

# THE GLEANER.

"Let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves."—Ruth 2; 7.

Thos. Somerville, Editor.

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## MORE FAITH, MY LORD.

O such a faith, my Lord, give me,  
A faith so strong and bold,  
Which only trusts and leans on Thee,  
Like Abraham of old.

A faith which knows no fear, nor shrinks  
When pressed by outward foes ;  
A faith which of life's fountain drinks,  
To bear these earthly woes.

Faith never murmurs, nor complains,  
When chastened Lord, by Thee ;  
Faith knows, God cares and will sustain,  
In trials perfectly.

A faith which shines more bright and clear,  
In darkness than in light ;  
A faith that will no danger fear ;  
With God, all will be right.

Faith knows the Father will provide,  
Till time, and life are past,  
Faith is my compass, is my guide,  
And shall be to the last.

A child-like faith, dear Lord, I need,  
By Thine own hand be led,  
A faith which leans more hard on Thee,  
If on my dying bed.

A faith which soars with eagle's wing,  
Up to the throne of grace,  
A faith which can in sorrow sing,  
And through my tears Thee praise.

A faith, a faith, which wavers not,  
When everything seems loss,  
A faith that says what e'er my lot,  
God measured off my cross.

Faith is a tower where I can hide,  
Safe, till life's storm is o'er,  
Faith goes with prayer, side by side,  
And lands on Canaan's shore.

At last when faith is changed to sight,  
I'll praise Him and adore,  
For every ray of heavenly light,  
Faith has for me in store.

North Plainfield, N. J.

S. S.

## THE OLD MAN'S PRAYER.

Sometimes the answer to prayer comes in a very indirect way. God is pleased to make men his almoners—unbelieving men, godless men. Even the Devil himself may be used indirectly to bless when he intended to curse. "The young lions may lack and suffer hunger, but they that trust in the Lord shall not lack any good thing." We may be very bold and say with good Matthew Hale, "O Lord, Thou didst at first freely give me my being ; I could not deserve it when I was not. The same title I have to my being I have to my preservation and support. It is still a free gift ; therefore I come to Thee for my bread upon no other terms than a poor beggar to a bountiful Lord." Boldly we may ask as God's children whom He is bound to feed, and whom He is pledged to deliver in every strait. The following is a beautiful instance of answered prayer :

"No," said the lawyer, "I shan't press your claim against that man ; you can get some one else to take your case, or you can withdraw it, just as you please."

"Think there isn't any money in it?"

"There would probably be some money in it but it would, as you know, come from the sale of the small house the man occupies and calls home ; but I don't want to meddle with the matter, anyhow."

"Got frightened out of it, eh?"

"No, I wasn't frightened out of it."

"I suppose the old fellow begged hard to be let off?"

"Well, yes he did."

"And you caved, likely."

"No, I didn't speak a word to him."

"Oh, he did all the talking, did he?"

"Yes."

"And you never said a word?"

"Not a word."

"What in creation did you do?"

"I believe I shed a few tears."

"And the old fellow begged you hard you say?"

"No, I didn't say so; he didn't speak a word to me."

"Well, may I respectfully inquire whom he did address in your hearing?"

"God Almighty."

"Ah! he took to praying, did he?"

"Not for my benefit in the least — You see," (the lawyer crossed his right foot over his left knee, and began stroking his lower leg up and down, as if to state his case concisely,) I found the little house easily enough, and knocked on the outer door, which stood ajar, but nobody heard me; so I slipped into the hall, and saw through the crack of another door just as cosy a sitting room as there ever was.

