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BELIEVER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

IS THE SIN OF A BELIEVER EXCUSABLE?

THE question at the head of this paper may be in itself a mild shock to some who read it. The thoughts and propensities of the natural heart, when formulated into words, often do strike one strangely. When Hazael came to Elisha to inquire as to the result of his master, the king of Syria's illness, the prophet's reply unveiled the sinister designs of the courtier. He *may* recover, said the man of God (for the king was not sick unto death); but, he added, he *shall* die. And Hazael's countenance, after a struggle, fell for very shame, as the murder in his heart was thus translated into words for him. And when the weeping prophet went on to tell him of the terrible cruelties he would commit upon the people of Israel, he exclaimed with indignation: "What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" (2 Kings viii. 9—15). But in spite of all his professed horror at even the thought of such things, as has been well said, "the dog went and did it." Like all the sons of Adam, he was deceived by his own heart.

And we fear that in a somewhat similar manner many believers are deceived. They may not of course break out into such atrocities as Hazael did, but they do fall into sin, which, however small, is sufficient to destroy communion with the Father and the Son. If they were confronted with the question, When you sin is it your own fault? they would at once acknowledge that they were to blame. And yet for all that there secretly works in the heart the thought that a little slip now and again does not matter a great deal, that just a little short step out of the path of precise obedience is not so very dreadful when the great temptations, the trying circumstances, the inherent weaknesses are all taken into consideration, and that, (oh, terrible thought! to make even this an excuse for sin), the Father is so ready to forgive. These are all subtle endeavours to find a suitable excuse for the toleration of the activity of sin in the Christian.

Beloved, such thoughts are all hatefully wrong, and utterly repugnant to God and His word. The Apostle Paul advances the idea in the Epistle to the Romans, only that he may tear it to shreds. "Shall we," he says, "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Rom. vi. 1). And he proceeds to shew that the entertainment of such a notion is a denial of the Christian's fundamental position. The believer is in no sort of bondage to sin whatever, seeing he has been delivered from sin's dominion by the death of Christ. And with this death every believer is associated. So that it is impossible for a Christian to plead legitimately

that the power of sin within him is such that he cannot avoid sinning. He is no longer in thralldom to an indwelling evil principle. Such a state of bondage has terminated for ever in the case of the believer.

But how is this condition of things brought about? By a severe course of mortification of the flesh, ending in complete self-conquest? This is by no means the teaching of Romans vi. Is it then by the eradication of the sinful will, so that a perfect state of sinlessness supervenes? No such instruction can be properly gathered from the chapter. On the contrary, we find it is not brought about by ourselves but by Another, and, moreover, it is not the result of a work within us, but of a work outside us altogether. We have therefore to accept, and the more simply we do so the better for us, the statement of God's word on the matter.

When the apostle contemplates the case of professed believers continuing in sin, he asks the question, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" How can death and life be equally true at the same time of the same person in relation to sin? It would be a contradiction of terms. So that a person living in sin is practically denying that he is dead to sin.

But if it be asked how we become dead to sin, the answer given by the apostle is that it is by association with the death of Christ. Christ died for our sins, but the truth here is that we died with Him. And he appeals to them on the ground of their common Christian knowledge to this effect:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.” Clearly death to sin is not the result of self-effort, but depends solely upon the death of Christ. And such is the means whereby every believer is delivered from slavery to sin. “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

From these scriptures it will be seen that death to sin is described as an accomplished fact. The reverse might be gathered from an examination of our own hearts. But as we had perforce to accept the testimony of God's word that Christ died for our sins, so we must by faith accept the same testimony that we died with Christ. Hence the exhortation to believe this truth that follows: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In this way only, because this alone is God's way, can we walk in “newness of life.”

Moreover, it is after such a manner that God would have us walk. Indifference to sin is opposed to every word of God; as is also any thought that sin is at any time a necessity or unavoidable. The fullest provision for a holy life has been made, only it is on the principle of faith, and is inseparable from Christ and His death. So that the glory even for our godly walk must be given to the name of the Son with Whom we died and in Whom we live.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

NOTICE now another thing. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." It is not liberty to be fearing and trembling before God. Liberty is to be happy with Him. When the Holy Ghost begins to shew me my sins, I have anything but liberty. I begin to be afraid of my sins; I do not know whatever to do with them. False liberty is taken away, and true liberty is not given. And that will always be the case until the perfect love of God is seen. Now, law will never teach me that. Suppose I command my child to love me and threaten him if he does not; will that make him love me? Why, it will make him tremble. That is what the law does. It cannot produce the love; it can but command. What is the effect? I cannot stand in its presence. When Moses had been up on the mount, his face shone. He had been with God. And when he came down with the two tables of the law, the children of Israel were afraid to come near him. He had to put a veil on his face, for the glory of his countenance. When in the presence of God's glory, they cannot bear to look on it. The only effect of the revelation of the glory of God is to drive me away as far as ever I can get from Him against Whom I have sinned. There is not a pleasure in the world that the presence of God would not blast in a moment. There is not a happiness of man, as man, that is not spoiled by the very mention of the name of God. Now think what a terrible state that is to be in.

The apostle calls this claim of God by the law, the "ministration of death and condemnation;" because it claims righteousness, and does not produce the thing it claims. Whenever a person is looking to his conduct for what he ought to be, he is under the ministry of death and condemnation. That is not the way to get Christ written on the heart.

Before we turn to look at Christ as He is now, let us look at what He was—God manifest in the flesh. In what state did He find men when He came? He found them "all under sin." And what does Job say of himself as being in this condition? "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his rod away, then would I speak; but it is not so with me." Now what do I find in Christ when He came? I find "a daysman"—the very thing that Job wanted. Was there fear in Christ? Was anyone afraid of Christ? If a sinner was ever so burdened he could go to Christ, and thus to God. Now here I find that though my sins hindered me from going to God, they could not hinder God from coming to me. You will never find a single case in which Christ did not receive the sinner with open arms. Never. Now, that is what you want. Christ did not say, Get righteousness and come up here, and I will have you. No; but He came down here to meet us here. That is an entirely new thing.

Christ came in this way to win our hearts thus. And therefore they reproached Him with receiving sinners, and eating with them. It is quite true, He replied, but is not a father glad to receive his lost son? Even so is it with my Father in heaven; and therefore am I come to seek and to save that which was lost. Now that is grace. But there is righteousness too. When the father fell on the neck of the prodigal, he was in his rags. He could not bring him into the house in his rags; it would dishonour the house. So His blessed love goes on—and Jesus gives Himself for the sins, which unfit me for the Father's house. I see that the very Lord, against Whom I sinned, has taken my sins and put them all away.

Extracted.

THE FIRST MAN AND THE SECOND.

THE reading of the Authorised Version in Luke ii. 14 has been amended as follows: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." (J. N. D.'s Version.) This appears more consistent with the general truth of scripture; for it is not so much the thought here of man's side as of God's.

God made man in His own image, and after His likeness, and for His glory. But alas! the tempter—that old serpent, the devil—entered Eden's garden, with the view of marring, if pos-

sible, God's glory in the creation of man. His apparent success only gave occasion for bringing out something infinitely better, and more for the divine glory. God had His own reserves upon which to fall back according to His counsels, which the saint of God is now privileged to know and enjoy, viz., the bringing to pass His divine purposes concerning His beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who in due time was manifested in this world, the Perfect Man, in Whom God would be glorified.

Hence it is that the angelic host declare glory to God in the highest, and good pleasure in man, that is, the Man, Christ Jesus, Whose delight it was to bring full glory to His God, not only in His perfect life on this earth, but also in His death on Calvary's cross.

Here then we have the groundwork for the full display of future glory when all the redeemed will be associated with Christ in that coming day which is according to the Christian's blessed hope.

The manifold ways of our God concerning His creatures are most wonderful. The first Adam was created in the image and after the likeness of God, Whose good pleasure was in man, whom He would have to be happy—but not alone. Therefore, to complete his happiness, he presented him a wife, made from one of his own ribs, taken from him while in a deep sleep. This led Adam to give utterance to those words, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman." Here we have the wonderful acts of our God in His mighty work of creation,

but not His counsels yet brought out. This remained for a future day. Therefore Satan was permitted to enter that fair scene to blight the prospects of the first man, thereby giving occasion for the display of God's grace and the intimation of His purposes concerning man. He declared that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

This brings us unto the second Man, the last Adam, Whose birth was ushered in by the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, &c." Good pleasure God most surely found in His beloved Son, both in His life and also in His death. The latter was the true ground upon which He could give to Him His bride, the Lamb's wife, the church, whom He would have to share with Himself throughout the eternal ages His given glory. But as typified in Adam's sleep, answered to by the Lord's absence from this earth, the church, which is His body and bride, is being formed, whom He will ere long present to Himself—a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

That we may understand this we have the divine counsels of God given to the beloved apostle Paul, shewing that better part which it is our happy privilege to know and enjoy by faith now. And while waiting for the fulfilment of God's purposes, we are called to be true and faithful to Him Who has so loved us and given Himself for our sins, that we might be delivered from this present evil world and brought to God in perfect peace and unclouded joy.

JESUS ONLY.

FILL Thou the vision of my soul,
Lord Jesus, with Thy glory bright ;
Let none beside Thee have control,
But fix mine eyes on that bright sight,—
Thyself, the Centre and the Bound
Of all, above, below, around.

Exceeding high, above the throng,
That daily round my pathway press,
By Thine own hand led up, along
The steep ascent which snow-wreaths dress,—
To be alone with Thee, to view
Thy glory and Thy kingdom too.

In shining purity arrayed,
Thy visage as the noon-tide beam,
Thy kingdom-glory there displayed,
And Thine own death the single theme,—
Lord Jesus, teach my heart to be
For ever there, engrossed with Thee.

Oh, let all others disappear,
However glorious in their day ;
Thy voice alone now let me hear,
And in Thy presence let me stay,
Descending only more to know
Thy ways of grace displayed below.

H. C. R.

"Some fancy that there is no outlet for piety except in emotion. They forget that the engine may be doing most work when none of the steam is blowing off; and therefore they are not content except they *feel* a great deal, and live in constant excitement."

SILHOUETTES.

XXIII.—ABIMELECH THE FRATRICIDE.

