

"YET A LITTLE WHILE."

"Yet a little while"—and the months and years
 Shall soon be number'd with the things that
 were ;

And joy give place to sorrow ; smiles to tears ;
 And rest divine, where once was strife and care.

"Yet a little while"—and the One we love
 (Whose love for us has been so true and tried)
 Will call His own unto Himself above,
 To be for ever with Him, as His bride.

"Yet a little while"—and the robes of white
 We shall be clothed in, and defilement cease ;
 No shade of darkness sully His pure light ;
 No harrowing care intrude upon our peace.

"Yet a little while"—and the night is spent,
 And we shall enter on His endless day,
 And His blest home, with hearts, oh, how content,
 A scene which human words can ne'er pourtray !

"Yet a little while"—and the tear-dimm'd eye
 Shall on the glories of our Jesus gaze ;
 And hearts oft sadden'd, beat with holy joy :
 And tongues oft murm'ring celebrate His praise.

THE CROSS.

"God forbid that I should glory, *save* in THE
 CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the
 world is crucified unto me, and I unto the
 world."—Gal. vi. 14.

I would say a few words on the entire *end of
 self* in THE CROSS—the *nothingness* to which it re-
 duces us. How little do we know practically of

this. Let us look at Jesus, and then learn how very little our souls have realized its power in thus *setting ourselves aside*.

We see in Him one who had all human righteousness, and one too in whom "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" yet what path did He take? What was **THE CROSS** to Him? To what did it reduce Him? The *entire setting aside* of all this human righteousness, of all this divine power. The perfect strength of His love was proved, not only in that He "did not please Himself"—though "in the form of God," and thinking it "not robbery to be equal with God," that He emptied Himself, and "being found in fashion as a man," humbled Himself to take the place of our disobedience—but that in *this* place of *love* He was content to be *utterly rejected!* to be reduced to nothing, that love might shine out!

The flesh in us is subtil, very subtil: if we show love, we expect that it will be felt; but if otherwise—if, when we have rendered a kindness, we get no return, not even a kind word—our hearts grow faint and cold in the exercise of love. Do we know what it is when our hearts have gone forth in love to meet with that which we read of in **Córinthians**, "Though the more I love you, the less I be loved;" to find that the only consequence of humiliation is to become thereby less respected, more humbled still? Thus it was with Jesus; full of patience and tenderness, He exposed Himself to the power and malice of Satan. But what

did He find in us when doing this work of love? *Man* took occasion, by His very lowliness, to treat Him with the utmost scorn. He was "the reproach of men, the despised of the people." They kept Him in on every side: "Dogs have compassed Me about: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet." "Many bulls have compassed Me about: strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." He looked for comforters, but found none. One of those with whom He had "taken sweet counsel" lifted up his heel against Him; and even that disciple who had been most forward to declare his adhesion, "Though all men should forsake Thee, *yet will not I*," denied Him with oaths and curses.

There was no outlet to His grief, no comfort from man; and here we see the meaning of that, "Be not *Thou* far from me, *O my God!*" Cast out by the scorn of those whom He came to in love, pressed upon, closed in by those whom He came to save, His soul turned to God: "My God, be not *Thou* far from me!" But God had hid His face from Him: "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" He now found the darkness and wrath that came upon Him to the uttermost; there was no response on any side: the deep hatred of man around, and from above darkness also; everything was set aside but the power of *love*. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing:

I come into *deep waters*, where the *floods* overflow me." The *waves* and the *billows* went over Him; *all* was lost in the waves *but* love: it was that which sustained Him; love was greater than all; and it was set *on us*.

When we see what He, as emptied, was, we come to the depth of *love*. If He emptied Himself of every thing else, there was still the fulness of love, for He is God, and "*God is love*." We, dear brethren, have found the *fulness of love* in Jesus, and that shall be our everlasting portion—we shall know, shall taste this *love* for ever.

