

Things New & Old,

A

GOSPEL MAGAZINE,

WITH PAPERS FOR THE FLOCK OF GOD.

"Christ is all."—Col. iii. 11.

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Things New and Old.

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

III.

GALATIANS.

CHAPTER III. The apostle having shewn how the believing Jews had given up the principle of seeking justification by works of law, that they might be justified in Christ, on the principle of faith; and after proving that if righteousness could be attained on the principle of law, then Christ is dead in vain; he now exclaims, "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified?" Could anything be more senseless? If the Jews, who had been under law for 1,500 years, had to give it up in order to be justified by faith, why should the believing Gentiles, who professed to be justified by faith in the atoning death of Christ, now go back to that which the Jews had thus given up?

Is it not like a slave who has been set free at great cost by a large ransom, now so senseless

as to go back to bondage, in order to try to do what he never can, work out his own freedom? The great redemption price had been distinctly declared to them—"Jesus Christ crucified." Oh, how senseless to reject this redemption, to turn from Christ crucified, to their own vain efforts to keep the law. And are not these words just as applicable now? Oh, senseless England, who hath bewitched thee? Art not thou doing the very thing that the Galatians were doing? Thy forefathers, 300 years ago, were groaning under the bondage of law, and vainly seeking to be justified by works. God heard their groans, and revived the truth of justification on the principle of faith. The great ransom has been set before thee, Jesus Christ crucified. And now thou art so senseless as to think it was all a mistake to believe God, and enjoy salvation? Oh, senseless Christendom! thou art going back to salvation by works, and to ritualism; thou art trying hard to prove that Christ died in vain.

Oh, Protestants, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Think of the sufferings of your fathers for the truth. "Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain." Yes, if you can be justified by sacraments and works; then indeed it was vain for Christ to die to procure the ransom of the slave.

The apostle cites Abraham, in proof that justi-

fication *before God* is not on the principle of law or works. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it [that is, faith] was reckoned to him for righteousness." Faith was reckoned as righteousness. This was a most remarkable ground of defence. The very father of the nation of Hebrews was not justified on the principle of works at all, but on the very principle of faith; which principle Paul had preached, and now defended. He says, Know then that they that are on the principle of faith, these are Abraham's sons. This was a self-evident fact.

Let us then turn to the history of Abraham at the case to which Paul refers, as an illustration of saving faith, or justifying faith. (Read Gen. xii. 1-3.) Abraham was called of God in verse 1. Then God speaks to him. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The promise is repeated in reference to his heir in chapter xv. We shall find important details further on. But mark, there are no conditions propounded as at Sinai. God says, "I WILL BLESS THEE." This is the absolute word and promise of God. Yes, the unconditional word of God. Not a single 'if.' "And he believed in the Lord; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." This

then is the principle of faith, for which Paul contends, believing in the Lord—believing His absolute, unconditional word. Had there been a single condition, Abraham would have had to believe in himself, in his ability and faithfulness to fulfil that condition. This element was entirely excluded. The Lord alone was his object of faith. All depended on Jehovah the promiser and Abraham believed Him. And his faith was reckoned as righteousness.

We will now pass on to the confirmation of the promise by the oath of Jehovah, in chapter xxii. Here we get the very picture of how God has confirmed and accomplished His promise, in the offering up of His own Son for sinful men. Isaac the heir is offered up on the altar, and received in figure from the dead. Isaac was spared, and God provided a ram to die in his stead. “And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.” Then the Lord spake by His angel from heaven, and said, “By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

That all this pointed to Christ there can be no doubt, for the apostle says, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith

not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16.)

To Abraham God confirmed His promise by an oath ; to us He has confirmed His promise by raising up Christ the new seed from the dead.

Let us return to Galatians iii. 8. The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify us poor heathen on the principle of faith, thus preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Then there are two principles still kept before us. They who are of the principle of faith are the children of Abraham ; they who are of the principle of the works of the law, are under the curse. Are not these two principles in direct contrast ? On one principle, faith in God gives peace with God, as in Romans v. 1 ; whereas the other principle, seeking to attain to righteousness before God by works of law, places those so seeking under the curse. The defender of the gospel makes his position quite clear. "For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

We must carefully mark that this is solely the question of justification before God. And we must not confound it with justification before men, as in James ii. 14-26. There it is righteousness of walk before men. "Ye see," is the theme of James. "But that no man is justified by the law IN THE SIGHT OF GOD is evident: for the

just shall live by faith." The law could not give life, and all were guilty and under condemnation. The law could neither give life nor righteousness to guilty sinners; it could only curse the guilty. The law is not of faith. What a remarkable expression! we shall see more of this further on.

But if those who were seeking righteousness by the law, were still only under the curse, what can meet, or who has met this terrible state of man under the curse? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Yes, He endured the utmost bitterness of that curse for those who were under the curse of law; and not that alone, but, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Mark, Christ did not die the death of the cross that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through keeping the law. No; but through Jesus Christ. "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through [or, on the principle of] faith."

It is a most serious question for the reader. Are you seeking righteousness on the principle of law? Then you are putting yourself under its curse. Are you justified on the principle of faith freely through the redemption we have in Christ Jesus? Then you have received the Spirit, the witness and seal of that redemption,

through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. On which principle do you stand before God ?

The question is now raised, Can anything alter the promise or covenant of God ? Though even it be a man's covenant confirmed, then no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. How much more so of God, who has confirmed His promise in Christ. A very serious statement is then made : "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Now mark this, the unconditional promise of God confirmed in Christ, was given four hundred and thirty years before the conditional law, or covenant of law, was given on Mount Sinai. The two distinct principles are thus separated by four hundred and thirty years. Blessed for us that the law, given amid the thunderings of Sinai, cannot set aside for a single instant the promise of God.

The apostle waxes bolder and bolder in his defence of the gospel, as given to him direct by the Lord Jesus Himself. He says, "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise : but God gave it to Abraham by promise." If the inheritance was given to Abraham by promise four hundred and thirty years before the law was given, then, clearly, the inheritance is not of

the law; the law has nothing to say to the principle of unconditional promise. It is the very opposite principle. The principle of law is what man should do as a creature for God. But the figure of Isaac is the entire opposite of this. The promise of God is confirmed in His gift of His only begotten Son, and in that death which He has accomplished, and it is God who has raised that Son from the dead. All is absolutely of God, and therefore nothing can disannul it, or make the promise of none effect. If, then, our eternal salvation is secured on the principle of faith in Christ, wholly apart from the principle of law, for what purpose was the law given? This question may next fairly engage our attention.



‘THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.’

XIX.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 11. Heaven is now opened, and behold He comes who is called Faithful and True. He comes in righteousness and strength, “and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” He comes to judge the quick—that is, the living nations. Nothing can be hidden from His eyes, they are “as a flame of fire.” He comes now to take vengeance on an ungodly world, “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.” Compare

Isaiah lxiii. 1-6, “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” We must not forget this, that though He comes in righteous judgment on the wicked, yet it is to set up His kingdom, as He says, “The year of my redeemed is come.” It is when the enemy has come in as a flood, that the Redeemer shall come to Zion. Oh, how much has now to be fulfilled to His redeemed nation of Israel; and through them what blessing to the earth!

Now mark, the armies in heaven come WITH Him. Surely He does not come to judge the saints who have long been with Him in heaven. In that sense He has assured us, we shall not come into judgment; and His word is enough for those who believe Him. (John v. 24; Heb. ix. 28.) It is a blessed truth, that when He comes to judge the wicked rejecters of His grace, all His saints will come with Him. Nothing can be more clearly revealed in scripture, “At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH all his saints.” “Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment,” &c. (1 Thess. iii., iv.; Jude 14, 15.) Thus the armies of heaven shall come with Him, when He comes to judge and reign. This is that coming to rule and reign spoken of in the prophets and the Psalms. (Compare ver. 15 with Ps. ii. 8-10, Isa. xi., Dan. vii., and many other

scriptures.) In those scriptures the object of this judgment is most distinctly to set up His glorious kingdom on earth.

Then, instead of sending missionaries to the Jews, the Jews will be God's missionaries to all that are spared in the whole world. (See Isa. lxvi. 15-20.)

But to return to our chapter. Verses 17, 18, describe a judgment which seems to refer to Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix. In those chapters a vast northern empire came up against restored Israel, only of greater dimensions than the empire now known as the Russian empire. There can be no doubt, from the Septuagint translation, that Rosh or Russia, is here meant. When they come forth finally to settle the Eastern question, God will settle their boasting and blasphemy, as described in those chapters and in these verses.

Then there is the last great effort of the ten kings, and the beast, and Antichrist, who is the false prophet. These, in their madness, come against the King of kings and Lord of lords. The judgment of God falls upon them, and in the most remarkable way upon the head of the Satanic empire of Rome, and upon the false prophet, or man of sin. "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." These are the two world powers that divide the earth—Russia, embracing Germany, all north of the Rhine, portions of Asia and Assyria; and

the other the whole of the old Roman empire restored. After the judgment on the professing church, the judgment falls upon these apostate political powers.

CHAPTER XX.

Then the judgment on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan. He is bound for a thousand years, and cast into the bottomless abyss. He shall deceive the nations no more for the thousand years; after that he must be loosed a little season. He now deceives them, and will deceive them more when the church is gone, as we see in this book.

Verse 4. We come now to the commencement of the millennium. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them" (those slain in chapter vi. and afterwards), "And those which had not worshipped the beast they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This prospect will be most comforting to the remnant of saints after the church is completed. They have the blessed privilege of being part of, yea, the completion of the first resurrection. This does not imply that they will form part of the heavenly bride. The bride is complete, and the marriage of the Lamb has taken place in heaven, before these companies of saints are raised from the dead. They have thrones on earth, and share in blessedness with Christ in His earthly yet glorious millennial

reign. Their being raised from the dead completes the first resurrection. No more will be raised from the dead till the thousand years be finished. Blessed and holy are such. The second death hath no power upon them.

Ignorance of scripture has confounded all this, in a general resurrection of all the dead together, in direct contradiction of scripture.

When Christ comes to take His own to Himself, then the dead in Christ shall rise first, and all living believers will be changed, and both be caught up together to meet with, and be with the Lord; to be like Himself, in everlasting purity and incorruptibility. They are with Him as worshipping elders all through the woes and judgments of this book. Then after the judgment on apostate Christendom, and on the Russian and the restored Roman empire, with the false prophet; and after the binding of Satan, then the two classes here spoken of—all who have believed the testimony of Jesus during the intermediate period of judgments, from chapter vi. to xix., will be raised in great blessedness, to reign with Christ. Thus we see *them* sitting on thrones. Then will be fulfilled every promise of God as to this earth, from Abraham downwards. Yes, every glorious promise in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and in all the prophets. All have their place, not *now* during the presentation of the gospel until Christ comes in judgment, but *then*, when He

has come, whose right it is to reign. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

What a large amount of the Old Testament is occupied with this period of the earth's blessedness; all of which has been spoiled or made of none effect by the great mistake, that those promises belong to the church. But surely this Book of Revelation makes all clear. The millenium will never come until after the destruction of apostate Christendom; what a delusion then to teach, that that very Christendom will convert the world! Alas, as this book shews, she has corrupted the nations.

Who is it that teaches them how to lie, and the cruel practice of boycotting, so called? Who teaches them to despoil and to shoot any that would be honest, and pay their just debts? Who teaches them to cut off the ears and tails of poor dumb animals? Who teaches them to hate their fellow men with Satanic hatred? It is not the old heathen Rome, but the apostate church! Yes, her judgment must come before the millenium can commence. Oh, what a change must take place, and surely will! Satan, the present prince of the world, the prime mover amongst men, must be cast out, and the now rejected Christ shall come, whose right it is to reign.

But there remaineth one more test. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." And who would have thought it possible, if God had not told us? The nations will listen to him, and be deceived again. (Vers. 8, 9.) This ends in the final judgment of the living. The devil is now "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Well did the Spirit of God know how the infidels of our day would seek to deny the awful truth of everlasting punishment. So that He presents it here as it cannot be denied. Two persons have been in that lake of fire one thousand years, and the character of that punishment is "and shall be tormented *day* and *night* for ever and ever." Is not this as clear as words can be given to prove the punishment of that lake of fire to be everlasting—"day and night for ever and ever"? Oh, beware of listening to the devil that it is not so, he would fain make you believe that God does not mean what He says.

Verse 11. We now come to the awful judgment of the rest of the dead who live not again until the thousand years are fulfilled. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand

before God," &c. All these were personally judged, every man according to their works. It is into this judgment the believer can never come, on the assured word of Christ. (John v. 24.) How can the justified from all things (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. v. 1), come into this judgment of the dead? We implore the reader to ponder the difference between these things; or take two persons—one has been justified from all sins; the other has to be judged. For every sin, for every secret thing and word, he has to be judged and dealt with according to God's wrath against sin. One of these things must be your case and mine. Justified or judged, we must be. Oh, have you fled for refuge to the only Saviour? Do you believe God the Justifier? Do you believe He is righteous in justifying you through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Has He loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood? Dear reader, it is a personal question. Can you say, He has loved me and given Himself for me? Can you say, He was delivered for my iniquities, and was raised again for my justification? If not, look at that great white throne. There is no escape from those eyes. He who sits there knows you through and through. If you reject Him as Saviour, you must meet Him as Judge. To none, however, will that great throne be so terrible, as to the *many* who will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not

prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" What does Jesus say to such? "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

None shall escape who have refused to do the will of the Father. And "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John vi. 29.) Oh, ye who think you are doing great things in Christendom, do you believe in Him, even Jesus the sent One of the Father? Does faith rest in Him alone? If in anything besides Jesus and His finished work—be it baptism, mass, eucharist, the church, temperance, or any of the fashionable helps of this day—oh beware, lest you hear those awful words, "Depart from me." Rest not until you know your names are written in the book of life, for "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Yes, it surely will be so.

PLAIN PAPERS TO DWELLERS ON EARTH.

V.

WE will now trace the history of these people through the Book of Revelation, and see what their end is. Oh may the unconverted, who read this, take the solemn warning pointed out in

these scriptures. I rejoice for your sakes to think that it is yet the day of grace, and that the way of salvation is still open for all ; but we know not how long it will be open, it may close at any moment, though it is not yet too late. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. iii. 9.)

In Revelation iii. 10 we have this class of people mentioned for the first time. The Lord is there addressing the church in Philadelphia, and He tells them, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." There is a time of trial coming on the earth, and on those who dwell there ; but it will not touch those who are faithful to Christ. They will be kept out of it, altogether out of it, because the Christian is not of the world. (John xvii. 16.) So he is not (or ought not to be) mixed up with its pleasures or interests, and will not then share in its judgments. Here we get mentioned the two classes we began with, but what a marked contrast ! This time of trial will be bitter indeed ; it will come after the Lord has taken His own people out of this world to be with Himself.

In Revelation xi. we see two witnesses "standing before the God of the earth," and they go

forth and preach and testify against those who dwell on the earth; for their testimony is that the Lord is the rightful Owner of the earth; and it "torments" these people (ver. 10) because they are dwelling on it, and taking possession of it for themselves.

Satan is spoken of as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4), though it is really the Lord's. (Psalm xxiv. 1.) Satan is a usurper, and so are these dwellers; for they think not of Him to whom it rightly belongs, but possess it for themselves; and thus work Satan's will, though they think they are only pleasing themselves.

These witnesses then testify that He is the "God of the earth," and that He will take possession, too. They continue 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth; thus shewing their sorrow at the state of things, and bringing down instant judgment on any who dare molest them.

When their allotted time of 1260 days has expired, the beast—an agent of Satan—makes war against them and kills them, and heaps upon their dead bodies great indignities; they are left lying in the streets three days and a half.

Now is the time of rejoicing for those against whom these prophets preached, and verse 10 tells us they send gifts to one another as a token of their joy, and they think themselves secure, when lo! "the spirit of life from God entered into them [the dead bodies of the prophets], and they

stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud. and their enemies beheld them." (Vers. 11, 12.)

Then there was a great earthquake; the rest of those who were not slain by it, were affrighted; and well they might be, for in chapter viii. 13, an angel proclaims with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth"—three solemn woes; and in chapter vi. 10 the voices of those who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, cry to God to avenge their blood on "them that dwell on the earth;" now their prayer is heard. Ah! well may they tremble, it is too late for them to escape; they refused Christ, and the way of salvation through Him; then they refused to hear the two prophets; now the third woe of chapter viii. 10 is about to come upon them, the coming of Christ, chapter xi. 15—not the coming of Christ *for* His own (see 1 Thess. iv. 13–18)—that will have taken place before the events of this chapter occur at all—but the coming of Christ *with* His saints in judgment (see 1 Thess. v. 1–4; 2 Thess. i. 7–10), yet mark, even in their fear, to whom do they give glory? It is to the "God of heaven," not to the "God of the earth." They acknowledge Him, but as afar off, not as the possessor of the earth.

We have seen how this class of people refused the testimony of God's two witnesses ; what else befalls them ? Turn to chapter xiii. 8, there we find them worshipping the beast, and, through the beast, doing homage to Satan himself, the usurper of the earth ; the one, too, who in verse 6 blasphemes God, and His name, His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

In Revelation xiii. 14 we read that Antichrist—the second beast spoken of in this chapter—deceives “them that dwell on the earth.” They would not believe the truth in the day of grace, therefore now they are given over to believe a lie. As it was in the history of Cain, so here : it is self-will that is their ruin. In 2 Thess. ii. 8–12 we have a history of this same time, “that wicked ” being the Antichrist of Rev. xii. 11–18.

Chapter xviii. 2, 9 explains how those who were the inhabitants of the earth were mixed up in the wickedness of Babylon.

And now we have come to the end of their history, to their final judgment ; and yet, before that judgment falls, God deals again in mercy towards them, for in chapter xiv. 6, 7, He sends forth an angel to preach the “everlasting gospel ” to those who dwell on the earth : its message is this, “fear God and give glory to him ; for the hour of his judgment is come : and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

This will be a very different gospel from that which is now being proclaimed. At present it is the day of grace, but when the events of Revelation xiv. take place this day of grace will be over, and the everlasting gospel will go forth, which proclaims God as the Creator; the gospel that is now preached proclaims Him as a Saviour. After this gospel has gone forth, the Lord, the Possessor of heaven and earth, will come and take to Himself His great power and reign on the earth for 1000 years. His kingdom will be set up; the Jews will acknowledge Him as their King; Antichrist will be cast down, destroyed "with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8); and the true Christ will reign. Satan will be bound for the thousand years (Rev. xx. 3), and all wickedness will be kept under, for instant punishment will fall on all unrighteousness. Then "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 9.) All will be peace and harmony (Isa. xi. 6-9), evil will not be allowed; righteousness will prevail; cruelty, injustice, or oppression will not be permitted.

When the millennium or thousand years are over, Satan will be loosed again, but only for a little season; then he will be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 7-10.)

We have seen how the dwellers on earth worshipped the beast; in chapter xiv. 9-11 there

is a fearful description given of the judgment of those who did so. And what of the earth, their dwelling-place? Cain's posterity perished in the flood; now we find by comparing Revelation xiii. 8 with chapter xiv. 9-11 that those who dwell on the earth, and worship the beast, have their portion in the lake of fire. The earth itself is burnt up (see 2 Pet. iii. 12). In Revelation xx. 11 the heaven and the earth flee away from the presence of Him who sits upon the great white throne. From Job xv. 15 we learn that "the heavens are not clean in his sight," and we know from 1 John v. 19 that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," or, as it should read, "in the wicked one," that is, Satan. Here in Rev. xx. 11 both heaven and earth flee away at His presence.

Then we read of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. xxi. 1), and 2 Peter iii. 13 says, "wherein dwelleth righteousness;" no longer keeping down evil, as it was in the millennium, for here there is no sin, so righteousness no longer *reigns* over but *dwells* on the earth.

Let me in closing remind you, that the Lord is coming quickly for His saints (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20), and then all these solemn events will follow; but there is yet hope for the sinner, and we can still draw your attention to the latter part of verse 17, "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

J. R.

R.

"THE LORD HAS CALLED ME
TO-NIGHT!"

MANY miles up the great valley of the Nile stands a large village, called M—— Like most of the Egyptian cities and villages, there are heaps of ruins to be seen as you approach it, affording evidence that many generations have lived and passed away on this spot; and, when the rubbish became so great in one place that they could no longer level it down for human habitation, they withdrew to some place near by, and continued to build. But, to me, the most interesting spot in the village, as it now stands, is a small room, where the gospel has been preached, with clearness and power, for some years past, and which has proved, I doubt not, to be the birth-place of a good many souls. Those who have come under the power of the truth, generally meet together every night for praise and prayer, and there is opportunity, for any who can, to minister the word.

One evening, when they were thus assembled, the preacher was led to take as his text: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God,

for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. lv. 6, 7.) He pressed immediate repentance upon the impenitent, and the present acceptance of Christ for salvation. He unfolded the greatness of God's love and mercy, and His willingness to accept the vilest sinner at once, if he would only look to Christ.

At the close of the meeting all arose to disperse but an ill-visaged stranger, who was observed remaining in his seat. Some of them approached him, and began to speak with him. His only reply to them was: "*The Lord has called me to-night! The Lord has called me to-night!*" After further inquiry, it appeared that he was a young man belonging to a troupe of vile characters roaming about from village to village, to sing and dance, and cater to the basest lusts of human nature. He was of christian origin, but a wicked life of sin had long kept him at a distance from all who had any fear of God before their eyes. Hence, he had become an outcast and a vagabond; and, humanly speaking, he deserved to be treated as a moral leper. His troupe had reached this village, and he chanced to be passing this gospel room just as the people were going in, and it occurred to him that he would just go in awhile, and see what they were doing. But the God of all grace and compassion had His eye set in mercy upon the vile outcast. The words of truth reached his conscience and heart, and, after the

sermon, he remained, as it were, spellbound, in his seat. After talking with him, they were convinced that a work of God had taken place in his soul. Without question or hesitation, he abandoned his lewd companions, and during the few weeks he remained among those who had been God's messengers to him, he gave ample proof that the Lord had actually called him that night.

But he who sows to the flesh, must, in God's wise and holy government, reap corruption. His former life of sin had not failed to fill his body with the seeds of disease, which began to make rapid progress, and, in a short time, brought him to the grave. But he fell asleep in Jesus. Oh blessed, blessed sleep !

About the same time, there occurred another remarkable case in the same village. It was the case of a poor man who was literally a leper. He, too, was called effectually by the word of grace. He lingered on for some time, while the poor body was decaying and dropping to pieces, but was so happy in his soul, that he was a wonder to those who visited him. And, it is said that his last days were almost ecstatic, for his soul was filled with a sense of Christ's presence and love. Death had not a single terror for him. He knew that the blood of Christ had cleansed him perfectly, and that he was whiter than snow. All the Christians of the town were astonished that such a man could have such an experience

as that. All their holy men and famous monks, from St. Anthony down to the present, after years of painful penances and conflicts with demons, could never venture to affirm that they were as sure of going to Christ as if they were already there. And no wonder, for a *vile* mixture of works and faith never yet set a soul free and gave it a foretaste of heavenly blessedness. Well, the poor leper, saved by grace and filled with glory anticipatively, bore his testimony, and passed away to Christ. His body, too, rests in hope, for it will, ere long, be raised, glorious, incorruptible, and powerful. This, also, is a precious part of the blessed hope, given us through grace. We know that God will raise, or transform, these vile bodies, and give them a form and fashion like to Christ's own body in glory.

I believe that there are innumerable bodies of God's saints resting in that valley of the Nile, all precious to Him, and waiting for the long expected morning of resurrection. The learned and curious of this world ransack the ancient tombs to find the mummied remains of the old heathen, but God cares for the bodies of those who are sleeping in Jesus.

B. F. P.



SENSE OF LITTLENESS.

NOTHING gives such a sense of littleness as being in the presence of the Father, and Him who bore all the wrath due to me. What is a cipher? Put a unit or ciphers behind it, all go for nothing. It is the unit before it that gives the value. All the value of what Christ is comes out alongside of us.

Is the life you are leading down here expressive of fellowship with the Father and the Son? There may be infirmity in the walk. I do not say *must* be, but may be. We want to be more simple. Are we walking in the light? It is the light makes visible what is the darkness. We may be walking through dark thickets, but there is light overhead. The darkness is shewn in a thousand different little ways. G. J.

THE LORD IN THE MIDST.

I AM concerned about . . . and feel that if there be no power to act towards Him, there is no table of the Lord; because the Lord's table implies the Lord's active and operative and efficient presence by the Spirit in the body, with fear and trembling, because it is God who is working in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Though absent, I am present in spirit, and much exercised.

May, 1869.

G. J.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. H. P. Paris, Ontario. Should you not receive the tracts posted, you will find your question answered in a tract, "What was the sabbath?" &c., by "C. S." (G. Morrish, London.)

The sabbath was the last day of Judaism. Under law, man never could enter into rest. Jesus remained in the grave that day. The next day was the first of Christianity, the day on which the Lord arose from among the dead. In the New Testament it is called the first day of the week, or Lord's day. But it is never spoken of as the sabbath.

In the Acts, the sabbath means the Jewish sabbath—our Saturday. The one day was never changed into the other in scripture. You ask "Why was it changed, and what effected the change?" It was no doubt the gradual leavening of the assemblies by Judaism, the *sad return* to Judaism. The very use of the term sabbath is a sure sign of Judaism. You will see, however, the contrast between the sabbath and the Lord's day, in the tract referred to above. With the return of the sabbath, and Judaism, the rest and joy in God, brought to us by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from among the dead, has been almost lost. This subject you will find dwelt upon in the present articles in this magazine, "Paul's Defence of the Gospel."

LYING down at night too weary to pray—I should be sorry to know I was not with God.

G. J.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XX.

CHAPTER XXI.

BEFORE we pass into this final scene of glory, let us dwell a little longer on the awful contrasts of the judgment of the rest of the dead, who lived not again until the thousand years or millennium, was finished. They must stand before the great white throne. And they are judged according to their works. Every secret thing is brought out there. In their lifetime they refused to be iustified, now before that throne there is no escape from judgment. "They were judged EVERY MAN according to their works." And there was no escape from the lake of fire. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Now, the gospel is, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." It is written now, "All that believe are justified from all things." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Therefore

being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." How great then the contrast to be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, as the justified, with no condemnation, no charge possible against the justified; or to stand before the great white throne to be judged according to their works.

Is it not amazing that any soul can be indifferent with such an end before him? What a question for each reader of these lines, Are you justified by faith in the Lord Jesus, or are you hastening on to judgment; and then to the lake of fire? It may be said by some, that the lake of fire is a figure. If so, if a figure, what must be the reality of that everlasting punishment, where the beast and the false prophet will then be, "and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"!

Fellow believers, justified from all things, are we lifting up the warning voice to the multitudes hastening on to such a doom? We earnestly ask each reader to weigh this question, Am I hastening on to the lake of fire, or to the new heaven and new earth?

Verse 1. Mark, this verse is not, as often misquoted, new *heavens*, but a new heaven and a new earth. It is on this earth God has been dishonoured by man's sin. On this earth He has been glorified by the death of His Son. To this earth He shall return and reign a thousand

years. And the revelation here is as to this earth as new, and (we take it) the heaven connected with it. These words seem to indicate this much: "And there was no more sea." The material condition of this earth will be new.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." What a temple, the dwelling-place of God! The holy city, not as she is seen now on earth. Not of earth, but coming down from God out of heaven. What holiness! what everlasting purity! No taint of sin can come down from God: "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;" to be the eternal delight of Christ. God also has then His joy in men. He tabernacles with them. They shall be His people, God Himself shall be with them. No more tears, no more sorrow, crying, death, or pain. For the former things are passed away.

This is the blessed state of the new earth, in which for ever dwelleth righteousness. The new creation is now seen in all its fulness, and incorruptibility. It is the work of Him who sits upon the throne. "Behold I make all things new." Everlasting scenes of ineffable delight. Then shall He who loved us and gave Himself for us see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied; "Oh, how He loves." Poor thirsty soul, hear Him; He says, "I will give unto him that is athirst

of the fountain of the water of life freely." And, oh, careless soul, hear further. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." If living in sin, overcome by Satan, dream not of these eternal joys. None but the overcomers will be there. Tempted, and it may be they have fallen, they have passed through many a fierce conflict; but they have been restored, and made conquerors. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." There is no thought here that such shall cease to exist, or be annihilated by this second death. They did not cease to exist at the first death. The rich man did not cease to exist when he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. He had his part in the awful punishment immediately after closing his eyes on earth. And now in the eternal state all these shall have their part, or portion, in the lake of fire.

If we do not believe this then we are infidels, and pretend to know the future better than God, who thus gives us these solemn warnings of truth. Whether we believe it or not, will not alter it. If we answer to the above characters, and die unpardoned, such will assuredly be our everlasting, unending portion. Can anything equal

the madness of running such a risk of death and judgment, and eternal woe, for the husks of society or the pleasures of sin? May God use these warnings of His holy word to any unconverted reader of this paper.

At the end of verse 8 is another important division of this book. This closes the revelation as to the eternal state—the new heaven and the new earth. From verse 9 to xxii. 5, we are taken back to see the holy city, the bride of the Lamb, during the period of blessedness of the millennium. Then afterwards are concluding remarks to the end.

In chapter xvii. one of the seven angels had shewn John the awful character and judgment of the apostate city, the great harlot—MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, &c. Now one of the same seven angels shews him the holy city—the true church, the bride of the Lamb. That church which He has built, and which the gates, or administration of hell, have not prevailed against. How little men suspect which are the gates of hell in this world. That church is the body of the Christ, composed of all true believers—of all the overcomers since the day it was formed. (Acts ii.; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) These have been hated as He was hated, persecuted, and often put to cruel deaths. Yes, even by those who arrogantly call themselves the only true church; whilst the true members of the body of Christ have sighed,

groaned and died in the dungeons of the harlot's Inquisition. But have one of these members of Christ perished? They have been burnt at the stake, and their ashes cast into the Rhine or the Rhone. Look now at the sight presented. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light [or shining] was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

Not one whom the Father hath given unto Him shall be wanting there; all who are His having been raised, or changed, and taken up to heaven, as we have seen. Yes, He has come and taken them to the place prepared in the Father's many mansions—He has taken them to Himself. Not one was left behind; not a stone shall be wanting in the holy Jerusalem. Oh, what a contrast that great and holy heavenly Jerusalem to the great earthly city, the harlot of Rome. She descends out of heaven from God, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. She had been branded with shame, and every indignity here. Now she descends, having the glory of God. Yes, she is now the righteousness of God in Christ; as He is, so is she now. We shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. She is the delight of the heart of the Bridegroom—the

bride of the Lamb. No obscurity now; "her light was like unto a stone most precious," for ever reflecting His glory in the light of life; no spot of impurity there, but "clear as crystal."

No more gates of hell to hurt her; the ministers of Satan shall trample on her no more. Her security, her walls are great and high; no prowling "familiar" shall pass those walls. Never more shall one of her members be dragged before the monsters of hell; she now takes the perfect administration of the world; she has twelve gates, the perfect number for administration.

Yes, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, if the Lord tarry a little longer, we may be on the eve of fierce persecution, and some may yet be comforted with this revelation of the holy city. It is blessed to know with certainty that the gates of hell shall not finally prevail against a single stone of the holy Jerusalem. How oft we have to mourn over the sad divisions of the church as seen now. But then all is in divine order. The administration is also perfect on every side; a perfect combination of the heavenly rule of the church through the earthly administration of Israel restored, and in the land. How perfect the administration, and how perfect the measure of the city of God! It lieth perfect, according to the measure of the golden reed. It is represented by the figure of a cube. Its vastness and its

form alike proclaim that the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

It may be observed that in the eternal state as described in verses 2-5, there are no walls or gates; there righteousness for ever dwells. Here it reigns; hence the figures of security, its wall great and high, 12 by 12, 144 cubits high; walls of salvation, of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto glass. No defilement there, nothing to sully the walk, all is everlasting purity; its foundations are garnished with every precious stone, "every several gate was of one pearl." What a change from the universal corruption of this world. Then the administration of righteousness shall be purity itself. "And the street of the city is pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Every stone in that heavenly building shall reflect the glory of its builder. Such is the figure of the bride of the Lamb adorned for her husband. Everything in her now is suited to Himself.

"HE WALKED WITH GOD."

WE read of "all the holy prophets." We do not know how far that extends, but we know the seventh from Adam. That prophet walked with God, and was not, for God took him. And this ought to be the motto of every God-born man: "He walked with God." It ought not to be more true of Enoch than of us. G. J.

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

IV.

GALATIANS.

CHAPTER iii. 19. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" Why was it given? If God gave the promise to Abraham as an act of free favour, why was the law given afterwards? "It was added because of transgressions [or, "for the sake of transgressions"], till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.* We are told also: "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. v. 20.) Thus, by the giving of the law, all were proved guilty before God. When men had broken the known law of God, there could be no question left of their guilt, and need of a Saviour. The law could have nothing to do with Abraham's justification. For he had been reckoned righteous 430 years before the law was given.

Verse 21. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Man was dead in sins. The law could only condemn him; it could not give him life. He was guilty; it could not give him righteousness, as we have said. Neither life, nor righteousness

can be acquired by the law, that is God's conclusion; on the contrary, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin." Yes, after man has been tried in every way, this is the conclusion. Have you accepted God's conclusion? or have you been seeking righteousness by keeping the law? Well, this is God's conclusion—you are under sin. Is this, however, that you may be condemned? No; but "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Thus the law did bring out sin in open transgression, that grace might abound. Yes; the promise with all its eternal results, is given to them that believe. What a defence of the gospel is the principle of faith!

Now we see how the Jews were shut up, kept under law, until faith in Christ was revealed. They were, like children at school, learning what sin was, by open transgression. This was the purpose of God in it all. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." How often this scripture is perverted, as though it meant that Christians *are* under the law as a schoolmaster. So far from this being the case, it is the very opposite; indeed, it is the strongest contrast. Thus to put the Christian under law as a schoolmaster, would be to give up entirely Paul's defence of the gospel. It would be a

mark of those who say they are Jews and are not. (Rev. iii. 9.)

No; the apostle says distinctly, that after faith is come, or the principle of faith, we Christians are no longer under a schoolmaster, but are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And as such, ye are baptised *into* Christ, have put on Christ, and are one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, what can ye want more? "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Let us seek to understand this part of Paul's defence. Man with a heart, or nature, utterly at enmity against God, placed under the law of God, would be like a slave or servant in bondage told to do a task he had no heart to do, and, in fact, could not do: see Romans vii. 5, 7-21. The very law of his nature is sin, and the law only brings out that sin in transgression. In contrast with this, here is introduced a delivered soul, *a child of God*—having the holy nature of God, a nature or new being which delights to do the will of God. "Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Such an one is no longer under the yoke of bondage, the old schoolmaster; but is baptised into Christ, has put on Christ. All that he was, whether Jew or Greek, is put off. He is a new creature, a son and heir of God.

Let us carefully pursue this contrast. The schoolmaster, the law, could only condemn the acts or transgressions of man in his carnal, evil

nature. It could only, if alone, kill man. Man in that state could neither acquire life nor righteousness by the deeds of the law; for he is guilty before God. The conclusion is, that he is shut up under sin. And then comes death and judgment. Oh, how gracious of our God to give the promise 430 years before this testing of man came in!

But now Christ, the object of faith, the fulfilment of promise, is come. What a change! We are no longer under that schoolmaster. No longer is our sinful nature tried by law. No longer are we seeking life and righteousness by works of law: but are children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ. We now *have*, not are seeking, *life* and righteousness for evermore. And are we to give all up, and go back under the old schoolmaster?

Chapter iv. It is fully admitted that the Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, were in bondage under the elements or first principles of the schoolmaster. "But, when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The great truth of redemption is now brought into the defence. Redemption from Egypt was a picture of this redemption. The Israelites were in bondage, bitter bondage under Pharaoh.

Nothing could give them deliverance until the blood of the lamb was shed. They were then brought out of bondage; they passed through the water of the Red Sea, as a figure of death; and then, through the Jordan, they entered the land. All this was of God. Now was this accomplished that they might serve Jehovah in the land of liberty, or that they might go back to the slavery of Egypt's brick kilns?

If God sent Moses to effect that great deliverance, has He not sent His Son to effect the greater, the eternal redemption of His people, of His sons, by the blood of the Lamb? Now, is it that these sons are to serve the Father in holy liberty, or to go back to the slavery of the old man, under the old schoolmaster, the law? For Israel to have gone back to Egypt's slavery would have been to give up their redemption. They could not be in Egypt and in Canaan.

For the Christian to go back under law is to deny his full redemption; and hence you never find a soul under law able to say he has and enjoys the known fact of redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins. It is impossible to be on the two principles of law and of faith in Christ at the same time. Let it be remembered that every teacher, be he who he may, that seeks to lead souls under law, undermines the great foundation truth of redemption. It may seem strange, but it is no less true, that

the truth of redemption was well nigh lost for many centuries. How could such prayers have been adopted, if redemption had been known? If a reader of these lines thinks this too strong, let him find us a page in all the so-called Fathers, before the Reformation, that distinctly teaches what redemption is, as found in the scriptures. Or, if you do not know the Fathers, sit down and write two pages on redemption, and then compare what you write with the scriptures. Get a concordance, and read what you have written, and compare it with what you find in the word of God. You will find that, if you are under law by the teaching of men, redemption has no true meaning to you.

The Israelites could not possibly understand redemption whilst in the brick kilns of Egypt; neither can we, if still under the bondage of law. It is plain they must be redeemed from Egypt, in order to worship and serve Jehovah in the land of Canaan. It is equally true of us, we must be redeemed and have redemption, in order to worship and serve the Lord in the holiest.

Verse 6. We now come to another powerful argument in Paul's defence. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." He had said before, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish?"

Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" God had given this seal on the hearing of faith. And what a seal! But it was on them, not as bondslaves under law, but as sons of God! It was God who had done this, because they were His sons. And mark, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. Words utterly fail to set forth the superiority of this position or standing of the children of God, with a new nature, and the Spirit of the Son dwelling in our hearts; in contrast with the bondage of being in the fallen, sinful flesh under law. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.)

How senseless, then, the charge, that the principle of faith, and deliverance from the law, means liberty to break it! If under it, we do break it, for it can only provoke the evil nature into active transgressions. In contrast with this, see the believer a child of God—as born of God, he delights to do the will of his Father. And more, he has the Spirit of the Son dwelling in his heart. And this characterises him. He finds now in the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, a law, a principle superior to the law or power of sin in the flesh, so that he is delivered from the old standing he had as a slave. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant [or a slave], but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

What a triumph over the efforts of Satan to get the child of God back under law. Well might the apostle speak with such vehemence: to go back to the law was to give up everything.

STRENGTH AND COURAGE IN CONNECTION WITH SERVICE AND CONFLICT.

