

## The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this world of sin and woe,  
 Came the Saviour long ago ;  
 The eternal Word, the Father's only Son,  
 He became a child of days,  
 Unto God's eternal praise ;  
 He has suffer'd and His mighty work is done.  
 He was number'd with the dead—  
 On the cross His blood was shed.  
 O ! adore ye, Him in glory,  
 Set on high o'er all things Head.

Jesus evermore the same—  
 There is not another name  
 Under heaven, that is given among men,  
 None whereby you must be saved,  
 You, by sin and death enslaved,  
 Jesus only who is coming soon again,  
 The ascended living one.  
 Hear Him ! God's beloved Son ;  
 O ! adore ye, Him in glory,  
 Praise Him, heaven is begun.

All the way is open now,  
 Glory, honour, crown His brow,  
 He is seated with His Father on His throne ;  
 O ! extol His worthy name,  
 Jesus evermore the same.  
 He is coming from that glory for His own,  
 Sing, His precious blood was shed,  
 And He liveth who was dead.  
 O ! adore ye, Him in glory,  
 Christ, the Lord, o'er all things Head.

There is yet a brief delay,  
 And who e'er will come—he may  
 Come to Jesus and forevermore be blest,  
 O ! He saith, " Come unto me,"  
 Saved for ever thou shalt be.  
 " Come to me ye may, I will give you rest ;  
 'Tis His voice awakes the dead,  
 Where His precious blood was shed.  
 O ! adore ye, Him in glory,  
 Jesus, Saviour, Lord and Head.

**"NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS."**

HEBREWS X.

The object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God, as it is written, "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." But what is our state before God when thus brought nigh? The right understanding of this is most important. It is impossible that we could be happy even in the presence of God, if there still existed a thought of His being against us. I need the perfect settled assurance that there is no sin upon me before Him. The sense of responsibility ever makes a person unhappy where there is any question as to sin standing against him: see the case of a servant and his master, or that of a child and its parent—the conscience is miserable if there be upon it the sense of that which will be judged. So God's presence must be indeed terrible, unless the conscience be perfectly good. If there be happiness for me there, it can only be in the sense of His favour, and of the completeness with which we have been brought to Him—the perfect assurance of "the worshipper once purged" having "no more conscience of sins."

God speaks to us according to His estimate of our standing: it may not be our heart's experience. There is a distinctness between the operation of the Spirit of God in bringing me unto Jesus, bearing witness to me of God's love, and of the

efficacy of what Christ has done, and His operation in my soul in producing in me the love of God. That which is the subject of experience is what is produced in my own soul, whereas that which gives me peace is His testimony to the work of Jesus. A Christian who doubts the Father's love to him, and who looks for peace to that which passes in his own heart, is doubting God's truth.

The gospel is the revelation God has given of Himself; it displays the love of God towards us, and what is in His heart. I can trust the declaration of what is in God's heart, and not what I think of myself.

The apostle speaks of a due time: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans v. 6.) It is almost always true that there is in us a terrible process of breaking the heart, in order that we may be brought to the ascertainment that we are lost and ruined sinners; but the gospel begins at the close of God's experience of man's heart, and calls us from that in order that we should have joy and peace from the experience of what is in His heart.

Man left alone before the flood, put under the law, in Canaan, indeed under all and every trial of his nature and tendency, up to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, was just God's putting him to the test.

One would have thought, after Adam had been turned out of paradise for transgression, that would have been a sufficient warning; but his first-

born became a murderer. We should have supposed that the flood which swept off the workers of iniquity would have repressed, for a time at least, by the terror of judgment, the outbreak of sin ; but we find immediately afterwards, Noah getting drunk, and Ham dishonouring his father. The devouring fire of Sinai, which made even Moses fear and quake, seemed sufficient to subdue the rebel heart and make it bow beneath God's hand ; but the golden calf was the awful evidence that the heart of man was "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (Jer. xvii. 9.) Again in Canaan, a part of the world was tried to the utmost to be cultivated, but it would not do. A bad tree producing bad fruit was the only type by which God could set Israel forth. (See Isa. v.) He might dig about it and dung it, but after all these efforts it could only bring forth more bad fruit. At last He said, I have yet one son, perhaps "they will reverence my son," (Matt. xxi. 37), but man preferred having the world for himself, and so crucified Jesus. Looking to His cross, Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world." (John xii. 31.)