GIDEON certainly had an inconveniently large famil : he had seventy sons, but we cannot approve the method that one of them, Abimelech, took to remedy the embarrassment : he slaughtered all his brothers in cold blood, "on one stone"—except the astute and cynical Jotham, who can hardly be blamed for deciding that discretion was the better part of valour on the occasion, and hiding himself. By the influence of his mother's family, Abimelech then ruled for three years in a rough, brutal, despotic fashion, till the poor misguided people that helped to set him up were sufficiently maddened by his oppressions to try and pull him down again.

He was evidently an able, determined man, vigorous, valorous, and ambitious, but always cruel and aggressive ; and he had a certain rough craft of reasoning which carried the crowd with him—for a time. The argument that he won over the Shechemites with was ingenious and quite sound enough for that large proportion of the people who don't take the trouble to use their brains : "Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of [Gideon], which are three score and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you ? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh." Observe the dismaying alternative, seventy kings, an embarrassment of riches indeed ! Observe, too, the modesty of the expression "one"—without naming himself—and the

dexterity by which, however, any ambiguity is prevented by the word "also" in the last clause. It did not seem to strike any of his hearers that they were by no means confined to the two alternatives, and that under any circumstances Abimelech was the least entitled of all the sons to rule, for he bore the bar sinister of illegitimacy on his escutcheon.

Sometimes we find a good man, like Gideon, may have a bad son, like Abimelech. Isaac groans over Esau, David over Absalom. The son of one of the greatest philanthropists of the last century died from insanity through wickedness; and the son of one of the greatest of this century—of that noble-minded peer who has been identified with nearly every great benevolent movement for as long as any of us can recollect—not long since shot himself. Divine grace is neither hereditary nor collateral in its action. In one of Horace Walpole's letters, he gives an account of the execution of Lord Ferrers for murdering his steward with circumstances of atrocious cruelty. This wicked Earl was nephew to the devout Lady Huntingdon of imperishable memory. Walpole says, "One of the singular characters here is the Countess of Huntingdon, aunt to Lord Ferrers. She is the Saint Theresa of the Methodists. Judge how violent bigotry must be in such mad blood! The Earl, by no means disposed to be a convert, let her visit him, and often sent for her . . . and complained that she was enough to provoke anybody. She made her suffragan, Whitfield, pray for, and preach about him, and that impertinent

fellow [fancy the fribble Walpole calling *Whitfield* an impertinent fellow!] told his enthusiasts that my Lord's heart was stone." And stone it remained, it is to be feared, until he went to Tyburn to be hanged, "in his landau and six, his coachman crying all the way."

Abimelech was supported by a large number of people ("vain and light persons, who followed him"—that means a large number I presume). This fact illustrates one of the most discreditable phases of human nature. It is difficult to believe that any influential number of persons would aid and support a wretch so notoriously wicked as to publicly murder his own brothers, yet we know how customary it used to be in former ages for rulers to do things of this sort and yet be supported by numerous followers. It is even now usual in some of the Asiatic states, and Stanley, the African explorer, wrote of a king there who had just *burnt* all his brothers and sisters.

We do not believe that the Shechemites sympathised with usurpation and murder, but it is the tendency—especially of the "vain and light"—to let themselves be carried by the over-mastering power of a vigorous and unscrupulous mind away into some current of evil which they never anticipated and will never fully understand. It is the action of these people that makes it possible for Nero, Caligula, or Diocletian to attain and maintain their accursed dominion of demoniacal tyranny. No doubt these Abimelechs have rare qualities of command over men's minds, but every man that gives his support to a colossal evil is responsible

for his own share in the wicked results, and it will not avail much to plead that he was misled, that he did not see much difference, that black did not seem so very black, nor white so very white. There are gigantic wrongs in the world, crushing down the souls of God's creatures with hoofs of iron and wheels of Juggernaut; let the Christian at least beware of lending countenance and support to them.

Jotham gave the men of Shechem a Parthian shot when leaving them by telling them the fable about the trees electing the worthless bramble to be their king in place of the vine, fig, or olive, and of the patronizing invitation of the bramble to the nation to come and trust under his shadow (the shadow of a bramble!) He prophesies of fire coming out of it and devouring the cedars of Lebanon, for men like Abimelech can do great works of destruction, though little in the way of construction: they can pull down a castle but cannot build a cow-pen. This little story might have been taken unkindly by Abimelech, had he heard of it, but Jotham did not stay. It was Erasmus who originated the apothegm to the effect that, "The same man that runnith awaie, Maie live to fight another daie."

It cannot, perhaps, be denied that both Erasmus and Jotham were authorities on such matters; both men, though indeed not very heroic, had, however, that much courage that comes of conscience and necessity; and both delivered their testimony to truth before retreating. They were no "vain" or "light" persons.

There is a popular delusion that the cruel are always cowardly. It seems a pity that it is so often incorrect, for then they would do less harm. The fierce dashing figure of Abimelech at the head of his troops, now beating down Gaal and fighting all day at Shechem, now cutting down the forest boughs to set fire to the tower, now fighting in the streets of Thebez, extorts from us a kind of admiration for qualities that would have done so much for God and man had they been rightly directed. "What ye have seen me do, make haste and do," he tells his followers. He goes first himself and leads the way: he does not say, "Go," but, "Come!" At last, however, when he has filled his measure of violence and wickedness, God sends upon him the judgement that had been held back so long. "Justice," said Captain Falconer, "though she has leaden feet, will show that she has iron hands." A certain woman—who reminds us of that stout old Barbara Fritchie, who thrust the flag out of her attic window into the face of the hostile army at Fredericktown,—expressed her protest against his policy by dropping a millstone on his head. Even then Abimelech's quick resource and recklessness flashed out in one expiring gleam: "He called hastily 'Draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him.' And his young man thrust him through, and he died."

J. C. B.

"By the fairest gales a sinner may sail to destruction, and by the fiercest winds a saint may sail to glory."

OPEN FACES.

Now where do I see the glory of God? Not now on the face of Moses—I could not look on it there. But now I see it in the face of Jesus Christ. Dear! I say, that is the One Who died for my sins. He could not bring my sins into the glory, and therefore He put them away. I have got His word and His work for it; and the glory for it too; and therefore God is now ministering righteousness. Now it is “the ministration of righteousness.” The sins are not passed over. He sweat great drops of blood in view of the sins. He has really gone through everything that holiness required on account of them, and now He is in the glory; so that every ray of the glory I look at is the proof that my sins are put away. When I see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it is the very thing I like to look at; because the One Whom I see in the glory is the One Who bore all my sins. Oh! I delight to look at Him. And that is the way I get Christ graven on my heart by the Holy Ghost. “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” It is the ministration of righteousness, because the Holy Ghost comes and tells us that there is a righteousness accomplished “by one man’s obedience.” It is the ministration of the Spirit, because the Spirit is given on the foundation of the righteousness. And now the man is at liberty, because his conscience is per-

fectly purged. Here he will have trial and conflict, it is true; but as between himself and God he will never have anything but perfect peace.

This is God's way of graving Christ on the heart. First, He gives a man the consciousness of being entirely condemned; shewing him that his nature is enmity against God; that the law he has broken; and that when Christ came in grace, Him he did not love. And when He has brought him to this in his conscience, then He shews him that the God against Whom he sinned has come and wrought out a righteousness for him, and that this blessed Man is now in glory.

Now mark how the heart thus learns to trust God. Dear! I say, when I was in my sins, God came and put them away. My sins are the very thing that give the greatest proof of His love. He has given Christ for them. Well may I trust Him for everything else.

Let me now ask you, dear reader, if your confidence is in this God? Has your heart been brought to submit to this righteousness—for you have none of your own? Oh, it is the hardest thing for the heart to be broken down so as to be willing to have righteousness by the obedience of another! “By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Rom. v. 19). But if you have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ you will desire to *be found in Him*, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. iii. 8, 9).

Extracted.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

I.—THE SCHOOL.

It was in the early forties that I first knew anything about Sunday Schools, and that was owing to the circumstance that at their annual treat the children of a school in South London used to pass the house in which I was born and spent the first ten years of my life, on which occasions I heard them, singing :

“Oh ! that will be joyful,
 Joyful ! joyful ! joyful !
 Oh ! that will be joyful,
 When we meet to part no more.”

I hope to tell you something more presently, about the school those children came from.

The next Sunday School I call to mind is another in the same quarter of London, to which I was invited when still very young, on the occasion of an anniversary, when I was much impressed by hearing them sing the hymn, written by Dr. Watts:

“There is a land of pure delight,
 Where saints immortal reign ;
 Infinite day excludes the night,
 And pleasures banish pain.”

To this and each of the other verses they sang a chorus thus :

“We are marching through Immanuel's ground,
 And soon shall hear the trumpet sound ;
 And then we shall with Jesus reign,
 And never, never part again.

(*Girls*) What, never part again ?

(*Boys*) No ! never part again.
 What, never part again ?

(*Girls*) No ! never part again.

(*All together*) And then we shall with Jesus reign,
 And never, never part again.”

These words made a deep impression on my mind, and do they not awake a wonderful thought for us who live in a world which, we may almost say, is made up of meetings and partings? "No, never, never part again."

The building in which I listened to that hymn that night is, like some others that I could speak of, now no longer used as a Sunday School, but has been turned into a little College of chemistry. Where, dear young friends, are those who sang that night—"And never part again"? How many in every hundred could answer: "Here!" I must leave it for others to compute; but One alone knows, even He of whom it is written, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place." Blessed thought! He knows every one of His sheep and lambs. How it should teach us to make use of our present opportunities.

I call to mind many other schools I have visited since that evening, but must, I think, content myself by describing one only; and I select it because of its differing in so many particulars from all the others. This was an out-door school.

About twenty years after the time last referred to, some of us who were teachers in different Sunday Schools, used to meet together on Sunday evenings, for the purpose of engaging in out-door preaching, and having chosen a "pitch" near to a railway station, we discovered in a covered space under the station platform some balks of timber and disused iron columns lying in rows sufficiently parallel to constitute seats for a Sunday school assembly. With little difficulty we persuaded

some children to seat themselves on these while we conducted quite a regular kind of Sunday school with them. We made them form one large class, but addressed some of our questions to the little children in the front row and if they could not answer them, we passed them on to the elder ones behind. Thus the children grew accustomed to our coming, and were as punctual in awaiting us as we endeavoured to be in coming to teach them.