There on the bed, with her silver head away up high on the pillows, was an old lady, who looked for all the world just as my mother did the last time I ever saw her on earth. Well, I was just on the point of knocking, when she said, as clearly as could be, 'Come, father, begin; I'm all ready.' And down on his knees by her side went an old, white-haired man, still older than his wife I should judge; and I couldn't have knocked then for the life of me. — Well, he began. First he reminded God they were still His submissive children, mother and he, and no matter what he saw fit to bring upon them, they wouldn't rebel against His will. — Of course it was going to be terribly hard for them to go out homeless in their old age, especially with poor mother so

sick and helpless, but still they'd seen sadder things than ever that would be. He reminded God, in the next place, how different all might have been if only one of their boys had been spared to them. Then his voice kind of broke; and a thin white hand stole from under the coverlet, and moved softly over his snowy hair. Then he went on to repeat that nothing could be so sharp as the parting with those three sons unless mother and he should be separated. At last he fell to comforting himself with the fact that the dear Lord knew it was through no fault of his own that mother and he were threatened with the loss of their dear home, which meant beggary and the almshouse, a place they prayed to be delivered from entering, if it would be consistent with God's will; and then fell to quoting a multitude of promises concerning the safety of those who put their trust in the Lord. Yes, I would say he begged hard; in fact it was the most thrilling plea to which I ever listened. And at last he prayed for God's blessing on those who were trying to take his little home from him."

The lawyer stroked his lower limb in silence for a moment or two, and then continued more slowly than ever.

"And I believe I'd rather go to the poor-house myself to-night, than to stain my heart and hands with the blood of such a prosecution as that."

"Little afraid to defeat the old man's prayer, eh?" queried the client.

"Bless your soul, man, you couldn't defeat it!" roared the lawyer. "It doesn't admit of defeat! I tell you he left it all subject to the will of God; but he left no doubt as to his wishes in the matter; claimed that we were told to make known our desires to God. But of all the pleading I ever heard, that beats all. You see, I was taught that kind of thing myself, in childhood; and why I was sent to hear that prayer I'm

sure I don't know, but I hand the case over."

"I wish," said the client, twisting uneasily, "you hadn't told me about the fellow's prayer."

"Why so?"

"Well, I want the money confoundedly the place would bring; but I was taught the Bible all straight when I was a youngster, and I'd hate to run counter to such a harangue as that you tell about. I wish you hadn't heard a word of it, and another time I wouldn't listen to petitions not intended for your ears."

The lawyer smiled.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you're wrong again; it was intended for my ears, and yours too; and God Almighty intended it. My old mother used to sing about God moving in a mysterious way, I remember."

"Well, my mother used to sing it too," said the claimer, as he twisted his claim-papers in his fingers. "You can call in the morning, if you like, and tell mother and him the claim has been met."

"In a mysterious way," added the lawyer smiling.

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### CONFESSING CHRIST.

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"Gentlemen, I wish to tell you that I have become a Christian. I intend, by God's help, to join with you no longer in the kind of conversation which has prevailed for so long in this office. Intoxicating drink and the tobacco pipe, which we have enjoyed together, I have abandoned. I have found Christ, He is mine and I am His, for ever and for ever. I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ last night, and am determined to live henceforth for Him. I thought I would let you know it first thing this morning, so that no explanation might be neces-

sary if at any time my conduct might appear strange.

And, gentlemen, let me say one word more. The road in which you are walking will surely lead you to destruction; Christ Jesus sacrificed his life for you, and bore the penalty of your sins on the cross. This is the truth that has laid hold of me, and my prayer is that you may see the folly of your ways, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you will know, as I do, what it is to have your sins blotted out for ever."

Such was the confession John Stanton made to his fellow clerks one Monday morning, before commencing the week's work. It was a bold thing to do; but it was the advice of his pastor, through whose earnest and faithful ministry John had been brought to a knowledge of the truth. "Take a firm stand for Christ this very night," he said. "Do not fear the consequences. In your home, in your office, let your friends and companions all know that you are a Christian. Take a stand at once, and you will never regret it."

And John Stanton pursued this course. He had to submit to a good deal of ridicule in his office, and in his home, but this only strengthened him. He bore it patiently for Christ's sake, and it has aided his growth in grace.

It may be that these words will be read by some who are secret disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our advice to such is, follow the example of John Stanton; let all your friends know that you are a Christian. Show your colours like a man! Let there be a dis-

tinct line drawn between the old life and the new. Confess Christ boldly before your fellows, and let your subsequent life correspond with the confession you make. Thus your usefulness will be increased a hundredfold, and your life will be full of joy.