NOTHING could be plainer to one conversant with scripture than that the gospel is antagonistic to all the principles of this world, and that, carrying with it, as it does, the authority of God, it must call forth the resistance of Satan, and of men in alienation from God. And this necessarily puts the gospel in the place of conflict, and entails suffering in this world on those who will stand with and for the truth of the gospel. Paul was "the prisoner of the Lord," and suffered many and varied afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the gospel which he preached as an ambassador of Christ. And so has it ever been when any have stood for God and His truth in this evil world, of which Satan is the prince and God.

Man has fallen under Satan's power, and is in a state of apostasy and complete alienation from God. The cross was the full witness of this. "This is the heir," they said; "come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Man

has fallen under the power of one who has usurped the place of God in this world; and so whenever God has been pleased to assert His rights in this world, or to exercise His sovereign prerogatives, man has resisted; as Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Pharaoh, Amalek, the Canaanites, all resisted Jehovah in the fulfilment of His purposes as to Israel. And even the Israelites forsook their own Deliverer; and when He sent them prophets, they beat, and stoned, and killed them; and when He sent His Son, they nailed Him to the cross. Jews and Gentiles united in putting to death Jesus the Son of God; and the full character of man's wickedness was thus manifested.

But it was by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" that He was delivered; and by His death redemption for guilty man was accomplished. In His death the foundation of eternal salvation was laid, and the ground for the display of greater and higher glories than those of the kingdom of Israel. God raised up Jesus from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand, and sent down the Holy Ghost to gather out from Jews and Gentiles a people to His name.

This work is being accomplished through the preaching of the gospel. But it is the gospel preached in the name of the despised and rejected Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Ghost sent

down from heaven, that so runs counter to all that is in the natural heart of man, and calls forth resistance from both man and Satan.

The instruments God uses are only poor, weak, defenceless creatures, without any carnal weapons to carry on their warfare. Yet the charge was given them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

It is easy to see that for the carrying out of this charge some *unseen* strength was needed. We see, for example, a few fishermen preaching the gospel, and thousands bowing to the authority of that name which they preached, while the world-power sought to silence them and stop their work. Yet undismayed these poor, despised fishermen go on with their work. What was the secret? *God was with them.* The rulers lay their hands on them and put them in the common prison, and the next morning they are found again standing in the temple and preaching to the people "all the words of this life." God was with them, and bonds and prison bars were nothing to Him, if He saw fit to exercise His power. And even though the apostles might be bound, the gospel could not be bound. It was when bound with a chain that Paul preached the gospel before kings and rulers; and even when in the lion's mouth he was strengthened, so that by him the preaching might be fully known, and all the Gentiles hear. And he was delivered out.

of the mouth of the lion. (2 Tim. iv. 17.) Here was true strength and real courage, but it was strength in the midst of utter weakness, and courage when there was no hope in human resources.

It was the power of God. The creature instruments were in communion with Him, and hence courage which nothing could daunt filled their hearts. It was all of God, who wrought in them effectually for the carrying out of His purposes.

There are many instances given us in the word of God in which we see the display of this power and courage in carrying out the will of God. But the first chapter of Joshua is important as giving us the conditions governing these things. Three times over the Lord exhorts Joshua in that chapter to "be strong and of a good courage." There was *the work* to be done, the *principle* on which it was to be done, and *the ground of strength and courage for it*.

1. The *work* to be done was the dividing of the land among the tribes of Israel. "Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them." The land to be divided was a land in which there were nations mightier than Israel—a land of "giants," and "chariots of iron," and "cities great and fenced up to heaven." These nations must be overcome

in order to divide the land, and for this great work strength and courage were needed.

2. *Obedience* was the principle on which this work was to be carried on, and the condition of success. "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Here we can see there was no way to succeed but by obedience. Joshua was not to turn from the law to the right hand or the left. The words of the law were not to depart out of his mouth: he was to meditate upon them day and night; and the result would be a prosperous way and good success.

The importance of this cannot be overestimated. If we have to do with God, His will must be everything. It is His to command, it is ours to obey. We may say we are not under the law, as Israel was, which is quite true; but we are none the less called to obey. God has indeed revealed Himself to us in grace, giving His

beloved Son, and in Him all blessing; and by faith we partake of the benefits; but while the blessing is by grace and through faith, it also commands the obedience of the heart.

Paul, as an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, received grace and apostleship "to the obedience of faith among all nations," for Christ's name; and the mystery kept secret since the world began was also "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." There is indeed no other way of going on with God. Our blessing is inseparably bound up with lowly submission to His will.

Now God has made known His will to us in His word. His will, His purposes, His counsels, are all unfolded there. And if we would know His will, and be obedient, we must attend to His word. The Lord said to Israel: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates." (Deut. xi. 18-20.)

Such were God's commands to Israel. And if the words of the law had such importance for Israel; if those words were to fill their hearts,

and occupy their thoughts day and night, in the house, and by the way, lying down, and rising up; if Joshua was not to turn from the words of the law, to the right hand or to the left, but to have them in his mouth, and meditate upon them night and day, in order to prosper and be successful; *how much more* ought the revelation God has given *us* to command the obedience of our hearts, since our whole blessing is bound up in this revelation! It is in the reception of the truth, and as the truth forms the heart and the conscience, that we receive and enjoy blessing. God's word is bread to the soul, as it is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It is thus that we grow spiritually, and learn God's mind, so that we may do His will, and have communion with Him. In this way the life, ways, actions, words, motives, desires and affections of God's people are formed, and in a practical way become a testimony to the truth and grace of God. And God will manifest Himself with and for those who are thus practically governed by His word.

FELLOWSHIP in connection with *light* is a great truth. Though men call it a truism, God is God. Come what will, God will take care of His own character, though you cannot read it—and this is rest.

G. J.

THE NEW DOCTRINE. IS IT TRUE?

ONE writes: "I can scarcely bring myself to believe that you really think that in these articles of — you find him giving 'an awful denial of the finished work of atonement on the cross!'" This writer is actively engaged in spreading these articles; and it would seem many others are not aware, or have no idea that such is the teaching of these articles. Let us then inquire, if it is so, could anything except an attack on the Person of our Lord be more serious? If it be not so, we beg of the author to utterly recall such articles as cannot be otherwise understood than as denying that the complete work of atonement was finished on the cross, in the *body* of Jesus Christ once.

Now, for the present, we will not pursue the way he seeks to prove this new doctrine, but simply inquire what that doctrine really is. We surely are agreed that propitiation is one chief part of atonement. Does he then teach that propitiation was made on the cross, in the body prepared for Jesus Christ? Or, does he teach it was not made on the cross, but out of the body after death? His words are clear and distinct. "Where and when has propitiation by blood been made by Him? The answer is simple:— In heaven, and after death!"

Again, "He made propitiation in the heavenly

sanctuary, as High Priests after death, but before ascension."

Mark there is no thought of propitiation or atonement on the cross—"After death, but before ascension."

It is quite certain that he teaches that atonement was not made on earth, on the cross, but after death, in the separate state. These are his words: "Atonement then was complete ere He rose."

Now, it is most misleading also to give the resurrection of the Lord Jesus for our justification, the rending of the veil, &c., as proof of this new doctrine. No Christian doubts that these blessed facts prove the atoning work was done, but by His death and blood shedding on the cross. Who ever heard before, either in scripture or out of scripture, that the atonement or propitiation was made in heaven after death, before He rose from the dead?

If this is not the new doctrine of the author, may God in mercy give him grace to disown it in clear terms that can leave no mistake.

This, then, is the naked truth. He teaches in these articles a doctrine that sets aside, as clearly as words can speak, the real atoning sacrifice of the scriptures, by which Jesus obtained for us eternal redemption—the atonement effected in the body of Jesus on the cross—by which God is glorified and the believer perfected in perpetuity.

And what does he give us in the place of true atonement and propitiation on the cross ?

He gives us propitiation made in heaven, after death, before resurrection !

When atonement was made, Jesus was forsaken of God : " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " Was He forsaken after death ?

" For he hath made him to be sin for us." Was He made sin after death ?

He was bruised for our iniquities. Was this in heaven after death ? Did all God's billows roll over His soul, in those hours of darkness on the cross ; or after death in heaven ?

My reader, this is a serious error, too serious to be treated with indifference. We feel sure many have been deceived with the collateral reasonings on priesthood which cover this new doctrine, and only perplex the reader.

Surely this awful doctrine only needs to be clearly understood to be rejected by all.

No doubt it is felt by some to be almost impossible for one so gifted and respected to fall, by a reasoning mind, into error so fatal.

Oh, let us not deceive ourselves. What are we, except as kept by the power of God in humility, and dependence on the Holy Ghost ?

The Lord lead us into much prayer for one another ; and for our brethren, that they may give up these errors. He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever.

No Christian doubts our great High Priest entered heaven by His own blood. But this was after He had obtained eternal redemption for us on the cross. "And you . . . *hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death,*" &c. (1 Col. i. 20-22.) Yes; He made peace by the blood of the cross. The evidence of this is His own Person on the right hand of the majesty in heaven. We most solemnly declare, if we give up the finished work of propitiation completed on the cross, we have no other foundation on which our souls can rest. "It is finished."

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

2. "E. T.," Stevenage. The last trump spoken of in 1 Corinthians xv. 52, has no connection with the seven trumpets of Revelation viii., ix. The last trumpet has reference to the call of the church; and the seven trumpets to events that will take place after the church is gone.

The expression, "last trump," so far as we understand it, has reference to the last trump, or sound of the trumpet, at the break up of the Roman camp. "When they are to go out of their camp, the trumpet gives a sound, at which time nobody lies still, but at the first intimation they take down their tents, and all is made ready for their going out; then do the trumpets sound again, to order them to get ready for the march. . . . Then do the trumpets give a sound the third time, that they are to go out, in order

to excite those that on any account are a little tardy, that so, no one may be out of his rank when the army marches. Then does the cryer stand at the general's right hand, and asks them thrice, in their own tongue, whether they be now ready to go out to war or not. To which they reply as often, with a loud and cheerful voice, saying, "We are ready." (Josephus, "Wars of the Jews," book iii., v.) They then, when they heard the trump, set fire to their camp, and every man marched in his rank.

Thus we believe the apostle uses this most striking illustration, as also in 1 Thessalonians iv.

The first trumpet sounded and announced the coming of the Lord in the beginning of the church's history. Then, after the sleep of centuries, again for fifty years the trumpet has sounded the second time. But, oh! when the last trump sounds, what a break up! All left to be burned up. And each redeemed saint shall rise in his rank, to be for ever with the Lord.

Does not the Roman camp put to shame the church of God? Can it answer with a cheerful voice, "We are ready"? What a question to the sleeping church, Are ye ready or not to meet your Lord? How does the reader answer that question?

In reply to your other question, we see no reason whatever to suppose that the "white horse," in Revelation vi. 2, might mean the preaching of the gospel previous to the three following judgments. The voice of thunder in verse 1; and the call of one of the four living creatures, saying, "Come" (the words *and see* should be omitted); and the same cry for judgment in the next three, calls, "Come"—all this

implies speedy judgment after the church is taken to heaven. Judgment from the throne of God must be in righteousness. Had the first been the mighty conquest of the gospel, the second would be out of place—peace taken from the earth.

3. "J. H.," Glasgow. The breaking of the bread, or loaf, at the Lord's table, is simply following the example of the Lord Jesus. He brake it and gave it to His disciples. It was no longer to be the broken bread, or lamb of the passover; but He Himself, as taking its place. He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." We should not be occupied then, with curious questions, but let our thoughts dwell on Him in holy remembrance. Precious privilege!

In John xiii. 2 it should be "during supper." And it is very remarkable that John does not name the Lord's supper. It was evidently during the paschal supper, or whilst eating the passover, that Jesus took the sop and gave it to Judas. There would be no sop at the Lord's supper. "He then having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night." Thus Judas did not take the Lord's supper. But it does appear that the Lord washed his feet. See verses 10, 11, 21-30. What will it be for him ever to remember the tender hands that washed his feet? And what will it be for the mere professor to remember, in like manner, the many mercies ministered here in the same way and by the same Jesus. The remorse of Judas, and of all such, will be beyond what any words can express. It is perhaps the most solemn warning in the word of God.

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

V.

GALATIANS.

CHAPTER IV. The Jews had been slaves under the bondage of the law. They had a nature utterly opposed to the law they were commanded to obey. The Gentiles had also been slaves to demons, which by nature are no gods. And now they were saved—known of God—why should they go back to slavery and be in bondage? “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.” On this account, Paul says, “I am afraid of you.” Is it not terrible that the old feast days to demons have been turned into fasts and feasts of so-called saints? How Paul does mourn over such in the tenderness of the bowels of Christ!

He, however, turns to his defence of the Gospel. Verse 21. “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” Mark, they were professing Christians—they had no thought of giving up Christ or justification by faith, but they desired to have both principles, or both Christ and the law—exactly like great numbers now, who have no thought of giving up the principle of justification by faith, but having entered in by that wicket-gate, they now

desire to have the law as a rule of life; or, in plain words, they desire to have both the principle of faith and the principle of law. May the Lord enable us to help rather than offend such. You that do thus desire to be under law, do ye not hear the law? Turn to Genesis, and read the history of Ishmael and Isaac. The son of the bondwoman, and the son of the free woman: these are the types of the two principles, the flesh under bondage, and the child and heir of promise—the principle of law, and the principle of faith. The apostle, in his defence, shews justly, that these two could not be allowed to co-exist. The bondwoman and her son must be cast out. The one should not be heir with the other.

And as it was then, just as the son of the bondwoman persecuted him that was born of the free, so it is now. “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.” Has not this been the experience of all the centuries since these words were written? How strange then, that not only the ministers of Satan want to displace Christ and faith by the principle of law and works, but many true Christians are so misled as to desire to have the principle of law *and* Christ!

Let us examine this great mistake a little further. Many have the thought, that to give up

the law, as Ishmael was given up, would be to become lawless, or Antinomians. But, if so, how could the Spirit, through Paul, thus shew us it must be given up, just as Ishmael was cast out? Are you quite sure you have by faith in Christ the salvation of your soul, and that that salvation is eternal? No doubt these Galatians had thus received the gospel as Paul had preached it to them—the very gospel he had received from Christ. It was a great matter to have seen and heard the man that received his gospel from Christ—one who had, in spirit, seen Him and heard Him. Then what did they want with the law? And what do you want with it?

Chapter v. will shew us they wanted the law for walk, just as you want it for walk. You find you have still an evil nature, called in scripture, “the flesh,” or, sin in the flesh. You find this lusts after evil things, and is a source of great distress to you. Further, you say that evil, vile nature, flesh, must be put under restraint of law, or responsibility to keep the law, or it will break out in iniquity. This looks very plausible, and it is the object of the Spirit to utterly disprove all this false reasoning in this very chapter.

We cannot give Ishmael the least room in the house without its being an offence to Isaac. We cannot allow the principles of law an atom, but, in like proportion, we displace Christ. Thus

it is strongly stated: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

You say, Yes, that is strong language, but we are not seeking to be justified by law. What then? To walk by law? Yes, you find the flesh still in you, and it lusts to do evil things, and you want to put that evil nature or flesh under the law, so that you may walk in righteousness, or, in other words, that you may attain to righteousness of walk. Is not this the thin end of Satan's wedge? Will it not surely betray us into seeking justification by works of law? The whole thing is a mistake.

For first, the flesh or carnal mind "is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 6-9.) It had been tried for 1,500 years. The root of this mistake we are dwelling upon, is ignorance of, or denial of the total ruin of man in sin. And though the flesh is still in us, we are not in the flesh; we are not on that ground. There is no improvement of the flesh thought of in the gospel, any more than a gardener thinks of improving the old briar on a stock rose.

Secondly, the flesh is utterly disallowed, and judged on the cross of Christ. That which the

law could not do, God has, "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.) We are not to cultivate it by the law, for the only effect of law on our sinful flesh is to provoke transgressions. (Rom. vii. 7-25.)

We always find it so. To place our sinful nature under law, can only prove what it is--utter enmity against God--and thus bring us into bondage and misery. Surely, the result of man being placed on the principle of works of law, as seen in the Jews rejecting and killing the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to have been enough to shew the Galatians the utter uselessness of going back to it, for even righteousness of walk.

And is it not so again with those who take the place of Jews, and are not, just in proportion as the principle of seeking salvation by works, and observance of days, and pretended holy sacraments--nay, in proportion as the *principle* of law is held for righteousness--in that proportion are the true living Person of Christ, and eternal salvation, rejected? And where there is power, He is still persecuted, and killed in His members.

Verse 6. This is a very important verse, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Man is so bad, that for justification, neither the principle of law nor

lawlessness can make him a bit better or worse. He is *concluded* already, under sin and judgment. Mark this well, if you are still in your sins, and in sin. You cannot be better or worse as to justification before God. But, if in Christ, your justification cannot be one whit more or less. If in the flesh, you are completely lost. If in Christ, ye are complete in Him. Nothing can add to your completeness in Christ. Have you this faith?

Now, faith must have an object, and the object of faith, true faith, is Christ. Is He the object of our faith? Then we shall be transformed by the object, and changed into His blessed likeness, soon to be like Him. But what is He? The perfect expression of love: for God is love, and thus faith worketh by love.

Here, then, we have the two principles fairly brought out, even as to walk, or a holy life. The principle of law availeth nothing, either for justification, or holiness of life. What is holiness but likeness to Christ, to walk as He walked, down here? Here, then, is a fact: the law, so pressed by deceivers in our day, and by many sincere persons, but deceived, has no power to work or produce a holy life, or a walk like Christ. Faith has power, for it is wholly occupied with Christ, and the more we do simply believe Him, as God speaking to us—the more we study Him—the more we are like Him. Let us,

then, *reckon* ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. And then also that life and new nature, we, as believers, have in Him, has now the capacity to enjoy Him.

This scripture, then, gives us this defence of the gospel, that the law is of no avail whatever, any more than license or lawlessness, circumcision or uncircumcision, for a holy life; but that other principle is, which Christ had taught His servant Paul, "Faith which worketh by love."

Now, since Christ had taught Paul the one principle, He could not possibly have taught these deceivers the opposite. "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you." Thus we learn that the leaven of Judaism in this day, is not of Christ. If it be not Christ, then, that is leading men, in our day, to ritual and legality, who is it? Who is it that is seeking to leaven the whole lump again with Romish salvation on the principle of works? Can there be a question that it is Satan now, as then, seeking to destroy your soul by leading you from Christ and eternal salvation in Him, and a holy life by faith in Him, working by love?

However gorgeous and unscriptural the ritual, however sweet the music or eloquent the tongue of men, however much dancing, bazaars, and worldly pleasure he may bait his hook with,

remember, it is the eternal damnation of your soul he seeks. Nay, do we need to say it is Romish? Is it not all fast becoming alike? As to complete and eternal salvation in Christ, who knows this, and enjoys it, on the mixed principles of these days? As to holiness, where do you find it? Can you talk of likeness to Christ, and mix up with the world, go to balls or dancing, cricketing, football, and bazaars, as now carried on? Would Christ be found in such places?

All these are allowed and practised in these days, thus utterly denying that which is so prominent in this epistle—the Cross. I am crucified to the world. What has the law, then, to say to a crucified man? And what are the sports of the world to such an one? To be circumcised, or to adopt the principle of law, was to set aside the Cross, and its offence would be gone. What fools Satan can make of men and women! They will wear a cross, and utterly reject the complete salvation wrought by Christ, and will seek to be saved by works of law, as directed by men!

The apostle could wish that those who made so much of circumcision, would really circumcise themselves, so to speak: “I would they would cut themselves off that trouble you.” But faith alone can understand how really reckoning ourselves to be dead, can be one great step towards practical holiness. Let us next look at facts.

STRENGTH AND COURAGE
IN CONNECTION WITH SERVICE
AND CONFLICT.

II.

THIRDLY, The *ground* of strength and courage is the fact that God has commanded, and is with the one who obeys. "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The difficulties might be like mountains, the enemy might be great and powerful, but Jehovah was greater than all, and was with His obedient servant, so that he had nothing to fear. He had delivered Israel out of Egypt, and brought them through the Red sea, the wilderness, and the Jordan; and He who had done this could lead them on to victory. He could give strength and courage against which no foe could stand.

This same strength and courage we need. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," it is said, where it is a question of Satan's power and wiles. And when Christianity began to decline, and Timothy was losing heart, the apostle Paul encouraged him in these words: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony

of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner : but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God ;" and again, " Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Timothy needed this encouragement, and *we* need it ; and, what is more, God is able to give it, and will give it to those who go on in dependent obedience to His will.

But we need to have *faith in God*. There is a maxim of this world which says, " Knowledge is power ;" but with the believer power is rather connected with " faith." Faith brings *God* in, and to *His* power there is no limit. Hebrews xi. gives us many examples of this faith which acted with God, and in which His power was displayed. Moses " endured as seeing him who is invisible." " Through faith," they " subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight ; turned to flight the armies of the aliens." In the midst of weakness *faith made them strong*. As Paul also said, " When I am weak, then I am strong."

" Have faith in God," Jesus said to His disciples, and then adds, " For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that

those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." And how could it be otherwise if there is the faith that brings God into the matter? He who created the mountains can surely remove them also, if He be pleased to do so. The real question is, Are we walking with Him? Have we the knowledge of His will, so that we can act with confidence? Can we bring Him into what we are doing? Are we standing with Him and for Him in the carrying out of His will and His purpose, so that we can connect His name with our service? If this be so, no difficulty can be too great. We can go forward in the name of the Lord with strength and courage of heart, and undismayed by all the power that Satan may raise up against us.

And here let us observe that *diligence of heart* is needful, and I may add as of equal importance, *prayerful dependence*. "Meditating day and night," and "praying always," is what the warriors of Christ are called to. Joshua was to meditate on the words of the law day and night, and the Ephesian saints were to pray always with all prayer and supplication for all saints. Paul says to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all." Oh! if we were more diligent as to the word of God and prayer, how different our state would be! What fervency of heart in all our service, and what

devotedness to Christ and His people, there would be; and how much greater blessing would be enjoyed!

How much we lack this diligence of heart! How many moments every hour, and hours every day, are wasted—time that might be given up to prayer and meditation on God's blessed word; in which we should find the Holy Ghost refreshing our souls, and filling them with that which flows down from the heart of Christ in glory. Hours spent in foolish talk and idle gossip, grieving the Spirit, blighting spiritual growth, and drying up the springs of divine love in the soul, might be spent in holy, edifying conversation about Christ and His things. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." (Mal. iii. 16.) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another." (Col. iii. 16.) In this we need diligence of heart, so that the Lord may be honoured, and our blessing and the blessing of others secured.

I may add also, that strength and courage are needed more in a day of decline than when all is going well. There is the enemy to contend with, and instead of having the support of our brethren, we may meet with that which chills the heart,

and fills it with sorrow. Here the heart is tested, and God only can sustain.

There is not only conflict with a common enemy, but there is the state of the saints to be borne as a burden on the heart. *Will you bear this burden?* Will you cleave to the saints in the power of divine love when they turn away from you, as all in Asia did from Paul? Will you seek to serve them when you are misunderstood, misrepresented, or even maligned, as Paul said to the Corinthian saints, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved"? The state of the saints with whom we have to do will often be the means of testing the state of our own hearts. It is easy to love my brethren when they love me, and heap their favours upon me. But do I love them just the same when they turn against me, or forsake me? Do I still cling to them when they have given me up? Do I intercede for them night and day, when perhaps they are only speaking evil of me? The real question is, have I got the heart of Christ about the saints? And do I see Christ's glory bound up in them? Then I shall act toward them according to His heart, and seek His glory in connection with their state, regardless of personal rights or present advantage. Paul could appeal to God as his witness, how he longed after all the Philippian saints in the bowels of Jesus Christ. It was whole hearted

devotion to the saints, for the sake of Christ, and as having the heart of Christ about them. And this too we need to have ; but it requires strength and courage to persevere in it, and the more so, if the saints are in a low and carnal state. And we need to be continually cast on God who alone can give strength amid weakness, and lead us on to victory. Diligent seeking of God's face, and patient waiting on Him for His will, His help and His guidance, are indispensable. Why have we no strength ? Why is there decline amongst us ! Why breaking of ranks, and scattering of the saints ? Is it not because we have not lived close to Christ, and gone on in humble dependence on God ? And God's Christ, God's truth, and God's people have not had their rightful place in our affections. We have seen one growing careless, and another going wrong, and we have perhaps talked about them, and criticised them, when we ought to have been on our faces interceding for them.

But will we now lay to heart our own state and that of our brethren ? Will we own our slackness of soul—our *guilty* carelessness—and with diligence of heart seek God's face, and walk with Him ? Then we might expect His blessing and the enjoyment of His favour which is better than life. There is no time for loitering, no time for idle gossip, no time for pampering the flesh, and feeding it with the vanities of this world.

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Eph. v. 14–16.)

The blessed Lord give the writer and the reader strength and courage in this evil world, to live for Himself and for His own, serving Him and them in lowly grace, until we are taken out of the scene of conflict and service to rest in the eternal brightness of His own presence, and in the joy of His unchanging love.

A. H. R.

“THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

XXI.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 22. “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” How high the privilege! How near the relationship! How deep the enjoyment! How sweet the communion! No temple; nothing to intervene; nothing to separate! No need of sun, or moon, or creature helps: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Its influence on the world, too, is very remarkable. “And the nations of them which are

saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." This shews clearly that this is the heavenly church during the millennium. Oh, how blessed; never shall defilement enter there. Nothing abominable or false can ever enter; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. What will it be to be there!

The false church has polluted the nations like a stream or river of poison. What a contrast!

CHAPTER XXII.

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Is it not most blessed to contemplate the church glorified in incorruptibility, and purity, and the channel of blessing to the nations, like a river of life? One with Christ, it stands the tree of life for the healing of the nations, with its fruit ever fresh. Oh, blessed scene! and so near! But even now should it not answer to all this?

Jesus said to the Father, "And the glory that thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Words seem to fail to describe that glory, and hence these marvellous figures: every one of which is in direct contrast with the great city of iniquity, Babylon the great. The one is the harlot of the

kings of the earth; the other the bride, the Lamb's wife. The one proceeds from the polluted city of Rome; the other is holy, descending out of heaven from God. The one ever seeks the glory of this world; the other is seen having the glory of God. The one spreads darkness over the nations like a black cloud; the other has her light like unto a stone most precious. The one has spread wars and devastation on earth; the other dwells in heavenly security, with her walls great and high.

The one has drenched the earth with the blood of the saints; from the other proceeds righteous administration to every part of the earth. The gate in scripture was the place of administration. She 'had twelve gates: three looking every way. The one was the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit; the other is divine purity—pure gold like unto glass—perfect purity, everlasting righteousness. She is adorned with the precious stones like the stones on the breastplate of Aaron—the Urim and Thummim that sparkled in the radiance of the presence and glory of God.

The sins of Babylon, the harlot—apostate Christendom—had reached up to heaven. But in the heavenly city, the bride of the Lamb, "every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Every act of government is

pure and righteous, and all her intercourse absolute righteousness for evermore. No stain of sin, no spot of defilement. Babylon had her temples, and her so-called saints and intercessors, to hide God from man. But in the heavenly city "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Yes, God will have His delights with the sons of men. The Lamb will have His unhindered delight with His bride, the church.

On earth the harlot seeks the light and help of the supreme government of the world, and, like the moon, all that reflects it. Not so the heavenly: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The great harlot did corrupt the earth: "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." But the nations that are saved shall walk in the light of the heavenly city. And instead of a black stream of corruption, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

If the tyranny of Rome has been the curse of the nations, the very leaves of the tree shall then be for the healing of the nations; and there shall be no more curse. No, the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. Oh, blessed reign of

God and the Lamb! And His servants shall serve Him; they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. No more night of darkness or obscurity; the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for the ages of ages.

Now the true church, the bride of the Lamb, will not only be the blessed contrast of the false church, or great harlot, but there is also another deeply interesting inquiry: Should not the true church of God, all the holy building built by Christ, have answered even now to what she will shortly be as here revealed? And, further, if the church has utterly failed in this, her heavenly character, ought not then each believer to seek to answer to this heavenly character, in contrast to all that is worldly and carnal around? Is it not the desire of Christ that we should not be of the world even as He is not of this world? If we are found in Babylon, and mixed up with her ways, how can we expect to be found in the holy city having the glory of God? Is it not true that, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him?

It may be asked, Are these things really facts, or are they the mere opinions of men; things that may never come to pass, or if they do, at some far distant period of time, that will not affect us? "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the

holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." Let it be noticed that both in the introduction and closing remarks of this book the revelation of God is limited to His servants. It would appear then that none will understand these sayings but those who are His servants. Thus we may ask ourselves the solemn question, Am I seeking my own interest, or am I truly seeking to serve Him? Is it then to be wondered at, that if those who are not His servants seek to interpret or understand this book, all will be, as it is, contradiction and confusion?

Verse 7. Do not say these are far distant events. Jesus says by His angel, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Three times in these concluding verses does He repeat those three words, "I come quickly." Do we believe Him? Are we really looking for Him? Then this book will be intensely interesting to us. When God spoke to Daniel he was to seal up the prophecy unto the time of the end—that time of three years and a half, which is so fully brought before us in this book. But to John He saith, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." May we read these things with this conviction, that the time is at hand! Yes, Jesus is coming quickly. Do you say, How can this be; we have been led

to expect a great change for the better before He comes? When He comes will there be such unrighteousness in trade, such prevailing sin and iniquity as there is now? Hear the solemn answer of the Lord: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Do not say, If that is the case it seems to be all in vain to make any effort. Why should we seek to serve Him by winning souls to Him? Hear what He says, "And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me," &c. Thus speaks the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Surely this is a most solemn moment in which we live! Is it a small privilege to have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb, and thus have right to the tree of life? And is it a small matter to any who may read these lines to be shut out with dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie?

How solemn the warning of this last sentence. How many spend their lives and talents in writing fiction, or a lie; and how many more love to read them! Oh, let such not forget this last warning! Satan is a liar, and fiction is one of his most deadly instruments in the last day in leading souls to destruction.

A few months ago a preacher was holding children's services on the shore of a watering place. Some two thousand souls were listening; great numbers of these had been devouring fiction until the very time he began. They sang a hymn, in which the readers of fiction or lies joined. One line they sang was, "I am following Jesus all the way," and how many might have added, "with a novel on my knees!" It was an awful sight; no sooner had the speaker closed, than the novels were again devoured. The Gospel had been earnestly proclaimed, but there was no wonder that the preacher was discouraged, and said he should probably not be there next year.

Let us, then, not forget that the loving and making a lie is classed with the greatest crimes. *Softly mingled the sighs of the sea and the sweet strains of that hymn*, but what was it all in the sight of the Lord? We were sorry the preacher did not lift up a warning voice; perhaps he thought if he did hundreds of his hearers would come no more. Thus is drifting the hollow profession of these last days. Surely each one may say, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe." He alone can keep us by His mighty power, through faith unto salvation at the coming of the Lord.

We have still the closing words of Jesus. Lord, grant that our ears may be open to hear.

LETTER FROM THE EAST.

*Alexandria, Egypt,**Dec. 31st, 1886.*

DEAR BROTHER ———,

Your last, of the 15th, came to hand on the 25th. It contained ———. I am exceedingly thankful to the Lord for it, because I had been feeling that the time had come for me to go down to Egypt, and visit the saints. In fact, I had told my wife to get all my clothes ready, for it seemed that I was soon to start on my journey. Hence, when your letter came, it found me quite prepared, and I took the first steamer for this port, and arrived here last night.

After I wrote you last, I closed up my printing work for the present, and on the 25th of last month, I took an inland journey, to see some of the saints at Deis Mimas, and was about a fortnight, and now have reached Egypt. I am in perfect peace, although, if I would look forward a little in a human way, it would seem that a good many sorrows are in store. However, I am in peace, and desire to go forward step by step, as guided and sustained of the Lord. I have already had some joy here, in finding that the Arabic-speaking brethren in this place have not been mixed up with the recent troubles that

so scattered the soldier and sailor brethren. I have not seen them all yet, and the old leading brother is now absent, but I learned from his family, last night, that he has had nothing to do with the for a good while.

Please the Lord, I shall proceed on my journey the first of next week, from whence I may drop you a line, after I shall have seen how things are. I forwarded them a large box of books last month. I too, like you, have of late been much encouraged in that line. I do not remember whether I mentioned to you previously, that, for some time past, there has been a good deal of interest in reading, in a district just north of Mount Hermon. I have sent them supplies of books and tracts, and had another request just before I left Beyrout. It is a place I have never visited, but, by means of some whom we know who are there from Mount Lebanon and Beyrout, and who have a good knowledge of the simple truth, an interest sprang up in the minds of many there since the early part of the summer, and it is still increasing. Among others, my correspondent mentions some schoolmasters, some Greek priests, and, in his last letter, he tells me that the Bishop himself was recently visiting there, and, by chance, found a gospel volume, called "Grace and Truth," in the house of one of his parishioners, and got to reading it, and he became so much interested, he took it away with him, telling its owner that

he could go and get another copy where he had obtained that one.

I have learned to greatly value awakenings of this nature here in the East. When God's Spirit moves minds and hearts in a quiet and unofficial way to read and hear the precious truth, without any excitement, and without the thought that they are getting a hold of a new *religion*, they seem to find in the books an unfolding of Christianity, which they have so long professed without understanding it. We do not attack what they have got, but quietly, on the part of God, explain in love what the Christianity is which we all profess, or, rather, what Christ is whom we all confess as our Saviour. The great thing we all need is, to go on patiently with God, with the eye and heart set on Christ and coming glory.

But I must write very briefly, for I have a good many to look after during my few days' stay in this city.

I cannot see what there is in the title of my tract to shock any christian person, or give the impression that it means to affirm that atonement was made in heaven. "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men?" is, to my mind, a similar sentence, and it does not imply that the Lord is going to affirm that it was *of men*. . . . The devil hates the confession of the finished work of the cross, of this we may

be assured. At all events, we have neither misunderstood nor misrepresented —.

I would like to write more, but must close for the present. Love to all saints with you.

Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.



THE LOVE THAT PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.)

LORD Jesus, Thine is love indeed,
Beyond our highest thoughts of love,
Which met us in our deepest need,
And brought Thee from Thy home above.

A love that led Thee here below
To tread a lonely path in grace,
To pass through sorrow, grief and woe,
The portion of a ruin'd race.

This love it was, our gracious Lord,
Which led Thee on to that dark hour,
When, faithful to Thy Father's word,
Thou mettest Satan's rage and power.

"The power of darkness," Lord, it was,
The hour when man by Satan led,
In deepest hatred without cause
Did crown with thorns Thy blessed head.

Yet, Lord, e'en there Thy love we see
Supreme o'er all the wrath of men,
For Thou in grace didst deign to be
The willing victim for us there.

To death of shame Thy love did reach,
 God's holy judgment then to bear;
 Ah! Lord, what human tongue can teach,
 Or tell the love that brought Thee there.

And now our hearts look back with praise;
 We trace Thy love so full, so deep,
 Which shone in all Thy blessed ways,
 To save Thy lost, but much loved sheep.

And in Thy love our hearts can find
 A peace which words cannot express,
 Too deep for man's poor finite mind,
 Yet full of joy and blessedness.

And Lord, this love is still the same,
 Unchangeable, and deep, and strong;
 Thou still dost call Thy sheep by name,
 Preserving from all hurt and wrong.

In glory now o'er all supreme,
 Yet still Thy heart, Thy love is here;
 "Thine own," Lord Jesus, Thou dost deem
 More dear than all Thy glory there.

That glory, Lord, we long to see,
 And Thy blest face, once fill'd with shame;
 To see all glory given to Thee,
 Who art in glory, still the same.

"The Man Christ Jesus," here in grace,
 The proof, the fulness of a love
 That bore the judgment in our place,
 That we might share Thy throne above.

A love "that passeth knowledge" Thine,
 And yet a love 'tis ours to know;
 'Tis like a deep exhaustless mine
 Of treasure, known e'en here below.

It knows no change, decreases not,
 Thy love for ever is the same :
 It is the portion, 'tis the lot,
 Of those who love Thy blessed name.

Soon shall we praise Thee, Lord, above,
 Soon Thine own face in glory see,
 And there, enjoying all Thy love,
 We'll spend eternity with Thee.

Our hearts still cry, " Come, Jesus Lord,"
 That we Thy Father's house may share :
 We wait to hear the gladsome word
 Which calls us up to meet Thee there.

FRAGMENTS.

SAMUEL COUPE, an aged Christian, known to the writer, was visited by a minister when he was near his departure. " My aged friend," said he, " have you begun to make your peace with God ? you are very near your end." " I shall never offer to do (or try to do)." The Yorkshire word was, " I shall never oss to do." " Indeed !" said the visitor, " how is that ? Are you not a sinner ?" " Yes, I am, but peace was made for me by the blood of Jesus more than 1800 years ago." On what are you resting, reader ? On peace made by the blood of Jesus ; or are you trying to make your own peace with God ?

FAITH says, God hath spoken. Reason says, Let me decide whether what God has spoken be right or not.

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

VI.

GALATIANS.

CHAPTER V. 14. Paul now shews that whilst the law availed nothing for a holy life, he fully allows elsewhere that it is holy, just, and good. Now he says, "By love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is a well-established fact. "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. . . . God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

This is a glorious part of the gospel Paul defends. We are not only justified from our sins and iniquities, but justified from sin, the root in us, by sin being judged, condemned by the sacrifice for sin, our Jesus bearing this judgment due to us. What a relief when this is really known in the soul! Sin as a root in the flesh is now no hindrance to the Spirit—sin having been judged. Then further, the law of the Spirit is superior to the law of sin and death. I have, as a Christian, a law, or power in the Spirit infinitely

superior to my old sinful self. The result is this, that in this totally new place the sinful flesh is set aside as judged, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled *in us*." But is this by putting our sinful flesh under law again? No, the very opposite, "Who walk not after the flesh." What, do you not seek to mortify the flesh by long fastings, and prayers, as sincere nuns and monks have done? Do you not seek to chasten and improve the flesh by the various means prescribed by those who take the place of being your guides? Surely you ought to put your evil lusting nature under the restraint of law! No! Paul says, not that way at all. "Who walk not after the flesh, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT."

We are not now on the question of justification, but of walk. The righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us who are not under law. We are born of God, have the nature of God, and that is love. The nature of our old man as in the flesh was hatred and enmity to God and man. In that state we were not, and could not be subject to the law of God, which surely requires us to be what we were not. In our old nature, evil was ever present with us. When we would do good, even then evil prevailed. Such was the trial of the flesh.

But now there is this immense difference. We have a totally new nature, and to us a totally new principle of life and power, even the Spirit

of life. Now our very nature is love, and "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." Thus with the delivered Christian, his new nature delights to do the will of God, and he has the power. Love is the fulfilling of the law.