T. J.

BIBLE ARITHMETIC.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—A little consideration may shew you that the elementary operations in arithmetic are suggestive of some very profitable passages of scripture. I propose just to point out a few instances, and leave you to follow the idea further, as you may be inclined.

Take first simple addition. This is a very easy operation ; you start with 1 and you increase it to 2 by adding another 1. Now we find a similar principle in spiritual things : “To him that hath shall be given.” Another scripture that has, no doubt, already occurred to many of you is found in Matthew vi. 33 : “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.” This is an important principle indeed, which you will do well ever to bear in mind. Consider first of all things else the rights of God. Our general tendency is to seek first food, raiment, with all that are considered the

necessities and comforts of this life. But the Lord puts these latter things altogether beyond the range of our anxious concern. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" and the assurance is that all these things shall be *added*—that is, that God will add them.

You recollect that in the time of the great famine in the days of Elijah, he was sent to the widow of Zarephath. He found her about to prepare her last tiny meal, and bade her to make for him, as Jehovah's prophet, a cake *first*, promising that God would so add to her meal and her oil, that her barrel of meal should not waste, nor her cruse of oil fail until the famine was passed (1 Kings xvii. 8—16). This is one, and there are many other such instances of God's additions to faith.

But there are also additions that you yourself must make. The apostle Peter sets you one such problem in his second Epistle. Here is what you have to perform, with all diligence, commencing from the lower line:—

Add together: Love
 Brotherly Kindness
 Godliness
 Patience
 Temperance
 Knowledge
 Virtue
 Faith

Result: You will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. i. 5—8).

To do this sevenfold addition you must exercise a great deal of perseverance. You have to proceed step by step. And you know that in long "tots" if you forget yourself when near the top you have to start afresh from the bottom. Be watchful and prayerful in your Christian life, lest you undo much of what you have been doing.

Coming to subtraction, we think of the great act of taking away our sins. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins" (1 John iii. 5). This Christ has done so completely that God says to us: "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). In the Old Testament ritual, on the Great Day of Atonement, the scapegoat had confessed over him, and laid upon him by the high priest, all the sins and transgressions of the children of Israel. The goat was then led away into the wilderness to an uninhabited place, so that Israel might learn that their sins were gone altogether. Our sins, too, have been removed by Him Who came into this world for that purpose.

Multiplication increases figures far more largely than addition. If you add 10 and 10 together you make 20, but if you multiply them you make 100. So God promised to Abraham: "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply [not simply add to] thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore" (Gen. xxii. 17). Our God and Father ever delights to make His blessings abound towards His own. And we are so needy that we require it. Hence

the apostle desires that mercy, peace, and love may be multiplied towards the saints (Jude 2).

We see an instance of rapid increase in the numbers of believers at the beginning of the church's history. To the apostolic band there were added in one day three thousand souls (Acts ii. 41). And the Lord kept adding to them daily (Acts ii. 47). But later on we read that the churches "walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were *multiplied*" (Acts ix. 31). This greater rate of increase we may be sure was because the word of God grew and multiplied (Acts xii. 24 ; vi. 7 ; xix. 20).

Division is the operation of distributing into smaller portions. It was an operation that the rich young ruler could not perform when the Lord invited him to sell all that he had and distribute to the poor. He did not understand what it was to do so for Christ's sake. So he went away very sorrowful, for he was very rich. But there were many in Jerusalem, after Pentecost, who did so. They gladly "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts ii. 45). They were fully imbued with the spirit of their Master.

You should do likewise. Be ever ready to share what you have with others, especially those who have need. This kind of division does not always result in leaving you with less than you had at first. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Prov. xi. 24). As the Lord said, "There is no man that hath left house or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake who

shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke xviii. 29, 30).

The Lord divided five barley loaves and two small fishes among five thousand men. They were all filled, yet the fragments that remained over and above what was eaten filled twelve baskets. This is an example of divine, in contrast with human, multiplication and division.

But there are many other instances that will occur to you. Jot them down, and meditate upon them.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the "Believer's Monthly Magazine."

DEAR SIR,—I. The serpent's punishment was, "upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat" (Genesis iii. 14). Looking at the physical structure of the serpent, what other means of progress could be possible to it? Is the thought admissible that it could have had legs as the lizards, &c., now have? What is the exact significance of the "dust"?

II. The Lord quotes in Matt. xxiii. 35, the incident related in 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, with this important difference, that whereas the Zechariah the son of Jehoiada is rightly named in Chronicles, the Lord is made to say that the Zechariah in Matthew is the son of *Barachias*. According to the N. T. chronology Matthew's Gospel was written in A.D. 33. But could that possibly be? Was not the Gospel written at a much later date? Because at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus a

Zechariah, a son of one *Barachias*, was actually slain in the manner described. Would not this clearly prove that Matthew's Gospel was written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, otherwise how would it be possible to describe an event that happened more than 30 years later on? There is no question of prophecy here, because the Lord spoke of what had happened hundreds of years before. Did not Matthew, or the compilers of Matthew's Gospel, confuse the names? F. W. B.

I. We know that Satan made use of the serpent in tempting our first parents. Hence in the Revelation he is called "that old serpent" (Rev. xx. 2). And since Satan all through scripture is accounted to be the one who beguiled our first parents, we have every reason to believe that the punishment referred to in Genesis iii. 14 was passed upon the devil and not upon the serpent tribe. It was Satan who was to go upon his belly, and Satan, too, who was condemned to eat dust.

These terms used are, of course, figurative, as so much of the Old Testament language is. But their meaning may be gathered from similar expressions elsewhere. Crawling in the dust and eating it are frequently used in a symbolical sense for thorough humiliation and subjection. Prostration to the ground before a superior was common in Old Testament times and in New (Esther viii. 3; Matt. ii. 11; Acts x. 25). The serpent was to be continually in this posture figuratively speaking, thereby indicating his humiliated condition. Such a destructive fall ever follows pride (Prov. xvi. 18), and is called the condemnation of the devil (1 Tim. iii. 6).

For instances of the figure of eating dust see the following passages:—Ps. lxxii. 9; Mic. vii. 17; Isa. xlix. 23; lxxv. 25; Lam. iii. 29; and for dust as the place of humiliation, compare Ps. vii. 5; xxii. 15; xlv. 25; *

* "Our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth;" this language is similar to Gen. iii. 14.

cxiii. 7 ; cxix. 25 ; Isa. lii. 2 ; Dan. xii. 2 ; and many other passages.

We see no reason, therefore, for thinking that the passage supports the idea that the physical structure of the order of serpents was modified at the fall of man, but rather that it refers to the sentence of complete degradation resting upon the evil one, which will be finally executed when he is cast into the lake of fire.

II. The identification of the Zacharias, son of Barachias, to whom the Lord referred, is a task of some difficulty. We may, however, dismiss at once your suggestion that the reference is to a person slain at the siege of Jerusalem. This person, mentioned by Josephus (Wars, book iv., chap. v. 4) was (1) the son of Baruch, a different name from Barachias, or Berechiah, (2) slain in the middle of the temple, and not "between the temple and the altar," and (3) slain by the Idumeans and the Zealots, and not by the scribes and Pharisees. Besides, the Lord clearly refers to the murder as past, not as future. The date when Matthew wrote his Gospel is unknown, but that hardly affects the question.

Some are disposed to regard the Lord's reference as being to Zechariah the prophet, who was "the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo" (Zec. i. 1), and who was a priest as well as a prophet (Neh. xii. 16). The manner of his death is not recorded in the Old Testament, but that is not in itself any evidence against the historical truth of the Lord's words.

Others believe the Zechariah to be the son of Jehoiada who was stoned to death in the court of the temple (2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22). There is certainly a moral connection between his death and that of Abel. The blood of Cain's victim cried to God for vengeance, and Zechariah's last words were, "The Lord look upon it, and require it." The fact of his not being called "the son of Barachias" in the O. T. may be explained by

supposing either that his father had two names—Jehoiada Berechiah—or that Berechiah was his father, and Jehoiada his grandfather, son and grandson being sometimes used interchangeably.

In any case we are not reduced to the unbelieving device of imputing error to the Lord or to the inspired historian.

QUERIES.

W.T.—I SHOULD LIKE A LITTLE HELP IN UNDERSTANDING THE WORDS, "WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION" (Phil. ii. 12). The apostle was exhorting the saints at Philippi to obedience. He first set before them the example of Christ Who was "obedient unto death." And as they walked in obedience when he was with them, he entreats them to do so still. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have also obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Salvation may be here used as a future thing in the full and complete sense of bringing a person into the glory. Obviously, in this sense it is to be looked forward to (Rom. xiii. 11; 1 Thess. v. 8, 9; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 10; Heb. ix. 28; 1 Pet. i. 5; iv. 18). As to the soul the believer is already saved (1 Pet. i. 9; Eph. ii. 8), but the body also will be saved at the Lord's coming (Phil. iii. 20, 21; Eph. v. 23). As may be seen, the term, salvation, is of varied significance, and we find it further used for deliverance from daily difficulties and sorrows (2 Cor. i. 6). Doubtless in this passage the word has the double sense of *both present and future* deliverance. Paul not being with them to watch over and preserve them by his warnings and exhortations, they were to work out *their own* salvation. In the midst of the trials and temptations that beset a godly walk they were now to act upon their own responsi-

bility, and by personal vigilance to avoid being overthrown by the enemy. They were to do so with "fear and trembling," thus indicating they had no confidence in themselves, and that they dreaded to *disobey* God (Eph. vi. 5 ; 1 Pet. i. 17). Their confidence was to be in God Who wrought in them both to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. i. 6 : ii. 13). Their fear was not of being eventually lost, because other scriptures shew that a believer can never be lost.

W.T.—ARE THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST THE SAME (Rom. viii. 9)? Yes ; for there is but one Spirit (Eph. iv. 4). A different term is used suited to the truth. The *Spirit of God* dwelling in the believer brings out the contrast with his former state, when inwrought by that evil spirit which works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2). The *Spirit of Christ* is so called because He works in us to obey God's will, as He did in Christ. Hence we become like Christ, a sure indication we belong to Him.