Again, this incident may be read by some who have not yet responded to the voice of Jesus; and our prayer is that the story of John Stanton's confession, and his advice to his fellow clerks, may induce you to consider your ways, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may be saved.—Herald of Mercy.

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BEWARE.

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A Christian lady once left a church in Richmond, in company with her husband, who was an unsaved man. She was a woman of unusual vivacity, with a keen perception of the ludicrous, and often playfully sarcastic. As they walked along toward home, she began to make some amusing and spicy comments on the sermon, which a stranger, a man of very ordinary talents and awkward manner, had preached, that morning in the absence of the pastor. After running on in this vein of sportive criticism for some time, surprised at the profound silence of her husband, she looked up in his face. He was in tears. That sermon had sent an arrow of conviction to his heart. What must have been the anguish of the conscience-stricken wife, thus arrested in the act of ridiculing a discourse which had been the means of awakening the anxiety of her unconverted husband.

Watch then, your words and spirit. Take care what you say, and before whom you say it. Are you about to speak in love, in humility, in the temper of Christ? Will any one be the better for what you say? Will your criticisms deepen your child's or your friend's respect for Christ's instrument for saving souls? When you have said what you wish, will you thereby become fellow-helpers to the truth? If not, leave it all unsaid, lest in criticising the flaws of the earthen vessel, you be found to have despised the heavenly treasure?

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"THAT'S MY BOY."

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"I remember," said a writer, "standing by the surging billows one weary day and watching for hours a father struggling beyond in the breakers for the life of his son. They came slowly toward the shore on a piece of wreck, and as they came the waves turned over the piece of float and they were lost to view. Presently we saw the father come to the surface and clamber alone to the wreck, and then he plunged off into the waves, and we thought he was gone; but soon he was back again, bringing his boy.—Again they struck another wave and over they went, and again the father rescued his son. By and by, as they swung nearer land, they caught on a snag just out beyond where we could reach them; and for a little time the waves went over them till we saw the boy in his father's arms hanging down helpless. We knew that they must be saved soon or be lost. We shall never forget the

gaze of that father as we drew him from the devouring waves, still clinging to his son. He said, 'That's my boy! that's my boy!' And shall fathers be less anxious about the eternal welfare of their beloved children? Can you let them go on in carelessness and indifference, unsaved? May God awake you to the reality of eternal things, and enable you to present the preciousness, the blessedness of a Saviour's love in such a way as to captivate their hearts.

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ETERNITY!

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When we pitch a tent it is only for a night, and we are not very particular as to where and how we place it. But when we build a house for a lifetime, we are anxious to have it in as good a location, and as well planned and built as possible. But, here and now, we are building for eternity. As we form our characters on earth, Christ will fit up our mansions in heaven. Every day, every hour, in all that we do, in all the thoughts and feelings that we cherish, we are shaping the limitless future. How important then, that we live wisely, that we improve all our opportunities.—It is said that an English princess looked so sad one night at a royal banquet that one of the courtiers asked her why. She replied that at the bottom of every goblet she drained, she saw the word "eternity!" That solemn word is at the bottom of all our goblets, and in it a path for each going up in light to the throne of God, or going down in blackness into a bottomless pit.

To the Christian the thought of

eternity is grand and inspiring, a glorious thought. To live forever, to go on growing and learning and loving and enjoying while God reigns—to be becoming more and more like God, age after age, and yet to see before us an infinite beauty to attract and to reward us—this is the highest ideal of blessedness.—C. E. B.

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BREADTH AND LOOSENESS.

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There is a vast difference between breadth and looseness. A very narrow man may be loose, and a very broad one may be solid. But this difference is commonly lost sight of in the estimate of religious opinions. Many a man counts himself "broad" merely because he is "loose." Holding no opinions with positiveness, he thinks that his theological sprawling is a result of his breadth.—True breadth in religious matters is to any man's credit. A man with a clear head can take firm steps along a straight line in a broad avenue, or across the broadest open fields; but a man with a confused brain will stagger from one side of the street to the other, even in a contracted alley. Before you pride yourself on being a broad Christian, be sure that you observe the distinction between breadth and looseness.

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Christ was content to bear the trampling of the goats for the sake of the sheep amongst them.