But if those who were introducing the law were biting and devouring those who were not circumcised, that was not love: they needed to take heed lest they consumed one another. Well, now, this is the question: If you can never meet the righteous requirements of the law by being under it, and if you have still a nature that can bite and devour, the very opposite of love, how are you to walk in holiness according to the holiness of that which is born of God? In other words, if not under the law, how are you to walk worthy of God, whose very nature is the holiness of love?

Verse 16. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Mark, this does not say there is no flesh or evil nature left in you. That is fully admitted. But a distinct remedy is presented, so that you may, as we have said, be superior to the flesh, so as not to fulfil its evil desires. "Walk in the Spirit." This is God's remedy. Take hold of infinite strength and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. And this is further enforced: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the

flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that *ye may* not do the things that ye would."

Are you a Christian, that is, are you born again, and have you the Holy Spirit dwelling in you—your sins forgiven you for Christ's sake? You say, Through the mercy of God I can say it is so. I am a Christian. Have you not lusts utterly contrary to the Spirit? You say, That is the very plague of my heart and life. That is exactly what you find here in this scripture. If the first part of this verse is true of you, then the old man is not mended or in the least better. And you find it so. Then what is your remedy? How shall you overcome them? The desires of the Spirit of God are holy and pure. You may read the list below, in verses 19-24. There is the double catalogue—what the works of the flesh are, and what the fruits of the Spirit are. There is the black list of what the flesh is capable of doing. And every Christian that knows himself, knows that this is a true bill; this is God's account of what the flesh is. And are not these lusts (worse than savage beasts) to be put under law? No, the law only provoked them into actual transgressions. And the inspired defender of the gospel says, "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Thus to put believers under

law, as the law provoked lust unto sin, would be by placing them under law to shut them out of the kingdom of heaven. This settles the charge that they might sin that grace should abound, or as it is called, antinomianism.

It is not how may we practise these sins? Far from it; but how may we not "do such things"? Let this be seen, and the subject will become clear. You long for practical holiness and righteousness of walk. How is this to be obtained? These Judaising teachers would put them under law. The scripture plainly declares the flesh does thus lust; but you have the Spirit: yes. Then walk in the Spirit. The only power for a holy walk is real, humble, watchful dependence on the Spirit. You say, Well, I am puzzled that the flesh in a believer is so vile, and that he needs the constant power of the Spirit; and is there no improvement of the flesh? No. What then? "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts." Crucifixion is not improvement, but death, the most painful and ignominious death. Have we really accepted God's judgment of the flesh, mine, yours, on the cross of Christ? There is the end of vile me. My old man is entirely sin; but judged on the cross. He was made sin for us. We can thus reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Sin has been utterly condemned on the cross. I, my old self, was sin; I

therefore have been judged, so as to need judging no more as to my old nature.

Since this is the case, let us then not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Surely the deepest humility becomes us. How great then the contrast between the two natures in a believer! What he is as a child of Adam, with a nature so utterly, un-mendably vile, but judged and crucified with Christ, his holy, sinless substitute: and the new nature born of God. And how great the contrast between the two administrations, that of law and that of the Spirit. It is not that the holy requirements of God are abolished, but how shall they be accomplished? and the answer is, not by the flesh being placed again under the law, but by being wholly condemned on the cross, and by walking in the Spirit as a child of God, reckoning my old self dead.

So far from this being antinomianism, it is the only means whereby practical holiness can be accomplished. Indeed, a most solemn warning is given in connection with this very subject, in further defence of the holiness of the gospel. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Here is a principle of universal application.

"Whatsoever *a man* soweth." This is not the same as a fall in a moment of temptation, though the bitter fruit of that may go with a man as long as he lives; but this is not *sowing*. The most terrible example of sowing to the flesh may be seen in Judas, who sought opportunity to betray the Lord for a little silver. Now if the believer sinks so low through carelessness and want of prayer, as to sow, to seek opportunity to indulge the flesh, there will be no exception to this rule in his case. Oh, what misery may he bring on himself and family, through sowing to the flesh, though saved so as by fire eventually.

Does not all this prove that though we should reckon the flesh, our old selves dead, and treat the flesh as dead, yet our old self is not actually dead, not even improved in the least. There is still in us the flesh, and if we live to it, walk in it, sow to it, the government of God, of our Father, must take its course; we must reap *here* what we sow. And at this point, let a man take care lest he is deceiving himself altogether. If he continues sowing to the flesh—doing that which is evil, and seeking to do it, let him beware lest he at last hear those awful words, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Remember the words of Jesus, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" &c. (Matt. vii. 22.)

All this is assuredly true. How many sad instances we see, and how fearful often the conflict in the true believer; yet, it is equally true, "he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." We do not ask if you are infatuated with the delusion that your old nature is changed, or sin or lust is eradicated. This is all delusion, and may find you off your guard in an hour of temptation. But which characterises your walk? Sowing to the flesh? Or are you quite sure you are sowing to the Spirit? It is in the word of God alone you learn what is of the Spirit. You will find very much, highly esteemed amongst men, that is not of the Spirit, but of the flesh, and its end corruption.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

XXII.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 16. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, [and] the bright and morning star." Yes, fellow believer, it is our Jesus, who has sent His messenger to testify these things to us. Surely this will give an interest in these things to which the world must be a stranger. If we think of Him as the Messiah, He presents Himself as both the root and offspring of David. But to us He is the

bright and morning star. Yes, it is His own Person that has shone so brightly at the end of this long dark night.

For long dark centuries it was *the church, the church*, but for half a century it has been CHRIST as the morning star. Oh, may He shine so intensely bright that compared with Him all else be dim! What has been the effect of this? The eye of the bride has been lifted up to "Behold the Bridegroom."

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." Yes, again it is known that we have not to pray for the Spirit. He is here on earth. He has awakened the heart of the bride, and touched her inmost affections. Her eye is lifted up; like Rebecca, it is the heavenly Isaac—the bridegroom, not the judge; and, as if with one voice, "the Spirit and the bride say, COME." Oh, what a moment is this. The Spirit on earth, who knows the mind of God, now says to the Bridegroom of the church, COME. Do you hear this? "And let him that heareth say, Come." Yes, if God has now opened your ears to hear, then lift up your heart and cry, COME.

Do you say, I am only just awaking: a desire has sprung up in my soul to know Jesus, and His coming again; I can only say, *I thirst!* Oh, precious words of Jesus to you: "And let him that is athirst come." Yes, you say, but I am the most guilty and unworthy. But Jesus

says, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Oh, how God delights in mercy—mercy to the last. Whosoever, *whosoever*, let him take the water of life *freely*. This verse 17 marks the testimony of Jesus in these very last days. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Yes, just at the last, the coming of Christ, and the full free gospel of the grace of God is fully declared. How great and blessed our privileges.

It is, however, true that no part of the holy scriptures have been, and are being, more perverted than this precious book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We have therefore the solemn warnings of verses 18, 19. Yes, those highly esteemed amongst men, who are adding to or perverting the prophecy of this book—such as deny the love of Christ to His church, and the certainty that He will keep His saints from the plagues of this book—such may indeed literally be left to pass through these tribulations. Yes, though their names may now be written as Christians, then it may indeed at last be found that they have no part in the book of life or the holy city. It is no light thing for the mere human mind, or the human mind led on by Satan, to meddle with the things of this book.

But now He which testifies these things speaks the closing word. "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Now it is evident that if all these things we have seen in this book—the judgment of the seals; the plagues of the trumpets and vials; the restoration of the Roman empire; the destruction of apostate Christendom, &c.—if all these have to take place before the coming of the Lord Jesus, then there would be no meaning in the words of Jesus, "Surely I come quickly." And this is the object of Satan, whoever he may use as the writer. His object is to make the words of Jesus to His saints to have no meaning. Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly." Let then the reply from the depths of our hearts be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Yes, quick as the flash of lightning, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He will come quickly. Our blessed certain future is, "For ever with the Lord." All is now ready. May we go out to meet Him.

The uniform teaching of the New Testament is that He will come quickly, and unexpectedly. His coming first to take the church makes all simple: without this, the harmony of scripture would be destroyed. At first the virgins went out to meet Him. (Matt. xxv.) How could this possibly be, if all the judgments and plagues of this book had to be fulfilled first? Yet from the day when the church was seen going out to meet the Lord, there has not been a single event unfulfilled so as to have hindered the coming of the Lord to take His church. No, it has been the

long suffering of God, the patience of Christ with a lost and rejecting world. God had His own to gather out by the preached gospel. But as to all matters of prophecy, absolutely nothing had to be fulfilled before Jesus might come to take them to Himself according to His promise in John xiv. 1, 2.

The construction of this book is most wonderful in reference to this matter. It is quite true, as we have seen in chapter i. 19, the book is divided into three parts. Things which John had seen in chapter i., then the things which are, as described in chapters ii., iii. ; then the things that should be after these—all the things that should take place after the “things that are” have come to a close. The “things that are” then include the whole history of Christendom up to its close.

Now God chose seven assemblies then existing, in the state thus described. And the addresses are so sent to them that Jesus might have come at once. And yet those addresses were so given, that they describe the seven successive stages of church history, full of deepest instruction to us in these last days. And further, it is only within the last sixty years that this successive application has been fully opened to us. Indeed, this has opened up the whole Revelation.

We now in this Revelation read the divine order of events from the day God was pleased to give this Revelation to the eternal state.

It is also very remarkable, whether we look at the churches as seen on earth, or at the state of Europe and the world, everything answers to this wondrous prophecy. There is in popery that which answers to Jezebel in Thyatira, running on to the end. There is in Protestantism that which answers to Sardis. There is also that in souls being drawn to the Person of Christ which answers, however feebly, to Philadelphia. And can we for a moment doubt that in the general state of Christendom there is that which answers to Laodicea ?

Then as to the state of the world and its politics, can any one deny, that the signs of the times indicate the very state described in this book, after the things that are ; that is, after the close and rejection of lifeless profession ? The very education of the world is preparing it for these last scenes of human wickedness, when society and government shall be broken and shattered to pieces, like an earthquake. Superstition and infidelity are preparing the world for deeds of unparalleled wickedness. Yes, all is now in readiness like a train of gunpowder laid to a mine. God still waits in mercy, and the world waits until the church is gone, and God no longer "lets" or hinders by His providence or governments: and then when the church is gone, the desolating scenes of this book shall begin.

He who led Jew and Gentile to put to death the Christ of God—Satan—is now drilling armies for these terrible scenes we have seen described in this book. The sun or supreme government is beginning already to be darkened with the black clouds of diabolical anarchy, out of the bottomless abyss, preparing the way for the Roman empire again to arise.

May the Holy Ghost then lead us to meditate on all these things as about shortly to come to pass. Fellow Christians, how soon we shall be for ever with the Lord. He who is worthy shall then open the seals of the Book. Then we shall know as we are known. Let us not lose heart now the Lord is so near. Conflicts with the powers of darkness may be very sharp. Oh, unspeakable privilege to be found faithful *at the end*. No doubt the state described in the address to Laodicea is the peculiar danger of this last hour of these last days. Let us then each beware of the sin of indifference to the interests of Christ. Vast numbers may give up Christ, and in His place seek satisfaction in sports, and service of song, or, as extremes meet, in unbelieving ritual : others in cold, infidel, soul-destroying speculations. Are all to be in earnest except the Christian? The Lord awake His own redeemed people, so that whilst following Him in lowliness of heart, we may be earnest and devoted as those who truly believe "The

things which are written in this book." Blessed Jesus, thy words are "Surely I come quickly. Amen." Ever may ours be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." C. S.



HOW GOD SHONE INTO THE HEART OF AN OLD MAN.

HIS house was within the silent precincts of the great old cathedral of —, and, as it fell to my lot to work twice or three times a week in the library of the dean and chapter there, I took the opportunity from time to time of calling to see him after the library closed, or before it opened, the hours granted for work there being very short. He was old and very feeble, it might almost be said fragile, and, to the constant irritation of his sensitive and independent spirit, he was now compelled to lean, as he had never brooked to lean before, upon the kind offices and loving services of the members of his household.

He was an interesting man: a skilful musician, bright and vigorous in intellect, and penetrated with a keen sense of justice and honour, as between man and man. Strictly honourable in his own dealing, he looked for the like on the part of others, and was a little apt to be impatient of everything like unreality. Nor was this the only side of his character; humorous too he was,

and perhaps a shade cynical in the expression of his judgment, but kind and tender withal, and so thoroughly gentle that the beautiful canaries which were the admiration of his many favoured young friends, used to hop about fearlessly on his head and shoulders, and even settle on his hand.

He had formerly made a religious profession, and had even for a time taken a place among a company of Christians gathered to the Lord's name alone, but, it is feared, thought little of the place he had taken, and certainly had never known, in his own soul and conscience, what it is to be justified from all things in Christ, to have peace with God, and to be in the present enjoyment of His favour. That favour, dear reader, "is better than life."

As he advanced towards a good old age, his sight failed, and when I began to visit him, he was already almost totally blind ; not yet confined to bed, but a great sufferer. It was suggested that I should read to him, and this I gladly did, thankful for the privilege of being permitted in ever so small a degree to do what might even momentarily dispel the cheerless feelings which settled upon my dear sightless friend ; and silently looking above for a word to drop in from time to time about Him who alone can bring the cheer of God's eternal love into the world-worn, sin-sick heart.

I read to him a book which had but a short time before been published. In this book the hollowness of modern Christianity was unsparingly exposed. It was a book which I could not recommend to any one, but it interested him greatly. It fell in with his disposition to reject what he felt to be unreal, and the pungency of the author's observations delighted him. Alas! talented as he was, and correct as his destructive criticism undoubtedly was in its way, the author himself knew nothing of the reality of Christianity—nothing of the divine simplicity of the gospel, nothing of eternal life, and of the righteousness of God. He saw the ruin, and the hellow unreality, but as a man of the world may see it, and he knew nothing of the resources of faith in the midst of the hopeless wreck as God has made it known. The only thing that he had to suggest was voluntary humility and will worship, after the commandments and doctrines of men.

To the solemn realities which the Bible reveals I now sought to point the dear old man, and besought his permission to bring with me and read to him an article in the first volume of "PRESENT TESTIMONY,"* which presented itself to me as one which the Lord might use to his

* Published by Groombridge and Sons, 5, Paternoster Row. The article under the title of "How to get Peace," is published by G. Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square.

soul. To the course proposed he courteously assented, and, as he was by this time entirely, or almost entirely confined to his bed, it may be that He who graciously prepares the heart for the entrance of His word had wrought by His Spirit, now that the natural strength of the man was drawing near to the nothingness which it is in the grave, to bring him to a deeper conviction of the utter need and helplessness of one in his condition, than he was at first willing to confess. His life was yet to see the light.

He listened attentively, and with an awe-stricken quietness. Well do I remember the day on which we reached page 135. The volume, worn and torn, lies before me. These are the words that were read to him (he was, ere this page was reached, already touched with the conviction of his lost state as a sinner).

“Christ . . . bore the sins of many, and appeared to put away sin, has glorified God about it in righteousness in that momentous hour. *He* took what I had *earned* ; I get the fruit of what He has *done*. . . . *My* acceptance is according to the value of *Christ's sacrifice* in God's sight ; coming with that is confession of righteous exclusion in myself, not of improvement in state ; I come with Christ in my hand, so to speak, my slain Lamb ; and the testimony is to my gift. God looks at that when I thus come by it, not at my state, which so coming is confessedly that of

a sinner, and only a sinner, as to his own title, shut out from God.

“ ‘But must not I accept Christ?’

“ ‘Ah, how ‘I’ gets through the blesseddest testimonies of God’s ways towards us in grace. I say, Here is Christ on God’s part for you—God’s Lamb; you answer, *But must not I?* It is no reproach I make; it is human nature, my nature in the flesh; but know that in ‘I’ there is no good thing. But tell me, ‘Would you not be glad to have Him?’

“ ‘Surely I should.’

“ ‘Then your real question is not about accepting Him, but whether God has really presented Him to you, and eternal life in Him. A simple soul would say, ‘Accept! I am only too thankful to have Him!’ but as all are not simple, one word on this also. If you have offended some one grievously, and a friend seeks to offer him satisfaction, who is to accept it?’

“ ‘Why, the offended person, of course.’

“ ‘Surely. And who was offended by your sins?’

“ ‘Why, God, of course.’

“ ‘And who must accept the satisfaction?’

“ ‘Why, God must.’

“ ‘That is it. Do you BELIEVE HE HAS ACCEPTED IT?’

“ ‘Undoubtedly I do—’

“ ‘And is—’

“ ‘Satisfied.’ ”

“ ‘And are not you?’ ”

“ ‘Oh! I see it now. Christ has done the whole work, and God has accepted it, and there can be no more question as to my guilt or righteousness. He is the latter for me before God. It is wonderful! and yet so simple! But why did I not see it? How very stupid!’ ”

“ That is faith in Christ’s work, not our accepting it, gladly as we do, but believing God has. You have no need to inquire now whether you believe. The object is before your soul, seen by it: what God has revealed is known by seeing it thus by faith. You are assured of that, not of your own state.”

As these words were read to the dear sufferer, God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shone in his heart. As he told another afterwards, it was as though the light all through was breaking through the darkness. Blessed be God every difficulty of unbelief was gone, and Christ, the blessed object of faith, filled his heart.

After this I saw little of him, and he was, ere many months were over, taken from the scene in which his heart for a long lifetime had sought the satisfaction which nothing under the sun can yield. He is absent from the body, present with the Lord, till that blessed moment now so near, when the power of Him in whose face God’s

glory shone into him, will claim in glorious incorruptibility the precious dust which has returned till then to the earth. J. T.

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHILDREN.

IN the first chapter of his first epistle, the apostle John presents to us the Word of life—the eternal Word—the eternal Son of the Father—in whom eternal life subsisted, and in whom, as a man, it was manifested in time, down here in this world; and all this that we might have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Then there is a message declaring God's inflexible holiness—light admitting no degree of darkness—speaking at the same time of the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and gives fitness to be in the light of that holy presence. In the opening of the next chapter we have, in the advocate with the Father, the divine provision for failure in the walk of those who have been brought into the light, and the means of restoration to communion when it has been broken by sin. Then follow the great characteristic traits of the divine life in man—obedience and love. These were perfectly displayed in Christ; and Christ having become our life, these are the tests of reality in us.

Having established these fundamental principles, the aged apostle goes on to address his

children, first altogether, and then in three classes—"fathers," "young men," and "babes." There is that which was common to all; and then there is that which was peculiar to each of these three classes, and all presented in beautiful order.

We will first look at that which was common to all. This was *forgiveness of sins*. He writes to them all as having been forgiven. In doing so, he calls them "children." The word "little" is not in the original. When he divides them into three classes, "fathers," "young men," and "little children," the last is a different word, which does mean "*little children*" or "babes." But in the first instance it is simply "children," and the term includes all that the apostle addresses in the epistle, the same as in verse 1 and in verse 28 of the same chapter. "I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." He does not write to them in order that they might *receive* forgiveness, but because they had *already* received it. He wrote to them as those whom God had forgiven for the name's sake of His beloved Son.

He had already written that which would test the reality of those who bore the name of Christ, and which would distinguish between the true and the false. But this was not intended in any wise to shake the confidence of any who had really been born into the family of God. Those

who, without reality, and in carelessness of heart, had taken a place among the children of God, might well tremble at what the apostle had written, and which necessarily condemned them, as when he says: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." "He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." These were solemn and heart-searching words, before which the careless, or the hypocrite, or the false teachers, might well pause, and consider their bearings, and learn in the truth whether their profession was real, or whether they were blindly drifting on in darkness, soon to be plunged into the dark abyss of eternal woe. But solemn as are the warnings given to such in God's word, they are never intended to shake, or disturb in any degree, the peace of those who have believed on the Lord Jesus, and who are seeking with purpose of heart to serve and follow Him. On the contrary, this aged apostle and father seeks to assure his children in the most happy way, by telling them that he writes to them *for the very reason that their sins had been forgiven them for Jesus' name's sake*. Not a cloud would he throw over the mind of the

youngest or the feeblest in all the family of God. He would have *all* in the full blessed consciousness, and unclouded assurance, that they were in the light, and without a spot upon them—the youngest babe, as much as the most aged father, or the most holy apostle, washed and made whiter than snow in “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son,” which “cleanseth us from all sin.”

And blessed it is to our poor hearts to know that the knowledge of forgiveness is not something to be attained only when the christian course has been nearly run—perhaps only on a death-bed, or, it may be, not till the poor storm-tossed soul stands before the great white throne, overwhelmed with terror, and crushed with dark uncertainty, while it awaits the sentence which is to fix its eternal destiny. No, dear reader, forgiveness of sins meets us at the very threshold of Christianity; and the assurance of it greets our souls the moment we believe the gospel of our salvation. Christ is the meeting-point between our souls and God. But it is a Christ who died, who was buried, who was raised again; and the moment we meet God in Him, we find Him a Christ who has borne our sins, having been delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Thus all is settled between our souls and God, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. iv. 24, 25; v. 1.) Christian attainments

there surely are, but forgiveness of sins is not one of them; for if I have not forgiveness of sins I am not a Christian at all. My sins are still between my soul and God, and exclude me from His holy presence, leaving me under judgment and exposed to eternal wrath. Forgiveness cannot, therefore, be a christian attainment at all. I know there may be such a thing as being forgiven, and not knowing it; but this is not a normal condition of soul. It is a result, either of wrong teaching, or of inadequate apprehension of the truth. The very gospel that announces salvation to the lost, and forgiveness to the guilty, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, gives also, in the most assuring terms, the knowledge of forgiveness to all who believe it. "*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Christ Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*" (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

In such terms as these the blessed gospel of God's grace speaks to the poor sinner, and such assurance it gives to the one who believes it. It speaks unconditional and eternal pardon to him who, falling down before God as helpless and guilty and lost, believes in Jesus; and it assures such a one that his sins are blotted out for ever, and his guilt cancelled by the atoning blood of

the cross, never to be brought to light again. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," is the conscience-purging word of the blessed God who pardons through faith in Jesus' blood. And the words John writes to his children are in happy confirmation of this blessed truth. "I write unto you, children, *because your sins are forgiven you*, for his name's sake." Happy children! Their sins may have been many, yea, more than the hairs of their heads, and they may be conscious that they are poor, feeble, failing creatures still; and Satan may thunder in their consciences, and seek to accuse and condemn; but the word of Him who cannot lie sustains their souls in unclouded peace. "*Your sins are forgiven you.*"

And it is "for his name's sake." Were it for anything in us, we might well question, and doubt, and fear. But if it is "for his name's sake," who in heaven or earth or hell can challenge our title? God has owned that blessed Saviour, and exalted His name above all. He has given Him a name that is above every name. Before that name all thrones and dominions must yield subjection, and every knee—all angels, all men, all demons—must bow. It is THE NAME OF JESUS. It is the name of Him who suffered on the cross, whose blood was shed for the putting away of sin, who by His atoning sacrifice has infinitely glorified God, and who has vanquished

for ever the adversary of our souls. "For his name's sake" God forgives.

Dear reader, have you believed God's testimony to that wonderful name? Have you believed in the name of Jesus? Then listen to that dear old apostle that knew Him so well, and the cleansing power of His precious blood, and hear him addressing *you* among the children to whom he writes these words: "I write unto you, children, *because your sins ARE forgiven you FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE.*"

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

4. S. S., Southampton. Your struggles for deliverance from sin that dwelleth in you, are representative. That is, they represent the condition of a great many. You have heard and believed the glad tidings of forgiveness of *sins*, and justification from them. And so far you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. You now want to live Christ. And now, instead of having Christ as your object, you find yourself sadly perplexed and occupied with *sin* in the flesh. And this *seems* to hinder all progress in the truth. These are the symptoms; now, what is the remedy? Nay, first, what is the Lord's object in all this? It is that self may be entirely displaced and Christ be all. You have not quite done with self. Whether under law, or under grace, we cannot find one bit of good in self. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Is not this the cause?

Seeking something in self. We never can be satisfied with self. We shall, in that sense, never be satisfied, until we awake in His likeness.

And what is the remedy? Give up all thought of what He must be to you by what you are to Him. Take up the other side. Think what your Father is to you; what Christ is, and for ever will be to you. Let go self, and rejoice in Christ for evermore.

5. J. J., Rankinston. It is not possible for sins to be on the believer before the judgment seat of Christ. All who will be there, when He appears, will be like Him. And there can be no sin on Him. (1 John i., iii. 2.) In that sense, the believer cannot come into judgment for sin. (John v. 24.) For a person to go on without confessing his sins to the Father, would be a grave sign, that he was no child of God at all. Still, there might be sin of such a character, as to be judged *here* in the government of God, with death of the body. But this is expressly that we may not be judged with the world. See 1 Corinthians xi. 29-32; 1 John v. 16. May we say continually, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe."

6. Colossians ii. 20-22. If we be dead with Christ why should we be subject to the ordinances or rules of men? There seems to have been such a rule as is here referred to. "Touch not; taste not; handle not." Why should they, since they were dead with Christ, be subject to such a rule or ordinance of men? Such rules are formed again in these days, by those who do not know what it is to be dead with Christ. Dead men do not need such rules or pledges.

7. G. H. Toronto. Your questions will be found answered above.

PAUL'S DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

VII.

WE now come to the close of Paul's earnest defence of the gospel which he had received by revelation from the Lord. He says, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

What a common principle this is in man's religious nature. He wants numbers, to make a fair show in the flesh. He will give his wealth even, he will toil, he will allow almost anything, if it will only make proselytes and swell the party to which he belongs. He may do all this, and be a stranger to Christ. And then the circumcision, that is Judaism, had peculiar claims. In the midst of the darkness of this whole world, it only had the knowledge and testimony of the one God. It only had the oracles of God. Surely here was much for man to boast of, and they did boast, and bitterly hated and stirred up persecution against anything that intrenched upon it. To incorporate then believers with this ancient system by circumcision, was the way sought to stop persecution, and wipe away the reproach of the cross.

Is there nothing like this in our day? The great desire is to make a fair show in the flesh, to increase the proselytes, to swell the numbers of the ancient systems for the improvement of the flesh.

But is the evil nature of man improved? It may be held in check, but has it improved by the law for 1,500 years? The apostle says not. "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh." What a boast this would be. If the multitudes of the churches in Galatia would all become proselytes by being circumcised, all professing to be under the law, what a fair show in the flesh. This is the spirit of conformity as set up by Nebuchadnezzar. Oh, how men do long for this outward show. How beautiful such a scene! All circumcised, that is, proselyted; all keeping the sabbath; all swelling the vast assemblies of worshippers. No dissent, and therefore, no persecution. How wonderfully improved, you say, is society. Is not this enough to make a man boast? Not Paul.

Paul says, "But 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." What a man this Paul is. This beautiful scene of religious show in the flesh, though all men be conformed to it, has

positively no charms for him. He says, I will take my stand outside of it all with that crucified Man, I will boast of Him, and Him alone. That cross has proved to me what you are, oh world of Jews and Gentiles. I have seen an end of this fair show in the flesh. It is for ever judged, crucified to me. I will boast of the cross, the place you have given my Lord. Yes, this is the end of all human pretensions: man has proved himself utterly vile and at enmity with God. He has shewn his hatred to God in the shameful death of the Son of God. There all united; the Gentile man with his philosophy and learning, and the Jew with all his pretensions to righteousness. On that cross the world is proved guilty, judged, and crucified; and I am crucified to the world. There is the true discerning of my old self as a child of Adam.

I accept the cross, it is my just desert; I will boast of the One that thus died for me.

Now Paul sums up in a few words, his grand and inspired defence of the gospel. How little we have understood these words, and yet they present to us the very foundation truth of Christianity. He says, "For [in Christ Jesus] neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or "new creation."

What can these words mean? What was the thought the Jew had as to circumcision, and being

under the law? That it improved him, and made him a worshipper of the true God in His temple or house on earth, as Paul himself had done, seeking to establish his own righteousness, being exceedingly zealous of the tradition of his fathers.

He had found it of no avail, of no use; for when the crucified One appeared to him in glory, he found out that he was the chief of sinners, blaspheming and persecuting the Lord of glory. If the law could have availed for any man, it must have done so for religious Saul. It was no doubt gain to him before men, but for righteousness before God he treated all that was gain to him as dung. It was the test whether the old man could be improved. Nay, further, when God gave His Son, man under law would not have Him, but cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him."

Now as to the uncircumcision, the whole Gentile world without the law, yet having a conscience knowing good and evil—with all its moral teaching and schools of philosophy, of which men were very proud, all seeking to improve man sunk in sin—did it avail? See the answer in Romans i. 18-32. And that lawless world was fairly represented by Pilate. For once there was uniformity, but it was to reject and crucify the Son of God. Pilate, Herod and the Jews are friends!

We now come to the grave inquiry, Has Christendom fallen into the fatal Galatian heresy? Is it the mixture of the truth, or the attempt to mix up the law and the gospel, and for what purpose? Is it not to improve man—man fallen and sinful? Is it to restore him? Has the Christianity of centuries been a mixture of christian truth, the law, and heathenism, having for its object the improvement of fallen humanity?—the saving of what scripture calls the old man, our fallen humanity as derived from the first Adam?

If this is our object, according to this epistle we are labouring under a total mistake. Yes, a mistake which is the cause of endless sorrow and disappointment. A child is baptised, confirmed, takes the sacrament, observes heathen feast days under Christian names, reads prayers, observes ceremonies, seeks to keep the law, tries hard to be religious. And for what purpose? To improve his sinful nature. Does it avail anything? Nothing: he finds his evil nature as bad as ever. The words of Jesus are true, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

And, what is most distressing, the evangelical has precisely the same object as the ritualist—the improvement of the old man. And how often he exclaims, "I am not a bit better." The longer he lives, if a Christian, the more he abhors himself; and, the more he tries to improve

his old carnal self, the more disappointed he is; the more he fails. No avail, no avail. Oh, what vain efforts to make the flesh better and holy. Yes, there are holiness meetings for this purpose, in order to attain to holiness of the old man, or to eradicate him, and thus be without sin in the flesh. And in the fervour of social intercourse, some may hope they are now perfect, without sin, and their love perfect! But after a time, and when alone, how dreadful to find the flesh still the same. We believe there is a terrible mistake throughout Christendom on this very serious matter. Every effort to improve my old self is utterly in vain. This is not christian truth at all, but the very opposite.

Will you notice, that the apostle not only tells us what will not avail, but also what will. "For . . . neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," literally "new creation." Before we examine what avails before God, just look back at one statement as to the flesh, the old man; "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts." (Chap. v. 24.) No thought of either improving it or indulging it. It is literally set aside by the cross of Christ, put away from the sight of God on the cross. We thus reckon it dead—my old self dead. I am to treat myself as dead. There now we can look at "*new creation.*"

Mark, this is the only true scriptural standing of every believer. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or creation]: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God," &c. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.) Now, "new creation" is not old things improved. "New creation" is not an effort of mine, or a work of man. "For we are his workmanship, CREATED in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. ii. 10.)

Is not this truth of "new creation" little understood? Do you really understand that all the religion and philosophy of this world cannot either improve the old man, or new-create the new man in Christ Jesus? Oh, how blind we have been; surely we ought to seek to help each other in these things. Just read Ephesians i., ii. What a new creation! How worthy of God. That new creation is suited to God. Every believer is brought into favour in the Beloved. No cobbling of the old man, but it is buried out of sight; and the NEW CREATION is the climax of Paul's defence of the gospel.

One more word as to walk. Many will say after reading this, If Paul takes away the law, or the law mixed with grace, as the believer's rule of walk, or life, what rule does he give us? Let us read: "Neither circumcision [the law] availeth anything, nor uncircumcision [lawlessness], *but new creation.* And as many as walk

By THIS RULE, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." What a subject to meditate upon. What a rule for our walk—"new creation." The natural man knows nothing of this. It is perfect, it is divine, it is all of God. Not (I) now, but Christ. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Christ is the beginning, the head, the all, and in all, of the new creation. We are called to walk no longer under the law, which tests the flesh and provokes its corruptions, but as a new creation of God unto good works; works suitable to God, suitable to Christ, Head of the new creation. May He bless these feeble meditations on Paul's defence of the gospel, and use them for the help and comfort of His children everywhere, and to Him be all the praise. Amen.

C. S.

BLESSED Lord! Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus within the veil. Help us to feed on Him. Teach us to discern between clean and unclean. And, though the world seeth Thee not, may we see Thee.

“PEACE—MY PEACE.”

JOHN XIV. 27.

THE thing, beloved, the one thing that was so specially before my heart, was the activity of the love that never fails.

We find, in the early part of the previous chapter, the word referring to that blessed One: “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” He came from God and He went to God.

I believe, beloved, what He speaks of in this verse is two kinds of peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”

We remember that after the work of redemption was accomplished by Himself, He, the raised One from amongst the dead, presented Himself to the few that were gathered in the upper room within the bolted doors; and his first salutation to them was, “Peace unto you.” “Peace unto you, and when he had so said, he shewed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.” Beloved, I believe that the first peace He speaks of here, when He says “Peace I leave with you,” was that peace that He made when He hung upon the cross. You get the truth in Colossians i. referring to Him. “He made peace through the blood of his cross.” It is His own blood that has made peace.

In Romans v. it is being justified by faith we have peace with God. It is through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews xiii. 20: "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," and so on. And also, in the Epistle to the Philippians, God is called the "God of peace." But here, beloved, you get two distinct things from that peace.

The first is the peace that He made through His infinite grace and love, going down to the cross and shedding His own precious blood. Now, He says, I leave that with you: "Peace I leave with you;" and then there is another peace that He speaks of: "*My* peace I give unto you."

What do we get in the early part of the chapter? He says to those who are so dear to His heart, Do not let your hearts be troubled, you have believed in God—now believe also in Me. He shews in the three previous chapters that He had been troubled. The Lord Jesus Christ had all the trouble, and now He says to those who are so dear to His heart, "Let not your heart be troubled," for *I* have had all the trouble—it is not for you to be troubled. He brings out the activity of His own love, having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.

How blessed it is to be occupied with Himself.

—with Himself. Just what you get in Ephesians ii. 14, where the Holy Ghost says, “*He is our peace.*” He knew very well that those who are so dear to His heart would be left in this scene, would be left in all the troubles and difficulties of the way. He knew well the troubles surrounding them, but He says, “My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Beloved, I tell you it is whilst we are occupied with Him there is no fear. There is no trouble while we are occupied with Himself, but the very moment we get occupied with ourselves, or our surroundings, we get troubled. It may be we get occupied with our *good* doings—they are the most dangerous. I should rather be occupied with my bad doings than with my good doings, because it always leads to legality to be occupied with my goodness. Occupation with either good or bad self, is only waste of time.

But what will save us from everything is to be occupied with Himself. To be occupied with Himself is to know the activity of the love of His own heart.

In Hebrews ix. 24 we learn that He now appears in the presence of God for us, and it is being occupied with Himself that will save us from the ten thousand troubles that we get into.

May the Lord in His infinite grace give us to be occupied with Himself, and to know some-

thing more of that charity that we read of at the close of 1 Corinthians xiii., that "never fails" and that is His own love, the love of Christ Himself that never fails. And whilst we are occupied with Him we shall have the love of His heart for others.

L. T.

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHILDREN.

THE FATHERS.

WE have already seen that among those the apostle calls his "children," there are "fathers," "young men," and "babes," or "little children." The "fathers" are those who have grown old in the truth. The "babes" are those newly born into the family of God. The "young men" are a class between, who have the strength of manhood, being no longer children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; nor yet having reached that experimental knowledge by which they have learned the utter vanity of everything apart from Christ. The "fathers," on the contrary, have had full experience, and, like Solomon, have written "vanity" on all that is under the sun. They have learned to know Christ as their only and enduring portion. "I write unto you,

fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." (1 John ii. 13.)

It will be noticed that the apostle addresses each class separately, the "fathers," then the "young men," then the "babes." In verse 13 all three classes are addressed. Then in verse 14 the "fathers" and "young men" are addressed the second time, and in verse 18, the "babes," the message running on to the close of verse 27.

We will now look more particularly at the message to the "fathers." We have already quoted from verse 13, where they are addressed the first time. When they are addressed the second time, in verse 14, the message is the same; and there is nothing added. It is simply, "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." And this is most beautiful, and instructive. There was nothing to warn them against, and there was nothing new or further to set before them—nothing which they did not already have. They had Christ—"Him that is from the beginning"—and that was enough. There was nothing to go back to—nothing to go forward to. To go back would be to return to the world which they had found to be only vanity. There would be no gain in that. And they could not go forward to anything beyond, without giving up Christ and Christianity, and there would be no gain in that. Christ was their all. They knew Him as the

sum of all their blessing, their enduring, their eternal portion. This is what characterised the fathers in Christ.

I have said there was nothing to warn them against. They were acquainted with the flesh and its ways, with the world and its attractions, and had judged both as worthless and evil. It was not something merely that they had been taught; they had learned it experimentally. In their own experience they had proved what the flesh is in its utter insubordination to God, and had learned that God's judgment of it in the cross and death of Christ was the only remedy for it. It was a judgment which was according to truth and holiness, a judicial ending before God of what was in a state of fixed and eternal enmity against His nature, and incapable of being subject to His holy law. (Rom. viii. 7.) The truth of this judgment they had learned, and had bowed to it experimentally in their own souls. It was not something they needed to learn now, even in experience. They *knew* it in such a way as not to need any warning against it.

So also it was as to the world which is in enmity against God as well as the flesh, and which also has been morally judged in the cross. To the fathers the world was but the scene in which the flesh flourishes—that to which the flesh in its nature and desires fully answers, and which furnishes the food on which the flesh

subsists. Moreover the world had cast out and crucified God's well beloved Son, and thus its whole status and condition was laid bare. The fathers had learned its true character. They knew it as an evil system estranged from God, and governed by Satan's will and power. Whatever might be its pretension, whatever its glitter and show, whatever its allurements and enticing temptations, to the fathers it was all a vain show, a scene of gilded sin and wickedness, which could not endure in its midst the presence of the holy and blessed Son of God. And besides, there was nothing in it that could satisfy the soul, or give real joy and happiness. To them it was practically a judged scene in which they had neither part nor lot. Through the death and resurrection of Christ, they had been delivered from it, and in their practical life, and spiritual mode of existence they were outside of it, and had no desire to return to it. Happy deliverance!

But all this experience had been gone through in connection with the truth of Christ. Apart from Christ these things could not be learned. And the result of the experience was that Christ was known as the only worthy object of the heart. All else proved to be but vanity. When all else failed, Christ remained the same, the faithful, unchanging One, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," the One who will

remain the same throughout eternity, filling and satisfying the soul, when experience has become a thing only of the past, and when flesh and the world are no more.