S.C.W.—WERE THERE THREE TEMPLES ? OR DID HEROD REBUILD ZERUBBABEL'S TEMPLE ? Zerubbabel's temple (Ezra vi.) was the second, and, of course, Solomon's the first. Herod commenced to build another temple about twenty years before the Christian era. It is said to have been built over Zerubbabel's, the latter being eventually removed when Herod's was completed. It was a very gorgeous structure, taking forty-six years to build (John ii. 20). Whether or not Herod's temple may be called the third is a matter of opinion.

W.W.—SHOULD A WOMAN PUT SOMETHING ON HER HEAD BEFORE PRAYING, EVEN IF AT HOME (1 Cor. xi. 5)? In the assembly she is to keep silence (1 Cor. xiv. 34) ; but if in a private way she prays or prophesies she is to observe God's order, and cover her head in token of subjection (Gen. xxiv. 65). See answers to similar queries in *B.M.M.*, vol. ii. 72, 264 ; vol. iii. 96.

THE DOWNFALL OF JERICHO.

THERE is a power that opposes the onward progress of the people of God, as well as a power that seeks to carry them back from whence they came. At the Red Sea the Israelites were pursued by Pharaoh and his host, who meant to recover them as captives into Egypt. And after crossing the Jordan and thus entering into the land of promise, the nation was confronted by the city of Jericho whose mighty walls towering to heaven in their pride bade defiance to Israel's host. Before the chosen people could take possession of the inheritance Jehovah had given them, that great stronghold which barred the way must fall. And the sacred history gives us to see that He, Whose power destroyed the enemies that were behind them at the Red Sea, overthrew the impregnable fortress which was before them on the plains of Jericho.

There was, however, a difference between the word of the Lord as given to the people of Israel before His interference in the two cases respectively. In the first instance, the host was bidden to "stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah." Then the sea was divided, Israel passed safely over on dry land, and the waters returned, covering the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh. In the second instance, the divine instructions were of a different character, involving more action on their part. They were not then to stand still until the de-

struction of the city, but to march round its walls each day for a week. The first six days they were to compass the city only once each day; but on the seventh they were to do so seven times. The directions further specified the order of their procession. The ark of the covenant preceded by seven priests was to be the central figure in the line of march, while the men of war went before and the people followed. The circuit was to be made each day in this manner and in the utmost silence, saving the sound of the trumpets. After the seventh time on the seventh day, however, the silence was to be broken, and the people were to "shout with a great shout," when the walls of the city would fall down flat. And so indeed it came about: "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. xi. 30).

We, too, have our warfare. We are to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. vi. 12). The heavenly blessings that are ours are only appropriated after a struggle. The power of Satan opposes our progress in divine things. And we can only meet the foe and gain the victory by warring on the lines of faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith" (1 Jno. v. 4).

Two points in connection with the procession around Jericho appear, amongst others, to convey lessons of moment. The first is (1) the ark in the midst, and the second (2) the continuous blowing of the trumpets.

There was a party of armed men who marched before the ark, while the "rereward" came

behind it. This was in contrast with the arrangement in the wilderness, when the ark invariably led the way (Num. x. 33—36). And as its position in the wilderness indicated guidance, so in the presence of the walls of Jericho it appeared to signify their association with Jehovah and was, therefore, a sure presage of victory. The people had kept the passover; they were circumcised; they had eaten of the old corn of the land; they were in holy fellowship with the prince of Jehovah's host (Josh. v.). Carrying the ark around the city in full view of the enemy was an open announcement of their practical identification with the interests of the ark of the covenant. The people of Israel were also to arouse public attention to what they were doing by continuous blasts of the trumpets of rams' horns.

In the practical appropriation of our heavenly portion, therefore, the key to success lies in attesting our identification with a heavenly Christ. The closeness of our connexion with Christ is emphasised in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and our walk is to be in consonance with this calling, and our testimony to be grounded upon it too. In face of such manifestation and evidence of our fellowship with a Christ on high, the opposition of the world melts and vanishes away. The weapons and tactics of faith are ever such as baffle the power of the world to overcome. For it is the character of faith to make much of God and little of men, while the policy of the world is to magnify man and ignore God.

THE CONTRASTS OF GRACE.

Thy wounds, Lord, not mine ;
My sins, Lord, not Thine ;
Thy sorrows, Thy sadness,
My joy and my gladness.
O Lord, how great, how vast, how free,
Is this, Thy gracious love to me.

The labour was Thine,
The rest, Lord, was mine ;
The wrath endured
My peace secured ;
Then let my soul rejoice in Thee
Whose love doth span infinity.

The love, Lord, was Thine,
The enmity mine ;
Thy life was given
To make mine heaven ;
Then let me praise the love that gave
The healing power, the power to save.

The strength, Lord, is Thine,
The weakness is mine ;
And Thine the praise
My soul shall raise
To Thee, O Lord, Thy greatness, vast, unknown,
Whose glory fills the earth, Whose brightness
veils the throne.

PREPARATION FOR SERVICE.

(JUDGES VI.—VIII.)

It is instructive to notice that Gideon became a worshipper before entering upon that path of active service to which God had called him. This is quite in order. Eliezer of Damascus, in presence of the answer to his pious request for guidance, "bowed down his head and worshipped" (Gen. xxiv. 26) before proceeding to declare his mission. We see the same thing in Daniel. Critical as the moment was, involving life or death to himself and many others, he worshipped God before going into the king's presence to reveal his secret (Dan. xi. 19—23).

The presence of God is the true starting point of service. "They came and saw where He dwelt and abode with Him that day" (John i. 39). Subsequently they could go forth and labour successfully for Him. The secret of outward power is inward peace. The faithful servant, exposed to tribulation in the world, sorrowing over the sad condition in which the people of God are found, and conscious too of his own insufficiency (2 Cor. iii. 5), can only be cast upon God, and find the great resource of his heart in the Lord Himself, Whose grace is sufficient for every exigency. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," the Lord said, for He indeed knew it in perfection.

We have to do with One Who has a perfect judgement of all that has been and that will yet be manifested, whether in the church or in the

world, Who has traced the progress of evil, from the introduction of the leaven to the burning of the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. xiii.). See, too, the Lord's judgement of the seven churches in Asia (Rev. ii. and iii.). Ephesus departing from first love ends in the pride, formality and indifference to Christ's glory of Laodiceanism. Yet the Lord maintains His own gracious way to the end (Rev. iii. 20, 21).

All being now settled between God and His servant, Gideon is then required to make a stand for truth and righteousness in his father's house. He must begin by "shewing piety at home." The worship of Jehovah must be dissociated from that of Baal. His eyes are opened to the moral inconsistency which had continued so long and so near to him, unjudged. He learns to "separate the precious from the vile" before God uses him in a more public sphere (Jer. xv. 19).

We are reminded of that most remarkable experience of Moses "in the way by the inn" (Ex. iv. 24), where Jehovah met him and sought to kill him. There had been laxity as to the sign of the covenant, even in the household of Moses, and God will be sanctified in them that come nigh to Him (Lev. x. 3). His claims must be enforced, however nature may oppose, or another instrument will be found for the appointed service.

Turning to the history of Jacob (typical in a great degree of the history of the nation), what sad moral confusion prevailed at Shechem (Gen. xxxiv.), what indifference to evil, what a ready acceptance of dishonour offered to God, and what

jealousy for his own reputation, and regard for personal safety. Yet God graciously awakens him from his carnal slumber, calls him up to Bethel that he may dwell there in the presence of One Who had indeed proved Himself to be a Saviour God (Gen. xxxv. 1—15). The evil is at once judged: "Put away the strange gods that are among you" and "Be clean," correspond exactly to "Break down the altar of Baal and cut down the grove that is by it." The latter might have been and sometimes was used in the worship of Jehovah; but it was impure and contrary to His word (Deut. xii. 3). Its tendency was to mix things. It was confusion. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well" is a divine principle of general application.

Man would say all this at such a critical moment was wasted time. "Better far rally Israel's scattered forces, repel the enemy, and turn him out of God's land, and *then* set about domestic reformation;" but this is not God's way. He will use "empty vessels not a few" (2 Kings iv. 3), or even broken ones, but He insists upon their being *clean*. "A vessel sanctified and meet for the *Master's* use, purified unto *every* good work."

Nature revolts against this new authority so intolerant of evil. It was Rachel, the *specially beloved* wife, who had cherished those idols; it was Zipporah, Moses' wife, who had delayed the circumcision of her son; and here it was Gideon's father who had set up the idolatrous altar. But nature must be refused, at whatever cost. The entrance of God's word brings light into the soul

and establishes an authority there against which sin cannot prevail. It is quite possible to be a Sunday School worker, a preacher of the word much sought after, while far from maintaining at home that simplicity of faith and subjection to Christ which *alone* renders one acceptable to Him.

G. S. B.

FROM MUCH TO MORE.

HEBREWS IX. 13, 14.

ST. PAUL is very fond of what is known as the *à fortiori* argument; in other words, he frequently establishes his point by triumphantly shewing that there is stronger evidence to be adduced for it than for something else which is already admitted to be true. No doubt a considerable portion of scripture consists, as might be expected, of categorical statement, and that as profound as it is simple; but often the Spirit of God, Who is the true Author of the Bible, condescends to employ logical weapons. Everything, of course, is just in its right place.

Now it would be easy to give instances from the other writings of the apostle (I say other writings because the evidence for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is all but absolute) of the mode of reasoning to which attention has been called. Take the well-known passage in Romans v. 10, where indeed we have a sort of double *à fortiori* proof, Christ's life being contrasted with His death, and again the state of reconciliation with that of enmity. What would not the

life, the eternal life, of Christ avail to do for those who were already saved by His *death*! And, if those were saved who had been *enemies*, what would God not do for the *reconciled*! Again, in the same Epistle, chap. xi., occur the words of solemn warning, "If God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee"—thee, the wild olive, that typified the Gentiles. Again, in verse 15 of the same chapter we find a precisely similar argument, though in this case respecting what is most comforting and blessed.

