rest, is to place Christ on the top of Mount Sinai, the sinner at the foot of that Mount, and a dark impenetrable cloud between. This must not be done. Christ stands, in all His matchless grace, before the sinner’s eye, and pours forth his touching invitation, “ Come,” and adds His heart-assuring promise, “I will give.” There is no condition, no demand, “no servile work.” All is the purest, freest, richest grace. Just, “come, and I will give you rest.” And what then? Is it bondage, doubt, and fear? Ah! no ‘‘Take my yoke upon you.” How marvelously near this brings us to the One who has already given us rest! What a high honor to wear the same yoke with Him! It is not that He puts a grievous yoke upon our neck and a heavy burden upon our shoulder, which we have to carry up the rugged sides of you fiery Mount. This is not Christ’s way. It is not thus He deals with the weary and heavy laden that come unto Him. He gives them rest. He gives them part of His yoke, and a share of His burden. In other words, He calls them into fellowship with Himself, and in proportion as they enter into this fellowship, they find still deeper and deeper rest in Him and in His blessed ways; and, at the close, He will conduct them into that

eternal rest which remains for the people of God.

May the Lord enable us to enter, more fully, into the power of all these divine realities, that so His joy may remain in us, and our joy may be full. There is an urgent need of a full, unreserved surrender of the heart to Christ, and a full, unreserved acceptance of Him, in all His precious adaptation to our every need. We want the whole heart, the single eye, the mortified mind, the broken will. Where these exist, there will be little complaining of doubts and fears, ups and downs, heavy days, vacant hours, restless moments, dullness and stupor, wandering and barrenness. When one has got to the end of himself, as regards wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and all beside, and when he has really found Christ as God's provision for ALL, then, but not until then, he will know the depth and power of that word," REST."

Answers to Correspondents: From Things New and Old 1858-1863, 54. Matthew 10:23

"M. B.," Cheltenham. Matthew 10:23 refers to the testimony to the cities of Israel, which began in the days of our Lord, is now suspended, and will be resumed at the time of the end. 1 Corinthians 5:5, sets before us the solemn result which was to be reached by excommunication from God's assembly. God ruled in the assembly. Satan ruled outside. 1 Peter 3:19, teaches us that the Spirit of Christ, in Noah, went and preached to those whose spirits are now in prison, because they refused the testimony.

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