This blessed Christ the fathers *know*. They have proved Him as the One in whom they can always trust. In all their varied experiences and trials, they have found Him faithful. In every time of need He has proved the Succourer of their souls. He has been their joy in sorrow, their strength in weakness, their stay in adversity, their unfailing resource at all times. And He is the eternal Sun of their souls, the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely, their all in all for time and eternity. They have followed Him, they have served Him, they have walked with Him, they have communed with Him, and they *know* Him, not merely by report, but by intimate and personal acquaintance. Blessed knowledge! It is what we shall have in eternity. Only then it will be in glory, and in a fulness far transcending aught that is known in the poor earthly tabernacle here. But the same thing is known in the soul now that will be known then, though the soul be fettered and held within bounds and limits. Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face. Now we know in part, then we shall know as we are known. There will be no fetters, no bonds then—nothing to hinder or cloud the glorified

vision. Christ will be known then in all the brightness and blessedness it is possible to communicate to His glorified people.

Yet even now, though it be not in the same brightness or fulness, because of the body in which we still groan, through all our varied experiences Christ reveals Himself to our souls in a most blessed way, and we learn to know Him, as friend knows friend—not merely as the One who has saved us from wrath and judgment, but as the One who is ever with us, bearing us on His heart, sustaining, comforting, blessing, and drawing our hearts and affections out to His own blessed person. The fulness of His grace meeting all our need by the way is realised; the varied beauties and glories and perfection of His person and character are discovered; and His unchanging and eternal love fills the heart and satisfies the affections He Himself has awakened. Blessed, glorious Christ! infinite delight of the Father! eternal brightness of God's glory! light and joy and centre of courts above! Object worthy of eternal homage and praise! may we learn to know Him more and more. May we so learn to know Him that before the brightness of His presence every other object may fade away, leaving himself the alone object of our hearts, our all-sufficient, our present and eternal portion.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

A FULL SALVATION.

THE tendency on every side being to give up truth long avowed, it is well, however feeble may be the utterance, that there should be at least no uncertain sound as to the fulness of the grace of the gospel. "Righteousness," it has been well said, "is not by priesthood. . . . Justification is not justification with the Father, but with God. He could receive no pleading till there was righteousness before Him. . . . God clears the saint before the accuser, the enemy, but as soon as He gets alone with the transgressor He uses the rod. . . . If the *least* sin rested on me, and I thought I could approach to God, I should directly lower His holiness—there is a wide difference between having sins forgiven for communion, for purifying ourselves, and for our standing before God." And surely the inevitable consequence of lowering the standing itself is the loss of the truth in its sanctifying power: the loss of the Father's word, the loss of the fulness of the grace of the gospel. To a lost, guilty, helpless and hell-deserving sinner that gospel, in the fulness of divine testimony to the nature and character of God, comes as the power of God for salvation to every one that believes. The believer, the one who hears the word of truth, the gospel of his salvation, is not merely cleared and safe from the

avenging sword of divine justice, but the clearing is such as to place him before God in all the fragrance and acceptability of Christ. Nothing less than this could satisfy the heart of God the justifier, of God who spared not His own Son. Nothing less sufficed to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy which He had before prepared for glory. The sons of the living God are by faith in the precious cleansing blood of Christ identified in the sight of God with all the value of that atoning blood as it is in His sight. It applies to the condition of the lost, guilty, helpless and hell-deserving sinner as such, and nothing else in heaven or earth could apply to that condition, if he is to be brought to God. No, blessed, adorable Saviour,

“ Nought for sin could e’er atone
But Thy blood, and Thine alone.”

In the gift of His Son, God sought the sinner, not imputing his trespasses, and with the view of reconciliation, and of bringing him into the present enjoyment of the gift of everlasting life in His Son, and of the most blessed relationship with Himself. The perfect grace brought out the deep enmity of our hearts against God. Nothing but the death of Christ could meet our condition. The Son of man *must* be lifted up: and further, as to the blessed details of that lifting up, the Christ *must* rise

from among the dead the third day. As it has been well said, "All the sentence must be passed on the first Adam." There is no such thing in the scriptural teaching of the New Testament as a justified child of the first Adam, whether with or without collateral blessings. The believer is quickened together with Christ, having all trespasses forgiven. He is in Christ, as God has sought in the triumphant aggressiveness of His love to bring him to Himself, to the satisfaction of His own nature, which could reach forth after objects suited to be vessels of mercy: lost, miserable, dead in trespasses and sins, and as to the energies of their own life, hateful and hating one another, and enemies of God. But these vessels of mercy are those which He had before prepared for glory. What a wondrous word of living power in grace—when we consider what we were in our distance and enmity, darkness, misery and death—is that in 2 Corinthians i. 20, "For whatsoever promises of God [there are], in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us." And the believer is in Christ in all the sweet savour and precious odour of the incense-cloud of Christ's personal acceptance as Man before God. He is brought into all the present and eternal—the unchangeable—blessing of the sons of the living God, children of God, possessors of eternal life in His Son, springs of living water springing up into eternal life, in the

power of the indwelling Spirit, heirs of God and Christ's joint-heirs, called to the fellowship of the Son of God, united to Christ and destined to be conformed to the image of God's Son, and to form the bride of Christ, and the dwelling-place of God in the new heavens and earth. Nothing can surpass the blessing into which God in His gospel invites His enemies, for instant, and for eternal enjoyment and glory. And believers, having in Him whose death is the ground of their title and boast, redemption through His blood, stand in the pure and sovereign favour of God, taken into favour in the Beloved: the favour into which they enter being not merely a favour received through Him, but the Beloved's favour.

And to you, beloved unconverted reader, a few parting words. You may be old and grey-headed in sin, an enemy of God; you may be in the prime of your years, busy and active in the senate, the university, the military or naval profession; you may be a man of pleasure or of business, but without God, a stranger to His grace, and an enemy; or it may be these lines may fall under the eye of one that is young and thoughtless, full of gaiety and spirit, still an enemy of God; but whoever, whatever, wherever you may be, God's solemn testimony by His word as to you and your condition, is that you have sinned and come short of His glory, that

you are guilty and lost, one of His enemies. Thank God, not finally lost ; for the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost, and it is of Him that God speaks to you. He is not your enemy. He sends to tell you of His Son, He tells you of His glory as the Word that was in the beginning, who was with God, and was God, and was in the beginning with God. He sends to tell you that the Word was made flesh. God tells you of His gift of His own Son, He tells you of His sinless manhood, of His spotless life, His perfect obedience, His marvellous grace and wondrous service. But all this did not meet your condition. Christ's obedience was unto death, and that death was the death of the cross. God sends to tell you of the sufferings of Christ, of the work of Christ, of the death of Christ. He appeared, once, to put away sin by His sacrifice. He finished the work. God sends to tell you of His finished work. He sends to tell you of the resurrection of Christ. He is beseeching you, "Be ye reconciled to God." It is He who has given His Son. Christ died, yea, rather is risen again : and the believer is justified in the power of His blood. There God meets your condition as a sinner. This blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of man, could have gone back without dying, in the perfection of His holy manhood and fragrant spotless life ; gone back to heaven from whence He came.

Death had no claim upon Him. Death has claims on you: it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. When Peter and James and John heard in the holy mount the voice uttered by the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom *I* have found my delight," Jesus could have ascended alone from that holy mount into heaven. He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." In the garden of Gethsemane He could have had twelve legions of angels. The sinless, adorable Sufferer went of His own voluntary will to take the place of Victim. He "by the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." He suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He said—and, oh, consider the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but IF IT DIE, it bringeth forth much fruit." He died; and God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

J. T.

WE pray Thee for all the little crossings of our path this day—that, in the dealings towards man with man, we may meet them in the Spirit of our God.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER
FROM W. PATTERSON, MISSIONARY.

St. Petersburg, September 28th, 1815.

“FOR me the most interesting, although not the most important discovery, was that we fell in with a colony of Cossacks, consisting of about ninety persons, who are in these quarters for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. They belong originally to the Don, and are of the sect of Dhubertzy, of whom you will find some particulars in Pinkerton’s Greek Church. Since they came to Finland, they have had no books among them, not even a single copy of the scriptures. We had a long conversation with one of them who could not read, and yet he answered all our questions in the language of scripture. We asked if they had any priests among them. He answered, ‘Yes, we have a great High Priest, who is holy, harmless,’ &c. ‘Have you baptism?’ ‘We are baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire.’ ‘Have you communion?’ ‘We have communion with the Lord Jesus daily.’ ‘Have you churches?’ ‘I hope you are not so silly as to think churches are built of wood and stone; wherever two or three are met together in Christ’s name, there He has promised to be with them, and there is a church of Christ.’

“‘We have now conversed about God for more than an hour, and are of one heart and one soul. We are a church when you will. With the so-called churches we can have nothing to do, as they admit drunkards, &c.; but a church of Christ is holy, and all its members must be so too. You will find no such people among us.’

“‘What is your opinion of the new birth?’ reading to him the passage in John. ‘We are born the first time when we are born of our mother, but the second time when our hearts are changed by the word and Spirit of God; when we are led to hate what we loved, and love what we hated formerly; when we give over living in sin; not that we are perfect in this world, but we have no pleasure in sin as before.’

“‘What do you think is meant by being born of water and of the Spirit?’ ‘By water is not meant baptism, but the word of God; for we are born of the incorruptible seed of the word which liveth and abideth for ever; and as it is the Spirit by whose operation this is effected, so we are said to be born of the Spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. So you see, we are not Christians, or born again, as we come into the world. We do not inherit it from our parents.’

“‘But seeing you cannot read, how came you to know all this?’ ‘I wonder you can ask such a question. Has not Jesus promised to be with

us always to the end of the world, and has He not promised to give them His Spirit to teach them all things? He has said, "When you are brought before governors and kings for my sake, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Now I believe the promise. I have often been called to answer for my religion, and have always found Jesus true to His word. And even now when called to come before you, I prayed God to fulfil this promise to me, and He has done it. You see I speak freely, and you seem satisfied with me. You are the first we have ever met with in this place who has understood us; you must be taught by the same Spirit.'

"Can any among you read?' 'There are some who can read, but you seem to lay much stress upon reading and being learned. . . . It is enough if we are taught of the Spirit.'

"We asked him if he crossed himself before their lectures. He replied, 'That we cannot do.' 'You know the commandments?' and here he repeated the first and second. 'Are you obedient to the law?' 'As far as it does not interfere with our religion or our faith. We have sworn allegiance to our emperor, and we serve in the army.'

"You have been called Duhubertzzy?' 'Our gracious sovereign has been pleased to call us so,

and we submit ; we call ourselves true Christians. We are the same as from the beginning.' 'Are there many in the Don of your way of thinking ?' 'Oh yes, many thousands, but they are afraid to shew themselves or to avow their opinions.' 'Have you been persecuted ?' 'If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus he must suffer persecution.'

"We then related to him what was going on in the religious world, and made him acquainted with the Bible Society. I wish you had been present whilst we related these things to him. He seemed to awaken as out of a dream ; a heavenly joy beamed from his countenance, which melted our hearts. At last he exclaimed, 'Now He is near ! We have been long expecting Him to come, and long been convinced it could not be far distant, but never believed that such preparations were making for His coming. No person has ever told us of these things. I will go home to my church and relate to them all these glorious things. How will my brethren rejoice when they hear them !'

"We gave him a Russian Testament and some publications to carry home to his brethren as he always called them. It seems they have all things common, or nearly so. Their conduct is most exemplary. They have a good report of all men, even of their enemies."

CORRESPONDENCE.

8. H., France. You may well ask what is the meaning of the words, the "dying of Jesus," in that scripture, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," &c. (2 Cor. iv. 10.) In these last days the love of pleasure has so taken the place of the dying of Jesus, that it is well-nigh forgotten.

The apostle had been shewing that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. The body is still earthly and mortal, as of the first Adam; but as such we have been identified with Christ unto death in baptism. We have accepted the judgment of death as the end of our old Adam existence. "I am crucified with Christ." Thus whilst in this mortal flesh the apostle could say, "*Always* bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." We carry about that which we reckon dead. "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." What a privilege for the resurrection life of Jesus to be made manifest in these poor mortal bodies. And we who have this risen life, yet, as to our mortal life, "alway delivered unto death for Jesus sake," &c. Thus as to the body, this would make suffering and death for Jesus' sake our normal condition. Such *was* Christianity in the beginning. Modern pleasure-seeking Christendom is the utter denial of this most important truth. Yes, as baptism shews in type, death and burial with Jesus is the very starting-point. And then "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHILDREN.

THE YOUNG MEN.

WE have already seen the fathers are characterised by having "known him that is from the beginning." Here (1 John ii. 13) we learn that the young men are characterised by having "overcome the wicked one." In his second address to the young men, he mentions the secret of their strength, and warns them against the world. Loving the world and loving the Father are incompatible. All the elements which make the world what it is, have their source in the world, not in the Father. And then the world passes away, and its lust, while he that does the will of God abides for ever.

Let us notice a little these several points.

1. The young men have overcome the wicked one. The strength of divine life is in them, and in the conflicts they have sustained with the enemy, they have been crowned with victory. It is not that all conflict is ended, and all danger past, but they have realised in conflict a power which is superior to that of the enemy. If they have a powerful foe, they know and possess a power greater than his, which they have, and to use, and the enemy is put to flight. They are characterised by this remarkable fact, that they

“have overcome the wicked one.” Satan who rules the darkness of this world, and who is the great enemy of God’s people, cannot stand before these young men. This is a wondrous fact that may well fill us with holy boldness and courage, in meeting this relentless and untiring foe.

2. The divine life, directed by the word of God, is the secret of strength in the young men. “Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” In Ephesians vi., where it is a question of conflict with spiritual powers of wickedness, the apostle says, “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” This is the source of all strength for conflict. In ourselves we have no strength, but in Him we are strong. Christ is the believer’s life, and this is directed in the believer *by the word of God*. Against this, Satan has no power, When Satan meets Christ in the believer, he meets One who has already vanquished him, and destroyed his power. In death (expression of utter weakness) Christ destroyed him who had the power of death; so that the weakness of Christ is stronger than the power of Satan. Satan did his worst against Christ at the cross, but Christ is risen from the dead in the power of a life that Satan could not touch. Resurrection proclaimed complete, eternal victory for Christ. Satan well knows that he is a vanquished foe, and that at the appointed time, Christ will cast

him into the lake of fire. If we meet Satan, therefore, in the power of Christ, he immediately flees. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

It is not only that Christ has personally gained the victory over Satan, but He did this for our deliverance. He took part in flesh and blood, "that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) In the death of Christ, all that Satan could use to terrify the conscience, as well as all that could bring down the judgment of God, was swept away; and thus the believer is emancipated from the condition of bondage and fear, into which he had been plunged by sin, and the power of Satan.

But this is not all. The believer is made a partaker of divine life. He possesses the very life in which Christ's victory over Satan was displayed—life in resurrection—life as Christ imparted it to His disciples, when He breathed on them after His resurrection—life in the Spirit. Christ was made alive in the Spirit (1 Pet. iii. 18); the believer lives in the Spirit (Gal. v. 25); and he has "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," as a delivering power. (Rom. viii. 2.) It is life in Christ, of which the Holy Ghost is the spring and power in the believer. This life

Satan cannot touch. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John v. 18.)

In this divine life, then, lies the secret of the young men's strength. They have the energy of Christ in them, and the word of God abiding in them, directing the divine life, according to all that He is as an object filling the heart, and governing its desires. The word of God expresses what that life is, in all its various characteristics; and if the word *abides* in us, it forms the heart by filling it with Christ as an object, reproducing in us, His life; as Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ." And if this is what Satan finds in us, what can he do? He is in the presence of One who has already conquered him, and he can only flee.

How blessed then to "abide in Him," as the apostle exhorts in verse 28, and to have God's word abiding in us, as in verse 12, so that we may be always able to overcome the wicked one. The power of Satan has been broken in the cross, but he has many *wiles*, and these we need to **withstand**. "We are not ignorant of his devices," as the apostle said to the Corinthians, and we need to watch, lest he "get an advantage." Our **safety** lies in having God's word abiding in us. It is this that forms the heart, according to Christ, and directs the movements of the divine life in the soul. It becomes also the sword of the

Spirit to the christian warrior, and enables him to repel every assault of the wicked one. The word is the word of God's grace, which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts xx. 32); and it is also the sword of the Spirit. May we prize it, both for what it gives us, and for what it preserves us against.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

CHRIST IN ASSOCIATION WITH ISRAEL AND WITH THE CHURCH.

LUKE XX. 40-47, AND XXI.

(Notes of a Lecture by J. N. D.)

IN the closing verses of Luke xx. the Lord takes up the chain which was the connection of the subject before Him. This is something distinct from being David's Son or Jehovah. The Lord having confounded the unwilling Jews by His wisdom, now in His turn questions them. "David called him Lord: how is he then his son?" He quotes Psalm cx. He is seen not as David's Son, going to take the earthly throne; He leaves for the present His place of Messiah's throne down here, and takes His place in heavenly glory. "The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adonai], Sit thou on my right hand, until I

make thine enemies thy footstool." There is a terrible testimony as to how He takes His place in glory for His *enemies*. It is not Zion's king coming unto her, meek and lowly, riding upon an ass! but the One whose enemies are to be His footstool, both His enemies among the Jews and others.

David's Son having the place of David's Lord, was the great hinge on which turned the change in the whole system. It was exactly what the Jews could not understand. Israel was to be set aside for a season, and the Messiah was not going to take the throne yet; but they wanted a present, earthly Messiah. The place He was about to take as seen in Psalm cx. was not simply as the One "who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh;" nor as "the Son of God;" but as "Adonai"—Lord—Man exalted to the right hand of power—Man in glory. Of course, as to His Godhead He was Lord from eternity; but now He was about to be the *Man* in glory, as the One who did "drink of the brook in the way" (ver. 7); as the One who had taken the lowly place of the dependent man; who had been a pilgrim, like others, getting refreshment by communion with His Father. Thus, having emptied Himself, humbled Himself, He is now exalted by God.

This great universal principle—that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that

exalteth himself shall be abased"—was fully brought out, as we have seen before, in both Adams. In the *first Adam* nature would EXALT ITSELF to be as God, until in its full ripeness Antichrist will exalt himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he as God, sitting in the temple of God, sheweth himself that he is God. (2 Thess. ii. 4.) Satan will set him up, filling him with the very same spirit with which he tempted him at the beginning. Satan, not being able to exalt himself in heaven, will attempt to do it through the seed of man; but the end shall be abasement. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Thou hast said in thine heart, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.... I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isa. xiv. 12-15.)

In the *Second Adam* we have Him who was God HUMBLING HIMSELF, humbling, emptying Himself: going down, becoming obedient even to the vilest of deaths. And then we see that "humbled One" going back to the place He had before—but as MAN. God highly exalting Him, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in the heaven, and things in the earth and under the earth.

All this was beyond the reach of Jewish promise to David's Son. The Jews did not

understand the scriptures, but fulfilled them through not understanding them. God placed *man* on the earth. He exalted *himself*. But God goes on patiently trying him until man at last rejects God in Christ. Then, in the fulfilment of His blessed counsels, He takes up the heavenly Man—the Second Adam—and now all life and glory and righteousness descend from heaven, depending not on man's responsibility, but on the faithfulness of God. Is it *life* now that is needed? God gives the life of Christ in resurrection. Is it glory? God gives heavenly glory. Is it righteousness? God gives divine righteousness. He puts us in heaven. All flows down, not simply from God in grace, but from the place which Man has in glory! The Man Christ Jesus has fully met all man's responsibilities. This is the reason of the fulness of the blessing of the *gospel*, and also of that of the *kingdom* to come, the blessedness of which will flow from the heavenly Man, though the Jews would have liked it to be set up in an earthly way.

Thus in the largest way the turning-point in all the plans and counsels of God, is JESUS being set at the right hand of God. All the character, the stability, and the perfection of our blessing takes its source from the exalted Jesus. Then the Holy Ghost comes down to bear witness to this, on which the peace of the soul rests—even

in the accomplished righteousness of Him who is taken into the glory that the heavenly life we have in Him *should* be manifested here. Thus, then, have we the Fountain, the very key-stone of all God's plans. Mark the moral blessedness—this universal principle—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" is displayed in perfection in the Second Adam in contrast to the first; but let us remember that this is the place we are to take, and He hath left us an example. In one sense truly we are at the very bottom already; still as saints we may know what it is to be servants of all.

There was this spirit of self-exaltation in the scribes, the Pharisees, the rich; but the Lord looks to the simple-hearted devotedness of the poor widow, and cares not for all the religious pretences, and for that which has a great appearance before men. (Chap. xx. 46, 47; xxi. 1-4.)

Having laid the great moral basis of all God's ways in David's son's exaltation to be David's Lord, the Lord goes on to shew the practical results. (Compare Matt. xxiv. with Luke xxi.) In Matthew xxiv. we get God's dealings with Jerusalem in special connection *with the Jews*. Up to verse 14 there is a *general* description of the testimony which was to go forth so long as there was any Jewish remnant to testify, or any Judea to testify in. Then in verse 15 He

goes back and details the special circumstances of the close (the "times of the Gentiles" being quite passed over), that is to say, the last half-week of Daniel, quoting from Daniel xii., when the abomination of desolation will be set up by Antichrist, and the Jews will go back to idolatry, worshipping the idol. These will be the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days, at the close of which, full blessing will be brought in. This will be the time of Jacob's trouble, as in Jeremiah ; but this is always connected with Jacob's deliverance. The Lord will shorten—cut short—those days, or none could be saved ; so dreadful will they be. And "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." In Luke xxi. it is not the Jews, but the Son of man and the Gentiles. It is the description of the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman emperor, Titus ; and then that which is going on now—Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles, and the full time of the four beasts of Daniel, running out until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. After that there is the end of the age upon the earth distress of nations ; but no reference to the events at Jerusalem are detailed in Matthew.

Thus we get, in the clearest way, the double character of these prophecies : that in Luke containing the description of Jerusalem during the times of the Gentiles, when Israel is set aside ;

and Matthew giving us that which is specifically Jewish, passing *over* the times of the Gentiles and speaking of Jacob's trouble at the *close* of those times, when the Jews will, under Antichrist, turn back again to idolatry, worshipping the idol he will set up in the temple.

The Lord then was rejected as the Son of David, but it resulted in the bringing in of the far wider and more glorious thing of the Son of man. The Lord dropped for a while His Son of David character, but it was to take up everything in the power of God. The church, life, righteousness, all comes down from the Son of man in glory. And thus it was that Stephen saw the glory of God, and *Jesus* standing at the right hand of God. In Psalm i. we have God's general principle of government under the law, that the righteous man should stand in the judgment. The Lord alone ever took this perfect place. In Psalm ii. the question is of God's purposes. In spite of the rising up of the Gentiles, God's decree should stand as to Christ. "He shall be king in Zion." This does not refer to the eternal Sonship of Christ. In the succeeding Psalms we have the Christ rejected, and the experiences of the Lord and of the remnant. Psalm viii. takes in the wider sphere, the glory which God gave to the Son of man when rejected. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise went forth, or the very stones must have cried

out. The Lord must have the testimony of praise, though not set up in earthly power. The kingdom having rejected Christ on earth, He gets it in a heavenly way. God is pleased to give all that He has created to the Man in heaven—the Man in God's counsels—who after all the sorrow He endured and death is crowned with honour and glory. As Man the Lord takes all the power and glory, to which He had a title as God. God, in His blessed wisdom, has centred all in the personal glory of Christ.

The church is the place into which the Holy Ghost brings us into union with Christ, whilst He is thus hid—hidden with Christ in God. The entire, distinct, definite place of the church is that while unknown here, we are united to Him by faith through the power of the Spirit, who comes down and gives us the display of the glory of Christ, not as being *under* it, but as associated with Himself in all the glory He has in the Father's house, where we have our place. Thus we never find the church brought in in the displays of Christ's glory save as the bride—never as part of the inheritance—she herself being “joint-heirs with Christ.” It is of the last importance for the saints to apprehend the distinct place which we have as united to the heavenly Man.

The word generation (chap. xxi. 32) usually, though not exclusively, in scripture, is used as

designating a class of men, a multitude having a common character, who may or who may not live at the same period. A case in point is found in Deuteronomy xxxii. 20, when, in prophesying of this very period, the Lord says of Israel, "They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith." The scene is earthly. (Ver. 36.) *We* do stand before Him in one sense. There are certain principles which are true, and apply, at all times, to God's people; but *we* do *not* take the place (at least I hope we do not) of dwellers "upon earth;" we are not looking for earthly events. We are travellers. I do not *dwell* in France or Germany because I have to pass through them. We *seek* a country, we are traversing earth; but we are dwellers in heaven, our birth-place is heaven. It is true of us on a higher principle, for we shall stand before the SON OF GOD.

Thus do we get the Lord's dealings with Jews and Gentiles. God reveals to the church what He is about to do in the world, as He did to Abraham about Sodom; and by this He proves that the church does not belong to the world. Our place is most blessed! The Lord give us to hold it in power, as our portion, that we may be indeed strangers and pilgrims here. Amen!

A LETTER TO A DYING SCEPTIC.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Pardon, I pray you, the liberty taken by an entire stranger in thus addressing you. I have heard you are ill, about to die, and yet in a state of unbelief; and I write to send you this message: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.) “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of *all acceptation*, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. i. 15.) “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 31.) “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.)

Now, my dear friend, these are the simple, yet *true* statements of the word of God. My desire in writing to you is that you may hear and believe these statements, and live. Life, eternal life, is before you. It is the gift of God, not to those who think they are worthy, but to those who, confessing their unworthiness, look to Christ as a Saviour. I need not tell you that you are a sinner, your own conscience will tell you that; and the word of God says plainly, “There is none righteous,” “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii.) But the word

of God says just as plainly that Christ is set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, and that God is just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. God justifies the ungodly through faith in Christ.

Do not, my dear friend, call this a fable. It is the very word of God. I know scripture says, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" but I hope you do not say this. And if you do not, like the fool, say, "There is no God," why should you not believe His word? If you or I (poor worms of the dust) are able to communicate what is in *our* minds, why should not God be able to do the same? He *has* done so, blessed be His name for ever and ever! He has spoken in no uncertain terms. He has revealed Himself in the Person of His blessed Son, and spoken to us through His word, unfolding a scheme of salvation which never could have originated in the mind of sinful man. Love, infinite love, to those that were enemies lies at the foundation of this whole scheme. But the cross, the blood-shedding of Jesus, was necessary, in order that that love might flow out fully and righteously toward the guilty. We had no righteousness, and no sacrifice; but God in infinite love has furnished the sacrifice that was needed. He gave His Son—gave Him up to the death of the cross; and this, that you and I might live. Oh! will you receive the gift

of God? Will you believe in Jesus? In view of that eternity that lies before you, I pray you, do not turn away from Him who would speak to you through His word, and who would draw you by cords of love, and reconcile you to Himself through the death of Christ. Oh! let your heart respond to the love of God. *There is no love like His!* No poetic fancy ever dreamed of such love, nor is it to be found—nor even the thought—in the writings of any heathen philosopher. God has *revealed* it in revealing *Himself in the Person of Jesus*. Otherwise such love could never have been known or conceived of. “God is love,” and this shone out in Christ Jesus. Oh! let me entreat you, ere you pass into eternity, not to reject the love of God. Believe in Jesus. Believe and live.

I know not whether this letter may not be too late to reach you on this side of eternity; but if not too late, I entreat you by the compassions of God, and by the cross and sufferings of Jesus, not to turn a deaf ear to His messages of love and grace. I write with the one desire that your soul may be saved, and that you may give glory to God, in bowing to His Son Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

With earnest desire for your eternal well-being, I am your friend and well-wisher.

A. H. R.

ARE YOU READY?

A lesson from the Roman Army.

THE morning appears on the distant hills,
 A white fog curls up from the little rills,
 And nothing is heard in the Roman camp,
 Save the sleepers' snore, and the sentries' tramp.
 But hark! that sound, shrill, loud, and clear,
 As the trumpet's notes fall on each sleeper's ear,
 From end to end of the camp resounds,
 And away to the echoing hills rebounds.
 A change now breaks on that quiet scene,
 Bustle and life where rest had been,
 As warriors step forth in their armour bright,
 And greet the first rays of the dawning light.
 The horses are saddled, the baggage is pack'd,
 The tents are struck, and the tent poles stack'd.
 And cavalry, infantry, horses and men,
 Are *ready*, and waiting the march to begin.
 But hark! again the trumpet's din,
 The camp is fired, and the ranks fall in.
 And now they await, in unbroken array,
 The trumpet's loud peal, the third time that day.
 'Tis heard; the *third*, the LAST great trump.
 Ere its notes die away or its echoes die out,
 A voice is heard; it demands, Are YOU ready?
 In loud cheerful tones they reply, We ARE ready.
 Again, yet again the question is ask'd,
 The answers ring out as clear as at first,
 The word is then given: the ranks move away,
 To conquer or perish, be slain or to slay.

But the time is coming, it hastens along,
 It might be here ere to-morrow's sun,
 When the Lord Himself, with His heavenly shout
 With archangel's voice and the *trumpet's* note,

Shall summon His saints to Himself in the air,
 My reader or hearer, will you be there?
 Oh, bear with me patiently a moment or two,
 The scripture has said it: it must be true,
 That "All have sinn'd, of the glory come short."
 Of sin death's the wages; life cannot be bought.
 No! Life is a gift as the flowing stream free,
 And the Saviour Himself says, *Come unto Me.*
 For that *trumpet call* can only be heard
 By those who have known and received Him as
 Lord,

By those who have found that by simple faith,
 In His *precious blood* pour'd out at His death,
 That their SINS ARE FORGIVEN, their guilt
 put away,

Turn'd from darkness to light, made children of day.
 I know some would tell you, with confidence too,
 That nought of all this can be known by you,
 Till before the white throne for judgment you stand,
 With sheep or with goats on the right or left hand,
 But what saith the scripture?

"There's NO condemnation,"

Oh, stop! and consider it,

"There's NO condemnation

"To those who are in Christ Jesus" the Lord,
 Our Saviour, Redeemer, Jehovah, the Word.
 "At the *last trump*" (for the trumpet shall sound,
 And from end to end of the world rebound),
 And the dead in Christ shall first rise, and we
 Who are alive and remain on the earth shall be
 Caught up together with them in the air.
 My reader or hearer, will YOU be there?

1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. 1 Cor. xv. 51-57.

C. E. T.

QUESTIONS IN THE WORKROOM.

THE CHURCH.

"BEING surrounded with Roman Catholics, and High Church fellow work-people, I often have such texts as these brought before me. Thou art Peter! or it should be, 'and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' And 'whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.' (Matt. xvi. 18; John xx. 23.) I feel at a loss sometimes, how to answer."

Your letter calls our attention to the immense importance of Paul's counsel to Timothy, as to the value of a knowledge of the holy scriptures. (2 Tim. iii. 14, 17.) We trust, whoever brings scripture before us, we shall only desire to bow with all our hearts, to its authority. Jesus, then, here said, "Thou art Peter" (*Petros*), which means a stone; "and on this rock (*Petra*) I will build my church." The question then, is, what is that rock, on which Christ builds His church? If He had meant that Peter was the rock, He would have said, Thou art *Petra*—the rock; but He said just the opposite, Thou art a stone.

Let us go a little further back to inquire what

our Lord means by the rock, the foundation on which He would build His church. You will find when the Pharisees had rejected Him, Simon Peter confessed Him: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona [son of Jona]: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Thus we learn that it was the Person of the Christ, the Son of the living God, as revealed by the Father, that was the foundation of Peter's blessing—the foundation, fit for this blessed stone to be built upon. And on this foundation—this rock—Christ declared He would build His church. Mark, this is far more than the Messiah, made known as son of David. He was that, but He was about to be cut off, rejected as Son of man, the Messiah of Israel. But now He names for the first time, His church. This He would build on the rock, what He was as Son of the living God. The gates of hell, the powers of darkness, might seem to prevail, as to the kingdom of Messiah long foretold; but He would build something which had been quite unknown, HIS CHURCH: and the powers of darkness should not prevail against it.

You will also notice that Jesus immediately tells His disciples that He must be killed, and be raised again the third day. Peter was now in a sad way, as he only looked for the kingdom,

and as yet, knew nothing of Christ's present work in building the church. He had no idea that Jesus must die and rise again, before He could begin that building.

There was another thing that does not seem to have been made known, or at least, was not understood, that there would be a new kind of kingdom on earth, that is, the kingdom of God on earth, but the king in heaven. You may read the parables about this in Matthew xiii. Peter was to have the privilege of opening the doors of this kingdom. Mark, He did not give him the keys of the church, or say that Peter should build the church.

Turn to the Acts: after Jesus had been crucified, and was risen from the dead, and having gone up into heaven, He, the ascended Christ, sent down the Holy Ghost, and you will find it is He, by the Spirit, who builds His church. And to Peter is given the honour, as promised, of unlocking the doors into the new kingdom, first to the Jews (Acts ii.), then to the Gentiles. (Acts x.)

Suppose we ask Peter what he has to say. Whether he regards himself as the rock, or the foundation: or whether he regards Christ as the alone foundation stone or rock—the foundation of salvation, and of the church?

Full of the Holy Ghost he says: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders,

which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Could Peter possibly mean himself ? No, he is speaking of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, "whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead." (Acts iv. 10-12.)

Not a word did he preach about himself, on the day of Pentecost ; but, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And were they to repent, and be baptized in the name of Peter ? No, but "in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."

And when he turned the key to open the door to the Gentiles, did he present himself as the foundation ? No, it is again Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." And to this truth God gave witness, by the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts x. 43.)

Did Peter, after this, invite men to come to him or to Christ ? Read his own words : thus he speaks, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house. . . . Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious : and he that believeth

on him shall not be confounded," &c. (1 Peter ii. 4-8.) Clearly, Peter never dreamt that he was the rock or that chief corner stone.

Did Paul ever say that Peter was the rock, the foundation on which Christ built His church? Ask him, and hear his reply: "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.) And, speaking of believers, he says, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF being the chief corner. In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," &c. (Eph. ii. 20, 21.)

Let us not then dishonour the Son of the living God, whom Peter confessed, by putting Peter in His place, as the rock on which Christ builds His church. But let us hear what all your companions can say in the workroom.

CORRESPONDENCE.

9. M., Glasgow. "What is meant by blasphemy against the Holy Ghost?"

In Matthew xii. the Lord had, by the Spirit of God, cast out a demon. The wretched Pharisees blasphemously charged Him with doing this by the power of Beelzebub. He shewed the absurdity of this wickedness, and then explains the solemn fact, that whilst sin against Him might be forgiven, as indeed it was—repentance and forgiveness beginning at Jerusalem—but to reject the

testimony of the Holy Ghost, and speak against Him, to such there could be no forgiveness. Compare this with Luke xii. 10. Christ has been rejected and murdered: pardon was to be proclaimed to the murderers. He is gone up to heaven, and the Holy Ghost has come down, and is on this earth. But there is no pardon, neither now nor in the millennial age to come, to those who reject and speak against the Holy Ghost, as they did blaspheme against Christ. How very little is it known that the Holy Ghost is on this earth!

In Matthew xxiv. 40, 41, the Lord is, as you say, speaking of His coming in judgment on the quick as it were in the days of Noah; and, looked at from that point of view, one will be taken away by judgment as it was in the days of Noah, and the other left for the millennial earth. (Compare Luke xvii. 24-37; Zech. xiii. 8, 9; xiv. 1, 2, 5.) No doubt all this will come upon the world and upon the unbelieving Jews, as unexpectedly as the flood in the days of Noah. The centre and scene of these judgments will be Jerusalem. The nations will be gathered there as the eagles gather from all sides to devour the carcase of a beast. Isaiah lxvi. 15, 19, shew us that a remnant will escape. The Lord suddenly comes, to the joy and deliverance of that remnant.

The hopes of the church had not as yet been revealed. Still we must not forget that from Matthew xxiv. 31 to xxv. 30 we have a break, or parenthesis, in which the Lord gives the most important instructions and warnings to the whole of professing Christendom during its entire history. He does not, however, name the church

as such, but takes up corporate and individual responsibility.

The promise to believers, as you know, is quite another thing. (John xiv. 1, 2, &c. ; 1 Thess. iv.) No doubt, in that sense, the separation of friends and families is a most solemn fact. If the Lord should come to take His own to be with Himself this day, who would be taken and who would be left behind of all we know? who would be taken to be for ever with the Lord? May the Lord awaken every careless reader of these lines, and especially the careless members of christian households.

10. T. G., Florence.—THE PARABLE OF A PENNY A DAY.—Matthew xx. 1-16.—How little was this parable understood! "A penny a day." And how little is it understood now! We must read it in connection with what goes before, and as meeting Jewish thought. The disciples were amazed at the young man who had every Jewish mark of the divine favour, and yet he went away, and the Lord had expressed the strange thought to them, that it was hard for the rich to be saved. They were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus pointed them to God: with Him all things are possible.

This is the occasion of Peter's question: "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" Now read the Lord's reply—the reward shall be at the incoming time, in the regeneration. "*Ye which have followed me,*" shall be thus rewarded, "and shall inherit everlasting life." "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Connected with this follows the parable which

sets forth the principle that it is not man's labour, and work for God; but God's goodness and grace to man. It is omitted in Mark and Luke. By comparing Mark x. 31, it is evident that it was told them as they were going in the way—He going up to Jerusalem to offer Himself the sacrifice for sins.

Spoken then to the Jews, He begins with the dealings of God with them. He took them from the rest of the world, and made an agreement with them, a righteous agreement: so much work, so much pay or reward. No grace, but righteousness, and God would keep His agreement. Each step after this is a step in grace—grace upon grace. At the third hour He found men in need in the market-place, and He took compassion and said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. They trusted His word and went. So of the sixth, and so of the ninth hour. All this was the goodness of the householder seeking the needy. They who believed his word, went into the vineyard. But when the eleventh hour came, it certainly looked too late to hope for any to take compassion on the unemployed. No man had hired them. They too are invited, and without any bargain, they trust his bare word—and they are not disappointed. There are four parts in the parable. These may answer to: first, the law, which if a man keep he shall live; secondly, the ministry of Christ; then, thirdly, the gospel by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven in the beginning of the history of the church; and now, fourthly, the present eleventh-hour testimony immediately before the coming of the Lord.

Oh the riches of His grace, after centuries of dark rejection. Yes, it is an act of grace on God's part in the last three cases. And the Jew who made his own bargain, as always, murmurs at the grace of God. In His vineyard, grace has shone out more and more. This is the theme of Jesus; but how little they understood Him! He was on the way to die for them—to take the lowest possible place. They were desiring to take the highest in the kingdom! Precious lesson! Everlasting life to all who have believed His word. To the Jew and to the Gentile, God is seen the Seeker of the needy.