This will suffice by way of introduction to a more direct consideration of the verses immediately before us. Let us see how the *à fortiori* principle applies to them. If, says St. Paul, the blood of goats and bulls, &c., sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, availed to effect a ceremonial cleansing, how much more should the blood of Christ purge! Thus the apostle skilfully makes use of the argument most calculated to tell with the dispersed of the Hebrew race. They had, and rightly, no doubts as to the validity and divine origin of the Mosaic economy. They did not deny the temporary efficacy of those temporal sacrifices. But if so, what could not the blood of Christ do—no common blood, but the blood of the eternal Son, Who had deigned to "become flesh"! Surely it was available not merely to purge their consciences, but to enable them to serve the living God. We may note, too, how the apostle emphasises the contrast, as is his wont, in every possible way, putting the "*living* God" in contrast with "*dead* works."

One might dwell a little on the deep import of the words, "through the eternal Spirit," for all the mystery of the incarnation is there—is pre-supposed; but the object of these few remarks was merely to call attention to this favourite mode of reasoning of the apostle. So I will say no more on these remarkable words, which are fraught with an infinite fulness, of which we can only touch the fringe. Like everything in scripture, this truth as to the operation of the Spirit in the atonement is in exquisite keeping with all we read of our blessed Lord's life, of Him Who was "conceived of the Holy Ghost," and Who, all His life, wrought in the energy of the same blessed Spirit. Hear Him say, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, &c." (Matt. xii. 28). Nor do I more than just call attention to the fact, often noted, that in several passages we have, as here, the three Persons of the Trinity mentioned within the narrow compass of a single verse. The Son offers Himself to God through the eternal Spirit. So at His baptism our Lord is saluted by the Father as "My beloved Son," when the Holy Spirit descended on Him "like a dove." These points are of course of infinitely more consequence than any style of reasoning. But it was to the latter chiefly I wished to call attention.

R. B.

HUMILITY.—"When a man steps out of his own nothingness, he steps into it."

MEMORABILIA.—VII.

OF WORSHIP.

FOR many years I had felt a difficulty concerning the (original) word used in the New Testament to convey the thought of "worship." In the Old Testament the word seemed to me merely to express primarily a reverential attitude or posture of the body, and hence by a metaphor—or a synecdoche—to indicate a reverential attitude of mind and spirit; but the word *proskunéo*, which the apostles nearly always make use of, takes its origin* from the idea of a dog's crouching before his master. As I thought, and still think, that worship is the most lofty and most delightful occupation to which any created being can attain, whether amongst men or amongst the celestial intelligences, or those hierarchies of angelic, seraphic, or cherubic dignitaries who rule the spiritual realms, I felt a kind of resentment against this word as unworthy to convey so exalted a thought. That the apostles had used the best word which the tongue they employed yielded was not to be doubted for a moment; that was not the question; my feeling was that for once the Greek language, so beautiful and copious in general, seemed to have revealed its poverty, and I attributed it to the low and imperfect ideas of worship which the Greeks held.

After having had such thoughts for years—without, so far as I remember, ever expressing

* That is remotely; immediately, it is no doubt from *kunéo* with the preposition.

them—I have become gradually convinced that the word in question is most beautiful and suitable, and full of deep pathetic suggestion. The fact is that I had held something of the old Jewish thought as to dogs, unsympathetic and prejudiced. Dogs were ceremoniously and practically unclean, and as characterised by returning to that which they had rejected, were apt symbols of apostasy,* as the swine was used symbolically for natural depravity. But the apostles (and the Holy Ghost who inspired them) were not to be restricted in their use of words by narrow Jewish views. The Greeks had far more kindly feelings towards dogs. Æsop, for instance, has very many sympathetic references to them, and Homer's lines in the *Odyssey* are deeply pathetic—the lines which describe how Ulysses, when returning to his home in rags, battered by age and war, unrecognised and despised by his own kindred, was remembered and instantly discerned by his old, blind dog, which, after giving one bark of joyous welcome, falls over and dies at his master's feet.

In any case I have come to see that it cannot really degrade a man to compare his position in worship before God to that of a dog's before his master, for there is an immensely greater distance between God's nature and the man's than between the man's and the dog's. If a man's intelligence be a little span higher than a dog's, then what unnumbered leagues higher, broader, deeper, is God's intelligence than ours; infinite in His nature, His wisdom, power and beneficence.

* 2 Pet. ii. 22.

When I thought of Cochrane risking his life and the lives of his men to put back in his boat to the burning frigate in order to rescue his dog, my first thought was indignation at the disproportion of the sacrifice with the object in view; my second was that the disproportion was a million times greater between the Son of God and ourselves, and yet He made free sacrifice of His life for us. I thought then of that German philosopher who said that the more he knew of men the more he liked dogs. He said that in a satirical spirit, but I am inclined to echo it without a tinge of sarcasm or bitterness. I could like, not men less, but dogs more, when I think of the fidelity, loyalty, love, energy, tenacity, vigilance, courage and unselfishness of the dog;* and if they have also bad habits and are spoken of as symbols of uncleanness and apostasy, our mouths are closed; are they worse than we? I fear this only makes the similitude the more complete!

“The lower animals?” I am not so sure! Which are the lower animals, pray? If we measure height by certain phases of intelligence, no doubt the dogs are; but if the test be moral, and not merely intellectual, if heart counts for anything against brain, the matter is not so easy to decide. If love, courage, and fidelity be the highest principles not only in this planet but in the whole universe, then may God make us more like the dogs! I remember when Euphonia had a little dog about the size of

* There are many well authenticated cases of dogs having deliberately starved themselves to death on their dead masters' graves.

my inkstand, and I used sometimes to raise my arm and pretend to be going to strike his mistress, to see the effect. Like a flash of lightning that tiny, gentle, silky lap-dog was transformed into a wild beast, or an avenging demon utterly reckless of pain or death in the furious rage and indignation which gleamed in his eyes and flashed in his teeth and violently shook every nerve and fibre of his being as he flew at me. When I checked the descending blows he would curl round in a sulky and suspicious triumph as who should say, "I properly frightened the creature this time," and settle down with one mistrustful eye half open and watching, and one ear half cocked.

And what obedience and energy to guard and care for the flock. The northern shepherd comes out of his hut with his dog at his side, looking eagerly in his face hungering for his master's gesture of command that he may have the supreme pleasure of doing something for him: the shepherd himself a gnarled, old, ignorant peasant, who can only give his servant a few bones, a little water, and a few kind words. But now as he opens his door he raises his arm with sweeping gesture, and the dog with one glad bark gallops towards the distant hills, gallops over those rocks and hills round the whole horizon for hours until the flock are at length folded every one safely, then lays himself down at his master's feet with his quivering tongue dropping foam, his weary sides panting, his strong heart seeming to beat its life away. And if he shall receive one kind word or look from his lord he is more than repaid, whilst

he looks in his face eagerly for another command. If you go out driving with a collie he will circle round your carriage during the whole journey. This is his instinct of guardian care inherited from generations of sires who spent their lives in keeping the flock together.

Or you see that wolf-hound cowering as his master harshly beats him for letting his zeal for his lord's chase cause him to forget for a moment to keep "to heel." Do you think it is cowardice which causes him to submit thus to those rude blows? It looks like it. Well, go and lay a finger in menace upon his master, the man who is brutally striking him, and you will soon see. The crouching dog, now so abased and submissive, would spring upon you like a wild beast and tear your life out. The lower animals indeed! He seems to say, "Shall I receive good at his hands, and shall I not receive evil? Though he slay me, yet will I love, obey, and defend him!" The lower animals! May God make us more like them in loyalty, submission, and devotion, to say nothing of courage, contentment, and unquestioning obedience.

J. C. B.

AN EXTRACT.—Beloved, let us remember that it was a little thing, an unadvised word, that occasioned to Moses the loss of Canaan. And let us remember, moreover, that the governance of the tongue is more pressed upon us in the New Testament than almost anything else. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 37).

THE THREE CUPS OF LUKE XXII.

It has been beautifully remarked by one whose life was spent in the Lord's service, "Love always delights to serve; but selfishness to be served." And this serving love was most perfectly displayed by our blessed Lord Jesus during the whole course of His ministry down here. Thoughts of self and His own ease never influenced His actions, nor caused Him to desist from helping needy ones as opportunity presented itself. Witness Him at the well of Sychar. Tired and thirsty with His journey He was; but when the poor Samaritan woman presented herself, the heart of the Lord went out to her at once. The weariness of His body was forgotten in the joy of His heart at being able to serve that sin-stricken soul. This self-forgetfulness His disciples could not understand (John iv. 32, 33.) Selfishness can never be expected to comprehend that pleasure is the reward of disinterested service on behalf of *others*. But such undoubtedly is the case. It is the food which the soul, in feeding the hunger of others, tastes for itself. But the Lord's thoughtfulness and desire for the happiness of others seem to be particularly displayed in the chapter named above (Luke xxii.).

Every Jew (and the disciples were such) esteemed it a privilege, as well as a duty, to observe the passover, according to the word of Jehovah (Exodus xii. 24—27). For the celebration of that feast was a season of joy and rejoicing in fellowship, because of the deliverance which God

had wrought for their fathers, from the bondage of Egypt.

The Lord, then, as a faithful Jew, would be desirous of doing God's will, and of obeying His commands in this respect. Besides, there was the earnest wish on His part to have fellowship with His disciples in this the last feast of passover during His life. So when the time was come He sat down with His disciples to converse with them and to testify His love for them as His companions for the last time. He ate with them, but He did not drink. The cup they were to take and divide it among themselves. It was not part of the Lord's supper, but the paschal cup which was drunk before supper began. After supper the Lord poured out another cup, which the Jews called "the cup of blessing" (cf. 1 Cor. x. 16), and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Drink ye *all* of it." At the same time He reminded them that it was the memorial of a *new* covenant based upon His shed blood. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark (xxvi. 27; xiv. 23) this last cup only is mentioned apparently. But in Matthew xxvi. we have the additional fact recorded that the blood was shed for many for the remission of sins. The "blood" is in contrast with that of the old covenant (Exodus xxiv.). The blood at Sinai "sealed on the people their promise of obedience to the law under menace of death; here all drink the witness, in the Saviour's blood, of their sins blotted out and gone." To the disciples then this was also a cup of blessing and favour, only of a new kind and in another way.