When Jesus was "going about" here, it was as "doing good;" He could not restrain His *power*, though ever so lowly and humbled, when good was to be done; He was obliged to show it. Thus in the life of Jesus, in His actings here, there was something which the natural heart must own, must approve: we like to have our diseases cured; and when they saw the dead raised, they could rejoice in having their deceased friends brought to life again: but in THE CROSS there was no putting forth of this *power*, there was no *miracle*—nothing but *weakness* and *degradation*—He was "*crucified through weakness*." Trial from man, temptation from Satan, forsaking from God—there was nothing to be seen but *love*—the depth, the fulness, the riches of that love which will be our happy, blessed portion for ever.

The natural heart in every one of us hates the power of THE CROSS. We want something for the

eye to rest upon, we seek a little honour here ; THE CROSS stains all the pride of human glory, and therefore we like it not. Let us test ourselves, beloved. Are we really content to take THE CROSS in this its power, and to say, " I want nothing else " ? " God forbid that I should glory, *save* in THE CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is *crucified* unto me, and I unto the world ! " May our souls rest in this blessed confidence—Jesus is our everlasting portion ; to dwell in Him is to dwell in God, and " God is *love*." Many Christians are cherishing those things which keep them from knowing the full power of this *love* in their hearts. We cannot enjoy love and pride together. Whatever nourishes *self*, no matter what—honour, talents, learning, wealth, friends, respectability—any thing, every thing which the natural man delights in, *nourishes pride in us, renders Christ less precious, and the enjoyment of His love less full.*

The Lord give us to know what it is to be "*crucified* to the world." Let us, beloved brethren, bless God for everything that *puts down self*.

THE SWALLOWS ARE GONE.

" Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times ; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming ; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord. How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us ? Lo, certainly in vain made he

it ; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken ; lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord ; and what wisdom is in them ? ” (Jer. viii. 7-9.)

The end of the year is near. The swallows are gone ; the cold blasts of winter are come : but not one swallow is left behind. We saw them gathered together, and they were seen to fly higher, as the time to depart grew nearer. No one saw them go. But they are gone to sunny lands of the south. The frost and the snow, the sleet and piercing winds of winter never reach them there. Very remarkable is this instinct of the birds. “ Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times ; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming ; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.”

Is there not a lesson for us in this instinct of the birds ? It was pleasing to watch the swallows as the winter drew near ; how they would gather in companies ; how they seemed to wait for the wanderers. Then they would fly high, as wanting to be gone. We thought, is not the Holy Spirit now gathering Christians together in little companies to Christ ? Now here, now there, a wanderer coming in. Should we not fly higher ? we, like the swallows, are about to leave this scene below. Already signs of this world’s judgment begin to flit across its autumn sky. And now every swallow soared ready to depart, moved by one common instinct. Oh that every Christian

was seen manifestly ready to depart, moved by the Spirit of God.

But will it be with the whole church of God as with the swallows? Yes, the Holy Ghost is already gathering them in little companies to Christ. He has revealed to them afresh, after many centuries, the heavenly Bridegroom, and the heavenly calling of the church. He is leading their thoughts and hearts, higher and higher yet. And soon, very soon, though the world will not see them go, yet every one shall be gone, not one left behind. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 16, 17). Are not these the sober words of inspired reality? Yes, brethren, we shall all be gone, not one be left behind: for ever with the Lord. If the swallows are gone to more sunny shores, oh, what will it be to be caught up away from the scenes of this world's wintry woes, and judgments, and in peaceful rest enter the glory of our Lord!

And if God never fails to take by instinct at the appointed time, the stork, the crane, and the swallow, can He possibly fail at the appointed time to take the saints to meet their Lord? Is it not sad and humbling that the Lord should have to complain, that though the swallow should

know her appointed time, "my people know not the judgment of the Lord?" Is not this as true now of Christendom, as it was of Israel then? What profound ignorance there is on this important subject. "My people know not." Men go on dreaming of a continual summer, yea, of increasing sunshine, peace, temperance, prosperity—just at the very time when the saints are about to be gone like the swallows of autumn, and the storms of this world's wintry blasts are about to take them all by surprise. (1 Thess. v. 1-9.)

It is incredible how utterly unaware the learned of this world are of the wintry judgments about to be poured out on the nations of the earth. "How do ye say we are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us?"