11. J. W., Harwich. It is not for us to “define the difference between socialism and co-operative societies.” It is enough that God says to us in His word: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” &c. (2 Cor. vi. 14.) We understand any voluntary association with this world's confederacies, to be yoking together with unbelievers. The believer is in Christ—in Canaan, so to speak—he is not an improver of Pharaoh's Egypt, or of Satan's world. As a social question, too, one must perceive these are the last days of intense selfishness, as long foretold. (2 Tim. iii. 2.) “For men shall be lovers of their own selves,” &c. Class against class, seeking by cheapness and selfishness to prepare this doomed world for that social earthquake foretold in the word of God. (Rev. vi.) It is no use talking of our commonwealth being in heaven whilst our politics are in and of Satan's world. Oh to really come out and be separate from them, and to walk down here as heavenly men in possession *there*, so as to be delivered from all the wiles of Satan *here*. What should we think, if any one told us our Jesus

belonged to a co-operative society when He was down here? Would it have become the Holy One of God? And He says, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

12. C. T., Grimsby. The Holy Ghost is dwelling here in Christendom. (See John xvi. 1-15.) He convicts the world. He is here, though the world cannot receive Him. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." (Acts vii. 51.) But the presence of the Lord, as explained to us in Matthew xviii. 20, is quite a different thing. How few there are truly gathered together TO His name! Some gather on Establishment principles, some on Dissenting principles, and others on what they may call divine principles.

But all this may be far short of being gathered to the name of the living Lord, the Son of God, surely present where two or three are so gathered. Let us examine *ourselves* on this all-important matter. Do we believe He is present where we gather? Do we honour Him thus present? Or do we despise His holy presence? If a difficulty arise, do we look at that difficulty in the fear of the Lord, just as we should do if we saw Him in our very midst? How supreme the privilege to be in His presence, without a cloud or spot, in the full, unhindered intimacy of His infinite love; in the calmness of His perfect and everlasting peace, without a care, a burthen, or a wish! Ah, that is the true sabbath of rest. And it is ours. May we enjoy it more and more for ever.

THE HEAVENLY VISION.

OR,

HAVE YOU PUT YOUR CANDLE OUT?

THE writer awoke one morning about 2.30 a.m., feeling the sentence of death upon him in a very remarkable way. With great difficulty he arose and lit his candle. He lay down again, and thought surely he was about to depart. After a time he became fully conscious that it was God speaking to him, and that the felt sentence of death on him was for some purpose. Suddenly the glory of the heavenly vision in Acts xxvi burst upon him. As he lay, the brightness of that glory became so great, and the reality of that light surpassing all created light, that he looked at his candle, and said, I am ashamed of you. There is no need of you in such a scene of light: so he got up and put his candle out. There was no need of manufactured or created light.

He would now pen down a few of the thoughts given on that remarkable morning.

It was at midday a light was seen above the brightness of the sun. How bright that light. Yes, brighter than the brightest created light in midday splendour.

Who was the man that saw this light? Saul,

the mad persecutor, the greatest Pharisee and the greatest hater of Christ on earth. There is no hatred against Him like religious hatred. Saul thought he was doing God service ; but his heart was filled with enmity against the disciples of Jesus. He says, "I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." Several things were common to them all. They all saw a light ; they all fell to the ground ; they heard a voice ; they heard a voice and they did not hear. Compare this with Acts ix., xxii. But only one could say, "I heard a voice speaking unto me." Well might Saul exclaim, "Who art thou, Lord?" And never was surprise greater than when he heard that reply, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." When the brethren of Joseph heard the words, "I am Joseph," their surprise could not have been greater. The glory of Joseph fades away when compared with the glory of that light and that voice speaking *from* heaven.

Peter speaks of the majesty and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Peter i. 17, 18.) That

was a voice *to Him*. But now this voice is *from Him*; He speaks in the brightness of that glory that blinds the eye to all of earth. He does not say, I am God, or Christ, or the Lord; He was truly all these; but He says, "I am Jesus."

Let us mark this. A man speaks from the excellent glory; a man from heaven. It is He who was once a babe laid in a manger of the inn; Jesus, Immanuel, God with us; He who, at the age of twelve, sat amongst the doctors at Jerusalem. It is the Jesus of Bethany; the Jesus of Sychar's well; the Jesus of Gethsemane; the Jesus who said to His loved disciples on the night of His betrayal to death, "Let not your hearts be troubled." It is that Jesus who was mocked, spit upon, smitten, scourged, rejected by men. Jesus, nailed to the tree, bearing our sins; made sin; forsaken of God whilst the dark billows of divine wrath due to us rolled over His soul. He who said, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God;" that Jesus who said, "It is finished." The work which God gave Him to do was finished never to be repeated. It was that Jesus who was raised from the dead for our justification; that Jesus who ascended above all heavens. Yes, that "I AM Jesus," now speaks to a poor deceived Pharisee, chief of sinners, at midday, in brightness above all created light.

Hearken to those amazing words from the

Jesus who speaks from this excellent glory. Once He had said, "I will build my assembly." He did not say, I will build a church or an assembly, but "my assembly." That was a wonderful new revelation. He has now built, He now has that which He calls "my assembly." Do you know that there is on earth, that which Jesus can call "my assembly"?

On the morn of His resurrection He said something further, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." This was very wonderful—what never could have been said before that morning. Disciples were now brought into the same relation to the Father, and to God, that He the Son was in!

But now what He speaks from heaven is still more wonderful. He asks, "Why persecutest thou *me*?" I must let you know, Saul, there is not a saint on earth that you persecute but that saint is part of myself. Not now "*mine*" only, but even still nearer—"me." This was the great truth afterwards more fully revealed to Paul, and through him to us in the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. So far as we know, there have been only two men, as we say, converted by this great fact revealed direct from the glory; and these two were perhaps the greatest Pharisees that ever lived. The one at the beginning, and the other in these last of the

last days—at the end. We will look at the latter by-and-by.

Who then was this Saul? He was a most religious young man. He was doing what he thought was pleasing to God. He says, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more . . . an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee [that is, of the most religious sect of the Jewish religion]; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." (Phil. iii. 4-6.) But when he heard the voice speaking unto him, he found he was the mad persecutor and the chief of sinners. What a change of mind! All that he had esteemed was now as dung, compared with the excellent glory of that One who spoke to Him.

Now mark that Saul's conversion was the effect of this, as he says, "I heard a voice speaking unto me." Did that voice speak in wrath and terror to that stricken soul? No, He said, "I am Jesus," I am the Saviour. He spake to him as Saviour, not now as judge. The brightness of that light, yea, the glory of that light, made all darkness here below. He was like the queen of Sheba—there remained no spirit in him. He had no appetite for this world's food. He must go three days without light and food. He must henceforth find his all in resurrection. No! Jesus did not appear in judgment; He will by-

and-by. But He says, as it were, I will take you Saul, my greatest enemy, and make you my brightest witness on this earth.

Speaking here, Paul does not tell the earthly side of his remarkable conversion : how Ananias was sent to him, and how he was bid to arise and tarry not, but be baptised, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Here in chapter xxvi. it is the heavenly side, solely the heavenly vision. There is an earthly side of conversion, and there is a heavenly side. On this earth, and before men, by his baptism he entirely changed sides. In the sight of men he thus washed away his sins, like the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, being baptised in the name of that Lord he had hated and persecuted ; and thus took his place amongst those he had formerly persecuted.

But on the heavenly side, sins are not washed away by the water of baptism ; but by the blood of God's dear Son. Believing God, who raised JESUS up from the dead, who was delivered for our iniquities, and was raised from among the dead for our justification ; by faith we are justified, and have peace with God. It is important to keep distinct the difference between the heavenly and the earthly aspect of forgiveness of sins. Let us in this scripture keep before us the heavenly. Before, however, we go on to the commission to Paul to minister what he had and

should afterwards receive, let us pause, and ask ourselves a few questions.

Paul says, "I heard a voice speaking *unto me*." You may have sat for years under the preaching of the gospel, and heard, like others, a voice from heaven; for the gospel is from heaven. But can you say at such a time in such a place, "I heard a voice speaking unto me"? Though the voice was heard by all, and all felt in a general way; yea, all fell to the ground; you may also have felt a power under the word, and even fallen unto the ground, and yet be a stranger to Christ. Have you ever really heard a voice, the voice of Jesus speaking unto you? "Verily, verily, I say UNTO YOU, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." What, Jesus in the bright glory of that light speaks these words TO ME! Can I doubt them? Not if I can say, I heard Him speak to me—"a voice speaking unto me." Hearken to those words as from the excellent glory, spoken to you. Again He says, "Peace be unto you;" and shews you His hands and His side. Do you hear the voice speaking unto you from heaven? Oh, to have the ear open to hear every word of Jesus, as His voice speaking unto me. Well does the writer remember that voice speaking to him about fifty-three years ago; when having for months

sought salvation by works and sought in vain, coming home as a boy one rainy night in a dark lane, his heart sank in despair, and he fell to the ground with his face in the mud, and cried, "Oh Lord, it is all over, I can do no more." It was then he heard a voice speaking unto him, "It is finished." Yes, the work he tried to do, and could not, was all done. Jesus had done it all, long long ago. If you really can say, I heard His voice speaking to me, you will never doubt His word. No, you will say, I have heard the words of Jesus. I believe God that sent Him, and He says I have eternal life. He says I shall not come into judgment; He says I am passed from death unto life. I believe Him; He has made peace by His blood on the cross; that peace He gives to me; I believe Him. Oh, has He spoken to you? He spoke peace to me, but He did not speak to me as He did to Saul, of that wondrous mystery, "Why persecutest thou me?" But whether it be that wondrous mystery, or peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall never be able to really understand or enjoy either unless we can say, "I heard a voice from heaven speaking unto me." We will next look at the commission of the heavenly vision.



LETTER FROM THE EAST.

*Beyrout,**May 1st, 1887.*

DEAR BROTHER —,

Your former note, giving me a little account of the London meeting, reached here in due time, and gave us real joy ; so also your other note, of April 15th, giving an account of the precious meetings in Rotherham, came to hand by last post, and filled me with thanksgiving. Truly this binding of hearts together is a most evident work of the Lord.

I have now been at home about a month, but have been suffering much from the re-action which followed the protracted strain on the poor body. I am not well yet, but I feel that I am now better. For the first fortnight after my return I had ophthalmia, and when my eyes got better, I began to feel the re-action in my whole body, and for the last fortnight was scarcely able to do anything. But a few days ago I seemed to get a turn for the better. I do not complain of bodily prostration after prolonged service, nor even of pain, for I find it very profitable. One ceases from all activity, and reviews things quietly in the Lord's presence.

I had a letter from a new correspondent last winter from Mousul. He says, "I thank my

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for His surpassing grace which He has caused to abound towards us through His Son, by whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. I have to inform you that we have heard that you have expository helps to the understanding of the scriptures and other religious books. And we have seen some of them, and seen that they afford much profit and joy to the believer, inasmuch as they teach him to put all his dependence on God's work alone, through Christ crucified," &c. He then asks if I can send them a supply of books direct to Mousul. The books, which had reached them, had come to them from Mardeen, five or six days to the north of them.

Mousul, you will know, stands near the site of ancient Nineveh, and there are a good many Christians there and in the surrounding country. Since my return, I was enabled to send them a box of books, with the hope that a good many more may get joy and blessing by a clearer apprehension of God's work for us through Christ. I have also had a good many letters from my old correspondents in Mesopotamia, and sent them also a fresh supply of books, and I trust that I may be enabled to see them all some day, if we live, and the Lord will.

I have had good word from Egypt since my return, and was specially glad to hear that the Lord's table had been set up in S., a place we

have had at heart for a good while, but hitherto there has not been sufficient courage for the saints there to take the step. But I now hear that they have done so, and that the Lord is working there and in neighbouring places with increasing power. This place is at the extreme south of the regions in which gatherings have been formed. But the work is extending both up the river and down it.

In E., a place near S., five or six Mohammedans have been converted. When I was labouring there recently one young Mohammedan, who had believed and was consorting with Christians, was stripped quite naked and severely beaten before our eyes. He had been with us all the afternoon, and at sunset went to his home, when his father and friends set upon him and beat him with savage cruelty. He fled naked from them into the streets, and they followed him. We met the sad scene as we were going to our evening meeting. The lad recognised us, and said, "Help me, O Christians!" But we were powerless as so many sheep among wild beasts. One brother turned aside to remonstrate with the lad's father, but was told to go about his business, that the boy was his child and he would do with him as he pleased. We turned into our meeting-room with broken and bowed-down hearts, for we thought that they would certainly kill the poor lad that very night. But we poured out our

hearts in prayer to the Lord for him ; and were surprised within a quarter of an hour to see him coming into our meeting, clothed, and his face beaming with joy. The rage of his persecutors had spent itself, and when he got his clothes he came straight to the meeting, and sat listening to the word of God as happy as could be. He told us afterwards that the beating was very painful, but nevertheless he was full of joy all the time.

Such scenes, dear brother, bring the blessed Lord Jesus very near to us. We feel at the time what a reality it is to confess the Son of God in the midst of a world that will not have Him. When a Mohammedan is converted he gives up his old name and takes a new one. This lad had of his own accord called himself by a new name : "The servant of our Lord." He was soon made to experience the reality of it. A brother had affectionately warned him that he must expect great suffering, and, while the words were still fresh, it came upon him. But suffering for Christ makes souls dear to us. We all felt that night that we would gladly have taken some of the blows on our own bodies. I think, too, it tends to make us more real in the ministry of the word. There is no room left for mere sentiment and imagination. We feel that it must be Christ ministered in the present power of the Holy Ghost. You might, comparatively speaking, call it the lowest round of the ladder, but,

nevertheless, I always find myself on the very top of it also. Christ Himself is the way, the truth, and the life. And what we all have to seek is increased reality in the things of God.

Your brother in Christ,

B. F. PINKERTON.

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHILDREN.

II.

THE YOUNG MEN.

3. We now have a warning against the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This is indeed a solemn word for any Christian whose heart is set upon anything in this world. Love of the world and love of the Father do not go together. They are opposed to each other in every way. The world has murdered God's Son, and this has revealed its state of utter enmity against God. God has indeed raised Him up from the dead, and crowned Him with glory and honour at His own right hand; and the Holy Ghost has come down to witness to the fact of His resurrection, and of His exaltation to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of

sins ; but the world rejects Him still. Christ is not of the world. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" *are* of the world ; but Christ is of the Father, and the world has hated Him, and cast him out.

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that our blessed Lord Jesus is rejected in this world. Go where you will—into the busy throng, society, fashionable circles, even among the mass of professing Christians—and talk of Christ, or His things, and there is no relish for it, no response in people's hearts. They turn away, or their mouths are closed. Many a professing Christian is dumb the moment Christ's name is mentioned. And in many instances conversation on this topic will not be tolerated, while the most insignificant bit of neighbourhood gossip will be borne or even relished. Anything and everything but Christ ! The very name—the thought of Him even—is distasteful.

And not only is there no heart to receive Christ, but there is positive enmity against Him. By the verdict of this world Jesus was delivered up to die, and was nailed as a malefactor to the cross. People may say now that the Jews and Pilate did that, and may thus seek to clear themselves of all responsibility. But Pilate was the representative of the world-power at Jerusalem when He delivered Jesus up to die, and thus involved the world in the guilt of that

terrible deed. Has the world ever repented of this awful sin? Let its own course answer. A message from heaven has been calling to repentance, but the world has not repented. For more than eighteen hundred years, God has been, as it were, beseeching men to be reconciled, but the world remains still in enmity. Through grace individuals have repented, and have been reconciled to God; but the world, "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely," has no ear to hear, and continues in its course, ruled by "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

The world is guilty of the blood of Jesus, and yet goes on amusing itself as if nothing had happened. The hum of business, the cares of life, the sound of the harp and the organ, the theatre, the concert, the ball, and the ten thousand varieties of amusement, worldly pleasures, and worldly follies, are used of Satan to ensnare his victims, and drown the cry of guilt in the conscience, until death carries them away, or judgment closes over the scene.

Beloved brethren, are we practically outside of all this? Have we found God's Christ in glory an object that so fills and satisfies the heart, that for us the world has lost all its charms? Where are our hearts? Where our affections? Are

they with Christ in glory? or with the world that crucified Him?

But perhaps some reader of these lines is saying to himself: "It is impossible that this world which has rejected and slain my blessed Lord should draw away my heart from Him who loved me and gave Himself for me." But this is the very danger to which the young men, are exposed. It is this that they are warned against, and if there had been no danger there would have been no warning. There is that in us which answers to the world, and nothing but the word of God abiding in us, and keeping us in communion with Christ, can preserve us from its allurements. The apostle Paul had to record of one who had laboured with him, "Demas hath forsaken me, *having loved this present world.*" (2 Tim. iv. 10.) Sorrowful words! "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." An apostle's presence was not enough to keep Demas. Our strength is only in Christ. If we abide in Him, and His word abide in us, we shall be kept securely. Otherwise our hearts will be drawn away, and we shall find our affections entangled in a world that is far from God. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" is written upon all that is under the sun, and all is estranged from God. The fathers have learned this experimentally, but the young men have it yet to learn, and unless they abide in their stronghold, having the

sword in readiness, they will surely be overcome by the wiles of the devil.

4. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The judgment of God is coming upon this world, both as a system that has fallen under the power of Satan, and as a physical world that has been ruined by the presence of sin. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke xvii. 26-30.) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but these words of the Lord Jesus shall not pass away. The world may go on with its business, its pleasures, its follies and its sins, forgetting its guilt in murdering God's Son; but God has not forgotten. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord with a heart like adamant, guilty of his brother's blood which cried from the ground, and sought to make himself happy in a world far from God.

Hundreds of years rolled on, and the descendants of Cain multiplied on the earth. A city was built, the sound of the hammer was heard on brass and iron, and the harp and the organ made mirth for those whose hearts knew not God. Thus the world moved on in its course, and perhaps Abel and his blood were quite forgotten; *but the flood came and swept them all away.*

The blood of Christ indeed speaks better things than the blood of Abel. It cries from the throne and speaks pardon and peace to every repentant sinner. The redeemed in glory, and the gathering of Israel, and the blessing of the nations, in a future day, all witness that the blood of Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel. But the rejection of that Saviour, and the shedding of that blood, have crowned the world's guilt; and He who once came in grace, will come again in judgment. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7-9.) This is terrible indeed to think of, but it will come as surely as the flood came in the days of Noah. It is the state of the world in its enmity against God that will bring down this judgment. Oh, beloved brethren, have we

learned the true character of this world? Have we seen it in the light of the cross, as the scene of Satan's power, and characterised by unrelenting enmity against the Son of God? Are our hearts far away from this scene of evil over which God's judgment is about to sweep as a flame of fire? "Remember Lot's wife." She was outside of Sodom, but her heart was in the doomed scene, and she looked back, and became a monument of God's judgment. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Peter goes farther and tells us not only of the judgment of the wicked, but of the dissolution of the heavens and the earth as well. The old world perished by water in the days of Noah. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.)

Thus, reader, we have God's estimate of the world, and His judgment of it. It is morally corrupt and guilty of the blood of God's well-beloved Son, and it is doomed to judgment.

However bright its allurements, however attractive its charms, and however great its promises of good, Satan is behind it all with his enchantments to charm and to seduce his victims, and make them slaves to his power. *"The whole world lieth in the wicked one."* May the Lord keep us from listening to the voice of the charmer. May we so cleave to Christ that Satan can have no power against us. This is our only safety. If the heart is full of Christ, and God's word abides in us, forming the heart and governing all its movements, Satan, with all his allurements through the world, will be driven back. Thus it was with Christ, Satan found nothing in Him but the word of God. It was the sword of the Spirit. Three times over he was made to feel the edge of that trusty blade, "It is written," "It is written," "It is written," and his enchantments had no power. Alas! too often he finds something else in us—"lust of the flesh," "lust of the eyes," or "the pride of life," and then we fall a prey to his seductions, and have to learn by bitter experience what the world is, and the folly of giving it a place in our hearts and affections.

May we be kept with the word of God abiding in us—the word by which we are born again, and by which we do the will of God. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

A. H. R.

QUESTIONS IN THE WORKROOM.

THE CHURCH BUILT ON PETER AND THE CHURCH BUILT BY CHRIST.

II.

IF the church built on Peter is not the only true church, then where do you find it for hundreds of years ?

God has had His own hidden ones preserved in Christ Jesus. We propose to give as brief an account as we can of one company of Christians, deeply interesting in itself. A fuller account will be found in Dr. Buchanan's *Christian Researches in Asia*. He tells us what he found of "the Syrian Christians who inhabit the interior of Travancore and Malabar, in the south of India, and have been settled there from the early ages of Christianity."

They were first noticed in recent times in the Portuguese histories. When Vasco de Gama arrived at Cochin, on the coast of Malabar, they were a nation to themselves, and had a king. "When the Portuguese arrived, they were agreeably surprised to find upwards of a hundred christian churches on the coast of Malabar. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship, they were offended. 'These churches,' said the Portuguese, 'belong to the pope.'

"'Who is the pope?' said the natives, 'we

never heard of him.' 'We,' said they, 'are of the true faith, whatever you from the west may be; for we come from the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians.'"
(That is Antioch.)

And now as soon as the Portuguese had power, days and years of sorrow fell upon these followers of Christ. For the first time they heard there was such a thing as the *Inquisition*. Fires were lighted at GOA. These unoffending Christians were committed to its dungeons, its tortures, and its fires.

"They were accused of following practices and opinions. They had married wives; they owned but two sacraments—baptism and the Lord's supper; that they neither invoked saints, nor worshipped images, nor believed in purgatory; and that they had no other orders or names of dignity in the church than bishop, priest, and deacon. These tenets they were called on to abjure.

"It was also declared that all Syrian books on ecclesiastical subjects that could be found should be burned, in order, said the Inquisitors, that no pretended apostolic monuments may be formed. The churches on the sea-coast were thus compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of the pope.

"The churches in the interior would not yield to Rome. After a show of submission for a little while they proclaimed eternal war against

the Inquisition; they hid their books, fled to the mountains, and sought the protection of the native princes."

And how long had these Christians been there when the Portuguese found them? "For 1,300 years past, they had enjoyed a succession of bishops appointed by the patriarch of Antioch. For two centuries nothing had been heard of these Syrian Christians, and it was doubted by many whether they existed at all."

In 1805 every facility was afforded by the Marquis of Wellesley for Dr. Buchanan to visit the interior. The Rajah of Travancore gave permission for him to pass into the country. From the palace of Travancore he proceeded to Mavelly-car, and thence to the hills at the bottom of the high Ghauts which divide the Carnatic from the Malay-a-la. Deeply interesting are the letters he wrote relating his interviews with these intelligent Christians. They had heard of the English, but strangely supposed they belonged to the church of the pope. And at first, from sad experience, they were afraid Dr. Buchanan was an enemy in disguise. From all their intercourse with Rome and its Inquisitors, when had they seen a friend?

In some points Dr. Buchanan scarcely understood the remains of primitive Christianity amongst them. When he reached the church at Chinganoor, he was received at the door by

three presbyters. There were also two deacons, and there was an elder, an older presbyter. They were aware that they were in "a degenerate state compared with our forefathers." And there were two special causes of their degeneracy. They said, "About 300 years ago, an enemy came from the west, bearing the name of Christ, but armed with the Inquisition, and compelled us to seek the protection of the native princes. And the native princes kept us in a state of depression ever since. . . . We have preserved the Bible. THE HINDOO PRINCES NEVER TOUCHED OUR LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE."

What a testimony is this! The church of Rome a greater enemy by far to Christianity than the heathen princes! Yet who can deny this? They had never seen a printed copy of the New Testament, and indeed but few written ones. The enemy of Christianity had destroyed all their Syrian books. How they languished for the word of God. How great was their joy at the prospect of having printed copies of the scriptures in Syriac and Malayalim.

As a whole, it might be said they had become formal and dead. Where has this not been the case? But there were individuals alive to righteousness, distinguished from the rest by their purity of life, and were sometimes censured for too rigid a piety. "The following are the chief doctrines of this ancient church :

"1. They hold the doctrine of the vicarious atonement for the sins of men, by the blood and merits of Christ, and of the justification of the soul before God, by faith alone, in the atonement.

"2. They maintain the regeneration, or new birth of the soul to righteousness, by the influence of the Spirit of God, which change is called in their books, from the Greek, META-NOIA, or change of mind.

"3. In regard to the TRINITY, the creed of the Syrian Christians accords with that of Athanasius, but without the damnatory clauses."

Thus God preserved these ancient Christians. And if Rome were to take possession of India, scriptural Christianity must be destroyed: for this purpose the Inquisition was established at Goa. How often have its dungeons, of ten feet square, immured these true members of the body of Christ! What shrieks of agony under cruel torture! How many have walked bare-foot to the fire to be burnt to death, as heretics, because they loved and believed the word of God.

Is it not wonderful that during the dark ages of Europe, when the so-called church was sunk in superstition, the scriptures were preserved, read, and enjoyed, in these Indian mountains? They had fled from Antioch, in the early persecutions, in or soon after the apostolic age.

Numbers of manuscripts proved by the characters in which they were written, deeds of Indian princes engraved on metal plates in ancient characters also, bore witness to the antiquity of these Christians. And if there was anything in apostolic ordination, there had been an unbroken succession from the day they came from Antioch, of elders, though this had degenerated into officialism, especially since Rome came so near them.

Mark, they were not an offshoot from Rome. They derived nothing from Rome. They existed as a church before there was a church at Rome. And they had found Rome more opposed to Christianity than the heathens amongst whom they lived. They had never heard of the pope until the Portuguese arrived on their shores. "And I saw a woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (Rev. xvii. 6.)

To such as are acquainted with the scriptural order of office and ministry, it would be easy to see how much of that order remained amongst these Syrian Christians. Dr. Buchanan says, "When we arrived, I was received at the door by three *kasheeshas*, that is presbyters, or priests (called in scripture elders), who were habited in like manner in white vestments. Their names were Jesu, Zacharias, and Urias. . . . There were also present two *shumshanas*, or deacons.

The elder priest was a very intelligent man, &c The three principal Christians, or lay elders, belonging to the church, were named Abraham, Thoma, and Alexandros." Thus there were the elders and deacons of the Acts, with a sort of president elder, a man of age and experience. As to ordination, they did not seem to think much of what is called apostolic ordination; though probably none on earth had so great a claim to it. They said, "That if there was such a thing in the world as ordination by the laying on of hands, in succession from the apostles, it was probable that they possessed it."

It must not, however, be supposed that all the Roman Catholics in India approved of the Inquisition. Bishop Raymondo, the apostolic vicar at Verapoli, spoke of it with just indignation, and called it "a horrid tribunal." This man desired that the Romanists might have the scriptures in the Malabar language. He said, "But believe me, the Inquisition will endeavour to counteract your purposes by every means in their power." Very few of the natives had ever heard of them, and scarce a man was to be found that had seen a copy of the word of God.

The Syrian church had highly valued the word of God during those dark ages, when in Europe the so-called church had sunk in ignorance, and its priesthood made the reading of the scriptures a capital offence. Yes, during all those centuries

God had preserved great numbers of Christians, loving His word, and walking in love according to its holy precepts, in the mountains, and on the coast of Malabar. The doctrines and scriptural discipline were preserved in remarkable purity.

And what did the church, said to be built on St. Peter, give in place of that Christianity it sought with all its power to destroy? What did it give in place of those priceless manuscripts it burnt at Udiampar, when "Archbishop Menezes from Goa, convened the synod of the Syrian clergy, in 1599, when he burned the Syriac and Chaldaic books"? Let us look at what Rome gave in place of what it destroyed.

(To be continued.)

LUKE xxiii. 56. "They returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment." The quietness of those who waited and watched is contrasted with those who crucified Him. They could not rest, though it was the sabbath. "Now the next day that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate . . . , command that the sepulchre be made sure." But these women rested according to the commandment.

QUESTIONS IN THE WORKROOM.

III.

WHAT ROME GAVE TO INDIA.

WE will now look at what the church of Rome gave, in the place of that comparatively pure scriptural Christianity it had destroyed on the coast of Malabar. We cannot do better than give the words of Dr. Buchanan as he wrote them on the spot at the beginning of *this* century, from "Christian Researches in Asia."

"But in the following pages the author will have occasion to shew what Rome is, as *having* dominion, and possessing it too within the boundaries of the British Empire.

"In passing through the Romish provinces in the east, though the author had before heard much of the papal corruptions, he certainly did not expect to see Christianity in the degraded state in which he found it. Of the priests it may truly be said, that they are, in general, better acquainted with the Veda of Brahma, than with the gospel of Christ. In some places the doctrines of both are blended. At Augpoor, situate between Trichinopoly and Madura, he visited a christian church, and saw near it (in October, 1806) a tower of Juggernaut, which is employed in solemnising christian festivals. . . . Thus, by the intervention of the papal power,

are the ceremonies of Moloch consecrated in a manner by the sacred Syriac language.

“What a heavy responsibility lies on Rome, for having thus corrupted and degraded that pure and ancient church.”

Dr. Buchanan was always referred to the Inquisition at Goa, as the fountain head. He visited it, and found it in full operation. He was permitted, under peculiar circumstances, to see a part of this awful place, and narrates the history of what he saw and learned, but was not allowed to visit its dungeons, or speak to its captives pining in darkness, though they might be Christians, and subjects of the British Empire. It was a city of churches; let him describe one for us. “I seldom see a single worshipper but the ecclesiastics. Two rows of native priests, kneeling in order before the altar, clothed in coarse black garments, of sickly appearance, and vacant countenance, seemingly unconscious of any other duty or obligation of life.”

We will not pursue the horrors of the so-called holy office. There it was in this century, and in some respects worse than when such vast numbers of Christians were burnt at the stake in public. Those executions were no longer public; but if a man or woman spoke a word against the Roman church, they were taken and thrown into these dungeons, and the friends of such had no possible means of getting to know whether they were

dead or still under torture. Do not say these things are in the far past. We are speaking of this century; and we firmly believe if God were to permit, it would be set up in England with all its horrors. Poor deceived England, what art thou doing, seeking to restore Rome rule? How blessed to be not of this world, though we may have to endure its hatred and persecution, but waiting for Him who said, "On this rock will I build MY church."

Space forbids us to give further description of the Inquisition. There is no doubt many of the Inquisitors were very learned men; and they sincerely thought they were doing God's service in destroying these unoffending Christians; just as vast numbers would think to-day. And what were the charges against these Syrian Christians who had existed there through so many centuries, as we have seen? "They were accused of the following practices and opinions: 'That they married wives; that they owned but two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper; that they neither invoked saints, nor worshipped images, nor believed in purgatory; that they had no other orders or names of dignity in the church than bishop (or) priest (really elder), and deacon.' " In other words, they were Christians who desired to walk according to the word of God. Rome, what hast thou done on the coast of Malabar? How didst thou use thine unlimited

power over so many Syrian Christians, who were the true members of the one body of Christ, the only true church or assembly?

We have thus very briefly looked at two things. That which had been preserved for so many centuries; and if we compare what they held and practised with what Papacy held and practised, we must perceive that the church, or assembly, was found to be composed of every true Christian wherever found: for we do not for a moment doubt that such may be found even in the church of Rome.

There were, among others, truly converted persons, many such, in the Syrian church, and by their books there evidently had been such from the days of the apostles without a single break. But it would be a great mistake to say that the Syrian church was the church of God. Only true saints or holy ones compose the church of God—that which is built by Christ. This is seen in the address to each assembly in the New Testament. To the saints at Rome, Corinth, &c.

Now why did the church of Rome seek to destroy the very remembrance of this Syrian church? Why did they burn their literature, than which there was no greater evidence of the truth of Christianity? These Christians held the very truth received from the apostles at Antioch. They could not be justly charged with a single false doctrine. No doubt they

had lost much truth, such as the heavenly calling of the church; the coming of the Lord for the church; the presence of the Holy Ghost—as seen in the church from which they came (read carefully Acts xiii. 1–4); at least, Dr. Buchanan does not name these truths, he himself perhaps being ignorant of them.

But they were well acquainted with the history of the church in the early centuries, and distinctly rejected the errors of Arius, Sabellius, Macedonius, Manes, Marcianus, Julianus, Nestorius, and the Chalcedonians. Thus they held the truth, and could ably defend it against all the errors of Rome, whilst Rome had sunk in idolatry, and was full of error which she could not defend, except by falsehood and murder. Can we then question that in this case, so far from Rome being the true church, she has done her utmost to destroy Christianity?

It may be said, This may be true of India, but surely it has never been the case in this country? In another paper we may see as to that.

We will now turn back to Matthew xvi. 18. Have you noticed one little word, "*my*?" "I will build *my* church." If you carefully examine the Acts, you will find when Christ had died on the cross, and risen again, and ascended up on high, He sent the Holy Ghost. And He then by the Spirit began to build His church. This was not begun at Rome, but first at Jerusalem, and

then at the very place from whence these Syrian Christians came. You will also find that high priests, and priests of the Jews, hated and persecuted the church of Christ, everywhere. Which do you think Christ would own as His church, the persecuting priests and Pharisees, or the poor down-trodden persecuted Christians whom they called heretics? The priests sent out the chief Inquisitor on a murderous mission to Damascus. You will find the account in Acts ix., xxii., xxvi. And you will find some remarks on this matter in this magazine. The heavenly vision leaves no uncertainty as to which company the Lord Jesus owns as His church. He uses a still more wonderful word than "my church." He says to the Familiar of the Jewish Inquisition, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Whatever those priests did to the least of Christ's little ones, they did to Him. He said, as it were, I must let you know this mystery, that every true Christian is part of My very self. Yet that Inquisitor, who fetched the poor victims, thought he was shewing zeal for God!

Can any one deny the striking resemblance of the church of Rome to the persecuting priests of Judaism, except that the Jews were never guilty of the barbarous cruelty of Rome's Inquisition? Indeed the whole world never inflicted such prolonged agony on human beings as that which calls itself the only true church.

Oh, that Rome could hear that voice from heaven. "Why persecutest thou *me*?" Yes, every Christian she has burnt at the stake, every child of God she has racked in her dark dungeons, was a part of the Christ. What she has done to them, she has done to Him, as part of Himself.

Now if Christ could not surely have owned the persecuting Jews as "my assembly," or as "my church," can He possibly own that which for centuries has persecuted Him in His members who have refused the idolatry and gross errors of Rome? But enough; let us have a little personal talk in the workroom. You may belong to the churches of this world: of such there are many. But, are you quite sure you belong to that which Christ calls "*MY church*"? How am I to know? do you say. Turn to the description given of its members in the word of God. They were born of God, partakers of the divine nature (John i. 12, 13); they had eternal life (John v. 24; x. 27, 28.) Are you born of God? Have you the divine nature? have you eternal life? If not, you do not believe God, and you have no part in what Christ calls "*my church*."

They believed on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Therefore they were justified by faith; they had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. iv. 24; v. 1.) Are you

justified by faith? Have you peace with God? If not, my friend, do not be deceived any longer. You may belong to the church of the pope, but you certainly do not belong to that which Jesus calls "my church."

They were written to, as those whose sins were forgiven them for Christ's sake. (1 John ii. 12.) Is that true of you? They knew that they were the sons of God, and that when Christ shall appear they will be like Him. (1 John iii. 2.) They knew and believed the love that God had to them. Not a shadow of a doubt. (1 John iv. 16.) They believed the record that God had given them eternal life. (1 John v. 10-12.) They could give thanks that the Father had made them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and all in Christ. (Col. i. 12, 13; Eph. i. 4, &c.) They needed no purgatory. The one sacrifice of Christ had perfected them for ever as to all conscience of sins. They needed no more masses, or sacrifices. (Heb. x. 1-23.) These are undeniable marks in scripture of those who are living stones in the church of which Christ is the builder. Can you in the presence of God, say "these marks are true of me"? Is there anything on earth that answers to Christ's assembly or church? Indeed there is, and will be, until He comes. He says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.)

AN AGED APOSTLE'S MESSAGE TO HIS CHILDREN.

III.

THE BABES.

THE babes know the Father. They may not, like the fathers, have learned the vanity of this world, and that Christ is everything; and they may not, like the young men, have known conflict with the wicked one; but they have known the Father.

We have already seen that the babes, in common with all Christians, have forgiveness of sins. But there is more than this: they are also in the enjoyment of a present and known relationship. They are children of God, and have the Spirit of adoption in their hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

This is no matter of attainment. It is not something gained after years of christian experience. It is the very starting-point of Christianity. The youngest babe in Christ has the forgiveness of sins, possesses the Holy Ghost, and knows the Father. Without these no one has entered upon the ground of Christianity. Christianity is characterised by this great fact, that redemption has been accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ, who has gone to the Father, and sent down the Holy Ghost to take His place in and with believers,

and to set them consciously in the position and relationship of a glorified Christ on high. These babes are in this position and in these relationships. They are in Christ, and His relationships are theirs, and they have the Holy Ghost as the power of it all, and as the divine Source of all spiritual intelligence. In all this there is no difference between a babe and a father. They all have the same position and the same relationships in Christ. And this, surely, is most blessed.

Now we have seen that the great danger to which the young men are exposed is to be found in the allurements of the world. As yet this is not the special danger of the babes. One who has just been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's Son, cares little for the world. The children of Israel, standing on the shores of the Red Sea which they had just crossed, and where they had seen their enemies engulfed in death under the judgment of Jehovah, would not have been easily persuaded to return to the land of bondage where they had groaned in "anguish of spirit" under the lash of the task-master. The rest they now enjoyed was too fresh and sweet for that. But after they had in a measure forgotten the rigours and hardships of that cruel bondage, and grown weary of the wilderness journey, and loathed the bread of heaven, *then* they lusted

after the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic of Egypt, and were ready to turn back.

So it is now: one who has groaned under Satan's taskmasters, making bricks without straw, when set free from this bondage by the power of God, enjoys the sweetness of liberty too well to return at once to the world. While the heart overflows with praise to God, singing, "The Lord has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation," the world has no charms. Its cruel bondage is remembered, and the sweetness of freedom is enjoyed, and the heart turns away from the world to find its satisfaction in the Deliverer, looking on to a habitation with Him. "He is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation." (Ex. xv.)

But the babes have their special danger as well as the young men. One thing that marks a babe is the readiness with which it receives everything that people say. So with a babe in Christ as to spiritual things. They are simple and artless in their reception of truth, and eager to increase in knowledge; and the enemy lays hold of this very thing as an occasion to seduce them, and lead them away from Christ. Their great danger lies in their being seduced by false teachers. Satan seduces the young men through the world, and the babes through antichrists.

The apostle affectionately warns these simple babes of their danger. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time."