To the Lord, however, it spoke of another cup (Luke xxii. 42), which He must drink to the dregs. This cup seems to be a figure of the concentration of God's righteous indignation against sin. In view of which even, He sweat, "as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (verse 44). Yet unswervingly He went to the cross and there bare our sins in His own body. Therefore Jehovah's wrath lay hard upon Him and He was afflicted with all His waves (Ps. lxxxviii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 24).

Such was the prospect before the blessed Lord. Hence He said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it NEW* with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29). The Lord could no more drink with them of that which spoke of joy and association, since for Him the opposite was in store. Yet He could look beyond all the sorrow and suffering that was then before Him to the time when, in a different position and with brighter prospects, He would renew with delight His intercourse with them.

Oh! what a time of rejoicing will that be to both saved and Saviour, when He shall present each believer holy and unblamable and unreprouable in His sight. Then will He invest His spotless bride with the glory and honour He acquired by His death on the cross, and she will reign with Him over the earth (Jno. xvii. 22; Phil. ii. 7—11;

*The word "new" here denotes wine of a different sort or nature from that which was then before the disciples. In a similar sense are to be understood the expressions *new heavens*, *new earth*, *new man*, *new Jerusalem*, and the like.

Eph. v. 25—27; Rev. v. 10). He will then, indeed, “see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” For His desire expressed to His Father (Jno. xvii. 24) will have been fully met when He has around Him in glory those who were redeemed with His precious blood, and who were succoured and sustained by Him during their perilous journey through this world to the rest above.

How intensely precious then to the believer’s heart are the thoughts which cluster around these three cups (Luke xxii. 17, 20, 42); shewing as they do the thoughtfulness, the unselfishness, and the incomparable greatness of the love of Jesus, which has so amply provided for our happiness in this world, and in that which is to come, at such a cost to Himself. May we have grace, in our measure, to imitate Him.

W. T. H.

HIMSELF.

It is interesting to note how often the expression “Himself” is used in scripture in reference to the work and functions (if I may so say) of our blessed Lord, and to the purposes of God with respect to Him. And this both where we have, as once or twice,* the record of His actual words, and also where, much more frequently, evangelists and apostles speak of Him. In short, His Personality is ever emphasised by the Holy Spirit and thrown into strong relief.

We know what a part the possession of a forceful character plays in the things of this life; people may say, “It is measures, not men, that

*See Luke xxiv. 39; Rev. xxii. 16.

we want," but after all the man of original gifts and of elemental force does the stirring deeds that live in history, be it in military, political, or literary walks of life, though in this last, obviously, personality is less obtrusive. If then it be so with erring and short-sighted men with all their palpable limitations, need one wonder if personality is in supreme evidence in the case of Him, Who, however meek and lowly, was, is, the illimitable and divine Man, God manifest in the flesh. Himself must be everything.

I proceed to quote a few verses in illustration of this principle. And first, if we take redemption, we read, "Who gave *Himself* for our sins" (Gal. i. 4)—gave not something or someone of great merit merely, but gave *Himself*. He, "His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24) even as it was by *Himself* (Heb. i. 3) that our sins were purged. The details fill many a page of the Pentateuch, but the words "by *Himself*" compass a far greater amplitude, as also an infinite altitude, to which no blood of bulls or of goats could lay claim. Again, in that new union, in which are sunk the distinctions, once so immense, of Jew and Gentile, what other bond is there but "Jesus Christ *Himself*, the chief corner stone"? As His divine Personality availed to bear sin, so it could bind together elements otherwise incongruous by the potent efficacy of His name. Again, Christ will present the church to *Himself*. Can we not see the exquisite fitness of this? Is He not the supreme object of all God's purposes? Undoubtedly it was to save fallen man that He

took the form of a servant, Himself (here again the unfailing stress) partaking of flesh and blood (Heb. ii. 14), but surely the ulterior end was, must be, His exaltation and satisfaction, as it is God's glory. As one has said, "If I ask, 'What am I wanted for in that scene of glory,' the answer is, to be a medium through which that glory may be displayed." And so, when we look at the wider circle, the reconciliation of all things (Col. i. 20) will be "unto Himself." How the renewed mind delights in His exclusive dominion!

But leaving the Epistles, from which we have not cited all the passages bearing on the point, and turning to the Gospels, we read (Luke xxiv. 27) that the risen Lord expounded to His doubtless enraptured hearers from psalmist and prophet "the things concerning *Himself*." The Old Testament is, indeed, full of Him from Genesis to Malachi. If not overt as in the New Testament, it is covert. True we need the anointing of the Holy Ghost, else we shall see (and that very superficially) only what is most obvious in Old or New. The eyes of some, alas, are further dimmed and blurred by groping among the figments of the neo-critics, who, while they tell us certain things (comparatively unimportant) that *may be* true, are in danger of blinding themselves and others to what is of infinite moment. But this by the way. Again, in St. John xxi. 1 and 14, we read that Jesus shewed *Himself* to His disciples. Who else could have started them on their work? They were turning their minds towards their forsaken nets; nothing less than that potent

Personality could suffice to "unmesh them from the literal drag and rope," if one may slightly vary the phrase of a classic writer. But Christ sufficed; and so He intimates to them by that miraculous haul that their work henceforth was to be mainly fishing of a spiritual kind. Lastly, in Luke xxiv. 39, the risen Lord calms His disciples by saying, "It is I *Myself*"—a final reason for allaying fear.

Doctrine is of vital importance. Let us beware of those who would pervert it or whittle it away. They are unsafe guides, for doctrine centres in a Person, Who is supreme.

R. B.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

II.—THE OLD SUPERINTENDENT.

IN the first paper I said I hoped to tell you something more about the Sunday School in South London from which the children came that I heard singing, "Oh! that will be joyful," on the day of their treat.

As I grew older I came to know more about this school, and a cousin of mine being one of the teachers, I was invited once or twice to some special meetings held there. I soon came to know something about the superintendent. His name was W——, and he was indeed most devoted to his work and beloved by the teachers and children. When he had been superintendent for fifty years there was a special meeting in the schoolroom,

and many assembled. There were addresses by several speakers, and during the meeting Mr. W—— was presented with an oil painting of his own portrait.

I recollect that one of the speakers (Mr. G.) had once been a pupil in the Sunday School, and he told us how well he remembered that one afternoon, after leaving school, he had joined with some of the other boys in a piece of mischief, in which they were detected by one of the teachers, whereupon they all scattered, and in attempting to run away he fled right into the opened arms of Mr. W——, who, he said, looked at him with such an expression of pity and sorrow that it quite broke his heart, and cured him of joining in such mischief again. Does that not remind us of what we read in Luke xxii. 61, 62? “And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.”

After Mr. G. had spoken, another of the speakers, pointing to the picture, said: “It is a very good portrait, but it appears too morose for Mr. W——; I should like to see a picture of him as he looked when he was catching young G.”

This, too, reminds me of our hymn:

“I wish that His hands had been placed
on my head,
That His arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind looks
when He said:
‘Let the little ones come unto Me.’”

I must now tell you an anecdote about another superintendent. The Lord had graciously converted three or four of the girls in his Bible class, and they were assembled to be baptised. Before the baptism they were singing a beautiful hymn, in which there was the fullest expression of love to the Lord Jesus, and the superintendent noticed that one of the girls, of whom he had no grounds for believing that she had given her heart to the Lord, was joining in most loudly. He just turned and looked at her, and as she caught his glance she immediately stopped singing; but in a few days she, too, found peace in believing in Jesus, and at the next baptism a few weeks afterwards, she could sing the hymn right through.

Now for another anecdote about our old superintendent. About twelve years later, that is, when he had completed about sixty-two years in the school, I paid my last visit. When one of the teachers was conducting the little service before the dismissal of the school, I stood beside the old gentleman and looked over his hymn-book. The teacher gave out that hymn by Dr. Watts :

“ How condescending and how kind
Was God's Eternal Son ;
Our misery reached His heavenly mind,
And pity brought Him down.”

When we came to the third verse, the old superintendent stopped the singing and spoke to this effect : “ There is a verse left out here,” and then he gave it out, line by line, thus :

“ Now though He reigns exalted high,
His love is still as great ;
Well He remembers Calvary,
Nor let His saints forget.”

This was sung and the following verses, and when the teacher had closed the school by prayer, and the children were leaving class by class, Mr. W—— said to me, “I suppose they left out that verse because they thought children could not understand it, but when a little child believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is as truly a saint as the oldest Christian.”

One more anecdote about the old superintendent. The next year he was at the school as usual and was there seized with illness. The teachers brought a cab to the school door and the dear old gentleman was assisted in; when just as the cabman was starting the horse, he said, “Stop a minute, and bring me one of the new Bibles; I promised the boy, ——, I would give him one.” The Bible was put into his hand, and on reaching his home the old superintendent wrote the boy’s name in it according to his promise. Thus he closed his sixty-three years of Sunday-school work. He then went to bed and the doctor attended him. In a day or two he passed away to be, “For ever with the Lord.”

T. J.

MANSIONS FOR AND IN US.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—You are aware, I have no doubt, that the word “mansions” occurs once only in the Authorized Version, viz., in John xiv. 2. The passage is a familiar one, and the whole context is full of tender associations which strongly appeal to every spiritual mind. Not every one, however, is aware that exactly the same

word occurs again in the same chapter. Nor is the failure to note this fact a matter for surprise, since the identity of the terms is concealed from the English reader by a different translation.

In point of fact, however, the word we read as "mansions" in John xiv. 2, appears as "abode" in John xiv. 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode [mansion] with him."

It is interesting to connect the two texts as they are the only places in the New Testament where this noun occurs. In the first instance, the Lord teaches us (we, as believers, are entitled to take His sayings to ourselves, though He was at the time directly addressing the disciples) that the true abiding places were in the Father's house on high. "In my Father's house are many abodes." It was a truth that would soothe the troubled minds of the apostles, who were just grieving because the Lord was going away. But He reminds them that *above* is the place of permanency. Here is the place of sojourn; there are the dwelling-places. And there on high, where there is no change, no parting, no snapping of links and ties, He was going to prepare a place for them. Into that fixed and changeless scene He would Himself introduce them, for He was coming to receive them unto Himself.