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There is as true a relationship of love between Christ and His sheep now, as there is between Him and His Father.

## JESUS, THE ONE !

Jesus ! the ONLY One !

The One that grace has given ;  
My soul trust Him alone  
Of all in earth or heaven ;  
He gave His life upon the tree,  
That I, the culprit might go free.

Jesus ! the LIVING One !

He lives no more to die,  
Full proof that all is done ;  
Yea more, He lives on high ;  
He lives His precious blood to plead,  
He lives for me to intercede.

Jesus ! the ABSENT One !

Ah, few His absence mourn,  
Few "crown Him Lord" ALONE,  
Or sigh for His return ;  
And yet while He remains away,  
Sin, tears, and death, will hold their sway.

Jesus ! the COMING One !

He waits to come again ;  
He'll come to claim His own,  
And they shall live and reign :  
My soul, be waiting for the Son,  
Be watching for the coming One.

Jesus ! the JUDGING One !

To Him all judgments given ;  
To Him each knee will bow,  
In hell, or earth, or heaven,  
Oh, happy they who bow to GRACE,  
All else may dread to see His face.

Plainfield, N. J.

R. H.

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 SANCTIFICATION.
 

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If we have really learned that "Christ is all," we shall give Him His place as that in everything we may have to say on the doctrines of Scripture. "The Lamb is the light thereof," as well as of the bright unseen which awaits those who are His. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." He is the theme of all God's precious word, and the key thereto.

Though much has been written on the subject of sanctification, yet it seems to be imperfectly understood, even by those who say most about it. And why is it so? Is it not owing to the obvious fact that Christ has not His true and full place in professed Christian teaching?

The inspired Word says: "Of Him"—that is, of God—"are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

Thus Christ is the sanctification of those who are of God in Him. He, as man in glory, is the measure of their sanctification, or separation to God. He is as much their sanctification as He is their righteousness. So that while Luther could say, "My righteousness is in heaven," he might with equal propriety have said, "My sanctification is in heaven."

Christ being divinely constituted the believer's sanctification is, of course, founded on the work of the Cross. He had to purge our sins by the shedding of His precious blood before He could appear in the presence of God for us. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate."

Christ therefore is the POSITIONAL sanctification of all true believers. They "are sanctified in Christ Jesus," 1 Cor. i. 2—sanctified in another, in their REPRESENTATIVE. And of course their sanctification in this sense is at once and ever "entire." "Ye are complete in Him" may be said to souls the moment they truly believe. They are as fully sanctified in Him as they are justified. Therefore positional sanctification—that is, sanctification "in Christ Jesus"—being clearly taught in God's word, any teaching on this subject which does not contain this main part must be essentially defective.

Christ being thus the positional sanctification of believers, their EXPERIMENTAL sanctification is the knowledge and enjoyment of Him as that. It is Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; and the more they know Him, the more they live in the joy of their entire sanctification in Him. In this sense they "are sanctified . . . by the Spirit of our God." Christ, speaking of the Comforter whom He would send said, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." We are exhorted to be "filled with the Spirit;" and being thus filled, we shall be filled with Christ, for

the Spirit does not occupy us with Himself, but with Christ, enabling us to exult in Him while we have "no confidence in the flesh."

The sum of what I have said thus far is expressed in few words by our blessed Lord, "YE IN ME, AND I IN YOU."

PRACTICAL sanctification is a holy walk. Believers are to walk in accordance with what Christ is for them before God. They are to express Him as their sanctification in their spirit and deportment—they are to walk even as He walked—thus practically manifesting that holy separation to God which they have in Christ, till they are called to be with Him in glory forever. "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," is a divine injunction to all who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus."

Thus the believer may look up to heaven and behold his sanctification as well as his righteousness in the Person of the glorified Christ, till his soul is filled with the sight, and his whole life is governed by it. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"Possessing Christ, I all possess,  
Wisdom, and strength, and righteousness,  
And SANCTITY COMPLETE."  
"CHRIST IS ALL."

R. HUTCHINSON.

(D. V. next month an article on practical sanctification will be presented.)