At the crucifixion of Jesus, the veil was rent, and the holiest opened ; what God was within the veil, then shone out in all its fulness. When grace reveals this to me, I get confidence. I see God holy and expecting holiness—true ; but peace with God is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows all the evil of

our hearts. Nothing can be worse than the rejection of Jesus—man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love, to the full. The wretched soldier (who, in the cowardly impotence of the consciousness that he could with impunity insult the meek and lowly Jesus, pierced His side with a spear), let out, in that disgraceful act, the water and the blood, which was able to cleanse even such as he. Here God's heart was revealed, what He is to the sinner; and this is our salvation.

Death and judgment teach me redemption. God judged sin indeed in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. It must be punished: Jesus bore the blow—this rent the veil, and showed out what God really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of God, put away the sin which His holiness judged.

The perfect certainty of God's love and the perfect cleansing of the conscience is that which the defiled and trembling sinner needs.

"By the grace of God," Jesus Christ has "tasted death." Death, the wages of sin, is seen in the cross of Jesus, as the consequence of "the grace of God." "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." Were anyone to demand of me a proof of God's love, I could not give more than God has done in that "He spared not His own Son:" none other could be so great. But then, it might be asked, may not my sin affect it? No, God knew all your sin, and He has provided for it all: "the blood of

Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." (1 John i. 7.)

In real communion the conscience must be purged ; there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. We read here, " By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." There is very frequently the confounding of what faith produces with what faith rests upon. Faith always rests upon God's estimate of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His word : faith rests on no experience. Jesus said, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God !"—" by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." " We *are* sanctified," it is not that which is proposed for our attainment ; it was the good will of God to do it, and the work is done, to bring our souls unto Himself. Jesus has said " it is finished." But then there must be the knowledge of this also, in order for us to begin to act. You might have a person willing to pay your debts ; nay, you might even have them paid ; but if you did not know it, you would be just as miserable as before. We are not called upon to believe in a promise that Jesus should come to die and rise again. The work is *done* : He " sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high " " when He had by Himself purged our sins." But then this is not sufficient for me : I must *know* that the work is done ; and therefore He sent down the Holy Ghost to be the witness that God is satisfied.

Knowing perfectly their guilt and amount, God

has declared, "your sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Faith rests on this, "God is true:" "he that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." The Lord said to Israel in Egypt concerning the blood of the paschal lamb, "When I see the blood, I will pass over." Could there be hesitation if we were in a house marked with the blood on the door-post? Should we not know that He would pass over? Faith is always divine certainty. God has said, "I will remember no more." This is the ground on which we enter into the holiest. "The worshipper once purged" has "no more conscience of sins."

God has found His rest in Jesus: our peace and joy depends upon knowing this. Were anything more necessary, it could not be His rest: God is not seeking for something else when at rest. None else could have afforded this. "God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God; they were all gone out of the way; there was none righteous; no, not one." But God bore witness unto Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God is well pleased in Christ; God rests in His Son, not merely in His life, though that was holy and acceptable unto Him, but in His work on the cross. Jesus said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," and that meets our need. When He shows



His glory to the angels, He points to what has been done by man. In man was God glorified ; as in man, the first Adam, He had been dishonoured. Christ reversed all this—" Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him ;" which God recognizes in straightway glorifying Him. Righteousness cannot be looked for from the creature, but the fruit of righteousness will — the thing itself is only in Christ.

God is not a grudging giver. Did Satan, tempting Eve, question this in the forbidden fruit ? He has given His Son ; He rests in Him ; the believer likewise rests there. What can man do for me ? Nothing. If I were to come to him to deliver me from death, could he help me ? No. He might fill my hand with those perishing things which could only swell the triumph of death and decorate the tomb, but there his power ends.

In Jesus God has found His rest—this is mine also ; I know it from the testimony of God's truth. Have you found rest in God's rest ? If you say, I have not, will you say that God has not found His rest there ? will you look to your own heart ? In that you can never find it—it is only in Jesus : who has said, " Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Would that all knew the perfect rest to be found there !



My fellowship with the Father is my taste of the delight He has in the Only-Begotten.



**WOMAN'S PLACE IN SERVICE.**

MATT. XXVII. 55, 56, ETC.