In the other instance, the Lord spoke not of dwelling-places on high, to be entered in the future, but of abodes during the present interval. They both were in connection with the Father

and Himself, and both truths were given to minister comfort to hearts sorrowing over the thought of the Lord's absence. The Lord then told them that so far from being altogether absent from them He, and the Father also, would take up a permanent dwelling-place within them. This, of course, would be in a different manner from that in which He was then among them. He would be with them, not bodily, but none the less really, as the Spirit would give them to know. In effect, therefore, they would not lose the Lord's presence. During the period of waiting for His return from heaven He would be with them, the object of their love and obedience. And with Him the Father also, so that their communion might be with the Father and with His Son.

This privilege, great as it is, and certainly less enjoyed than it might be, is *conditional*. The prospect of being removed to the Father's house is associated with no condition whatever; but the enjoyed presence of the Father and the Son is dependent upon obedience to the word of Christ. "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. The word of Christ is to be found in the scriptures. There you must seek it. And, having found it, you must keep it before you as your guide. You must obey it, and the reward of such obedience is this wonderful intimacy, with which there is nothing to compare. Let it be your aim to know and enjoy it.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

QUERY.

C. M.—CAN YOU GIVE A LITTLE HELP TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF JOHN V. 31 ; VIII. 13, 14? The two passages taken together afford an illustration of the inability of the natural mind to understand spiritual truth. The Lord had pointed out to the Jews that in presenting Himself to them for their acceptance He did so not upon His own bare testimony, but upon that of John the Baptist, of His own miracles, of the Father, and of the scriptures. They were, therefore, entirely without excuse, having not merely a twofold but a fourfold witness. It is in that connection that the Lord said, "If I bear witness of myself my witness is not true" (John v. 31). Clearly, an unsupported testimony is here meant, such as that of Theudas who boasted that he was somebody (Acts v. 36).

The Pharisees took up the words literally, seeking to use them against the Lord. "Thou bearest witness of thyself, thy witness is not true" (John viii. 13). But their accusation only proved their utter ignorance of the Person of Christ. For His witness was not simply human. What *He* spake of Himself was true, because He was the Son from heaven. And His answer to their cavil is the truth concerning Himself. He, in contrast with them, knew whence He came and whither He went. Besides, He said, "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." They could not, therefore, divide between the testimony of the Father and that of the Son (John xiv. 10).

The Jews stumbled at the letter, because they failed to perceive the spirit of the Lord's words. To them it was one of those "discrepancies" which it is the morbid delight of some minds to discover in the scriptures. But the knowledge of Christ is the key to all such difficulties. For He Who spake on earth was not man only but God also.

THE FATHER'S WELCOME.—VIII.

RECONCILIATION TO THE FATHER.

As soon as we have been shewn that the prodigal had set his face to return to the father's house, the deep and full love of the father for his sinful son is exhibited in vivid detail. It was when he saw the returning penitent a great way off that the love which had dwelt so long within his heart found an occasion for action and expression. While the son was yet in the distance the father, impatient to display his unchanged affection for the wilful and wayward youth, ran to meet him. Mercy, pity, and compassion for the one who had tasted the bitter fruits of his own self-will caused the father to be first in the greeting. And, in the ardent plenitude of the father's embrace and the father's kisses, the son found himself welcomed home to the unstinted love of the heart he had wounded so deeply.

The picture is one of reconciliation to God. In the Epistles we have the truth stated in the way of doctrine, while here in the parable it is set forth by means of example. And reconciliation in scripture invariably treats of the new and blessed relationship into which God brings us with Himself—a condition of righteousness, peace, and joy in Himself, embracing, in the language of the parable, not the kiss only but the best robe and the banquet also.

Looking at the manner of the father's welcome, as described in Luke xv., we can discern a feature of divine reconciliation to which it may be well to draw special attention. It is clear that, from the

moment the father saw the son a great way off, to the feast at the table, the father is the prominent figure in the description given us. He runs; he receives with kisses; he provides the best robe, the ring, and the sandals; he spreads the banquet; and he does all these things because in his great love he cannot do less. But the son did nothing to arouse this effusive tenderness. It was not his penitent confession of sin, for that came *after* the welcome. And there is not so much as one word in the parable to indicate that the father had been changed from a state of rigorous austerity to one of compassion and affection. And as far, therefore, as this is an illustration of divine reconciliation, there is no indication whatever of a change of God's mind and disposition towards the sinner. The change is only on the part of the wilful wanderer.

This, indeed, is one of the particulars in which divine differs from human ideas and examples of reconciliation. The term is commonly applied where there had been formerly mutual animosity, but now there is the mutual abandonment of feelings of enmity and acts of hostility. For instance, when Jacob stole his elder brother's blessing from Isaac, Esau hated his deceitful brother exceedingly, and in his fury would have killed him, had he not fled to his uncle Laban. On Jacob's return from Padan-aram, however, Esau's anger had entirely gone; and "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept" (Gen. xxxiii. 4). This is a touching example of reconciliation, but it is, nevertheless, of a human order,

not divine. For, while the sinner committed infinitely greater deeds of provocation against God than Jacob did against Esau, it is not said of God, as of Esau, that He hated the sinner. Esau, the one who was wronged, is the one who relented, and made the reconciliation possible. But this is in no sense a pattern of God's love. For "God commendeth his love toward us, in that *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). It is false to declare that God's hate for the sinner was changed to love in any manner or by any means. The truth is that "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).

To speak therefore of God being reconciled to the sinner is not according to the terms of scripture, especially since "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man" has appeared. The very advent of Christ denies such a thing. For then "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." It was the world that needed reconciliation, not God. And the crucifixion of the Lord of glory shewed that the world would not be reconciled. After that, the word of reconciliation was committed to the apostles, as Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. v. 18—20). And they besought men *to be reconciled* to God.* There is, in fact,

* "You," being in italics, should be omitted, and "ye" also. The apostle was not beseeching the Corinthians to be reconciled, but was speaking of his ministry. The passage has been rendered more literally and correctly, "We are ambassadors therefore for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us, we entreat for Christ, Be reconciled to God."

no passage that supports the notion of God being reconciled to man. But there is ample evidence of the converse. Take the statement on this subject in the Epistle to the Romans: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10). We are the reconciled ones, and we are so now. We have, as believers, been brought into that state Godward. So the apostle goes on to speak of it emphatically as a present condition. "And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have *now* received the reconciliation" (Rom. v. 11—*see margin*).

WHY DO YOU DO SO?

WE get the rule for his [the Christian's] conduct. It is very simple, very sweeping, and uncommonly satisfactory to the heart that really desires to do the will of God. "*Whatsoever* ye do, whether in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17). If we look at that "*Whatsoever* ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," it is bringing all the principle and motive for our conduct from the revelation of a Person Who is everything to us; not forbidding things.

We know in how many things during the week the question arises, Shall I do this or that? Not as to absolutely wrong things; but a person says, What is the harm of that? Are you going to do it in the name of the Lord? No! Then you are getting away from the Lord, and that is the harm

—a great harm for the Christian. In taking a house, or buying a dress, in the way I manage my house, is it “in the name of the Lord Jesus”? What can we say? It is leaving the Lord *out* (not leaving Him altogether), and letting self in. This is what the will of the flesh is.

The Christian has the privilege in everyday things of doing *everything* in the name of the Lord Jesus. People ask if there is any harm in a concert of sacred music. It is a cheat of the devil. Ask if they are going in the name of the Lord Jesus. They know they are not thinking of Him.

Some one says, Can you not come and see this beautiful scenery? God made it; I know He did. Are you going in the name of the Lord Jesus? It is the *object*, that is the thing. God sent honey to Jonathan when he was going through the wood, and he was refreshed by it. Very right and nice. But if he had been *looking* for honey, it would not have been fighting the Lord's battles. There was to be no honey in the sacrifices; but if God sends it, it is right to be refreshed by it, and I am thankful for it.

The question is, where the mind of man is set and living. If a person is in earnest to do the will of God (and the Holy Ghost could not lead us in our own will to amuse and please ourselves; He is not down here for that), if a person is anxious to live to God, and no one else, he says, Give me a simple rule for the things that turn up every day. “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Then I live with Him in the everyday things.

Suppose my father wants this book put *that* way, and I put it *this* way; it may be of no im-

portance, but it is a proof I do not care for my father. If the blessed Lord is all to me, I shall be seeking to do everything in His name. We may forget—alas! we do—but if it is on my heart to please a person, I do not forget. Suppose I am walking thus in everything, I shall taste more of Christ, and it will give fixed happiness, instead of grieving the Spirit for some foolish thing I shall not care for in a few years. I shall have Christ for my object in everything I do.

We think much of those we love in our conduct, and I shall have in my mind what He likes, if I love Him. That is what the Lord looks for as One Who has loved us, and gave Himself for us in grace.

J. N. D.

TENT-LIFE.

Tent-life—for I'm a pilgrim,
 My home is not below ;
 I'm journeying to my country,
 In haste I forward go.
 The desert sands are shifting,
 No structure here I raise,
 But canvas round me flutters,
 Through all my desert days.

Tent-life—when past the judgement,
 On "all things new" I stood ;
 In resurrection freedom
 Acknowledged by my God.
 The tent He gave in blessing
 I gladly now would share
 With those who, not so favoured,
 Are trusted to my care.*

* Gen. ix. 27.

Tent-life—when chosen by Him,
 And called from friends and home
 To journey where He leads me
 In foreign lands to roam.
 I may not build my dwelling,
 But must an altar raise—
 A witness to the worldling
 Of God my Saviour's praise.*

Tent-life—but oh, how favoured
 This fragile dwelling-place !
 For He has deigned to visit
 And fill it, in His grace !
 I gazed in rapturous wonder
 To see Him drawing nigh ;
 He stayed and told His counsels,
 And list'ned to my cry.†

Tent-life—the blood is on me,
 My trespasses are met ;
 Such cleansing and such pardon
 How can I e'er forget !
 The "log of oil," too, sprinkled
 Upon that precious blood,
 Tells not alone of cleansing,
 But power—the gift of God.‡

Tent-life—while as a shepherd
 I seek to feed His sheep,
 I know that He is near me,
 Eternal watch to keep.
 And though it seem unsightly,
 Oh, may my tent oft prove
 A waymark in the desert
 For those who from Him rove ! §

* Gen. xii. 8.