## THE ALTAR AT BETHEL.

1 Kings xii. 25—xiii.

The inspired commentary on Idolatry, which we find in Rom. i., teaches us to know that it had its source in the corruption of the human mind. The haughtiness of the intellect became the parent of it. (verses 22-25.) The Apostle tells us also, that the "heart of unbelief" is an "evil" one. (Heb. iii. 12.) And at the opening of this scripture, we find that it was the love of the world that erected the idolatrous altar at Bethel. Jeroboam thought it was the only way by which he could secure the kingdom.

He corrupted the religion of the people.—He did not, in infidel scorn, deny—because he owned that God's people had been brought

out of Egypt—but he corrupted it—as guilty a thing; for it was turning it to his own account, or making it serve his own ends.

We learn, at the opening of chapter xiii., how the Lord deals with this corruption.—It is according to His usual method. He sends His servant, under a fresh communication of His mind, and a fresh anointing of His Spirit, from the land of Judah, to the altar at Bethel, to denounce it, to deliver the judgment of God against all who had connected themselves with it; with a stay of the execution of that judgment until the time of Josiah the future king of the house of David. But He also gives a present pledge of such execution—for the altar was rent at the moment, and the ashes that were upon it were poured out. The judgment here pronounced was executed to the very letter.—2 Kings xxiii. Josiah was prophesied of by name, as Cyrus afterwards was. Isa. xlv.

This is His common way. He pronounces judgment, but delays the execution of it.—The interval is called "His long suffering" and we know it is "salvation," a time for gathering and quickening. 2 Pet. iii. 15.—Enoch pronounced the judgment of the ungodly, and we know from Jude that that judgment is still to be executed—but the Flood was a pledge fulfilment. The Lord pronounced the judgment of Jerusalem in Matthew xxiv., and we know, from the very terms of that sentence, that it is still to be executed—but the Roman invasion was a pledge-fulfilment of it.

Jeroboam was indignant at the man of God who had pronounced this sentence against his altar, and he stretched out his arm, as commanding his servants to lay hold on him. But the hand of God laid hold on him, and his outstretched arm became rigid and withered. Then his mind is changed—he repents himself—to be sure he does—he is gracious when pangs come upon him—and he cries to the man of God to pray for the restoration of his arm. This is done; and he invites the man of God to come home with him to his palace for refreshment and rewards. But he lets the king know, in the spirit of a Daniel, that he may keep his gifts to himself and give his rewards to another. He leaves the scene of God's curse, and sets himself on the way back to Judah, having done the business committed to him by "the

word of the Lord." The altar and its priests are left to meet the judgment of God in its season.

Now, however, and from hence to the end, the scene changes. We have no further sight of the man of God and of the King together, but we are to see the man of God in company with an old prophet who at that time lived at Bethel.

We are exposed to special temptations if we live on border lands, or in equivocal circumstances and conditions.

The old prophet, saint of God as he was, lived (something in the way of a Lot in Sodom) near the altar. The devil uses him; and with a lie in his mouth, that he was bidden by an angel to do so, he brings the man of God back from the road that was leading him down to Judah, to eat and drink with him in his house at Bethel.

The man of God was not on the Apostle's elevation, or in the Apostle's strength. He could and would stand for the word of the Lord in the face of all pretensions or assumptions. He would pronounce anathema upon even an angel himself, if he dared to gainsay that word which he had received from God. He cared not who it was, so to speak, come he from earth, hell, or heaven. He would hold by the word of God in the face of them all, Gal. i., ii., just as he could turn his back upon Jerusalem, and rebuke the chief of the Apostles, even Peter, and withstand him before all.

But this man of God was not in this vigour of Paul. He surrendered the word which he had received from God, to the word, as he judged it to be, of an angel; and he goes back to eat and drink in the place of which the Lord had said unto him, "Thou shalt eat no bread, nor drink water there."

And here, another Divine principle gets a very striking illustration.