The part that women take in all this history is very instructive, especially to them. The activity of public service, that which may be called "work," belongs naturally to men (all that appertains to what is generally termed ministry), although women share a very precious activity in private. But there is another side of Christian life which is particularly theirs, and that is personal and loving devotedness to Christ. It is a woman, who anointed the Lord while the disciples murmured; women, who were at the cross when all except John had forsaken Him; women, who came to the sepulchre, and who were sent to announce the truth to the apostles, who had gone after all to their *own home*; women, who ministered to the Lord's need. And indeed this goes farther. Devotedness in service is perhaps the part of man; but the instinct of affection, that which enters more intimately into Christ's position, and in this more immediately in connection with His sentiments, in closer communion with the sufferings of His heart—this is the part of woman; assuredly a happy part. The activity of service for Christ puts man a little out of this position, at least if the Christian is not watchful. Everything has, however, its place. I speak of that which is characteristic; for there are women who have served much, and men who have felt much. Note also here, what I be-

lieve I have remarked, that this clinging of heart to Jesus is the position where the communications of true knowledge are received. The first full gospel is announced to the poor woman that was a sinner, who washed His feet ; the embalming for His death to Mary ; our highest position to Mary Magdalene ; the communion Peter desired to John who was in His bosom. And here the women have a large share.



## MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

(Continued from page 60.)

*The origin and consequences of declension.*

(Ch. ii 1-5.)

Israel's declension was characterized by the fact that they had not remained in separation from the world, and this in itself denoted that they no longer had strength to drive out the enemy. Their lack of power was due to what we have just read. "And the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim." (ii. 1.) The book of Joshua, the record of Israel's victories, was characterized by Gilgal, the blessed spot wherein lay the secret of their strength. It was the place of circumcision, that is to say, typically, of the putting off of the flesh—"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh *by the circumcision of*

*Christ.*" (Col. ii. 11.) At the cross of Christ, in His death, the flesh was absolutely condemned and made an end of for the believer. At Gilgal, Jehovah had rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off the people.

Delivered (in type) from the dominion of the flesh which was connected with the world, i.e., Egypt, they now belonged only to God. The great fact of circumcision at Gilgal, the cutting off of the flesh, is a Christian responsibility. But continual *returning* to Gilgal was a necessity. There must be for the believer the constant realization before God, what the cross of Christ teaches, that "the flesh profiteth nothing." True self-judgment must be maintained if we would know wherein lies the secret of spiritual power by which we mortify our members which are upon the earth. (Col. iii. 5.) We may learn this from the victories in the book of Joshua. The Israelites always returned to Gilgal, except in one case (Joshua vii. 2) where they were defeated.

But Gilgal had been neglected, nay, even forgotten since the days of Joshua. It is thus that hearts become worldly through the absence of daily self-judgment. The angel of Jehovah, the representative of Divine power in the midst of the people, had remained there alone, so to speak, with nothing to do, waiting for Israel to return to him; he had waited long, Israel did not return. There was nothing for it, but that the angel should quit this blessed spot and go up to Bochim, *the*

*place of tears.* Those days of strength and joy, when Jericho fell at the sound of God's trumpet, were over; the days, too, of Gibeon and Hazor were for ever gone. Israel could not recover the blessings dependent on Gilgal; Jehovah's power was no longer at the disposal of the people, looked at as a whole. Those days were past, when Israel went up willingly to Gilgal, judging, in type, the flesh; so that, sin not being there, they might conquer. Achor, too, was past with its lesson of humiliation and blessing, when the people judged their sin to put it away and were restored. At Bochim Israel wept, obliged to bear their chastisement and its irremediable consequences; present restoration was not possible; *God does not re-establish what man has ruined.* The church has trodden the same path. Its ruin as a testimony and looked at on the side of human responsibility will be continuous to the end of its history. It has become unfaithful, till at last it has become established in the midst of the world, mixed up with iniquity of every kind which goes on to the close. God compares it to a great house with vessels to honour and dishonour. (2 Tim. ii.) And yet the moment will come, when the history of man's responsibility being over, the Lord will present to Himself His church, glorious, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. (Eph. v.) At that time it shall be said of her, as of Jacob, not "what hath man wrought," but "what hath God wrought!" (Numbers xxiii. 23.)