The antichrist is coming. He will come according to the unbelief of the Jews, denying that Jesus was the Christ, and so will come in his own name, not in the name of the Father: as Jesus said to the Jews, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." When he comes, it will not be at the first as denying that there is a Christ, but as claiming to be the Christ himself, until he has seduced his victims; and then the mask will be thrown off, and he will *deny the Father and the Son*. This is the true mark of the Antichrist. He will be a liar from the first, because he will deny that Jesus is the Christ, as the apostle says: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" Afterward he will deny both the Father and the Son, as the apostle again says: "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." This gives his full character when all is unmasked. He will come also with terrible Satanic power, by which he will darken men's souls, and lead them into open apostasy and rebellion against God. He will exalt himself above all that is called God or is

worshipped, and sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. His power he will get from the dragon, so that his coming will be "after the working of Satan," and this "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." He will make fire come down from heaven in the sight of men to deceive them ; and he will make an image to the beast (the imperial head of the ten kingdom confederacy raised up by the power of Satan), and to this image he will give breath so that it should speak, and cause the death of all who refuse to do it homage. Thus he will delude men, and lead them to believe that he is God, with power to create, and work miracles. But the wonders he performs are "*lying* wonders," by which he will seduce the mass of the Jews and apostate Christians after the true saints have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Men receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved ; and for this reason God will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. ii. ; Rev. xiii.) All this display of Satanic power, and malignant hatred and opposition to God, will take place in the closing days of what the apostle calls "the last time."

Now the little children had heard that Anti-

christ was coming; but the apostle would have them understand that they were exposed to danger of a similar nature—a seducing power of Satan leading men into apostasy. “*Even now* are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time.” The presence of these proved that it was already “the last time.” Failure had come into Christianity. Seducing spirits were leading men into apostasy. This would culminate at the end in the great apostasy under the man of sin, which will bring down the judgment of God on apostate Jews and on apostate Christendom. Thus we may know it was the last time. Thus antichrists had gone out from among Christians. They were not true Christians, and never had been, else they would have remained. Their going out manifested their true character. They were apostates, enemies, and liars, because they denied that Jesus was the Christ. This is the spirit of Antichrist, and so the apostle calls them “antichrists.” They might not deny openly the Father, but they denied the Son, and “whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.” They were seducers of the people of God, as all false teachers are.

But the babes in Christ are not without resource in the presence of these false teachers. Their going out from among Christians might tend to shake the faith of the babes, and their subtle arguments might seem difficult to answer,

but the babes have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things. They know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth. The anointing which they have received abides in them, and they need not that any man teach them. They have that in them by which they are able to discern the truth, and reject all that is opposed to it. It is not that they do not need teaching, for the apostle is very carefully teaching them in this very scripture. But they do not need *man's* teaching. The Holy Ghost teaches them, and fortifies them against false doctrine. God may use an instrument, but the teaching must be divine. There is the action of the Holy Ghost, both in the instrument and in the one who is taught. "The same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie." It is by the Holy Ghost that the teaching is given and received. He is in the babes, and is truth, and is no lie; thus the babes can discern the truth, and detect what is false. Weak though they may be, the Holy Ghost is able to keep them from the seductions of the enemy. But this connects itself with another most important principle, namely, that of cleaving to the truth we have already received—the truth in which the Person of Christ has been revealed to our souls. "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide

in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." We have received Christ, the Son of God, in receiving the truth, for He *is* the truth, and He is that which was from the beginning. If this abides in us, we abide in the Son and in the Father. There is living and abiding dependence on Christ—cleaving to Him as our life, and as the sum of all truth and of all blessing. The Holy Ghost—the anointing—is the power of all this, connecting Himself with the truth in our souls, and at once challenging every lie that seeks entrance. This then is the security of the babes against false teaching. We are to cleave to Christ, and give heed to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, who connects Himself with the truth in us, and resists all that is not of the truth, who "*is* truth and is no lie." By Him we know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth.

The Lord keep us, beloved brethren, in these last and closing days, when error in every form is stalking abroad like a noisome pestilence, before which many fall as victims. May we be content with the truth, and the truth alone. All that is not of the truth is a lie, and of Satan, the enemy of all truth. If we have the truth, we have Christ, the Son, and in Him the Father; and we have the Holy Ghost as the power of it in our souls. What would we have more? Is not this enough until we reach the glory itself? Even there Christ will be all. A. H. R.

REBEKAH.

"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. . . . And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."—GENESIS XXIV. 58, 67.

THINE the beauty and the glory,
 Heir of all things, Son of God;
 Shining o'er me, and before me—
 Lighting all the desert road.

Thine the grace that made me ready,
Saved me, ne'er from Thee to roam;
 All my heart is where Thou dwellest:
 Thou my hope; Thyself my home.

Roll afar, ye many waters;
 Nought can hold me from my bourn—
 Where my mighty Guardian came from,
 There, with me, He must return.

Buried in the world's dark city,
 I had perish'd with my race;
 But the Steward, sent to save me
 Met me in his Master's grace.

Ask'd me for a little water,
 Let me quench his camels' thirst
 Saw in me—Bethuel's daughter—
 Her he pray'd for at the first.

On the "Errand" that He told me,
 Of the living one who died;
 Of the Father's love and counsel
 Taking unto Him a bride.

Nothing I remember—nothing
But that sacrifice and choice ;
Never music fill'd my spirit
Like that penetrating voice.

Could I hear this Eldest Servant
And for Isaac not be won ?
Oh, the *Father* loved and sought me,
Sent and claim'd me for His Son.

Let the token on my forehead,
Let the bracelets on my hands—
Prove me chosen—now the daughter
Of the Lord of all the lands.

I will go—how should I tarry ?
He—His Father's own delight—
He was unto death obedient :
Let me walk with Him in white.

Jewels, raiment, gifts, the Servant
Brought for me from Isaac's hand,
Precious things that else had never
Shone in any foreign land.

I shall see Him in His beauty,
He Himself His bride will meet ;
shall dwell with Him for ever,
In companionship complete.

Thoughts of Him are strength and gladness,
Ah ! who comes ? who walks this way ?
“ 'Tis my master ” see—the Bridegroom.
So she hid herself that day.

And the Servant told to Isaac
All things, all that He had done.
Comfort flows, o'erfilling Hebron—
For the Father loves the Son.

THE HEAVENLY VISION;

OR,

HAVE YOU PUT YOUR CANDLE OUT?

II.

No, it was not to take vengeance on that persecutor that the glory of that light shone on Saul, and eclipsed the mid-day sun. It was not to plunge Saul into everlasting and deserved darkness, that he heard a voice speaking unto him. That voice spoke in tones like heaven's sweetest music. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Oh, precious Jesus, and is it thus Thy will that we should minister to others, and bear witness of the riches of Thy grace, in which Thou hast appeared to us? and also to tell out the grace upon grace, free favour upon free favour, mercy upon mercy, in which Thou wilt and hast appeared unto us? Yes, Lord Jesus; thus Thou takest up the chief of sinners, and thus Thou displayest the aboundings of Thy grace!

Now was it not wonderful for the Lord of heaven to come down, as it were, to this earth again, in glory above the brightness of the sun, and thus reveal Himself to this chief enemy?

Every true servant of Christ knows something of this direct commission from Christ. And in every true case of conversion it is Jesus speaking direct to the soul, in and by the Spirit. Others may hear a sound, but the word comes direct to the soul of the one saved, as though Jesus actually was speaking from heaven. Only in this case, Saul was the chosen vessel through whom the Lord revealed the mystery, that every believer now was part of Himself—His body, the assembly—so that he was in great measure converted by this truth, that as a new creature he was what Christ was.

No doubt this was more fully made known to him afterwards. He was chosen to be a witness: "Both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee."

What had he seen? Jesus in glory above all creation. He had heard to his amazement that they whom he persecuted were one with the glorified Jesus. This very Lord was Jesus whom he persecuted. He had seen that the despised saints on earth were one with the Lord of heaven; and he was chosen to take that place, and be a witness of it. Amazing grace!

And now he who had been the chief agent of the people of Israel in persecuting the saints, would himself need delivering from *them*, and from the Gentiles, unto whom he should now be

sent. And such was the deep sense of the grace shewn to him, that he never questioned the grace and mercy shewn to the Gentiles, whom up to that moment he had viewed as dogs. The chief of sinners becomes at once the chief witness of the riches of divine grace. He who had opened his eyes now sends him to Gentiles sunk in wickedness and sin: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." It was from darkness to light, from Satan to God. As he says long afterwards, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." What a light the heavenly vision threw upon this world. Satan is its god, blinding the minds of them that believe not. The chief priests, his late employers, were led blinded by Satan. But he had seen One in glory above the brightness of the sun; He "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 4.) With all their privileges, he had found that the zeal of the chief priests, yea, his and their very religiousness, was the direct slavery of Satan. What a discovery!

Has that same Jesus opened your eyes to see these things? Do you know that this age, from the murder of Jesus to His coming in judgment, is distinctly the age of *evil*?—that the age in which

this world boasts, with all *its* priests, and all its zeal, and all its religion, is in total blindness and darkness, yea, under the power of darkness; and that it has rejected Christ, and accepted Satan as its god and prince? If you know this, it will explain to you all the misery and wickedness in this world at this time, so near the end of this age of evil, and especially the unparalleled wickedness of what calls itself Christendom.

This is the scene into which the true disciple and servant of Christ is sent, as a lamb in the midst of wolves. If a true Christian in that world, he must suffer with and be hated with Christ. When Judaism was set aside, its temple destroyed, and its priests slain, Satan did not die. He remained, and he soon had his ministers as angels of righteousness, and himself transformed into an angel of light, and as such he deceives Christendom to this day. He has still his high priest, chief priests, and priests by thousands, all led by him, and his works they do. Oh how soon it could be said, "Where Satan dwells." (Rev. ii.)

Not one in his kingdom has the least idea what that kingdom is, and who are its subjects. Vast numbers think they are doing God's service, as Jesus said it would be during His absence; and so it is. Oh fellow-servant of the rejected Jesus, hast thou seen the heavenly vision? Hast thou heard that voice speaking to thee? What

is in the heart of that despised and rejected Lord? What sends He thee to do? "To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." And God, who used Saul, can use whom He will; yes, if He please, even thee and me. Oh the riches of His grace! Yes, He who called Saul, and revealed His Son *IN* him, chief of Pharisees as he was, can also reveal Christ His Son *in* us, chief of sinners. From that day Christ was seen in him, and it was Christ, not himself, he preached to the heathen.

"That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." Such is the good pleasure of Him who speaks to us from the glory above the brightness of the sun. Saul believed, and he said, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." He received his commission direct from the risen and glorified Jesus. What could man add to this? What would human ordination be worth to him? What the value of apostolic succession to him? Not worth a straw, as he carefully shews in Galatians i. and ii. How many thousands have, as they think, this, and are in Satan's darkness and Satan's service, ever, so far as they have power, and in all places doing the works of their father.

Oh what light the heavenly vision throws on

present things. But who treads in the steps of Paul? Who? He said he "shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Of course they sought to kill him. There are many who think they are called of the same Christ; but only to preach to the unconverted. But Paul began with the religious world, and then the Gentiles. Who obeys the heavenly vision, as to the awful religious world of this day? Who has courage to declare (with eyes opened by the glory of the risen Christ) to the religious world that they must repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance? Do not the priests of this day need to change their minds, as much as the Jews did then? Do they not need to turn to *God, from* their imitation Judaism—from trusting in their masses and sacraments, and worship and prayers to saints and angels and the blessed virgin, and their opposition and persecutions? Oh that a voice might proclaim, like a trumpet, to Romanist, and Greek, and Protestant, REPENT and turn to God from all these vanities. No doubt they will seek to kill the faithful servant who obeys the heavenly vision. It was so then; it will be so now. Neither Satan nor his children are altered at all. It is most sad that he deceives the

children of God even, so as to be yoked with his abominations. The Lord grant that those that are His may awake from sleep and obey the heavenly vision. Surely this vision was needed by the mad persecutor; and it characterised his preaching to the end of his service.

It is a very interesting inquiry, What did Paul preach in order to produce this repentance, both to the religious world (the Jews) and also to the Gentiles? This will throw great light on what the servant of Christ is to preach now, both to the professing world, and also to the unconverted.

Before we look at this, for he distinctly tells us, we will remind the reader that we said there had been two men, perhaps the greatest Pharisees that ever lived, and both converted directly by the Lord speaking from heaven, revealing to each of them that every saint on earth, or believer during this present period of His rejection, is part of Himself, the risen and glorified Christ. We have seen the one, Saul the Pharisee, the blameless religionist. (Phil. iii.) He was at the beginning. He it was whom the Lord used to reveal the mystery of the joint body—the one body of Christ, the church, or assembly of God.

A little more than fifty years ago, when Pusey and Keble and others were talking about salva-

tion by sacraments and ritual and fasting, &c. a young man might have been seen practising what they talked and wrote. He was described to the writer by one who knew him well, as a walking skeleton on two crutches, covered with big old clothes, living in an old cabin, worn near to death with fastings and watchings and labours *for* salvation, on the mountains of Wicklow. He fasted four days a week, and on the others ate very little more than a few potatoes. He was sincere and blameless, kind and charitable to a degree; but as yet a stranger to the grace about to be revealed to him. He had never yet seen the heavenly vision; he had never yet heard "a voice speaking to me."

Well does the writer remember him saying, "I was walking in (I think it was) Stephen's Green, Dublin, when suddenly the scriptures came to my mind: 'There is one body,' 'We are members of his body,' &c." This was the voice from heaven to him. "What," he said, "am I then a member of His body? Then I must be what He, the Head, is." He was dead with Christ and risen with Him—what Christ was—part of Himself. Peace flowed from the glorified Christ in heaven into his soul—peace that never could be lost, that never varied or failed until the day of his departure a very few years ago. It was the restoration of the long-lost truth of what the church is as the body of Christ.

In the first case it was the beginning of the revelation of what the church is, and to Paul was given the blessed ministry of the revelation of the mystery. In the latter case, the Lord gave the blessed ministry of the *restoration* of that long lost truth. In both cases their peculiar conversion characterised the whole of their lives and ministry. Great are our privileges, and responsibilities, since the restoration of the truth of the church—the body of Christ.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

FRAGMENTS.

WHAT a wonderful thing is the forgiveness of sins. It is the FORGIVEN SIN we hate.

COMMUNION with the Lord differs from all other communion. He has told us all that is in His heart, and He knows all that is in ours.

No perplexity so great but present practical communion with the Father and the Son lifts you above it; so that you give the slip to yourself, as it were, in the knowledge of this source of blessing. "Truly our fellowship." The result of this is always practical. No question of the joy being full if the soul is brought to God.

G. J.

CORRESPONDENCE.

13. T. G., Florence. 2 John 9, 10: this scripture does not take up the question of eating with relations, or strangers. On that, see 1 Corinthians v. 9-11; x. 23, 27, &c. But 2 John refers to the *many* deceivers who had entered in. The imperfect translation also completely hides the true meaning. In the literal translation it is, "Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son. If any one come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes in his wicked works." This is a most important scripture. It refers to the fearful error called "development," of which modern Christianity is the result. Just as with the Jews, the traditions or developments of the elders made of none effect the scriptures of the Old Testament, so the developments of the so-called church, or clergy, have made of none effect the complete revelation contained in the New Testament. Nearly all you find in Christendom to-day is development: not abiding in what is written, but human additions. How narrow, then, the path of that Christian who desires to have only that which he finds in the beginning. How much of man will he have to give up. The elect lady was not to receive such into the house. Who can now count the number of false teachers?



QUESTIONS IN THE WORKROOM.

IV.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN.

THERE is no doubt Christianity existed in Britain in the third and fourth centuries, but by whom it was introduced there is no reliable account in history.

It may have been by Christians in the Roman army, as there would have doubtless been such. And God is pleased to work by obscure and unknown means.

The irruptions of the Picts, and savage pagan Saxons, seem to have swept away every vestige of it, in very large districts. It was however preserved among the remains of the Britons in the west, as well as some parts of Ireland, and also in Scotland.

It was in A.D. 596 that Augustine, with a number of monks, arrived in Kent ; and being favourably received by Ethelbert and his queen, had great success in their labours. Paulinus, one of them, had still greater success in the north. Edwin, king of Northumbria, was convinced of the excellence of Christianity. Before embracing it, he held an assembly of his nobles and counsellors, in the hope that he would prevail with them to concur in his resolution. “ As soon

as the assembly had been convened, and the subject had been proposed by the king for discussion, Coifi, his high priest, who was no doubt acquainted with the sentiments of his royal master, rose and addressed him to the following effect, 'It becomes you, O king, to inquire into the nature of that religion which is now proposed to us. In regard to that which we have hitherto had, I solemnly declare, that I have found it altogether worthless and unprofitable: none of your people has been more devoted to the service of our gods than I; yet many receive from you more ample favours, and greater honours, and prosper more in all their undertakings. If the gods had any influence, they would surely give the greatest share of their favours to their most zealous servant. Therefore, if the new doctrines which are preached to us, appear to you, upon examination, to be better, and more certain, let us hasten to embrace them without delay.' *

It will be noticed, there was far more of policy in this speech than conviction of sin, and felt need of a Saviour. Another of Edwin's grandees is reported to have made the following remarkable speech.

"So short, O king, is the present life of man on earth, compared with that extent of time

* Dr. Young's "History of Whitby," a rare but very valuable book, from which the writer will give extracts.

which is hidden from our view, that it seems to me like the sudden flight of a sparrow through your house, when you are at supper with your generals and ministers, in a winter evening, and the hall is heated by a fire in the midst, It comes in at one door, but presently goes out at another ; and though it feels not the wintry tempest when within, yet it enjoys only a momentary calm, while it passes from winter on the one side, to winter on the other, and then disappears from our eyes. Such is the life of man ; it appears for a little space, but what follows it, or what has preceded it, we cannot tell. If, therefore, this new doctrine presents us with something more certain, it ought by all means to be adopted."

Coifi, the pagan priest, then requested Paulinus should discourse to them more fully about God. When he had finished, the high-priest then exclaimed, "Long have I been convinced that our worship is vanity, since the more I sought for the truth in it, the less I found it : but now I openly profess, that by the preaching, we clearly discover that truth which can give us life, salvation, and eternal felicity. I therefore propose to your majesty, that we should hasten to profane those temples and altars which we have foolishly venerated." The king then openly renounced idolatry. He was baptised A.D. 627, in a small wooden chapel. His niece was the

celebrated Lady Hilda, whose life had much to do with the propagation of evangelical truth. The people followed their king. Great numbers of all ranks were baptised in the river Swale, some authors say ten thousand in one day. It is however, probable that this is exaggeration, as Bede intimates that Paulinus catechised the people before he baptised them.

There is no doubt God used this man, in preaching chiefly in the open air, by river sides, and other places; but the national or worldly element greatly predominated over the christian. On the death of Edwin, by the sword of the pagan Penda, "many of the converts to Christianity were slain by the barbarous invaders, and the greater part of the rest relapsed into idolatries, from which they had been but imperfectly reclaimed."

"Osric and Eanfrid, the immediate successors of king Edwin, both apostatised from Christianity, with most of their subjects." Thus terminated for a time the influence of the church of Rome, such as it was at that time.

Before we come to the conflict between Rome, and Christianity in the abbey at Whitby, we will notice how God was pleased to introduce Christianity from a totally new quarter.

The Scots from Ireland had a school, or a so-called monastery in the island of Iona. The monks were not like monks of Rome, but a

band of devoted missionaries, preachers of the gospel. King Oswald had been educated amongst these God-fearing men, and by them baptised. On coming to the throne of Northumbria his first care was to have his people instructed in the truth of the gospel. He sent for these preachers. "His request was readily complied with; but it seems, the first missionary who arrived was a man of an austere disposition, who finding his ministry unsuccessful, returned to his fraternity in disgust, and told them the Northumbrians were too untractable and barbarous to be taught. When the brethren of Iona held a council to receive his report, and to consider what was to be done, one of their number named Aidan, thus addressed the disappointed missionary, "It seems to me, brother, that you have been too severe on your unlearned hearers, and have not studied, according to the apostle's plan, to feed them with milk, before giving them strong meat." Aidan, by this remark, was pointed out to the assembly as the most suitable person to undertake the mission. And their expectations were not disappointed.

The king, who evidently was a true Christian, was himself a zealous missionary, and interpreted for Aidan, having been educated amongst the Scots. He invited a number of his brethren to assist him in the work. It would seem that some of them came from Ireland, which was

then the proper region of the Scots; and was at that time, an enlightened country, much resorted to by lovers of learning. (See Bede l., iii., c. 3, &c.)

As Columba chose Iona, so Aidan chose the island of Lindisfarne, now Holy Island, as the centre of his labours. There they met for prayer, and the study of the scriptures, and then went forth to preach the word of truth, baptising such as *believed*.

Aidan is represented by Bede as a man of extraordinary piety. No doubt there was much of the true apostolic spirit, and work of the earliest day of the church. "*He disregarded the things of the world*: what he received from the rich, he gave to the poor. The king gave him a present of one of his best horses, richly harnessed; but meeting with a poor man asking alms not long after, he dismounted, and gave him his horse. When Oswin blamed him for this seemingly indiscreet generosity, he replied, What? my king! Is the offspring of a mare dearer to you than that Son of God?" Greatness and luxury had no charms for him! The fellow-labourers of Aidan possessed the same spirit of devotedness and humility. "Their whole care was to serve God, not the world. At home their time was chiefly spent in study and devotion; abroad they were engaged in preaching, and baptising, visiting the sick, and in short, doing

everything in their power to save the souls of men."

Oh, Ireland, such were thy missionaries sent out to the world; what a contrast to thy present priests! All their meeting-rooms, or what are called churches now, were built of wood. Stone buildings were not as yet erected. In short, there was much of true Christianity—the evident work of the Spirit of God, through these devoted servants of Christ. They valued no titles or worldly honour, but followed in the steps of Christ.

Such a *Christian* was Lady Hilda. And such were the preachers who met and settled at Streonshall, known for centuries after as the Abbey of Whitby. She was born in the year 614, and, when a child 13 years of age, was baptized at York by Paulinus in the first little chapel. Whether at that early age she merely followed the example of the court, or was truly converted, cannot be determined. It is hopeful the latter was the case, as she did not apostatise. She is found in Northumbria during the ministry of Aidan. At the age of 33 she became a nun, and ultimately the Abbess of Streonshall, now called Whitby.

"When Britain was separated from the Roman empire, the churches in the British Isles were detached from those on the continent, and had scarcely any communication with them for the

space of about 200 years." During that time, great changes had taken place in the church of Rome. In the meantime, the British churches remained much as they were when the communication with the continent ceased. When Augustine with his helpers arrived among the Saxons, the difference between them was found to be so great that they could not coalesce. The British Christians had a great dread of being brought under that spiritual dominion, to which the churches on the continent were already subjected. The church of Northumberland planted by the Scottish missionaries, adhered to the communion of the British churches, having no dependence on the see of Rome. By degrees however, some ministers of the Romish persuasion found their way into the churches established by the Scottish missionaries, where they laboured to introduce the forms of Romanism.

It is remarkable that so early as these times, the Romanists claimed to be the true and catholic church, and pronounced their opponents to be heretics and schismatics. Again was that word of Paul's fulfilled, "Of your own selves shall men arise." Wilfrid, abbot of Ripon, became the champion of the Romanist party. This remarkable man spent some of his younger years in the monastery of Lindisfarne amongst the devoted Scottish missionaries. He travelled into France and Italy to complete his education, by the

assistance of the royal family. His learning and talents recommended him to the prince, Alchfred. That prince was gained over, chiefly by Wilfred, to the Romanist party, who soon gave him the monastery of Ripon. The Scottish monks, or really the true missionaries, were expelled. The Romish party grew stronger every day, exactly as it is repeating itself in this our day. This brings us to the final contest between lingering Christianity in Britain, and Romanism. Some superstition had mingled itself with the ancient Christianity, still they no doubt had much of the true gospel and its fruits.



THE HEAVENLY VISION ;

OR,

HAVE YOU PUT YOUR CANDLE OUT?

III.

WE will now in conclusion look at that truth which the apostle preached, and which produced this wondrous change of mind, in turning men to God, both from the religion of the Jews, and from all the abominations of the Gentiles—which opened their eyes, turned them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God ; by which they received forgiveness of sins and inheritance among the sanctified, according to the words of Jesus “by faith that is in me.” And by which *great* and *small* were shewn that

they must repent; they must abhor themselves, and the very things in which they had trusted, even as Paul himself did, and count them dung. Ah, Paul, if you were here now, you would have the same to do in this day to the great *rulers* and *chief priests* of Christendom, and to all the small who follow them.

Well, the truth is the same; who will declare it as he did? And what is that truth? Briefly he explains it to the king Agrippa. "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." If we turn to another scripture we shall see his exact manner of preaching, as recorded by the Holy Ghost. "Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ." (Acts xvii. 3.) And the effect of this preaching for three weeks may be seen in the letters Paul wrote to these Thesalonians.

In another scripture the effect of this truth is equally striking. He shews that those who believe this truth are accounted righteous before God. "If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our

Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. iv., v.) Blessed as this is, it is far from being all. Indeed, everything is connected with the Person of Christ, dead and risen, and ascended to glory.

But it may be asked by some, Is not that the truth held by modern Christendom ? Thank God, He has restored this truth again, and it is feebly preached by a few, little known except to be opposed. But if our eyes have been opened ; if the light of the glory has shone into our hearts ; if we have heard the voice speaking to us from heaven ; if that light has so shone as to put our poor candle out—we shall then see in that light, that the truth preached by Paul, and the error preached now, are as wide apart as the poles.

The truth Paul preached was entirely from heaven. It was not of men, but of the Son of God from heaven—what He must do : that He must be engaged with the whole question of the salvation of LOST sinners. And what must He needs do ? Paul tells us He must needs suffer. He has suffered, bearing our iniquities—delivered for our offences. According to the scriptures, bruised for sins. As our substitute, dead and buried ; and there was the entire end of us judicially, so that we are reckoned dead and buried with Christ ; no improvement expected in the old carnal

man, but buried as dead—baptism being a figure of this. (Rom. vi.)

Before we go further, is this what a sinner is taught now? Is he told what has been *done*? or is he told to *do*? Is it what God is, and has done in the gift of His Son? And is he told what that Son *has finished* on the cross?

Paul preached forgiveness of sins through that once dead and now risen Christ; and assured all who, through grace, believed the message of God, that they were justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) And since GOD had raised Him from the dead who had died for their offences; and having raised Him from the dead for the very purpose of their justification, they surely were justified by faith. There could be no possible mistake: therefore they had perfect peace with God. So that God was the justifier, and the work was finished by the Man who spoke to Saul from heaven. All is thus divine certainty, everlasting peace with God; and this was, and is, the effect of believing the truth as preached by Paul. We appeal in proof to every epistle he wrote.

If we now turn to the *great* or learned priesthood, take that large branch of what boastingly calls itself the Catholic Church, we are obliged to admit it curses the man that believes the above truth, preached by Paul. For proof of this, we only need read the records of the Council of Trent. If you doubt this, go to a priest and

ask him what you are to do, so as to be quite sure, like the true believers in the church at Rome, that you are accounted righteous before God, and HAVE peace with God.

Sad as this is, yet we cannot point in warning to the church of Rome alone, as utterly denying the truth which Paul preached. In thousands of scarcely Protestant places in this land, the truth as Paul preached it, is never heard; and if they possibly could, they would take care it never should be heard in their parishes. No, with them it is what you must do to improve your poor fallen nature. And you must go on improving it until you may hope to be fit for heaven! No, you must wait until the day of judgment! The Thessalonians heard the true gospel three weeks, and they had the full assurance faith gives, and were quite ready and waiting for the Son from heaven. But you may hear the false gospel all your lives, and die in uncertainty at last.

Is this true? You know it is. Are you, my reader, enjoying peace with God in unshaken confidence in the truth of God; or are you trying by baptism, or the incarnation, or the secret though idolatrous worship of, and supposed improvement of yourself by, sacraments, and holy days, and services—are you trying by these means, or any other means, to fit yourself for heaven, according to the errors, and command-

ments of men? If so, you know all is darkness and uncertainty. God will not allow you to even think you have peace with Him, or have eternal life, if you are looking to these delusions. Truly He was incarnate, but that was not to improve human nature, but, that He might in due time die to save them that believe. Oh, that the light may shine into your heart.

And we would also call attention to a most important fact. Not only must Christ needs suffer, but also rise from the dead. He died for our sins according to the scriptures. There was an end of our sins for ever, never possibly to be remembered against us. God says it, "And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." That is, as to the conscience before God. This does not set aside His chastening us when we sin, or the advocacy of Christ. But God deals with us according to His estimate of the blood of Christ. Therefore, as they have been laid on Him, they can be charged to us no more.

But not only has Christ died *for* us, we are reckoned dead with Him; so that both our sins are reckoned gone, and we also are gone. Dead with Him, buried with Him.

Now if this was all, we should simply perish, just as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians xv. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also vain." "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." All turns plainly on the resurrection of Christ. For again, He is not only raised *for* us, for our justification; but also we are raised up with Him. "If ye be risen with Christ." Clearly, we are neither justified nor risen with Christ, if He be not risen. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

Can you then look back to the cross and see your Holy Substitute in pure love, taking your place, bearing your guilt, and sins; yea, made sin for you? He finished there the work of atonement. Was He delivered for your offences? It is not here a question of your accepting that substitute, but has God accepted Him? Can there be a possible doubt? Has not God raised Him from the dead, and received Him up above all heavens? What, your once bleeding substitute seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high!

But still *far, far* more—you are accepted just as He is accepted. See how God hath blessed you in Him in the heavenlies. Language fails to shew how the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blest the whole church; every member of it "taken into favour in the beloved," "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath taken us into favour in the beloved," &c. (Eph. i. 3-7.)

Do not, however, make that sad mistake, that

this is your old nature improved, reconciled to God, or worse still, God reconciled to it. This error is the foundation cause of all errors. Ritualism is entirely based on it. No, the whole thing is entirely new, not a bit of the old mended. The doctrine that the incarnation was intended to be Christ permeating human nature, and then holy communion imparting still more of Christ, to improve humanity—all this is from the father of lies, utterly contrary to the word of God. Paul did not know Christ for that purpose, he says, "Wherefore henceforth, know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now, henceforth, know we him no more." To suppose that Christ in the flesh would save, or even benefit humanity, is utter folly. He must needs suffer, and rise again, or remain in His sinless purity for ever alone. This is His own teaching, John xii. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God," &c. (2 Cor. v. 16, 17.)

The more we study in the light of the heavenly vision, the gospel committed to Paul, the more distinctly we see that there is the same need for men to change their minds *now*, and turn

to God from the errors of Christendom, equally as it was in the days of Paul. May the same Lord who thus called Saul the persecutor, call many more to declare this long lost truth to *great and small*.

Can you, reader, say in reading this paper, I have heard that voice speaking to me? Soon our privilege of witnessing for Him will be closed: may we be able to say, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." C. S.

FALSE PRAYER AND SELF-WILL.

JEREMIAH XLII.

How often do people go to God about something, and pray for guidance and direction, when all the time their own mind is made up about what they intend to do. In some cases, looking to God for direction, means asking God to bless our own plans, trying to get Him to sanction our way.

There is a striking example of this in Jeremiah xlii. We find there a great company of people of all ages met together for apparently, a very good object, and that is, to present a supplication to Jehovah; to ask Him to shew them "the way wherein they may walk, and the thing that they may do." (Ver. 3.) What could be better or more becoming—looking to God for their whole future course? Nor do they stop here, they even go further and promise that when the mind of the Lord is revealed to them, they will do it.

They say, "Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God." (Ver. 6.)

After ten days the answer came, a plain straight-forward answer, telling them what to do, and promising them life and happiness in doing it. Now they know the Lord's mind unmistakeably, and after their promises, you would expect them to hear it and obey; but do they? No, for in the next chapter we find it twice recorded: "They obeyed not the voice of the Lord." What became of all their former boasted obedience only ten days previous? When reminded of it by the prophet, God's messenger, they profess to doubt the answer they have received, because it does not fall in with their views and arrangements, and they say to him, "Thou speakest falsely," and they try to find a reason for not carrying out the Lord's will. Bent on their own way, and utterly disregarding the answer to their prayer, they begin at once to carry out their pre-conceived plans, which end in judgment and death.

Is there no lesson for Christians here? Do we not sometimes speak of having the Lord's mind, when to others it appears quite the contrary? Do we not too often go to God full of our own thoughts and ways, instead of seeking to get His mind by dependence on Him?

If we trace the progress of these same people

after they had carried out their own purposes and gone into Egypt, we find their further departure from God. Now they boldly say to the prophet, "We will not hearken unto thee, but we will do whatsoever goeth out of our own mouth." Later on, judgment overtakes them as it assuredly must, for self-will brings its own punishment.

May we learn from their sad example not to give up dependence on God for self-will, for 1 Corinthians x. 11 teaches us that "these things happened unto them for examples," and that they "are written for our admonition." If any one should ask, What is false prayer? I think scripture defines it in this same chapter referred to, Jeremiah xlii. 20. "For ye dissembled in your hearts," or, as another version has it, "For you, you are deceived in your souls." C. E. H.



A FEW THOUGHTS ON EZRA III.

THEY acted according to the revealed will of God. There was a true desire in the remnant that returned to do that which the Lord God had assented to and required; and they were not discouraged by the fewness of the number, nor did they endeavour to substitute something lower. They trusted in Him, and no one ever trusted in Him and was confounded. And I feel this is the great parallel between their case and ours. We have not to build the house, &c., but

we—that which is pointed to by it—we have the church of the living God in a fearful state externally, and the truth of God is so overshadowed, that people are satisfied with anything—forms, vestments, incense.

The experience of my conscience and heart on the enormity of sin gets deepened as I meditate on the cross, and on Jesus as He lay in the tomb. Man makes light of it; makes pictures, &c. We are creatures of God, and it is a great thing to be an intelligent creature of the creation; but then there is the fact that Adam, the head of this creation, stepped aside; and it was a disaster which affected the whole race. And as I see the fall, the more I am full of praise at the wonderful work of God, so that I am taken out of the ruin of the first Adam, and put in the second Adam.

“Things that are revealed belong to us.” If I step out of the line God has revealed, I am lost in my own weakness.

One thing we have got—we have not some of the gifts that they had at the beginning, manifestations of the Spirit and fresh revelations—but we have the *word*, and so far are like those in Ezra. All the mighty works had been done in Egypt. They had had the prophetic word in Babylon, now they could open their windows and pray towards Jerusalem. But they had liberty to return, many did not return, and they had the word there.

'We have bowed to the truth of Jesus being the Christ, what has He set us to do? He has sent the Spirit down to be the Teacher and Comforter. And He is the One on whom we depend to be the Teacher; and the first thing we learn is to go to the word itself. And that, in the last days specially, we have to beware of false teachers, and look to the word through the Spirit.

We learn in Ezra that there was not the servile imitation of things, but the acting out of the principles. They set up the *altar* upon its *bases*. And what have we? The word and the Spirit, and our worship must be in spirit and in truth.

But the first thing must be life. Our Israel is the Israel of God. Our worship is just this, knowing One in whom Jehovah delighted without measure. He yielded Himself up, and the offering was accepted, and what has He set us to do? "Two or three gathered together in my name." As many as believed were baptised. And they that had been baptised into Christ, put on Christ. They are included in Christ as a new head. "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

I believe that *peace* is *in believing*. It is not a kind of happy feeling I rest upon. I may not be *enjoying* peace, and if I look at myself, I cannot always say, "I have peace." If we try

to realise peace it is always in believing. You may say, "Oh I have peace with God." But if you try to realise it, it is in believing.

We are always brought, when we meet for worship, to realise that the One who lay in the tomb is the Man in the glory—the One who was miraculously born of the virgin, and grew up—the Son of man. He bore the sins of all who shall believe in Him. And we have now on earth a miracle of love in those that are born of God, walking on earth, and not satisfied unless growing like Him. And the whole scripture shews, where there is *life* there is power. We get it exemplified here in Ezra.

We live in an age when, instead of worship in spirit and truth, man's will is mixed up with it. There is a kind of attempt to make God's blessing flow in human channels. But we need to bow, and to have a "Thus saith the Lord," for everything. Jerusalem alone was their place of worship, but what was the path for the remnant?

Now, it is to adhere to the word and the Spirit, and to take care not to nullify our own actions by substituting anything for the word. They could not arrange the temple, they picked out the bases of the altar, and clave to God's altar of burnt-offering, and in the seventh month they got together in one place.

G. J.

“I HOPE IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT
WITH ME.”

SUCH were the last words of a woman, the other day, which, with a deep sigh, closed a short, but earnest conversation between two women, both professing to be Christians. They had both met in the same class, at R. some years before. After usual greetings, the one we will call A. said to the other, we will call B., “Well, B., I am now looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus,” and spoke of the blessedness of being with Him for ever.

“Ah,” said B., “my lass, we do not need trouble ourselves about that. He will not come in thy day and mine.”

“What,” said A., “is it with you as Jesus said? Are you saying in *your heart*, My Lord delayeth his coming?” She endeavoured to shew her friend that in that case it might go badly with her, if He should come unexpectedly.

“Well,” said B., “can you say that you are ready if He comes?”

“Yes,” said A., “through mercy, I can. My sins are forgiven for His name’s sake. And I am accepted in Him. Quite ready to meet Him.”

“I cannot say that,” said B., “but I hope it will be all right with me.”

This short conversation exactly illustrates the condition of thousands. In both cases there are two things which always go together : waiting for the Lord from heaven, and being quite ready to meet Him. And in like manner, those who are saying in their hearts, "My Lord delayeth His coming ; do not let it trouble me ; it will not come in my day ;" are always connected with—"I am not sure how it will be with me." Never have I met a man, or woman, that enjoyed the certainty of eternal salvation, that could say in the heart, that is, desiring it to be so, My Lord delayeth His coming. How is it with the reader? Do you in the secret of your heart say, The Lord delayeth His coming ; I desire Him in my very heart not to come in my day ? Depend upon it, if this is the case, it is not all right with you. Do not deceive yourself by the vain hope, that it will be all right with you when He comes. Jesus tells you exactly how it will be with you : "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 50.) If this be your case, may God awaken you as out of a dream. Is this the cause of many scoffing at the coming of the Lord ? We believe it is so. Never did we meet a single scoffer saying, Where is the promise of His

coming? that had peace with God, and enjoyed the blessed certainty of eternal salvation.

On this question also our friend A. was very clear and distinct. She shewed B. that salvation was wholly of God. It was what God had done for us, in giving His Son; salvation was of God. Christ had finished the work that God had given Him to do for us. She said, “I am a poor helpless sinner, and I dare not trust myself. But I do trust my Saviour, kept by the power of God.” Poor B. could only hope it would be all right at last.

Nothing was more blessed to A. than the coming of the Lord, and nothing of which B. was more afraid. And well she might be afraid, for after all, she might be rejected at last. For hours and years she had talked about herself and her experience, and yet might be lost at last.

Do not lay this question aside. The Lord may take all that are His to-day. Will you be left behind for judgment, or taken to meet the Lord? Do you say, “Ah, He knows all about me”? True, and He knew all about you, on the cross. He bore the sins of many there. He comes for them, without the question of sin. All is forgiven, to be remembered no more. If you believe God, you may know with certainty how it will be with you at the coming of Christ—for ever with, and like, the Lord.