God is judging according to every one's work, 1 Pet. i. 17. That is, He is disciplining His people now. Judgment at the house of God has BEGUN. 1 Pet. iv. 17. And so is it here. The judgment on Jeroboam and his priests is delayed; the judgment of this man of God shall be immediate. He shall now be judged of the Lord, that he may not be condemned with the world or Jeroboam by and by. See 2 Kings xxiii., 17, 18. The word

alights upon him, falls in judgment on him, as he sits at the table of the old Prophet, eating and drinking—for he was eating and drinking condemnation of himself. And shortly after, as he resumes his journey home to Judah, and is on the road thither, a lion meets him and slays him.

How very arresting of our thoughts, and full of solemn meaning, all this is! The judgment of the world is stayed; the discipline of the saints is proceeding. So is it here. Yea, and more. There was a present pledge of the future judgment of the world, and there shall be now a present pledge of the future salvation of the saint. The altar was rent, as we saw, and the ashes poured out—and so now, the lion is not allowed to touch the carcass of the man of God, nor lay his deadly paw upon the ass that had carried him. His body is reserved for final honor, though his life was a present forfeit to the righteous judgment or holy discipline of God.

It would have been the nature of the lion to kill the ass as well as its rider—and to devour the carcass—but he acted as much under divine commission, in the death of the man of God, as the man of God himself had acted, when he pronounced judgment on the altar.

What varied and instructive illustrations of truth all these things are!

And the old Prophet, too, is to be again before us. There was in him that which was of God, as well as that which was of nature or the flesh. But he was now old and grey hairs are sadly numerous upon this Ephraim as the Prophet speaks. He had lived carelessly as a saint. He had taken up his dwelling in an unclean place. He was too much like an old professor that needed reviving virtue. Satan uses him (as we have seen, but sad to tell it,) to corrupt his younger brother, a freshly anointed vessel of the Spirit. But still, he seems to have been a "righteous man," like Lot, though living in a Sodom. His lamentation over the man of God was genuine, and as that of one saint over another—genuine as the lamentation of David over Jonathan. It was the sorrow of a saint of God. And he charges his sons when he should die, to bury him in the same sepulchre where he was now religiously laying the remains of him whom he calls his "brother," the man of God.



All this bespeaks the better nature in him. And when the Lord comes to execute by Josiah the judgment He had now pronounced by the man of God; when the power of His hand comes to make good the declarations of His Spirit, and the day of the world's doom arrives, this Jeroboam-world of which we are speaking, the hand of God respects the old Prophet as it does the man of God. Josiah saves the sepulchre of these men, and preserves the bones of each of them from the common penal burning under which he was putting all others found in that unclean place around the altar at Bethel—as we read so fully and strikingly in 2 Kings xxiii.

It is thus; and all this reads us a lesson of very various moral instruction. We see the danger of living near Sodom. And we learn afresh that God's Word must be clung to in the face of all, and of everything.—J. G. BELLETT.

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#### JOAB.

It is possible for a man to be orthodox, and even more, (that is, to perceive intuitively God's mind, up to a certain point,) and to make his orthodoxy and perception the basis of a tortuous policy; and this is Joab.

We have seen, in the history of men, weakness and the love of reputation conspire to make a villain of one who would otherwise have been inoffensive; but there is something deeper and worse in the son of Zeruiah with whom we are occupied. This profound politician was apparently on the right side, but his true character comes out in the end, as every other character must, before Him to whom nothing is hidden.

The whole of David's history vindicates God's ways in bringing out His thoughts as to Christ, of whom David was a type, and in exposing the true nature of the opposition to Him; the secrets of many hearts are thus revealed.

We find very little of this man in the first book of Samuel, and David (1 Sam. xxvi. 6) seems to speak rather to Abiathar than to his brother; the fact should

perhaps be noticed that Joab does not come to the front till later on. In 1 Chronicles xi. 6 he performed the great exploit of attacking the citadel of Zion, and contrived to be the first in the escalade, and thus become the chief. Joab is not mentioned in 2 Samuel xxiii. amongst David's mighty men.

I apprehend we have in him a man who was not following a rejected king, content to be nothing, and to await the day of triumph; but a shrewd, sagacious statesman, whose eyes were sufficiently open to see that David would prosper, and who was anxious that his cause should succeed, to the furtherance of his own ambitious ends. Many a man since has carried out an unswerving policy in the name of the holy empire and God's right, &c., whilst serving his own ends.