It was not a sense of humiliation which filled the hearts of the poor people at Bochim : they were there, shedding tears at the sentence of judgment, and seeing no issue, for there was none. In the course of the book, we meet with times of partial deliverance, and even a beginning of real humiliation (x. 15, 16). But Israel's restoration is reserved for a future day. There is a sort of foretaste of it under Samuel, type of Christ, the true Judge and Prophet. In the scene at Mizpeh (1 Sam. vii), we have a picture of the day when Israel humbled, will be restored to their place of blessing as the people of God. Samuel convenes the people at Mizpeh, which is not merely the place of tears, but of humiliation. It was there that "they drew water and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, 'we have sinned against the Lord.'" It was there that they put away their strange gods, and it was the dawn of an era of blessing which shone in all its splendour under the reigns of David and Solomon.

Bochim characterizes the book of Judges, as Gilgal does that of Joshua. Likewise the place of tears characterizes the present period of the church's history. It is no longer a question of retracing the pathway ; the edifice is in ruins : to replaster it, would be but to adorn its decay, which would be worse than the ruin itself.

The angel of the Lord has come up from Gilgal to Bochim, and forfeited strength cannot be recovered. The Lord abhors pretension to power

in a day such as the present. The display of human, fleshly power which we see on all sides, is utterly different to the power of the Spirit. Those who talk loudly about the power of God being with them, savour somewhat of the crowds who followed Simon Magus, saying: "This man is the great power of God" (Acts viii. 10); and of Laodicea, who says, "I am rich," not knowing that she is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). However, we must never forget that if the church as a corporate witness has failed, God has preserved a testimony to Christ in the midst of the ruin, and those who seek to maintain it, acknowledge and weep over their common failure in the presence of God. We find something similar in Ezek. ix. 4. The men of Jerusalem who sigh and cry are marked on their foreheads by the angel of the Lord; they are a humbled people, as in Mal. iii. 13-18. There are two classes in this chapter; those who say: "What profit is it that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?" (ver. 14), and the faithful ones, a feeble and afflicted remnant who speak one to another, acknowledging the ruin, but waiting for the Messiah who alone can give them deliverance. These latter do not say: "What profit is it?" Their humbling is for their profit, turning their eyes to Him who "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes." (1 Sam. ii. 8.)

God grant that this may also be our attitude, and that we may not be indifferent to the state of the church of God in this world, but rather weep at having contributed towards it. Let us, like Philadelphia, be content to have a little strength, and we shall hear the Lord say for our consolation: I have the key of David, power is mine, fear not, I place it entirely at your disposal.

In verses 1-3, the angel of the Lord speaks to the people. Had God broken His covenant? Had He not accomplished all that His mouth had spoken? It was Israel who had broken the covenant. "Why have ye done this?" How this question reaches and probes the conscience. Why? Because I preferred the world and its lusts to the power of the Spirit of God, idols to the ineffable favour of Jehovah's countenance. What then was the natural heart of this people? What is ours? Israel weeps and sacrifices (ver. 5). How touching the grace which provides for worship in the midst of the ruin. *The place of tears is one of sacrifice*, and God accepts the offerings made at Bochim.

---

*Israel's ruin looked at in reference to God.*

(Ch. ii. 6—iii. 4.)

---

Chap. ii. 6-9 is a repetition of Josh. xxiv. 26-31, closely connecting this history of declension with that of the people before their fall. There were elders, that outlived Joshua, to help and encourage



the people, just as there were apostles for the church, but in the days of the apostles as in those of the elders, principles, destructive of the assembly, were already at work. Judaism, worldliness, corruption, all these things Paul set his face against by the power of the Spirit of God, but with the certainty that after his departure, grievous wolves should enter in, not sparing the flock. The close of Chap. I. gave us Israel's declension, in their connection with the world; the verses we have just read, shew it to us in reference to God. We have a summary of the whole book of Judges in this passage. Worldliness and idolatry succeed each other. In whatever measure our hearts go after the world, they turn away from God; and between that and forsaking Jehovah to follow after idols, there is but a step. We see the same things in the life of Christians individually. It is not without purpose that the Spirit of God warns us so solemnly: "Little children keep yourselves from idols," 1 John v. 21. If we associate with the world, its cherished objects gain possession of our hearts, robbing Christ of His place.