Never was there a day of more boasting, "we are wise." It is quite true the word of God is in men's hands; but who believes it? The rapture of the church *before* "the day of the Lord" is clearly revealed. God has said it. He has made it perfectly clear, both the departure of His saints to meet the Lord in the air, and the terrible judgments that shall follow. Has he made it clear? Yes, but, "Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain." Yes, in vain hath God spoken in His word; men will not believe Him. "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mark vii).

Let us now pass on to the December of this world, before the new era of the millennial king-

dom begins. (Ver. 9.) "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken : lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord ; and what wisdom is in them ?"

Let us listen to these learned men, these rejecters of the word of God. "How strange this is : those Christians we despised are all gone, like the swallows of autumn. Not one of them can be found on earth. How we laughed and hated their gathering together ! What fools we thought them because they would fly higher ; as they said, their Lord was coming to take them. They spoke of their heavenly calling ; and would have nothing to say to our earthly societies and politics. We scorned them because they would not join our various schemes for the improvement of man. We hated the thought that we were not to glory save in the cross of Christ. They gathered together—poor little despised companies—and told of the coming Saviour to the wanderers all around. No one saw them go, but they are gone. And now the world's wild, fierce, wintry blasts are blowing. Where is all our boasted wisdom ? Peace is taken from the earth. All that we hear on every side is, that men are killing one another. Famine and pestilence, sword, hunger and death all around. Woe, woe to us, the winter of this world is come.

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains . . . hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the

mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." (Rev. vi.) Ah, we rejected the word of the Lord, but now the Christians are gone, and the great day of His wrath is come. Storm after storm has come : we seek death and do not find it. (Rev. ix. 6.) Where is now our boasted wisdom ? We are worshipping devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood. (Rev. ix. 20.) And what is the end of all our politics ? What strange events since the winter set in, and the saints are gone ! It is not forty-two months yet, since the new last head of the Roman Empire appeared. But oh, what months ! The dragon has given him his power. Ten kingdoms have sprung up and given their power to this Satanic head. When he opens his mouth it is in blasphemy. And all that dwell on earth worship him. And all that refuse are boycotted and put to death. It is true all this was distinctly foretold in scripture, but we were far too wise then to believe what God said to his servants in Revelation vi., ix., xiii., xvii. Certainly there never was such a winter as this since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be, Jesus said it would be so : but we did not believe Him." (Matt. xxiv. 21.)

Yes, "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken : lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord ; and what wisdom is in them ?"

And now, beloved reader, as the last days of another year are fast coming to a close, where are you, and what is the condition of your soul? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb, and ready to be gone like the swallows in autumn? Are you following the wise men of this world, who will so soon be ashamed and confounded? Is Christ the centre of attraction? Are you separated to Him, and waiting for Him from heaven? Great is the last effort to draw Christians from Christ to join the confederacies of men. Oh, let us seek to get higher and higher. The word of God is utterly disregarded. On no account will men allow it to be Christ alone. Christ and circumcision, Christ and teetotalism, Christ and the world's various confederacies, or even Christ and profanity. All these things hide the coming of the Lord to take His saints. Every doctrine of human improvement denies the utter ruin of man through sin, and the fast approaching winter of divine judgment on the rejecters and despisers of the word of God. It is solemnly true of the great men and the wise of this world, "They have rejected the word of the Lord." The mark of a Christian is, "Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Which is true of you, beloved reader? Whatever name you may bear, if you have not kept His word you are not a Christian, and will surely be left behind when the Christians depart like the swallows that are gone.

Can you for a moment admit that the instinct of a bird is more sure than the words of the Saviour? As this world's winter approaches, let us then dwell on the words of Jesus. He cannot fail to fulfil His promise. We may not know where the swallows go; but Jesus says to us, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) Do we hear you saying, "Yes: Jesus says so, but our learned, wise teachers do not say so"? Remember the word, "They have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?"

It is a solemn fact that God by His Spirit has sent forth the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him;" and they have rejected the word of the Lord. God grant we may cease from man; for what wisdom is in him?

May the saints of God be now gathered together like the swallows in autumn. May we love to dwell on His sweet words of promise. Has He not gone to prepare the place? Oh, those scenes of radiant glory, far away from earth's cold wintry blasts! And will He not come to take us to Himself? With Himself! How soon, like Moses and Elias, shall we be talking with Him! Glorious reality. Soon we shall be gone; not one be left behind. And poor deceived apostate Christendom left to "become the habitation of devils, and

the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. xviii. 2). Blessed comfort; the Lord knoweth them that are His, and none shall be left behind.

"Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephes. v. 14).



THE JOYS OF CHRIST.

We ought to think of the joys of Christ as well as His sorrows. Nothing shows where a man's heart is, and what it is, more than when oppressed, distressed, and full of sorrow, where his heart finds its joy, and if it does find a joy unreached by it.

We see these joys in Christ—a secret comfort in the midst of His sorrow. He had meat to eat which man knew not of. Besides His communion with His Father, there was this working of love to us. Paradise shone in upon His heart in comforting the poor thief. "Go in peace" refreshed His spirit in the house of the Pharisee. "She hath done it for my burial" justified Mary against the reproach of selfish man. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes" was His joy in the sense of the heartless rejection to which the wickedness of man subjected Him. How blessed to the heart, besides learning where His joy was, to think that He found it in the working of His love to us!

MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

(Continued from page 220.)

Gideon's ephod.

(viii. 24-35.)

Hitherto Gideon had been marvellously preserved amidst dangers and snares. His heart was still full of good intentions; but a subtil poison had been doing its work in his heart, and we are about to witness the ruin of the career of the judge, as formerly we have seen the ruin of the people.

“And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey;” a request with which the people willingly complied. Gideon did not covet these things as Achan did, when he brought judgment upon Israel. He was noble-hearted and disinterested, and wished to make a good use of the gold. Aaron, of old, had asked for their ornaments to make therewith the calf of gold. Jerubbaal, who had cast down the idols, in no wise sought to set them up again; but, impressed with the sense of his own importance, he wished to erect a memorial of his victory at Ophrah, his native town. This memorial was to be an *ephod*, an article of divine appointment. It formed part of the vestments which the sacrificing priest wore when representing the people before God. It was

indeed a beautiful object, yet in Jehovah's eyes it was worthless, apart from the high priest who wore it. Alas! *all Israel* looked upon this ephod as a means of approach to God, and went and prostrated themselves before it. Even Gideon and his house fell into the snare.

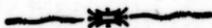
Christendom is no stranger to ephods. Many are the things of divine appointment which it has apart from Christ and by which it imagines that it can approach God. The church, ministry, baptism, the Lord's supper, and even prayer, separated from their source, become ephods before which people prostrate themselves. Form takes the place of God, and souls thereby fall again into idolatry. Ah! do they not even make an idol of Christ on the cross! The brasen serpent had been kept and the people had made a false god of it. Like the faithful Hezekiah, the true witness of the present day cannot put up with that. The king brake in pieces this idol, and called it *Nehushtau, i. e., a piece of brass* (2 Kings xviii. 4).

What a humbling fact, that the leaders of the people should be the instruments to lead them back into idolatry! Frequently, after an auspicious beginning, the heart, allowing itself to be acted upon by the flattery of the world, is influenced thereby, and the desire gradually gains ground to be of some importance in, as well as recognized by, it. A monument is thus erected which can only add material to the increase of the ruin; thus

their Ophrah became a gathering centre, and the ephod became a centre of Ophrah, to the displacement of the divine sanctuary at Shiloh, the true centre of gathering for Israel. Gideon was not a proud man, but, his heart being deceived, he was no longer upright before God. He dwelt in his own house (v. 29), and rested from his glorious labours. He was surrounded by a numerous family, but he had set up a "serpent" which was eventually to accomplish the destruction of his race. No sooner had he closed his eyes in death, than Israel returned to unmixed idolatry, and made Baal-berith their god (v. 33), thus making a demon their chief and "Lord of the covenant."

But there is one consolation in the midst of all the ruin which will be seen in chap. ix.: God never leaves Himself without a testimony in this scene. Let us then be His witnesses, holding fast this word of Gideon to the people: "Jehovah shall rule over you."

(To be continued, D. V.)



“ BUT THE END
OF ALL THINGS IS AT-HAND : BE YE
THEREFORE SOBER, AND WATCH UNTO PRAYER.”
“ BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS, WHOM THE
LORD WHEN HE COMETH SHALL FIND
WATCHING.”