“PEACE, BE STILL.”

MARK IV. 34.

PEACE, be still ! the wild waves raging,
 Loudly raging, heard the Lord,
 And, fierce war no longer waging,
 Sank obedient to His word.

Vanish'd every sign of terror,
 Instant ceased the tempest wild,
 Shone the lake like polish'd mirror,
 Slept as sleeps the wearied child.

Mighty Jesus ! Lord of glory !
 Who can wildest storms control,
 Why does not Thy lovely story
 Still the tempest of the soul ?

Thou canst smooth the dying pillow,
 Give the troubled conscience peace,
 Still the raging of the billow,
 Bid the angry passions cease.

Oh Thy love ! all thought confounding,
 Who its wonders e'er can know ?
 From it, love and peace abounding,
 Living streams incessant flow.

Yet man's will, like angry ocean,
 Still is raging furiously ;
 Who can hush the dread commotion ?
 Prince of Peace, 'tis only Thee.

'Tis in vain we preach or reason,
 Warn, entreat, or deeply mourn
 Man, so stubborn in his treason,
 'Gainst Thee, Lord, treats us with scorn.

But the time is surely nearing,
 When, the church away being ta'en,

Thou in glory bright appearing
Shalt assume Thy power and reign.

Then, O Lord, while heaven adores Thee,
Thou wilt heaven's desire fulfil,
And from off Thy throne of glory,
Speak, and lo the earth is still !

H. M.

CORRESPONDENCE.

14. E. C. L., London. "I wrote unto the assembly: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." (3 John 9.) It is probable that the aged apostle wrote a letter of commendation to this assembly, commending these itinerant preachers, or teachers. Mark, he did not recognise the man Diotrephes, but wrote to the assembly. There is no thought in this epistle of John having presented himself there. Gaius had done well in receiving these teachers. They had no salary, but went forth in dependence on God. And, "We therefore ought to *receive* such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth." They held no official position, but if they preached the truth we ought to receive them.

As to the word "*receive*;" there are many Greek words translated "receive," but this one in the New Testament, is only found in these two verses, 8 and 9: the meaning is plain. The subject however, is of great importance, as it is just the turning-point of the history of the church, from ministry as of the Holy Ghost, in the first century, to the terrible clericalism that followed after. And simple as it is, yet it proves, that so far from ecclesiastical apostolic

succession (in a man taking the place of pre-eminence over an assembly) being of God : it is so utterly opposed to apostolic ministry, that where it had commenced, even the apostle John would not be received. The same thing was working in Paul's day, thirty years before this. (See 2 Cor. x. 8-11, xi. 13, 15.) It is well for the Christian to know that that system of ministry, or clericalism, falsely named apostolic succession, is the very opposite to that which Christ set up in the beginning.

How important is every part of the inspired scripture, and even this short letter to Gaius. He had received those whose only credential was the truth. To bring them on their journey preaching the truth, was to do well.

They went forth as the servants of Christ, for the love of the truth, for the truth is Christ. "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth." They came with no pretensions of apostolic ordination. They were what men call laymen. And the man that took the place of what is called a clergyman now, would not receive such men, as John the apostle and these fellow labourers. Does John, does the Holy Ghost approve of this? Let verse 10 answer the question. So widespread has the system become, that is seen here in Diotrephes, that very few could even explain what that principle of ministry was, which John defends. Thus the path of individual faithfulness is approved by God, as may be seen in Gaius. How much that may be highly esteemed amongst men, may be utterly contrary to the mind of the Spirit, as revealed in the word of God.

“THE JOYFUL SOUND,” OR JUBILEE.

It may not be known by all that the word translated, “the *joyful sound*,” in Psalm lxxxix. 15, is *troo-gāh*: or the Jubilee, of Leviticus xxv. 9: “Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you.” The word jubilee in verse 10 is not the same as in verse 9. The word in verse 9 was translated in the Septuagint, some three hundred years before Christ, as meaning in Greek, “Manifestation.” But in verse 10 and onwards it is *yōh-vēhl*, “To make proclamation with the sound.”

The subject is one of the very first importance as one of the clearest possible illustrations of the glad tidings of God. It may be asked, how is *God manifested* in sound of the trumpet in the joyful year of jubilee? We see God desiring the rest of His people in three ways: the rest of the seventh day; the rest of the seventh year; and further, He desires man to be brought into the most perfect rest.

“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of

years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound," &c. This, then, is the true manifestation of the blessed character of God. God is love—and God in love desired my rest, my perfect rest. God desired that I, a poor slave of sin, should be brought by proclamation into perfect peace with Himself.

But God is holy, God is righteous; and I am a vile, guilty sinner. With my sins upon me, I could have no rest, no liberty, no, surely not in His presence. Nay, in my guilt and shame I could not endure His holy, holy presence; could you? All this being the case, and it is so, on what ground, in what way, can the righteousness of God be fully maintained in the joyful trumpet sound of deliverance, and peace to us poor slaves of sin? How wonderful the answer in this type, given by the Spirit: "In the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." The blood of the victim must be shed: "without shedding of blood is no remission." The blood must be presented to God. The sins of the people must be laid on the Substitute, and borne away. God is glorified, and sins are borne away.

Now sound aloud the joyful news. See those slaves with their wives and children waiting, listening with bated breath. Hark! hush! what a dead silence in the prison. What a moment. God desires it; every barrier is removed by the

atonement. Through all the land, to every slave, to every poor prisoner, sound forth the loud welcome tones of liberty and freedom. Oh, what a day of joy! Freedom to the slave! Liberty to them that had long been bound!

Does scripture refer to this scene of joy? Let us turn and see. Who is this the prophet speaks of? "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." (Isaiah lxi. 1, 2.)

Very interesting the question, Whom did Jehovah send to do all these things, for the objects of His love, and in what way, so that God might be righteous and the sinner set free? Is there any doubt as to whom God sent? None whatever. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Did the jubilee then point to Jesus? We will hear what He says. We see Him stand up in the synagogue of Nazareth to read, as was His custom. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was

written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach [or proclaim] the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." (Luke iv. 16-22.) Thus Jesus presented Himself as the fulfilment of the joyful sound of the jubilee. In looking, then, at the jubilee, may our eyes be fastened on Him, and our ears opened to hear His gracious words. Eternal life is ours on hearing His words, and believing God who sent Him. (John v. 24.)

The jubilee, then, was entirely of God. God so loved. The atonement must first be made. And God who loved, provided the atoning Lamb, His only beloved Son. In the type that work had first to be done. But on the part of the poor prisoner, or the slave, the poor broken-hearted captive, not one thing had to be done. God is manifested in this very free grace to the poor and helpless. The silver trumpet with loud

sound then proclaimed liberty throughout all the land—there was nothing to do, nothing to pay. Is not that a fact? And mark, the very moment the joyful sound was heard and understood, every captive that heard the loud sound WAS free. Salvation was brought to every prisoner and captive in the land. All was pure absolute grace. And this was the manifestation of God. What an acceptable year, what a year of joy was that fiftieth year! It was not then if they would pray for liberty, or do one thing for liberty; but the loud sound of the trumpet simply proclaimed liberty to all.

Now, if this is God's picture of His glad tidings, where is the gospel of His grace proclaimed to every creature on earth? Let us carefully notice how the jubilee is applied to Christ. In Isaiah liii. His atoning death for our sins is most distinctly foretold. Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, our iniquities laid on Him. His life cut off for the transgressions of His people. His soul made an offering for sin. "*He bare the sin of many.*" Then, as we have seen, the Lord God sent Him to sound the jubilee, to proclaim the good tidings. What precious words, the manifestation of God to us poor helpless sinners: "*He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted.*" Oh, broken-hearted slaves of sin, do you hear, do you know, that God sent His Son to bind up your broken

hearts? Oh, captives of Satan! Jesus says, God sent Him to proclaim liberty to you. Do you hear the loud sound? Do you believe God in sending His Son for you? Do you say, I am bound in the iron prison of despair? Jesus says, God has sent Him to open the prison to them that are bound. Do you say, When is the happy time that I may be free? Now is the day of salvation; Jesus has come to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Then shall come a day, when this day of salvation closes, "And the day of vengeance of God." And afterwards the millennial day of comfort and blessing to this earth. But we would prefer in this paper to pursue the joyful sound. We have seen, in Luke iv., how the Lord Jesus presented Himself as the fulfilment of all this. Mark, He did not go on to the day of vengeance, but closed the book at that which occupies us now: to proclaim the jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord.

It was a joyful year, and the sound of the loud trumpet was a joyful sound. It was joyful liberty. We will now turn and see if the gospel is as joyful as the type of it was.

The first full, clear sound of the jubilee trumpet was when Jesus had made the atonement for sins—on the very first day when God had proved His acceptance of the atonement by raising Jesus from among the dead. He had

glorified God by the atoning death of the cross. He had borne the full judgment of His people's sins. He had made peace by the blood of the cross. It was finished—He had said it. He had been forsaken of God, under the wrath due to us. His body had been laid in the sepulchre. But now all was over for eternity. God had raised Him up to die no more. If we turn to John xx. 19, we see the risen Christ in the midst of His disciples—and now the joyful sound is heard: “Peace be unto you.” And what did He shew them as the ground of that peace? Was it any one thing they had done? Was it their feelings, or experience, or works? They had all forsaken Him. He shewed them His hands and His side. The atoning work had been done—there was nothing now to hinder the jubilee trumpet sound of liberty—“Peace be unto you.” This was the sweetest sound they had ever heard; the joyful sound that filled their hearts with gladness: “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.” Not only had He thus proclaimed the joyful sound to them, but they were to do the same to others. “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” For this purpose they were to receive the Holy Ghost, that in gladness of heart they might also proclaim the good news of forgiveness of sins.

In Luke xxiv. 46, 47, they are commissioned to proclaim the jubilee, the joyful sound, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. What a repentance, what a change of mind, would be produced even amongst the very murderers of Jesus in Jerusalem. Even amongst them, thousands should hear the joyful sound, believe it, and be saved.

But the joyful sound must not be limited to all the land of Palestina now. No; as to this the words of the risen Lord are clear and distinct: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) What a command—sound the trumpet with joyful sound, to every creature, to every slave of sin, to every prisoner of Satan, in this wide world. Sadly did these disciples fail to apprehend the vastness of this joyful charge, or to carry it out. Sadly fail we also in this day. Eighteen hundred years have passed, and yet how many millions of the wretched captives of Satan have never heard the joyful sound! Let us now pursue the joyful sound in the Acts, and see the effects it produced.

And let us remember the jubilee, or joyful sound, is entirely of God. Her Majesty's jubilee is past for ever, never to return; but not so the jubilee of God.



OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND LOVE TO THE SAINTS:

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIVINE LIFE IN THE BELIEVER.

PERFECT obedience characterised the life of Christ here on earth. He was ever the dependent One, ever the obedient One. "In the volume of the book" it was written of Him, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and when on earth, He could say, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me;" and again, "I do always those things which please him." This was perfect obedience.

But His path of obedience to the Father was also the perfect exhibition of God's love to man. His words, His ways, His acts, all spoke of God's love to His guilty creatures. And the cross was the full revelation of this, together with the infinitely perfect expression of His obedience to God the Father. In the life of Christ, as a man on earth, perfect obedience and perfect love were united; and the life in which these were displayed in Christ is the life which, through grace, is imparted to the believer.

In Christ there was no imperfection. His was a life of *perfect* obedience—*perfect* love. In us there is much to hinder the manifestation of this life; yet the life in us is the same in its nature,

its traits and characteristics—it is the *same life*. And whether in Him or in us it is characterised by obedience. Obedience is the state in which it subsists. “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” (1 John ii. 3.) No matter what our pretension may be, it avails nothing, unless there is this obedience. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (Ver. 4.)

The other characteristic of the divine life is not separated from this. Where there is obedience there will also be love, because they belong to the same life—the same nature. “Whoso keepeth his word”—this is obedience—“in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.” (ver. 5.) His word is the expression of what He is, of His nature; and “God is love,” so that if we keep His word, His love is perfected in us.

But “his commandments” are not only the expression of what He is, but of His authority as well. We are called to obey, and to obey as Christ obeyed. We are sanctified unto the obedience of Christ. And if we say that we abide in Him, we ought also to walk even as He walked, that is, in obedience to God, for His whole life was that. There was not a single movement in His soul, not a single act of His life, that was not obedience to His Father’s will.

Blessed indeed it is to behold that perfect One in His path of perfect obedience! And happy they who follow in His footsteps, who walk even as He walked!

The commandment to obey as Christ obeyed, to walk as Christ walked, was not a "new commandment." It was the word they had heard from the beginning in connection with the manifestation of the divine life in Christ. It was the Father's commandment to Christ, according to Christ's own words, "For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John xii. 49, 50.) So John says the commandment was "old." Again, it was a "*new* commandment," because true in Him and in us. The commandment was the expression of the divine life—"His commandment is life everlasting," and was first seen in Christ. But now it is true in us too, "because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." God had come out through the cross, and the light of life was now shining for man, and dispelling the darkness. This life, *for* man, and *in* man as the fruit of redemption, life in Christ, life in the Spirit, was a new thing. It is Christ in us, Christ as our life. The commandment is

“old” because the obedience which characterises this life was seen in Him which was from the beginning, “the Word of life.” It is “new” because the same thing is seen in the believer now. If they were seeking something new, according to the Gnostic philosophy, the bane of Christianity in that day, the apostle John gives them this; but he would not disconnect it from Christ, the believer’s life, “that which was from the beginning.” “Which thing is true *in him and in you.*”

Until redemption was accomplished Christ remained *alone*. Now He is no more alone; we are in Him, and He in us. This is a wonderful truth, and it gives a wonderful character to the children of God. The Holy Ghost in us is the power of it all—the divine answer in us down here to all that Christ is in glory as a man. It is no longer Christ as a man walking *alone* in this world, but Christ *in the saints*, and the “eternal life” displayed in *them*. In John’s epistle, Christ is seen as “eternal life” down here in this world, first *alone*, and then *in the saints*; “which thing is true in him and in you.” And this life, whether in Christ alone, or in Him and in us, is first an *obedient* life, and secondly a life of *love*.

1 John ii. 3-8 is obedience and disobedience.

Verses 9-11 are love and hatred.

Obedience and love characterise those who

are in the light. Disobedience and hatred characterise those who are in the darkness. A man may *say* he is in the light, but if he hates his brother, he is still in darkness, and has never seen the light. He knows not "the light of life." But if we see the outgoings of divine love toward a brother, we can say: There is a man who dwells in the light. He has found God who is light, and having found the light, he has the love also, for "God is light," and "God is love;" and we cannot have the one without the other, just as you cannot have the sun without having both light and heat.

The light casts out the darkness, and then there is no occasion of stumbling. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And He who has shined in our hearts as light is love also. Wonderful grace to such as were "once darkness," but now "light in the Lord."

Have *our* eyes been opened to see the light? Have *our* hearts tasted the love? Oh! then to "walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;" and to walk "as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth); proving what is acceptable unto the

Lord." (Eph. v. 2, 8-10.) Let us walk in the light and sunshine of His presence who could say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," never swerving from this path, and who, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

A. H. R.

QUESTIONS IN THE WORKROOM.

V.

THE expulsion of the preachers from the monastery at Ripon, together with the advancement of Wilfrid, the pervert to Romanism, naturally tended to inflame the controversy, and to raise the hopes of the Romanists. "To terminate the disputes which now agitated the church in Northumberland, it was at last resolved that a synod should be held, in which the subjects in question might be publicly discussed. This memorable synod was held in the monastery of Streoneshalh (Whitby) in the year 664, and the heads of both parties having been summoned to attend, there was a general muster of their respective forces. On the part of the Romish church appeared Alchfrid, Agilbert, Agatho, Wilfrid, James, Romanus, and others; and on the part of the Scottish church were Oswy, the abbess Hilda, Colman, and others. . . ."

It is scarcely credible that the great point discussed at this synod was as to the time of observing Easter! And this shews how, in many things, the whole professing church had utterly departed from scripture. The reader of the word of God will be aware that there is not only no instruction for Christians to observe Easter, but that the observance of days is contrary to the true spirit of Christianity. (Gal. iv. 10, 11.) The discussion then turned on tradition, and how Easter was observed in other countries. The account would not be worth our reading were it not for the fearful results of this synod for centuries of degrading superstition.

“At the opening of the assembly, Oswy made a short speech, setting forth the importance of unity in the church. ‘They who serve one God,’ said he, ‘should hold one rule of life; and they who expect the same heavenly kingdom, ought not to differ in observing the heavenly sacraments. Let us inquire, then, which is the true tradition, and let us all agree to follow it.’” There was no appeal to the word of God, for indeed there could not be. It was a great mistake for Oswy to allow himself to be drawn into a question that could not be defended by scripture.

“Colman, the (so-called) bishop of the province, was then desired by the king to state what he had to say on behalf of the rites which he followed; and

he proceeded to address the meeting as follows: 'The Easter which I am wont to keep, is what I received from those who sent me hither as bishop, and which all our fathers, men beloved of God, are known to have observed in the same way. Nor is it to be despised or rejected; for it is the same which the evangelist John, the beloved disciple of the Lord, is said to have observed, with all the churches under his inspection.' . . . Wilfred replied, 'That Easter which we keep, we have seen observed by all that be at Rome, where the blessed apostle Peter lived, taught, suffered, and was buried,' &c. His manner and language were insulting and overbearing." It would weary the reader to no profit to give the details of this foolish discussion as to the right day and the true way of observing Easter, when it was no part of Christianity to observe it at all. Wilfrid pretended that Rome was following the rule of "Peter, the most blessed prince of the apostles, to whom the Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Upon hearing these words of Wilfrid, the king thus addressed the bishop of Northumbria: 'Is it true, Colman, that these things were spoken by our Lord to Peter?' The bishop answered, 'True, O king.' 'And can you prove,' said he,

‘that any such power was given to your Columba?’ To this Colman replied in the negative. ‘Are you both agreed, then,’ adds the king, ‘that these things were principally spoken to Peter, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given him by the Lord?’ They answered, ‘Yes, certainly.’ ‘Well, then,’ says Oswy, ‘I tell you that he is a porter whom I will not contradict, but, to the utmost of my knowledge and ability, I will obey all his statutes; lest perhaps when I come to the gates of heaven, there be none to open to me, being at variance with him who is acknowledged to hold the keys.’

“The king’s speech was received with applause by all ranks in the assembly: which resolved accordingly that the practice of the British church should be discontinued, and that of the church of Rome adopted in its stead.”

Colman might easily have replied that Wilfrid had given no *proof* that Peter observed Easter in any way; but he made no further reply, and thus Rome gained their point. “Yet, though he was silenced, he was not convinced; and being no doubt disgusted at the insolence of Wilfrid, . . . he resolved to retire into his own country with such as chose to follow him. He and many of the devoted missionaries returned to *Ireland*.” The historian Bede unintentionally pays them a high compliment, when he states that they were ignorant of the decrees of councils, and diligently

observed no other works of piety and purity than what they could learn in the prophets, the Gospels, and apostolic Epistles. (L. iii. c. 4.)

They had, indeed, some superstitions; but they were strangers to that immense mass of ceremonies with which the church of Rome was encumbered. They, like many Protestants in our days, unscripturally kept Christmas and Lent and Easter and Whitsuntide. And this then, as now, gave Rome a handle, and, as we have seen, was the means of their overthrow in this synod, which so fearfully blighted the future history of England.

They were, however, true Christians, who loved and revered the word of God. "Their prayers appear to have been chiefly extemporaneous, and in the public reading of the scriptures they do not seem to have been confined by any fixed rule, but might read more or less as they had opportunity. They set apart their churches (wooden meeting-rooms) to the service of God; but they never dedicated them to any of the saints." All such superstition took place after this synod. Bede does not "ascribe any one dedication of this sort to the brethren from Iona: on the contrary, he informs us that it was not until some years after their departure that the church of Lindisfarne, their principal church, was dedicated to the apostle Peter by archbishop Theodore." And long after this, the church of

Listingham was dedicated to "The mother of God"! And some think it probable that the consecration of Streoneshalh was deferred till after the death of that devoted christian, Lady Hilda.

Let us further examine what was the true character of these brethren who were driven from England by the proud church of Rome. "The missionaries from Iona, and their disciples, appear to have surpassed the Romanists in piety and diligence, as much as they fell short of them in superstition. Our historian takes pleasure in recording their zeal, their humility, and their unwearied labours; he recurs to this topic again and again, and sets forth their activity and self-denial, to reprove the indolence and selfishness of some of their successors. These pious servants of Christ were far from seeking to make a gain of godliness; they had not learnt to set a price on every act of devotion, and to limit their services by the extent of their emoluments; but with disinterested zeal they laboured, 'in season and out of season,' and thought no exertions too great by which they could profit the souls of men. They had not learnt to confine their ministrations to consecrated walls, on pretence of conducting them with greater decorum—a pretence which serves well as a cloak for indolence; but, like the primitive apostles, they preached and exhorted from village to village and from house to house."

When many of the brethren retired to Ireland, still some remained, as did Lady Hilda, and these greatly checked the progress of superstition and corruption; but before the death of Bede, seventy years after this disastrous synod at Whitby, "the indolence and avarice of the clergy, and the consequent immorality of the people, had grown to an enormous height." The description he gives in his last writings are truly lamentable. The king himself was greatly distressed at the change. But Rome sent its archbishop Theodore to reduce all to subjection to her superstition.

It would be perhaps impossible to find another incident in history so terribly disastrous to England as the synod at Whitby. Centuries of dark superstition followed. And even the Reformation came far short of the scriptural simplicity, devotedness, and earnest piety of the brethren from Ireland. These were the true missionary servants of Christ, who travelled far and wide. Their record is on high.

In a word, Rome drove Christianity from these shores, and established the mystery of iniquity. God had His own suffering children. Their history is little known to us; but they will soon be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. There they shall receive their reward, when the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

God works in His own way. After some twelve centuries, Ireland was again the favoured

place where, about sixty years ago, God began again to awaken a few to seek a return, not to the British church of the sixth century; but to Christ, as revealed in the holy scriptures. Again these became, and not a few still are, the missionaries of Christ to England. Yes; God has restored long-lost truth, in giving Christ His true place, and believers their true place in Him.

And further, as then so now, Satan is marshaling his forces to lead England into the dark superstition of Rome—the very same gross perversion of scripture as to Peter and the keys of heaven. Yea, Peter is again put in the place of the true foundation, and Rome is fast taking the place of, and is supposed by many to be, Christianity. The brethren of that day may have had less light than the brethren of this day, but do they not utterly put us to shame by their life and works of devotedness to Christ?

The truth is, however, that so far from the church of Rome introducing and sustaining Christianity in this country, she became the sad and determined enemy of all true, simple scriptural devotedness to Christ, as seen in the missionary servants of Christ from Ireland.



REST.

PSALM XCII.

"God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good." Then there was rest—God Himself rested, the work was finished and there was blessing.

And then after years had rolled on, and sin and death had left their dark stamp on all that had been made so beautiful, a man of God, led by the Spirit of God, and in the enjoyment of the rest which God gives to His people, sang forth, in the words of Psalm xcii., the glories of the Lord and the majesty of His works: "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep." And this was the song of the servant of God for the sabbath day—the day of rest and peace. No room is there here for any of the psalmist's own works, but all his thoughts are concentrated on the works which another has wrought.

And then again years afterwards another song is raised. Not now the psalmist, though he had looked forward to the day, nor yet morning stars rejoicing in the settling of earth's foundations; but heaven's high hosts lift their voices in the praise of the One whose mission was to bring

peace and to give rest. Ah! listen to His voice : "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*." Glorious tidings those which fell on His listener's ears—rest in a fulness unknown before for the weary and heavy laden. Man could not have this rest before, inasmuch as the sabbath of God had been broken by sin.

Reader, do you know anything of the work which another has wrought at Calvary, and the glorious rest which Jesus, the Son of God, offers so freely? He has purchased it by His death, and now rest and peace, which can never be marred, are yours if you simply trust in the precious blood of Christ.

He has made peace, He has finished the work; and how good, how stedfast, how unmoveable is His work!

Now if you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have entered into the rest which He gives, you will be able to understand somewhat more of this Psalm and sing "in the morning . . . every night," and all day long, too, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep."

P. H. E.



CORRESPONDENCE.

15. W. C., Washington. "‘Except a man be born again he cannot SEE the kingdom of God.’ (John iii. 5.)" You ask what kingdom is it he cannot see, or enter into—the kingdom of God?

If you turn and read carefully Ezekiel xxxvi. 24–35, you will see the Lord was speaking of the kingdom He will yet set up on this earth, with Palestine as its centre, and the Jews its happy subjects. But none will enter or see that kingdom unless they are born from above, with wholly a new nature, as described in Ezekiel. But if that is true of the earthly part of the kingdom of God, how much more so of the heavenly, (that is, the church) of which Jesus says He was not then speaking.

Your next question has been a difficulty with many. In verse 13 Jesus says, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven." You ask did not Enoch and Elijah ascend to heaven; see Genesis v. 24, 2 Kings ii. 11. On my knees the Spirit directed me to the word "ASCEND to heaven," assuring me the answer to your difficulty was in the word *ascend*. Jesus did not say no man hath been *taken* to heaven. Enoch had. "Enoch walked with God; and was not, for God took him." This was far from his own act in *ascending* up to heaven.

So of Elijah, though a striking type of Christ, yet how careful the Holy Ghost is to guard against this! He descended from the highest Gilgal to Bethel. Jesus descended from the highest heaven to Bethlehem, and to Israel. Then he descended to Jericho, the place of the

curse. Jesus descended still lower, to man under the curse. Elijah must still go lower, to the Jordan. Jesus must needs suffer death, the death of the cross. But mark the contrast, as well as the parallel. The sons of the prophets say, both at Bethel and Jericho, "Knowest thou that the Lord will *take away* thy master from thee to-day?" And Elijah said also to Elisha, "If thou see me *taken away* from thee," &c. Now the disciples did see Jesus as Messiah *taken away* from them. (Luke xxiv. 51.) Acts i. 9, "He was taken up." So far we have a parallel in all three cases, for He was truly man.

Now look at the heavenly side. He says, "If I tell you of heavenly things. And no man hath ASCENDED UP into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." (John iii. 12, 13.)

Enoch and Elijah were only men, and had to be taken to heaven. Jesus was Jehovah, human and divine. He could be taken, and He in His own right, title, and power, could *ascend*. No other man ever came down to be man. No other as man could ascend. He could say, "I ascend." (John xx. 17.)

In accomplishing our complete redemption, God "raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies," &c. (Eph. i. 20, 21.) But He had this surpassing pre-eminence. He is the only one that descended, the only one that ascended. It is only written of Him, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended

up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph. iv. 8-10.) This can be said of none other than of Him, who has the pre-eminence. It cannot be said of David. (Acts ii. 34.) Enoch and Elijah *were taken up*. And Paul, as in Christ, whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he had to be "*caught up* to the third heaven." (2 Cor. xii. 1.)

Therefore it is absolutely true, and in perfect harmony with all scripture as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "And no man hath ASCENDED up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man which is in heaven."

Holy, Holy, Lord, thou alone art worthy of this high pre-eminence.

Another thought has been suggested. Whilst it is quite true that there is no contradiction in scripture, as to the bodily ascension of the Lord, He alone having that right and title, yet it is also true in another and most important sense. "There was no moral power in man in his natural state to ascend or rise up to heavenly things. Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven,' &c. In this sense Christ was the only one who came down from heaven and could communicate those heavenly things to others: 'he that cometh from above,' &c. (Ver. 31-33.) Man must needs be born from above before he can understand those heavenly things.

"Whether therefore we look at this as to the title of the blessed Person of Christ to ascend to heaven, or spiritually in connection with the instruction given to Nicodemus, all is in perfect

harmony. In all things He hath the pre-eminence. Man in His natural state has no knowledge of heavenly things."

16. W. F., London. In reading Matthew xiii. 30, 41, 49, it must be borne in mind that the Lord is not speaking concerning the church, or His coming to take it to Himself; but the kingdom—that kingdom promised to Israel—only here the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. That is the mystery of the kingdom whilst the king is away in heaven. We get hints of this in the prophets: see Micah v. 2-7.

We learn, then (ver. 30), that the wicked and the righteous are to grow together until the harvest. The wicked at the end are bound together, ready to be burnt. When we see men being bound together in guilds, and leagues, and all kinds of confederacies, it certainly seems that the end is near, and that they are being gathered together ready for judgment. And the words in this place are quite applicable in either case, whether the wheat means the church which shall be gathered up to glory, or it means the godly remnant of Jews who shall be gathered to Palestine for the earthly kingdom. The whole testimony of scripture shews that there will be judgment on the wicked before God sets up His kingdom on earth. That is the living wicked, as in Matthew xxv. That has nothing to say to the church being taken first to glory before the day of the Lord. Nothing can be more certain than this. (See 2 Thess. ii. 1.) Also in 1 Thessalonians we have first the taking up of the saints in chapter iv., and then the day of the Lord in chapter v. The saints must be taken to heaven first, as they come with Christ when He

comes to execute judgment. (1 Thess. ii. 19 ; iii. 13 ; iv. 14 ; Jude 14, 15.)

17. "W. P.," Homerton. "So much the more as ye see the day approaching." No doubt the Spirit could apply this to the judgments about to be poured at that time on Jerusalem, and the Jews. The day of the Lord as foretold by the prophets is yet future, and thus the warning of this verse (Heb. x. 25) is as applicable to Christendom now, and to Christians in it, as it was to believers then in the midst of the Jews. Many then may have been going back to Judaism, the very thing about to be destroyed, or set aside. It is the exhortation to hold fast the public profession of Christianity—the full eternal efficacy of the one offering of Christ.

Many are going back *now* to the heathenism and Judaism of the dark ages. Christendom *now* is pretty much what Judaism was then. It is fast going back to sacrifices and masses that can never take away sins ; and having rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the everlasting efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, judgment is now at the door. It is about to be destroyed, the day of its judgment and terrible destruction approacheth. Surely then it is high time for believers everywhere to be warned. This is not the question of the Lord's coming to take His church, but the coming day of judgment on this Christ rejecting world. All who know that they are perfected for ever are to gather. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is."

THE NEW BIRTH
AND
THE SERPENT OF BRASS.

JOHN III. 1-18.

MANY years after the Jews had rejected Christ it was written, "He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power [or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 11.) How high then the privilege, how great the dignity! Born of God—sons of God. Let us bear this in mind. One of the true marks of the operation of the Spirit was seen in a religious man, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. There was a felt need in his soul that brought him, though by night, to see Jesus. He owns Jesus as a Teacher come from God, he believes the evidence of the miracles, which could not be done by any man except God be with him. Jesus treated him as all wrong if he supposed that teaching could meet his case or need. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [or wholly anew], he cannot see the kingdom of God." This fills Nicodemus with amazement. He says, "How can a man be born when he is old?" &c.

Now the astonishment of Nicodemus shews that the learned Jews had no idea of the new birth. This ought not to have been the case, but it was so. It was distinctly foretold, but it never was understood, till Jesus arose from the dead. We find David, under a deep sense of sin, longing for it. And, as we said, it is distinctly foretold, that when God restores Israel to their own land, then they shall all be born again, or have wholly a new heart. Let us read the words. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers," &c. All this is of God. Then afterwards they will repent. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations." (Ezek. xxxvi. 24-31.)

Now is it not remarkable that Nicodemus

should have had no idea of this? The disciples also had no knowledge of the new birth. And though all the offerings, and such a scripture as Isaiah liii., pointed to the atoning death of Christ, yet neither the Jews, nor the Jewish disciples of Jesus, seem to have understood either Moses or the prophets on that all important foundation truth.

Is it not sad to think that Christendom returned very much to the same state of ignorance, both as to the new birth and the atonement? For the one they substituted baptism, in place of circumcision; and for the other, the blasphemy of the mass.

Let us then read our chapter as a restored revelation from the lips of Jesus, yea, from the heart of God. Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." We must notice that Jesus here is evidently speaking of the kingdom of God to be set up on this earth, as foretold in the scripture above. Man as he was in sinful flesh, had proved himself totally unfit morally for the presence and kingdom of God. He was to be cleansed, purified, of which water was the well-known type. He must have a totally new nature. Nothing could improve the old nature, called flesh in scripture. So that Nicodemus was entirely mistaken in supposing that God had sent Jesus to improve the sinful

nature of man in the flesh by education. This was new and astonishing truth, that man's nature was not fit for God, even on earth in that kingdom He had promised to set up. New, yet not new, as it had been foretold, but not understood. Nicodemus himself was a proof of this. The King had come ; He was there, the kingdom was there : but until Nicodemus was born again, he could not see nor understand who Jesus was.

Jesus now says a few words which settle the whole question, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This is a self-evident fact, true in all generations. With all the childish talk, a monkey never brings forth a man. Everything partakes, is, of the nature of that from which it is born or generated. Gather a thousand different birds' eggs, mingle them together, let them be hatched ; the form, the feathers, the very instinct, all is true to its generation. Is it not so ? Even a Darwin must have said, *Yes*. God said, "*after his kind, and it was so.*" This John iii. 6 is a most important verse, and corrects a very common mistake as to the new birth. It is not that the sinful nature, the fallen nature of man, is changed, or made holy. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Thus they are, and remain, in each believer, two totally distinct natures. But we must not anticipate, but just take scripture as

we find it, on this most important subject. The Lord now shews that the new birth is the sovereign act of the Spirit, even as "the wind bloweth where it listeth," &c. This shews the utter fallacy of baptismal regeneration.

If the act of a priest baptising the whole population was the new birth, or effected the new birth, there would be no divine sovereignty in it at all. And in like manner, if you say the water of baptism is the agent, or medium by which the Spirit effects regeneration, there would still be no divine sovereignty in regenerating the whole population by water. The whole thing is a gross delusion, not only has it no foundation in scripture, but it is in contradiction of scripture. Happily this is a sure mark of false tradition. When tradition contradicts divine revelation, it is and must be false. That baptism is a figure or type of the regeneration we quite admit.

Let us not forget that the Lord is speaking to a Jew, and about the kingdom of God to be set up in the land given to their fathers. All that that Jew can say is, "How can these things be?" "Jesus answered, . . . Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Plainly He refers to the things that had been foretold in Ezekiel xxxvi.; so that most assuredly being born of water could not be christian baptism at all, but water is used in the Jewish sense as the emblem of purity. He had spoken of the pure

and new nature needed in order to be suitable for the earthly kingdom, and Nicodemus did not understand; as Christ said, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" No man but Jesus knew what was suited to heaven. He spoke that which He knew. No man had been there and could tell, or knew, as He did. You would say no one surely thinks that man in the flesh, in his sinful, vile nature, is so foolish as to suppose that he is fit for heaven, and the presence of God? Friend, that is just what the whole religion of this world is doing, trying to make that sinful nature holy, and thus fit for heaven; some in one way, some in another. Some, by fastings and prayers and sacraments; some, by striving to keep the law; some, by washing in the river Ganges; and some, by holiness by faith. Oh, that all these would ponder the words of Jesus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

There is then this universal feeling, or conscience, that man as he is, is not fit for the presence of God. Just as if a message arrived from the Queen to a collier in the mine, ragged, half naked, covered with dust and soot; you would scarcely need tell him he was not fit for clean carpets, and spotlessly clean apartments, and attendants, and especially the eye of Her Majesty. Would he not be miserable there, and

wish himself out? Ah, how well did Jesus know that man in his natural state, his sinful, defiled nature, was totally unfit for the purity of the presence of God in heaven! If He said then to Nicodemus, speaking of the earthly kingdom, "Ye must be born wholly anew," how much more does he thus speak to us now as connected with heavenly things! What is that new birth? How is it effected? Is it enough to give the anxious soul peace with God here? Is it enough to fit a sinful man for heaven? Surely these are deeply interesting questions. Are you quite clear about each of them?

It is far from our desire to attack or offend any reader of these lines, but we do beg you to fairly test whatever you are resting in. Do you really believe that in your baptism you were made a child of God, a member of Christ, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? Has this improved or changed your sinful nature? If it be true, then you *are* fit for heaven. Is it so? Oh, baptised thousands, are ye fit for the holy presence of God? One cannot but pity the man that sincerely believes such a delusion. But what can we say of the man who does not believe it, yet tells people it is so, knowing it to be false? Is it not fearful wickedness? To these we give the word of warning. Could anything be worse than this wilful deception? But we affectionately ask the baptised, Are you quite

sure, if summoned into the presence of God, that you are fit for that presence ?

The same question may be put to such as are seeking fitness for heaven by fastings, prayers, sacraments, masses, and the like. Is your sinful self so improved, that you are fit for the holy presence of God ? Or are you supposing that sin, that old nature, is so eradicated by holiness through faith, or by faith, that you are now so pure that you are fit for heaven ? Can you give thanks to the Father that you are now meet for the inheritance of the saints in light ?

We will now leave for a little while our chapter, and see what the Holy Ghost teacheth on these deeply solemn questions. We shall find all in perfect harmony with the words of Jesus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."



PSALM CXLVII.

IN this psalm the people are seen, after passing through very deep troubles, brought into the presence of the Lord Himself in the land to which He had promised to lead His chosen race.

A place of rest, joy, and blessing. And now, as their eyes rest on their Lord, they at once break forth into praise ; and then the very next thing we find them occupied with is, what

the Lord *is doing*. Not now the mighty finished work wrought out on Calvary, the foundation on which their title to be in this place was laid; but their whole attention is engrossed in the Lord's present interest and present occupation.

"The Lord *doth build* up Jerusalem."

"He *gathereth* together the outcasts of Israel."

"He *healeth* the broken in heart."

"He *bindeth* up their wounds."

"He *telleth* the number of the stars."

"He *calleth* them all by their names."

Reader, if through grace you know something of the efficacy of the finished work of Christ to meet your needs as a sinner, and the priceless value of His most precious blood to wash away your sins, do you know what the Lord is now doing, and what His present interests are? Building, gathering, healing, binding, counting (telling), calling—such are the Lord's present interests.

In Matthew xvi. we hear the Lord saying, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" and from the day of Pentecost till this moment the Lord has been building, gathering, healing, binding, counting, and calling living stones to form part of that building.

Then, reader, say, are you taking an interest in this present work of the Lord; a work which

bears eternity's stamp, and one in which you also have part? The great transaction of Calvary was wrought out by Christ alone; but to-day, in this present work of the Lord, His word calls you to be workers together with Him—carrying the precious gospel light into the dark territories of sin and death, and telling tired ones of the living Saviour who calls the weary to Himself and bids them find in Him their rest. Yes, Christ is building, and soon the last stone of that wondrous structure will be reared; ere long the last wanderer will be folded in the Shepherd's arms, and at His well-known voice all will rise to meet Him in the air. But now the One who at such a cost has bought you, would have you in fellowship with Himself, entering heart and soul into the work which He is fast completing.