Two things describe the low estate of the generation that arose after Joshua. "They knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" (ii. 10). Where a personal knowledge of Christ and of the value of His work are lacking, the floodgates are open to an overflowing tide of evil. This was the case with Israel: "They forsook the Lord and served Baal and

Ashtaroth " (ii. 13). Then the anger of the Lord was hot against the people, and He sold them into the hands of enemies *round about*, who spoiled them (ii. 14); and left the enemy *within* to be a thorn in their sides (iii. 3). *The enemy within the house of God* is the distinctive feature of the last days. The nations whose terrible moral condition is described in Rom. i., are now-a-days established with all their corrupt principles in the very midst of this building, so beautiful of yore, when it came forth from the hands of the Divine Architect; but entrusted by Him to human hands, it contained thenceforth, amidst material only fit to be burned up, the sad mixture of vessels to honour and to dishonour.

The judgment of God on His house consists in this, that He allows these things to exist in it. How little account Christians take of this. But the God who judges is also the God who has compassion (ii. 18). Israel groans under the oppressor; then the Lord looks on this people for whom He had done such great things, and raises up deliverers for them. Such is the history which we shall see unfolded in the book of Judges, and of which we have here the summary. There are *awakenings* and then a short space of rest and blessing. The chains broken, the enemy silenced, God leaves the people to themselves, and they fall as before into idolatry. "They ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way" (ii. 19).

There was only one resource, and it was worthy

of God. In His grace He makes use of the very unfaithfulness and its consequences to bless the people. In suffering these nations to remain, God had not merely chastisement in view ; He also wished " to prove Israel by them whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their fathers did keep it " (ii. 22) ; in short, would they separate from evil ? Thus in 2 Timothy God uses the mixture of vessels to honour and dishonour to test and bless the hearts of those that are faithful. " If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work " (2 Tim. ii. 21). What a blessed description of faithfulness in perilous times ! God would shew us a path which glorifies Him as much in the darkest day of ruin as in the brightest days of the church.

But the Lord had yet another object in leaving these nations to prove Israel (iii. 4), " to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, which He commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses." The blessing which God had in view, was to cause Israel to return to that *Word* which had been given at the first, and which was their only safeguard. Similarly now, the apostle says to Timothy, in an Epistle which dwells on the ruin : " But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; and that from a child thou hast

known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 14, 15). Has the condition of Christendom compelled us to take a place of separation to God down here, adhering closely to His Word? Unless we can be thus characterized, we cannot be a testimony for God in a day of ruin. Those in Philadelphia bore this stamp, for He who addresses them is Himself the *holy* and the *true*; and they, walking in communion with Him, had *kept His word*, and *not denied His name*. These will also be the marks of the future children of the kingdom. In Ps. i., they separate themselves from the way of sinners, and their delight is in the law of the Lord, meditating in it day and night.

There was a third object which the Lord had in view, in permitting these enemies to continue in the midst of Israel: "That the generations of the children of Israel *might know, to teach them war*" (iii. 2). When we allow ourselves to be cast down by the state of the church and its prevailing evil, we are apt to think that it is no longer any use to fight, and that our part should be exclusively that of the 7000 hidden ones who had not bowed the knee to Baal. (1 Kings xix.) This is a serious mistake. There are Elijahs in days of ruin, and conflict is more than ever needed. Christian warfare is not, it is true, waged against flesh and blood, as with Israel, but against wicked spirits in the heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12, margin). This

satanic power is always at work to hinder our taking possession of heavenly things, and to bring the people of God into bondage. We fight then either to conquer or to deliver. In Joshua and Ephesians the conflict is to put us in possession of our privileges ; in Judges and 2 Timothy the warfare is more especially for the deliverance of the people of God. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," says the apostle to his faithful disciple (2 Tim. ii. 3). "Endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist," he says further on, adding, "I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. iv. 5, 7).

What goodness it is on God's part, in a day of universal weakness, to have allowed the enemy to continue, that we might learn what warfare is. Christian conflict will never cease on earth, but the Lord says : Put your trust in Me, I have set before you an open door, and I will recompense the overcomer. May God give us to take to heart the deliverance of His people, in seeking to reach souls by the gospel, and in setting them free from their chains of bondage by the two edged sword of the Spirit.

*( To be continued, D.V. )*



"Prayer is prayer, let it come from the weak or from the strong. It is not the heart or the lip from which it comes, as the Ear that it goes to, which is the great thing."