He lived an orthodox life, and contrived to die at the very sanctuary, when justice at last overtook him, deceptively pious up to the very end.

It is a striking history; that of a man who appears rather suddenly in 2 Sam. as the chief. I cannot help thinking that others had borne the heat of the day during David's sorrows and rejection; but this man by a brilliant exploit takes Jerusalem, and the place of prominence in the kingdom, and for a certain time has great power and influence.

The man's unscrupulous character should be apprehended. Thus in 2 Sam. xi., we find him conniving at David's great sin, and ingratiating himself with the king in carrying out with alacrity the murder of Uriah the Hittite. The previous murder of Abner is very shocking, and one cannot help feeling that it was a pity (humanly speaking) that Abner was not at the head of the army instead of Joab, when the king sent the fatal message.

A man who disposes of his enemies as Joab did of Abner and of Amasa, 2 Sam.

xx., under circumstances of perfidious treachery, is not troubled by scruples of conscience; he would very likely have told you that the end justified the means.

2 Sam. xiv. gives us a fair specimen of Joab's intrigues; the whole story of the woman of Tekoah and the sequel is suggestive. And then, what are we to think of his bringing back Absalom? Is it going too far to say that Joab had his own reasons for thrusting three darts into Absalom's heart, when the hapless young man was hanging by his hair from the tree? These politicians know how to be firm they say. Is it what is called vigour; and Machiavel, who had somewhat of Joab's genius, has informed us that dead men tell no tales. Joab's great crime would have been to be found out.

Treason never prospers. What's the reason? That when it prospers, none dare call it treason.

His heartlessness is manifest through all the history (see 2 Sam. xix. 5.) his ability (chap. xx.), and pretended piety (xxiv. 3) likewise; but a man of this kind cannot escape. It is not permitted to outrage God's laws of truth and mercy under the cloak of a zealot; and David, in speaking to his wise son, 1 Kings ii. 5, 6, had God's thoughts as to Joab, and the swift punishment which fell on him who had followed the revolt of Adonijah, although he had openly sided with Absalom, was but a just reward of a long life of calculating ambition.

There is something very terrible in the end of the man who would not come away from the sanctuary when summoned by Benaiah, but who was slain under its very shadow. He was buried "in his own house in the desert." 1 Kings ii. 34.

It is not ability or shrewd perception that God seeks in those who are to share the sorrows and glory of David (Christ)

but an honest and true heart, and submission to His blessed will.

The lesson to be learned in this ambitious man's history is this—that want of true principle can never be sanctioned by the Lord; such a man must ever be an obstruction rather than a help; all the energies that a vigorous politician can bring into play, all his profound combinations, must in the end turn to his own confusion, and compromise the true-hearted ones with him. May the Lord give us to know more of the wisdom that is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy! —E. L. B.—A Voice to the Faithful.

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#### "PERFECT LOVE!"

"Christ is all and in all." Who can be this except God? "All" excludes everything else. In getting Christ we get eternal blessedness, and life, and knowledge of the Father—all that will make heaven blessed. The object on which we look gives perfect rest to the conscience and heart. The One in whom the Father delights I know has given Himself for me, and has satisfied not only the Father's love, but God's righteousness. I start with the consciousness of being perfectly loved and perfectly cleansed. My relationship and standing with God are not founded on anything that I am, but on what Christ has done. The law put life at the end of the course; Christianity puts it at the beginning. The Christian has redemption behind him; and he is walking through the wilderness, waiting and watching for Him who is the object of his heart; for Him who gave not merely something for him, but Himself; who kept back nothing.

The distinct character of the Christian is that of one in a state of expectation.

"Like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately."

The STATE of the soul is the first thing: it must precede service. It is, "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning." Before we can serve our own state is in question; not the SERVICE but the QUALITY of the service depends on it. Christ, the revelation of Christ, must be applied to everything: it is a dirty world, and you must have your heart rightly tucked up as you go through it, "your loins girded." There must be these two things: the heart in order, (kept so by the word of God,) and no will of our own. The instant we are not in the consciousness of God's presence self comes up—will is there; but, if we are in earnest, running to attain, we are glad of the removal of every hindrance to our running. Try your heart by this. Do you think a man running a race which he cared to win would weigh himself by keeping even gold upon him? I judge everything by one object; Christ being my object I judge all by Him, and I say, If this hinder me in running after—in apprehending Christ, let it go.