If you read through this psalm, you will notice that it commences with praise, and then as each heart and eye is riveted on the Lord, and watching with reverent interest, what He is doing, again and again their hearts overflow in praise to the One who is doing all things so well. Soon, when all is completed, and we are with Him, the triumphant shout of praise will be, "Our Jesus hath done all things well;" but may He now by His love constrain us to take a deeper interest in what He now is doing—building, gathering, healing, binding, counting, calling.

P. H. E.

“THE JOYFUL SOUND,” OR JUBILEE.

II.

WE will now turn to the Acts. God was glorified, and the atonement was made. The disciples were commanded to sound the true jubilee—the glad tidings of God manifested, forgiveness proclaimed to every creature. They had waited at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. The Holy Ghost had come to abide with them unto the end. And now the trumpet sounds in Jerusalem: the city of His very murderers hears the wondrous news, that He whom it had slain, “God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” They cry out in bitterness of soul, under conviction of sin. The trumpet sounds its joyful notes of an entire change of mind. Repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus, for forgiveness of sins, they hear the joyful sound: “Then they that *gladly* received his word were baptised; and the same day there were added about three thousand souls.” Gladness and singleness of heart and praising God was what marked the first day’s sounding of the glad tidings of God.

Very little, however, did the first messengers of the gospel understand the largeness of the heart of God, and His wide purpose of blessing.

Grace lingered also over Jerusalem, until the marked rejection of the Jews, in the death of Stephen, and the great persecution scattered them abroad. And they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And what was the result of the glad tidings? There was great joy in that city. Why is it not so now? What is supposed to be the gospel is preached year after year, and what is the result? Years of doubt and utter uncertainty, or worldliness and indifference. Can it possibly be the same clear sound of complete liberty and deliverance proclaimed to every prisoner, captive, or slave, on earth—to every creature?

If we examine the proclamation to the eunuch it is just the same: Philip preached Jesus unto him. He heard, believed, was baptised, "*and he went on his way rejoicing.*" How simple, sure, and immediate the effect of hearing the joyful sound. Is it so with the reader? Have you heard, believed, been baptised, and are you going on your way REJOICING? If not, you may be utterly deceived by that which is not the true, loud sound of God's jubilee.

We will now take a very distinct case. The apostle Paul, sent forth by the Holy Ghost, arrived at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii.); he proclaims the death and resurrection of the Lord

Jesus. That atoning death, as we have seen, is the only ground of the jubilee's loud sound of liberty. God having raised up Jesus from among the dead, the silver trumpet sounds the jubilee first in the synagogue of the Jews: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached [or proclaimed] unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." What a proclamation, what a joyful sound! And is this the true gospel of God? As liberty to every slave was proclaimed on the day of atonement, ever pointing forward to the atoning death of Jesus, so now that this infinite sacrifice for sins has been offered, and God has shewn His righteousness in raising up that blessed, atoning victim from the dead, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to every creature on earth. And mark the joyful result, on the authority of the word of God, ALL that believe are justified from all things. This is what God proclaims, this is what God says to you. Do you believe Him? If you do, He says He justifies you, He accounts you righteous in His sight through the death of Jesus; yea, He assures you of this by raising your Substitute and Representative from the dead and receiving Him above all heavens. And more: God assures us we could not be thus justified, even by the law of Moses.

Mark how this answers to the proclamation on the day of atonement—the jubilee. The poor prisoner, or slave, had not one shekel to pay, not one thing to do. God proclaimed liberty by the sound of trumpet. The sinner has not one thing to do for salvation. Forgiveness is freely proclaimed to him, just as he is: if he believes the proclamation he is justified from all things, and God would have him know this. He says, “Be it known to you.”

It may be said, Yes, this was the gospel to the religious Jews in the synagogue; but you would surely not say that this is the gospel to the sinner, sunk in sin and captivity to Satan. Yes, almost the whole city of the poor Gentile worshippers of demons came together to hear the very same joyful sound of forgiveness. “And when the Gentiles heard this, *they were glad*, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. . . . And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.” Surely the jubilee was a most striking type of all this.

Again, see how Paul preached or proclaimed the glad tidings at Thessalonica. Not one thing had these Jews or Gentiles to do; but they believed what Jesus had done, and suffered, and that He had risen again from the dead. (Acts xvii. 1–4.) Men no doubt will say, Such a jubilee gospel as that would lead men to walk

in sin. Many believed this gospel at Thessalonica: did they walk in sin? Read 1 Thessalonians i. for the answer. They so walked, and laboured, and waited for the Son from heaven, that Paul could give thanks for them all. He says, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, WITH JOY of the Holy Ghost." No, the true gospel is a jubilee, a joyful sound. And God would have us know that joyful sound. It is most sad to think that even England pays its priests who deny all this; they would tell you that you never can know the joyful sound of sins forgiven, and justification from all things; you must seek this blessing at their hands by law-keeping and sacraments. But never is it with them, "Be it known unto you."

Which will you believe, God or the pretended priest? We say 'pretended,' for God has no priests now, except as all true Christians are priests unto Him. God says, I proclaim unto you, unto every creature, through Jesus, forgiveness of sins. What love, what mercy! God says, All who believe *are* justified. The priest says, as it were, You must not believe God. God says, Be it known. The priest says, No man knows. God says to the believer, You are justified from all things. The priest says, No, you are not. You cannot be justified by works of law, says God. You must be justified

by works, says man. Oh let God be true, and every man a liar.

Do you say, This is so different from all I have been taught from my youth; do shew me from the word of God what would be the effect of believing this joyful sound of free forgiveness and deliverance, of liberty as in the year of jubilee? Very good, my friend, then let us now look a little more closely at Psalm lxxxix. 15. We have seen how God says, "Be it known." Here we read, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound [the same word, *troo-gāh*, jubilee]: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

Is there any uncertainty here? They know the joyful sound, they know their sins are all forgiven to be remembered no more. They know they are now in the liberty of Christ, justified from all things. They know they have passed from death unto life—Jesus says so. (John v. 24.) Is this to walk in darkness, to walk in doubt, to walk in sin? No: "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." And surely this will give untold joy; yes, "in thy name shall they rejoice all the day." They joy in God.

And now in the light they see how guilty they have been. What was gain to them, they count loss; all of self is dung. They utterly renounce all pretensions to righteousness of their own;

but they say, "And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." They need not their old rags, for now they are clothed in the best robe. They know their own utter weakness. If they were tried again they would fail, for they have in themselves no strength. They lean on God and say, "For thou art the glory of their strength." Yes, there must be the hopper in the field before the reaper; seed sown before fruit gathered. We must know in our inmost souls the joyful sound of God's glad tidings, before there can be the fruit of a walk in the light of His countenance.

As we have said, the jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, has passed away, never to return. And oh how soon *the present* jubilee of abounding grace may pass away, never to return. Before you lay this down, yea, before it is in print what a change may have taken place.

It is quite true that all this, as to the present period of grace, is in anticipation of another final fulfilment of the type of the jubilee. What is true now of an individual will then be true of the whole nation of Israel; but these are very distinct in scripture. We may trace both how this period of grace will close, and also how, after the day of vengeance, the trumpet shall sound to God's ancient people the Jews, and also how the whole earth shall be filled with gladness.

Reader, beware of delaying to hear the joyful

sound. The atonement has met the claims of the righteousness of God. Now, in His infinite love, He delights to proclaim liberty and forgiveness to every slave and prisoner of sin on earth, through Jesus who died and rose again. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)



SUPPOSED DIFFICULTIES:

PROOFS OF INSPIRATION; THE FORTY DAYS AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

T. G., Florence. In your letter you say: "In Matthew xxviii. and Mark xvi. 7, the angel says, 'He goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him.' In Matthew xxviii. 10 the Lord says, 'They go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.' But in Luke xxiv. 49 the Lord says, 'But tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued,' &c. Also in Matthew xxviii. 9 we read 'and held him by the feet;' but in John xx. 17 the Lord says, 'Touch me not.' And apparently these two are the same occasion."

That which at first sight may appear a contradiction, contains the clearest proof of divine inspiration. You will find each of the

writers gives the history of the events after the resurrection, not according to memory, but in keeping with the aspect of our Lord's history on this earth which each gives. Let us notice them. Matthew keeps to that which concerns Christ's Messiahship—the rejected king of Israel, owned only by the remnant. Consequently he omits here every word that refers to the church. The order is therefore: verse 1, the end of the Sabbath, our Saturday night. Verses 2–10, what took place in the morning of the Lord's day. The company of women receive the message of the angel; but not a word about the Holy Ghost, and the intended work at Jerusalem. He is rejected of the Jews, and will meet the remnant in Galilee. They are to announce His resurrection. *Jesus meets them, and as their message is concerning Galilee, there is not that haste, but they may hold Him by the feet and worship Him.* In “touch me not” we shall find it altogether different.

Then verses 11–15 relate to the Jews, and are entirely omitted by the other Gospels. Then verses 16 to end, the remnant meet Him in the former scenes of His labours with them. And these verses throw great light on the millennial kingdom, and the gospel which will then be preached to all nations. As to the church, or special character of the present grace of God, the ascension of Christ, or the work at Jerusalem,

or the return of Jesus, not a word. How much Matthew must have remembered. But we are deeply convinced he only wrote the words the Holy Ghost gave him to write.

Mark also says very little. Verse 1 is also separated from verse 2. Verses 2-8 describe what took place early in the morning of the first day of the week. But such tenderness, in keeping with His servant character: "the stone was rolled away;" and "tell his disciples *and Peter*." In verse 9 to end, new facts are recorded; but up to that verse it is Galilee that is named, as in Matthew. The fact is just mentioned that He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to two, then to the eleven; their unbelief; and the commission to preach the good tidings of His resurrection; and His ascension also is named. Just a short outline; but no contradiction to Matthew.

In Luke we seldom get the *historic* order of events, but their moral order or connection. Jesus is here the Son of man, as in Matthew He is the righteous Jew, or Messiah. Perhaps we might say Matthew is the Jewish Gospel, and Luke the Gentile, or to man. Verse 1 begins with the events of the early morn. There are again fresh interesting particulars which you may trace out, and enjoy, as verses 6 and 7. Also we are told who these women were. (Ver. 10.) One verse only as to the two disciples

who ran to the sepulchre. (Ver. 12.) The wonderful interview with Mary is entirely omitted. Verses 13-36, the most instructive narrative of the two disciples at Emmaus. It is the fullest account of any event, describing as it does the three states of soul during this dispensation: the sad hearts, the burning hearts, and hearts in communion—marvellous *church* lessons. Then verses 36-43, the pattern of the assembly—Jesus in the midst. Oh hear Him! All this has to do with the setting up of the church, first at Jerusalem. To that place they returned from Emmaus. Then verses 44-48, the great present commission, totally distinct from the remnant commission in Matthew. Here the Holy Ghost is wholly occupied with the setting up of the church at Jerusalem. Not a word about Galilee. And as the Holy Ghost would set it up at Jerusalem, they must wait in the city of Jerusalem until they “be endued with power from on high.” All this in strict keeping with the fact, that Luke was the vessel the Spirit had chosen to go on and describe the formation and early history of the church, as formed by the Holy Ghost. Thus, instead of going to Galilee, Luke closes here with Jesus being parted from them and carried up into heaven.

In Acts i. he takes up the history as given to him to narrate. In verse 3 we learn that Jesus was seen forty days, but, as usual, he does

not give the order, he does not say when in Jerusalem and when in Galilee. The Holy Ghost does not give him a word to say about Galilee, though he must well have remembered the events of Galilee. Verse 4, he does not say whether this was after they had seen Him in Galilee; but verse 6 may describe the coming together from Galilee, and what took place from that moment until He was taken up. They must have returned to Jerusalem. Indeed, in speaking to them He plainly impresses them with the fact, that grace must begin and triumph in the city of His murderers. Only bear in mind that the Holy Ghost uses Luke to bring the great moral facts before us. He then goes on to describe the formation of the assembly of God on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, and subsequently from the Gentiles at Antioch.

Hitherto we have certainly no contradiction, but each writer states only that which he is inspired to write, and certainly not all which he could remember.

In 1 Corinthians xv. we learn He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, then of about five hundred brethren at once, and lastly of Paul.

We now turn to the Gospel of John. The inspired account of John demands our utmost attention. Given by the Holy Ghost so many years after the rest, and when the Jews had utterly rejected Christ, and also after the church had so signally

failed, how much that is new, both at the supper and after the resurrection! In John, Mary Magdalene has a very special place. She is singled out in verse 1, and in verse 2 "she runneth." Afterward she remained at the sepulchre when the two disciples went home. In verse 16 Jesus speaks to her: "Mary." He appeared first to her. (Mark xvi. 9.) When He met the women (Matthew xxviii. 9), when they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him, it was then only a question of going to tell His brethren that He was risen and would meet them in Galilee, but there need be no haste as to that.

But it was altogether (here in John) another matter. It was not through His mother He chose to announce the wondrous news, but by Mary Magdalene. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; BUT GO to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." This was not, I go to Galilee, but a present fact, the result of His death and resurrection. It was the new creation, new relationship. He was the first-born from the dead. They were one now for ever with Himself. How His heart longed for them to know it. Touch me not; go and tell them they stand in the same relationship to my Father and God as I stand in to Him. Haste to tell them—there was no need for the women with the other

message to haste, they might for the moment take Him by the feet and worship Him.

And think of His joy that evening when He appeared in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you. This was not Galilee, but peace made by the death of the cross—present and eternal. For proof, He shewed them His hands and His side. And in still further contrast to Galilee, He said, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you;" and He breathes on them the Holy Ghost, that they might make known the peace and forgiveness of sins to others that He had made known unto them. All this is beyond what we get in Matthew, and unspeakably precious. The end of chapter xx. closes the Gospel of John. Then follows a supplementary *chapter after these things*—and here the scene is Galilee! It is a figure of the millennial morn, quite in keeping with all we have had in Matthew and Mark, and is Jewish: Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, is the chief person. He it was that fed the sheep and lambs of the Jewish fold. This is added, as the ministry of John has its place when Peter's had ceased to the Jews. Thus all is in inspired harmony. To our God be all praise.

C. S.



CORRESPONDENCE.

18. L. B. R., London. "The present truth" (2 Peter i. 12) is the truth as then revealed, and for the whole period of Christianity. Peter had no expectation of apostolic succession, or of what men call *development*. He therefore wrote, "that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." (Ver. 15.) Surely this very epistle contains both the truth that preserves, as in this chapter, and also is full of warnings and descriptions of the last times, which then even had begun.

The other verse you refer to, 2 Timothy iii. 16, is of the same character. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished [or perfected] unto all good works." All scripture, the inspired word of God, is sufficient for the complete instruction of the man of God in righteousness. Righteousness here is consistency of state and walk, in contrast with instruction in wickedness, of all who do not regard the scriptures as all-sufficient. The man of God will be the man who receives the scriptures as of God. Such an one is always in contrast with the man of tradition and development. Yes, even the law of Moses which kills is profitable. It is well for the old man to be killed, that Christ may be all. By it we learn our utter powerlessness.

19. W. K., Leeds. "How may I know that I am called to preach the gospel?" I now send

you again an assortment of tracts. In answer to your inquiry, How are you to know if you are called to preach the gospel? I would say, Is it real love to souls? Do you desire to earn your own bread, and serve the Lord in the gospel? If you are sent of the Lord you will win souls. Jesus said to Peter, the fisherman, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." What a fisher of men he was in Acts ii. Yes, a fisherman is a man who catches fish. A *sent* preacher of the gospel is a man who catches men; who wins souls to Christ. Now I send you a parcel of tracts, these are baits for lost souls. A good fisherman would not throw his baits into the water, and think no more about them; he would try to use each bait to catch a fish. Do not throw these tracts into the sea of humanity, and think no more about them, but seek to use each tract to catch a soul.

If you catch souls, you are a fisher of men. Do you see that man with rod and *basket*, you will find he goes where he hopes to catch the fish. There is a likely place for a trout; see how carefully he puts in the bait in the water. See, he has got a nibble; does he say that is enough, and leave it? No, how carefully he seeks to land his fish. Ah, the fishers of fish are wise in their work. We might learn a lesson from them. You might find a quiet suitable place to try these baits for precious souls. I will tell you a quiet fishing-place. The cemetery. You need the wisdom of God which bait to use. It may be that little fly-leaf "Your dying hour," or "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or for some fish a larger tract.

Watch the effect of each bait. Is there a nibble,

is there manifest interest? Now you need the wisdom of God to deal with that soul; such wisdom as He gives to those He sends. Then it is a mistake to suppose the fish will come to a room always, or a chapel. Oh, go and sow beside all waters. God may use in divine sovereignty the broad-cast sowing.

And He may use the gospel net in the open air, or in the preaching-room; but there is a field of labour, and especially in the use of tracts, that has been little tried. From house to house; in the street, or lane, or court, or village; and in not throwing a lot of tracts, as it were, away, like fisherman's bait, in the water, but in seeking to use each one as a bait, or an introduction, to one individual soul. If you will tell me how many souls you have won to Christ by this parcel of tracts, I shall then know pretty clearly if the Lord has sent you to catch men.

20. E. B. H., Ottawa. "Will every Christian receive a crown of righteousness? If not, who will?" (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

1 Corinthians iii. shews this will not be the case, whilst through grace every believer will be for ever with the Lord. But as to reward, it is,

If any man's work abide . . . he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire." The crown of righteousness is this mark of approval, of reward, that the *righteous* Judge would give to Paul. He had walked and served consistently with the heavenly truth he preached. However he might be misjudged and forsaken by his brethren, the righteous judge would make no mistake; and not only as to him, but to all who love His *appearing*. How

many would draw away the true consistent child of God in this day. Jesus says, "I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. iii. 11.)

How few hold fast the heavenly position of the believer, waiting for Him from heaven. The righteous Judge will only give this crown of righteousness to those who are walking practically in righteousness, that is consistently with the truth they hold. To all such, and to none others, will He give this mark of approval; perhaps the greatest test as to who they are, to you and to me, is this, do we love His appearing; do we long for His manifestation in glory? when all we are doing shall be made manifest? Have we Enoch's testimony that we please God? If so, the righteous judge will give us the crown of righteousness.

It is the subject of faithful service in this chapter, and hence the crown of righteousness is the mark of reward. When it is the grace of God, all are crowned: "Clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold." Crowned with divine righteousness—made kings and priests unto God and His Father. This is His work, not our reward. Brought to God, sitting on thrones, crowned and clothed. We must not confound this with the mark of approval that each will have according to his faithfulness down here. The Lord use these thoughts to make us more watchful and dependent.

THE NEW BIRTH
AND
THE SERPENT OF BRASS.

JOHN III. 1-18.

No. II.

WHAT, then, is regeneration? What is that wholly new birth? What is it to be born of God? What does the Holy Spirit use in sovereignty to effect this new birth? That new birth is a new creation. Not a remodelling of old materials. Such is not a Christian. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God," &c. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.) This is what characterises the new birth, or new creation. As to the old nature, the sin in the flesh—dead with Christ; as to the new life—risen with Christ. (See Col. ii. 20; iii. 1.)

The picture of this regeneration is truly baptism. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. ii. 12, 13.) Now, buried in water is not LIFE, but *death*, as in another place.

Read carefully Romans vi. 1-16. "Baptised into his death." (Ver. 3.) "We are buried with him by baptism unto death." (Ver. 4.) "Planted together in the likeness of his death." (Ver. 5.) The old man is not changed, or improved, but we are crucified with him. (Ver. 6.) Nay, every verse teaches death with Him. Is the old man, or our sinful nature, actually dead? No! But we are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Ver. 11.)

Thus the first part here of the new birth is death to our sinful nature, and the second life new to us in the risen Christ. Thus, baptism is a striking type of this doctrine of the new birth. You take a believer, and bury him in the likeness of the death of Christ. It is not the improvement of the old man, our sinful nature, but the entire setting of him aside in death; the death, not of the old nature, but of Christ: dead with Him. But where then is the new life for us when reckoned dead? Wholly in the risen Christ. And this could never be until He was risen from the dead. And this is by the operation of God who raised Him from the dead. Yes, the new birth, or new creation, is "according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," &c. (Eph. i. 19, 20.) It is God that hath quickened us together with Christ. (Eph. ii.

4-10.) This new birth, or new creation, is God's workmanship. (Ver. 10.) How simple all this is when we take the word of God.

Peter gives the same testimony. It is by the resurrection that we are brought into the new creation, or new birth. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," &c. (1 Pet. i. 3.) It is not then by the water of baptism, but by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that we are born of God. It may be said, But does not Peter himself contradict this? Does he not say we are saved by water, or baptism? No, he says, "The like FIGURE whereunto baptism doth also now save us." But what is the reality, if baptism is the like figure? Peter says, "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Yes, Jesus the grain of wheat must die before He could bring forth the blessed fruit of eternal life in a new creation. (See John xii. 24.)

If we also turn to Peter's preaching at Pentecost, we find it was only those who received the word that were baptised. And if we compare this with the words of Jesus, it is clear that they had passed from death unto life, or were regenerated *before* they were baptised. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, and believeth on him that

sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE." He never said, He that is baptised is passed from death unto life. It is hearing the word, and believing God: then baptism as a sign of it.

We will take another instance of Peter's preaching (Acts x.): Cornelius and his company. They heard the word, they believed God. They were born again, for the Holy Ghost fell upon them; they had passed from death unto life, and were sealed by the Spirit. Was this by baptism? How could it be, for it was before they were baptised?

Further, is there a single instance of one person—the eunuch, the jailer, Lydia, or any company, being baptised before they heard the word, and believed God? Not one. And Jesus assures us that all who hear His word, and believe God that sent Him, have eternal life, and are passed from death unto life. Then we have the unanswerable proof, that every believer was regenerate before he was baptised; hence the extreme folly of that most destructive delusion, baptismal regeneration.

That water is used as a figure of the word, is also clear. In this sense, how beautiful the figure of Jesus washing His disciples' feet: not with blood there, but water. (John xiii.) And again, "Christ also loved the church, and gave

himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water BY THE WORD," &c. (Eph. v. 25-27.)

Thus false tradition always contradicts scripture. James says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (James i. 18.) Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) John is largely occupied in his first epistle with the eternal life we have in Christ. But not one thought that this is by baptism. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God," &c. "Beloved, now are we the children of God," &c. (John iii. 1, 2.)

He that practiseth sin is of the devil. Millions that are baptised practise sin. Therefore millions who are baptised are not born of God, but are the children of the devil. For "whosoever is born of God doth not practise sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin [or practise sin], because he is born of God." "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

Thus if we look to the inspired words of Paul,

regeneration is, being dead with Christ, and risen with Him. To James and Peter, it is by the word of God: especially as with Paul, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This life is seen to be eternal, and in the Son of God, in John. Nothing avails but a new creation. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Such is regeneration. Not I, but Christ. The old I, reckoned dead and set aside. And as born of God, Christ is all.

A very serious question now arises. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Does not that imply that the two natures remain distinct? That the flesh is not changed? That though we are reckoned dead with Christ, and are risen with Christ, and have the divine nature as born of God—a nature that cannot sin, or practise sin—are born of God, and have the holy nature of God; are passed from death unto life—seed that can never die; have life eternal in the Son—yet is there still that old evil sinful nature called the flesh? Is it still in the believer? That which is born of the flesh, is it not, as Jesus says, flesh?

How many believers are utterly perplexed because they find it really is as Jesus says? They are born of God, for Jesus says again, that hearing His word and believing God that sent

Him, they are born of God ; or His words are, "they are passed from death unto life," which is regeneration. But they find an evil nature the very plague of their lives. They find lust, or the desire to do the things they, as born of God, utterly abhor. They are a complete enigma. If they do not, through unwatchfulness, fall into sins, they find the old nature to be far more vile than ever they felt it to be when in it, dead in trespasses and sins.

The truth is, many a believer, who thought that the new birth meant the change, instantaneous or gradual, of the sinful nature, looks at himself, and sees his evil lusts. And here Satan is mostly ready to lend a helping hand. Yes, the believer looks at himself, as a child of Adam, and he sees nothing but an evil nature, ever ready to break out in the most shameful sins. "Oh, my friend," says Satan, "is that what you call the new birth? Depend on it, you are no child of God." No words of mine can describe the misery of a soul when the full light shews him the old poison of that evil nature, the flesh still in him. He says truly enough, All that is not fit for heaven, nor fit for the holy eye of God.

In most cases he, now at this stage, turns away from Christ to the law, and seeks the remedy in an earnest effort, and desire, to keep the law. He now takes the law of God, just and holy, as a rule by which to improve the flesh.

What does he find? Let Romans vii. answer. He forgets that the effect of the law on them, the Jews, who were once under it, was this: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." He forgets also that as a believer, he is delivered from the law, being dead to it. But what he finds is this, instead of the law helping him, it only brings out sin. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence (or lust)." The only effect of law is thus shewn to bring out the exceeding hatefulness of sin. If we look at our old sinful self under law, what is it? "I am carnal, sold under sin." "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." This is no trifle; it is a most alarming discovery when hoping that by keeping the law, this evil nature will be so improved, that ultimately I shall be fit for heaven, to find as a fixed principle as to that which is born of the flesh, that it is "sin that dwelleth in me;" and to have to say, with deep distress of soul, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

We might fain say, Surely that is only true of an unconverted man. Nay, it is one who can truly say, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." He must have the inward

man or new birth before he can delight in the law of God. Yet this very man says, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Have you ever said with this man, thus described, I have found that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh"? Have you ever groaned out, "O, wretched man that I am [the old sinful self], who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

What does all this lead to? "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." How can this be? What, and how is this deliverance?

We will now return to John iii. He who knew man's utterly lost condition in sin, said there must be an entirely, wholly new birth, or new creation. If for the earthly kingdom, surely how much more is it needed when speaking of heaven and heavenly things! No one knew the holiness of heaven as He knew it. We have been looking at the awful poison of sin—the vile character of our fallen evil nature sin, the source of all lust. We have seen that he who is born of God, and delights after the inner man (that which is born of God) in the law of God, delights to do the will of God; yet he finds another nature, another law of sin, working in his members; and if he gets from Christ to law, the result is terrible, as a matter of experience.

Which of us, as we have gone on in the journey, have not found this terrible poison of sin? What wretchedness it has caused! How ready to despair is many a soul, thus perplexed and harassed by evil lusts, the very virus of the old serpent! Plainly we want special instruction as to this very thing. Now as to this matter, as if it was not enough to have told out to Nicodemus the truth, entirely new to him, and as new now to many, of the new birth, the Lord now says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

For what purpose was the serpent lifted up? If we turn to Numbers xxi., we find that the serpent was not lifted up in Egypt. It was not the redemption aspect of the death of Christ set forth; neither was it at the beginning of their journey. It was not at the Red Sea. It was not on the day of atonement, when the blood was sprinkled before God, and when all the *sins* of the people were laid on the head of the goat. It was not that at all. It did not typify the substitution of Christ, bearing our *sins*. It was a good way on the journey. *It was to meet the poison of the fiery serpents.* The people were bitten, the poison was in them, the virus of the deadly serpent, which brought forth death.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it

shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole : and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Thus the serpent of brass, a serpent in *likeness* of the fiery serpent, was lifted up, that they might not die from the deadly poison. Mark, it was the likeness of the fiery serpent lifted up, for one specific purpose—to meet the condition of the bitten, poisoned Israelites.

Could there be a more striking figure ? The believer finds, it may be, when far on his journey, that sin, the poison of the serpent, is in him ; and, as we have seen, all attempts to remedy this by the law, only aggravates the case. It does not cure or improve him in the least ; it only brings out the awful workings of lust. He tries to improve his sinful nature, sin in the flesh, by what he calls holiness by faith. The excitement lasts for a little time. Still the poison is there, the plague of his heart, and do what he will, he finds the truth of the words of Jesus. Though born of the Spirit, and delighting in that nature, born of God, to do the will of God, yet he finds "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." Yes, and though the Spirit dwells in him, he finds this sinful nature, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and

these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye may not do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.) Have you not, reader, found it so? Have you not found two distinct natures in you? The very nature of God, as born of God, and the very poison of sin, as born of the flesh? Yes, and more, that sinful poison lusts against the Spirit dwelling in you. If a Christian, you have found it really so.

Do not confuse this with the commission of sins, or transgressions. It is your old sinful, poisoned nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." If this were eradicated, christian parents could not transmit it to their children. But it is transmitted, they are born of the flesh. It is not what we have done, but that evil nature that desires to do evil.

Well, in the type, the likeness of a fiery serpent was lifted up, the object of faith. If a man, though he had deadly poison in him, looked at the serpent on the pole, *he lived*. Jesus says, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "*For God so loved.*" Yes, if the love of God has been displayed in the eternal redemption we have through the death of Christ, and in the death of Christ bearing our sins, surely no less has that love been shewn in the way He has met the whole question of sin—the poison of our fallen nature.

How has God in love met the question of the poison of sin, which the law could not reach? "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, GOD, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or a sacrifice for sin], condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.)

Mark, this is of God. This is how God has met the, to us, insurmountable difficulty, of sin, poison, in the flesh. Just as Moses put the *likeness* of the serpent that poisoned the bitten ones, so God pointed to the gift of His Son to be lifted up in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, that by a sacrifice for SIN, the very root or poison of sin might be judged, condemned in the flesh. We look at Him not only bearing our sins in His body on the tree, but in the likeness of sinful flesh dealt with for our sin, the nature—that which is born of the flesh. This is evidently the meaning of, or aspect of the brazen serpent—Christ the Son of man lifted up for our sin. As it is also said, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." This is important. Though in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet He personally was sinless. Yet He was dealt with as the sin offering for this very purpose, "That we might be made [or become] the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. x. 21.) Oh, the righteousness of God.

Yes, God so loved, as to thus deal with the

whole question of our old sinful nature. No wonder that the enemy should ever seek to get us from God's way—the way He has judged our sin and dealt with it, in the Son of man lifted up. What the law could not do, God has done, in the brazen serpent aspect of His Son. Here is the answer to, and deliverance from, the deepest wretchedness the poor heart can ever endure here. Yes, God is the deliverer. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Have you ever thanked God for meeting the desperate case of sin in your flesh, bringing you into captivity to its law, or power? Have you clearly understood that that deliverance is through Jesus Christ being lifted up in the likeness of sinful flesh; bearing the judgment due to sin, and all its evil desires, so that instead of perishing, through this dreadful virus, poison, sin, you have eternal life; and all this in absolute righteousness?

Now this being the case, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. What! does not God reckon that evil nature sin to me? and if He does, must He not condemn me? If He does reckon it, He must condemn me. But hold, in righteousness He cannot reckon the sin to me. How so? Because He has reckoned it to His Son lifted up, as the serpent was lifted up on the pole.

It is then in this way. As born of God, the believer is holy, and fit for heaven, but he has

an old sinful nature that is not fit for the holy presence of God. His sins have been borne by Jesus, and are forgiven. God has sent His Son to be lifted up in the likeness of sinful flesh. The believer's sin is fully judged in Him who knew no sin. All this is reckoned to the believer, dead with Christ, risen with Him, brought into favour in Him. Nothing, no nothing, is left to condemn. What, not my sinful old self left to condemn? No, all is condemned and swept away as to that, in the death of Christ. And I have life in the risen Christ beyond all this. Yes, and that is eternal life. But, you say, I have still that sinful nature. Yes, but it has been judged in the Son of man, sinless Himself, taking the place, lifted up in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. Thank God, all is of God! There is no condemnation. All is condemned that is unsuitable to God. Then I am now in perfect peace with God.

How then am I to walk in holiness? How am I to follow holiness? How am I to be superior to that power or law of sin in my members?

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) And that because sin has been judged in the Person of the Son of man lifted up. I have now a law or power in the risen Christ, a life by the Spirit, which is infinitely superior to my old sinful nature. So

much so, that we are to reckon the old man dead. Hence we read, "I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Every precept shews the flesh is there and lusts, but the divine remedy is, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 16, 17.)

Now, since this is the way God has shewn His love to us, in meeting the whole question of our old nature, it is evident the Spirit will not lead us from God's remedy and deliverance to the law, which only made our case worse; neither can it possibly be of the Spirit to persuade us to ignore this way of God in dealing with the flesh, and seek to make it holy by faith, or any other means. Satan well knows that no way but God's way avails for the flesh. We beg the reader to study the scriptures on this most important subject. In no other way can we overcome the flesh, than by reckoning it dead with Christ, crucified with Him; and now all power is by the Spirit in Christ risen from the dead for a holy walk.

How beautiful and important the connection between the new birth and the serpent of brass.

C. S.



“THE JOYFUL SOUND ;”

WHEN AND HOW WILL IT CEASE ?

III.

WE now come to the close of the present period of the joyful sound. Fellow Christians, when will it close, and how will it close to you ? And how will it close to the professing, but rejecting world around ?

Are these questions answered in the scriptures ? They are. Shall we all, as to this body, have to die first ? No. The apostle says, as to that, “Behold, I shew you a mystery : we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” This present period of gospel sound will close then in a moment. (1 Cor. xv.) “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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 Thess. iv. 15-17.)

For all believers this is how, and when, this present jubilee of joyful sound to every creature

shall come to a sudden close. Then shall the true church of God be presented glorious to Christ. Yes, our Lord said, "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.) Oh, what joy to thee, what joy to us, will be the moment of the close of this jubilee of grace. Dwell on it, oh my soul.

But how shall it close with the rejecters of this jubilee glad sound? "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," &c. (2 Thess. i. 7-9.)

It is still the acceptable year, but the day of vengeance must come. And oh, how sudden, how unexpected! Even as sudden as the flood in the days of Noah, and the fire that fell on Sodom in the days of Lot. In that day of vengeance so near, there shall be tribulation such as never was, and never shall be again. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and

they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth, shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Matt. xxiv.; Rev. i. 7.)

Thus shall close this day of grace to the rejecters of the joyful sound. He shall come, and before Him shall the nations be gathered, to the judgment of the living. One of three things must occur to every one of us. Be caught up to meet the Lord, our Lord; be alive on earth as a rejecter of His grace and mercy, to meet Him when He comes to judge the quick; or die, and if unsaved, be raised to be judged before the great white throne at the judgment of the dead, only to be cast into the lake of fire, to be tormented day and night for ever.

Is there no hope then hereafter to such as have heard and rejected the joyful sound of forgiveness? None; “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) What a solemn moment this is.

We have dwelt chiefly on the joyful sound, the glad tidings of God to every creature, during

this present period of grace to the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus came to His own nation, but they received Him not. Through unbelief they have been set aside. "Because of unbelief they were broken off." The judicial blindness of Israel is not to continue for ever. This is fully explained in Romans xi. Every prophecy concerning God's ancient people must yet be fulfilled. The day shall come when, as it is written, all Israel shall be saved. Having forfeited all claim to the covenant through ages of unbelief, God will take them up in mercy—objects of mercy, as He has had mercy on us Gentiles. Oh, the riches of His grace.

We will now briefly look at this subject, as it regards Israel. We must remember Old Testament Scriptures are applied to us in anticipation, yet they refer primarily to Israel. What is Isaiah liii. but the discovery of Israel, when God shall awake and restore the captive daughter of Zion? As they look at the wounds in His hands, they discover that He was wounded for their transgressions. They will see in Him, and in His death on the cross, the fulfilment of all their offerings for atonement. What a manifestation of God this will be to them, as it also is to every soul, now brought to God. Thus, on the ground of the atonement, the jubilee will have its fulfilment to them, though crushed and oppressed as they have been, and will be still more, during the

three years and a half of their tribulation, such as never was and never shall be again. The day of atonement shall then be understood, the year of their release will have come; the loud sound of liberty will echo through the world for them. The scriptures also abound with evidence that the day of vengeance shall be on their enemies in the year of their jubilee.

In our chapter, Isaiah lxi., there is then, first, the proclamation of jubilee to them, to Israel; then the day of vengeance; and then to the end of the chapter, their millennial blessing on earth. Every word also in chapter lx., is about this great future blessing on Israel, also chapter lxii. To Jerusalem God says, “Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” In chapter lxiii. we see the day of vengeance on their enemies; but the day of salvation to them. “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” Again, what a description of this day of vengeance is in the last chapter of Isaiah, in close connection with the blessing of Israel.

In Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., the chief oppression of Israel is by the Russian empire, and the nations confederate with it; they come as a cloud to cover the land. Their terrible overthrow is described, and the months it will take to bury them in the day of the vengeance of God. “There-

fore, thus saith the Lord God, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel," &c. We have a full account of how God will bless them when He thus has mercy upon them, in Ezekiel xxxvi. 23-38. This can only mean Israel, as it says.

There is the same testimony in Joel. When God brings again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, He will gather all nations, and judge them for their treatment of His heritage Israel. He will then be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Then follows the grand jubilee of Israel. "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem." (Zeph. iii. 8-20.) Yea, this is greatly the theme of the Psalms and all the prophets, and will surely come to pass. If we understand this, then the judgment of the living nations for their treatment of Israel will be quite clear in Matthew xxv.

How remarkable that the future jubilee of Israel is so little understood. Yet Isaiah lxi., and indeed all the prophets, distinctly foretell

both the deliverance of those captives, the opening of their prison doors, and their restoration to their own land.

He who made atonement for sins, is the anointed One, whether to announce the heavenly joyful sound now to us, or the earthly glad tidings to Israel in the day of Jacob's restoration to his land.

At present Israel is cut off through unbelief. And through their unbelief we Gentiles are having in anticipation a more blessed jubilee than they will have. God is now taking out the heavenly bride of the Lamb. This may close at any moment, by the church being caught up to meet the Lord.

Then will follow the day of vengeance on all who have heard and rejected the joyful sound.

For a short period the Jews will pass through the great tribulation. Then comes the day of vengeance on their enemies and persecutors. At the same time they are restored to their own land, to enjoy their millennium of rest. Then shall be fulfilled that word of the Lord, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Read Is. xi.)

What an interval of infinite grace to us, since the day that Jesus presented Himself as the fulfilment of the jubilee! And still the long

suffering of God lingers, not willing that any should perish. But the end will come; the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord. The day of vengeance will come. Ah reader, in that coming moment you must, if still alive here, either be taken, changed in a moment, and be with and like the Lord; or you will be left to the day of vengeance as a rejecter of the love of God in the gift of His Son. Will you continue to despise His atoning death? Will you still reject the glad loud sound of liberty?

May God open your ear to hear the joyful sound before it is for ever too late. The atoning work is done; God proclaims to you through Jesus the forgiveness of sins. Blessed proclamation! God declares all who believe are justified from all things. Believing, you are free; and knowing the joyful sound, your happy privilege is to walk in the light of His countenance. And how soon to see His face!

C. S.



'Tis but a little while,
And Christ shall come again,
Who died that we might live; who lives,
And we with Him shall reign.
Thou hast, O Lord, prepared
My soul for that glad day;
Hast wash'd me in Thy precious blood,
And clear'd my sins away.