Then, when you have got your heart in order comes the full and unqualified confession before men: "Your lights burning." If the heart be not first right within of course profession is useless, but where it is real let us have it out. There is always a shrinking from confession when there is not power within.

A Christian is one whose affections are fixed upon Christ and who is waiting for Him. If He has bought us with a price it is that we may be as men that wait for their Lord. Every one should be able to see that you are a man waiting for Christ. If we were so, it would cut up by the roots ninety-nine out of a

hundred of the things people so live for down here. Can the world say of all of us as of the Thessalonians of old: These are a people who have given up every idol to wait for God's Son from heaven? The world ought to think so. It is, blessed are those servants who he finds, not only waiting, but WATCHING for Him.

There was not one act for self in all Christ's life; He was always at the service of everyone. It is difficult for us to believe in the love of Christ, we are so selfish. Love likes to serve, selfishness to be served. Christ was love; He delighted to serve; He took upon Him the form of a servant; He took it as a man, and He NEVER gives it up: even in that day "He will come forth and serve them." He says, You shall never make Me give up this delight of Myself—to serve you.

First we have, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching;" and then we get, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so DOING"—serving in the place where the Lord had set him. Where their affections are watching, they get Christ's affections in return serving them in heaven; where they are doing they get the ruling all that He has. Where we serve we rule; where we watch we sit at the table and He serves us.

Christ shows His perfect love. If I love a person a little I give him a little—a small thing; if I love him much I give him more; but if I love him perfectly—which of course I cannot do—I give him everything I have. But more, when the world gives anything it has to part with what it gives; but He says, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." He brings us into the enjoyment of everything that He has.

But at the same time He came "to send fire on the earth; and what will I

if it be already kindled?" The cross brought in what man will never accept: he will not have the reproach of it; and they despised and rejected Him even BEFORE the cross; the fire was "already kindled." But that thing which tests the heart of man and exposes it, sets free the heart of God. When He was baptized with that baptism it opened the flood-gates of God's love.—J. N. D.

“Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” We would naturally have looked for faith's recompense, but instead we find apparent refusal and continued disappointment.— But this is the very soil of faith, this is the very time for the song of triumph and the shout of victory. Like the rose of the Alps which blossoms amidst the icy glaciers of the mountain top, or the strange sweet blossom of the Saharas, which only opens its petals when the hurricane sweeps the fiery plain, or the song of the nightingale which is only heard in the midnight; so faith reaches its highest development amidst the darkness and tempest, and when all around seems even to forbid its brightest expectation. It is nothing to believe when we see the fulfilment of our promise, the time for faith to live is when sight and sense afford no comfort and we rest our confidence on the naked word of promise.”

The moment Christ's voice has reached me, it is enough; this gives a peace and quietness in one's path that nothing else can. He gives strength and confidence, nothing else is needed.

It is pleasant to see the faces of God's people beaming with the secret refreshments of the Spirit, or reflecting the glories which shine from their exalted Head.— But this sacred rejoicing is no more like levity, than the clear diffused light of morning is like the flash of shaken tinsel. Cheerfulness is the genial warmth of the Sun of Righteousness; levity the crackling of thorns under a pot. One is the voice of rejoicing which becometh the tabernacles of the righteous, the other the laughter of fools, fit only for the tents of wickedness. Cheerfulness can mingle with solemnity, just as the clear heavens may be solemn with night, yet cheerful with stars.

“A sight of Jesus in His power and glory scatters all our forces, and peoples the most barren waste with forms of life and loveliness, making the desert to blossom as the rose. This is the remedy for discouragement, this is the support of faith, this lifts up the hands that hang down, and confirms the feeble knees, and enables us, like Him to endure the cross, despising the shame, 'looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.' 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'”

It is Christ not self, however advanced, that forms our meetness for heaven.

“He that winneth souls is wise.”