† Gen. xviii. 1.

‡ Lev. xiv. 8—18.

§ Canticles i. 8.

Tent-life—but not for ever :

A *house* for me remains

At home, where in His glory

My God and Father reigns ;

A house which He has builded,

Eternal and secure,

Which, when the tent is perished,

For ever shall endure.

Tent-life—in retrospection,

How will it there appear

When all around's in keeping

With that e'en now most dear ?

Oh ! will the weeping murmurs,

Too oft, alas ! now heard,

Confront me then in glory

In presence of the Lord ?

His grace will thus be proven

In every journey's length ;

The fulness of His patience,

His goodness, and His strength.

My walk will be unfolded ;

Tent-life in light be seen ;

But, oh ! stupendous wonder !

No cloud shall intervene !

Judged every act unholy ;

Each sinful word and thought,

Once hid by canvas round me,

To fullest noontide brought ;

For ever there my dwelling

'Mid those effulgent rays,

Whose distant beams oft gladden

Tent-life, in pilgrim days !

H. C. R.

" If our hearts are not constantly reckoning on the Lord's present power and love for us, the mere *memory* of the past will never help us ; for memory is not faith. Faith is *present* dependence."

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

CHAPTERS II.—IV.

So above man, so opposed to fallen nature, is the truth of Christ, as to involve conflict as well as toil, in such as serve Him. What can one do better than to transcribe the apostle's burning words? "For I would have you know what conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea and as many as have not seen my face in flesh; that their hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding unto right knowledge of the mystery of God, in which are the treasury of wisdom and of knowledge hidden. And this I say that no one may delude you by persuasive speech. For though in the flesh I am absent, yet in the spirit I am with you, rejoicing and seeing your order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted and being builded up in him, and confirmed in the faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in [it with] thanksgiving. See lest there shall be one that leadeth you astray through philosophy and vain deceit according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are filled full [*or*, complete] in Him, who is the head of all principality and power, in whom also ye were circumcised with circumcision not

done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; buried together with him in baptism, in which ye were also raised together, through faith in the working of God that raised him out of the dead. And you being dead in the offences and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he quickened you together with him, having forgiven us all the offences, having blotted out the handwriting in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and hath taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross; having stripped he made show of the principalities and powers, openly triumphing over them by it. Let none therefore judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of feasts, or new-moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. Let no one cheat you, a voluntary in humility and worship of the angels, treading on things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed by the mind of his flesh, and not holding fast the head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God" (chap. ii. 1—19).

None on earth knew as the apostle how all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in the mystery, or secret, God now reveals in Christ. Philosophy which flatters men's minds was as vain to penetrate and unfold it as the law which condemned his unrighteousness and left God in the dark. Man was thus exposed to worship of the angels, not those who beheld by faith all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ bodily, and

themselves made full in Him Who is the head of all principality and power ; and this in virtue of a redemption which gives in Christ the fullest force to the old rite of circumcision and the actual sign of baptism. For the truth goes farther than His death and resurrection, and declares that God quickened ourselves together with Him, having forgiven us all our offences. Hence the reflected light of ancient ordinances, as but shadow, passes away for such as hold fast the Head, unfailing in His gracious supply.

And he thus applies it. " If ye died with Christ from the elements of the world, why as alive in the world do ye subject yourselves to ordinances (Handle not, nor taste, nor touch, which things are all for corruption with the using), according to the injunctions and teachings of men: things such as have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and unsparingness of the body, not in a certain honour, unto satisfaction of the flesh " (verses 20—23). But more, " If ye then were raised together with Christ, seek the things above where Christ is sitting at God's right hand ; mind the things above, not those on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory " (iii. 1—4). The Christian is not only quickened, but quickened and raised together with Christ, and thus he has new life in its highest character. It is hidden because Christ is hidden, hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall be manifested, then shall we too be manifested with

Him in glory. How close and blessed is the association!

Practical consistency is next pressed. "Put to death then your members that [are] upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil lust, and covetousness, which is idolatry, on account of which things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience; among whom ye also walked once when ye lived in these things. But now ye put off also all the things, wrath, anger, malice, blasphemy, shameful speech out of your mouth. Lie not to one another, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new that is being renewed into knowledge, according to his image that created him; where there can be no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bondman, free-man, but Christ is the all, and in all." Thus Christ and His work, and our association with Him dead and risen, become the standard of every-day walk for the Christian. Higher there cannot be, if our union with Him on high be added; lower is not acceptable to God Who thus blessed us in Him, but a slight to His grace.

Nor is it only deliverance from the corruption and the violence of the flesh, as we already had from its philosophy and its religion; the positive is not omitted. "Put on then, as elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving each other, if any should have a complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye. And over all these

[put] love, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of Christ rule [arbitrate] in your hearts, to which also ye were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing each other, with psalms and hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. And every [thing] whatever ye do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and [the] Father through him" (iii. 5—17). It will be noticed that the peace and the word are Christ's; all here is to exalt Him, and detach from every rival.

Then from verse 18 follow special relationships on earth, but in the Lord: wives and husbands, children and fathers; bondmen and masters; (the first verse of chapter iv. being strangely dislocated from the close of chapter iii.). The Lord, the Lord Christ, is the key-note. He is the master's Master in heaven.

From verse 2 is the call to perseverance in prayer and watching with thanksgiving, and prayers for him that he might speak the mystery of Christ, to which he attributes his bonds, that he might manifest it as he ought to speak. He exhorts that we walk in wisdom towards those without, redeeming the fit time; and that their speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Tychicus and Onesimus would make known to them all about Paul and things at Rome, and the former would report their matters to him. Then follow from verse 10 the salutations of many fellow-labourers by name, with instructive com-

ments, greeting to the brethren in Laodicea and the assembly in the house of Nymphas, direction as to the Epistle and a companion one, and a charge to Archippus, not to be slighted. And as in his early letters, so in this late one, Paul's salutation is with his own hand. He reminds them of his bonds, and prays that grace be with them. It is altogether a needed and noble Epistle.

W. K.

A THANK OFFERING.

IN a certain town two Christian ladies had been labouring for several years among the young, instructing them in the simple truths of the gospel of Christ. The good results of such labour are often a long time before they are seen. Many disappointments and discouragements have to be met: prayer, faith, and perseverance are greatly needed to be enabled to go on with the task without wavering. So we must not be surprised to hear that these two workers were tempted to be cast down, after serving a long time, with little apparent fruit to their labour.

Several years before the time of which I speak, there had been a lad in the class who was led to think about the welfare of his soul. God wrote upon his memory many precious truths of His word, which were afterwards to prove of real value to him. After a time his eyes were fully opened and he was enabled to rejoice in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. He never forgot the class where the Lord began to work with him: and he longed to

shew his gratitude. He knew that when he was of age, he would come into possession of a small sum of money; and he purposed that he would then give five pounds of it as a "thank offering," to be used in the service among the young, which the Lord had used to his own blessing.

This he carried out just at the time when the two workers were so cast down. And when the young man knocked at their door, and told them who he was, and what his errand was, their tone of sadness was soon changed to praise and thanksgiving.

Is not this another case where the bread "cast on the waters" was "seen after many days"? And surely no "labour in the Lord" will ever be in vain, however disappointing and discouraging things may appear. We "have need of patience." We have also need to consider well God's perfect Servant (the Lord Jesus), lest we be wearied and faint in our minds.

A word may be added as to the "thank offering." Real gratitude to our God becomes us all for His wondrous grace. This He looks for from us. And He has not left us ignorant as to how we may shew it, and what He appreciates. When the Lord Jesus was here, "there were certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities," who shewed their gratitude by "ministering unto Him of their substance." He is not here now, but He takes what is done in service to His saints, as done unto Himself. Doing it to *Him* should be the mainspring of all our actions. He looks that there should be "first

a willing mind," then He accepts according to what we have.

See how He regarded the widow's mites. I have heard of an old Christian woman, living on parish allowance, who always put by a penny every Lord's day morning. She was carrying out the injunction where *everyone* is told to lay by him in store *as God has prospered him* (1 Cor. xvi. 2). If with an exercised conscience before Him we are willing to give according as He has prospered us, most surely that which we purpose in our heart to give will be the right sum. If we have before us God's "unspeakable gift," we shall never give niggardly, nor grudgingly, but cheerfully: we shall delight to "in some small degree, return His love again."

With such a desire may we "lay aside on the first day of the week," for the poor of the flock, or the general service of the Lord. Though this is by no means the only occasion we have this privilege, but as opportunities arise we are told to "do good and communicate," for "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." His children have the first claim; but we are to do good unto all men as we have the opportunity. Such self-sacrifice goes up, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing with God." To give the merest trifle (a cup of cold water) to one because he belongs to Christ is appreciated by Him. Whatever we do, may all be done "*heartily as to the Lord.*"

w.c.

TABERNACLE NOTES.—I.

It is a striking fact that, whilst *two chapters in Genesis* suffice to tell how the world was framed, the Holy Ghost uses some *sixteen chapters in Exodus* to make known, in a most comprehensive manner, the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture. We may be quite sure that the *church* (God's house) is of far greater importance to Him than the *world*; for we read that "He is the Saviour of all men, *especially of those that believe*" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

The tabernacle cannot be dissociated from the history of Israel, who, as God's early chosen people, were peculiarly blessed and highly favoured, and, in some particulars, resemble the church of God now. They were a "*called-out*" people. "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Hosea xi. 1 and Matt. ii. 15). It is well to observe that Exodus (the title of the book which makes us so very familiar with Israel's deliverance from bondage, &c.) means "*a way out*"; and how sweet it is to meditate upon the wonderful means of exit which God ordained for those people. Is He not, in grace, still calling out sons from under sin's thralldom? The heaven-sent Deliverer Himself said, "*I am the way*" (Jno. xiv. 6). When brought out from captivity, and pilgrims in the wilderness, with a promised inheritance in view, the Israelites were favoured with the special presence of Jehovah, Who said, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 8). He could find only *one* dwelling-place here below then, and that was in the heart,

or "midst," of His own; even so, at this present time, what was said to the church of God at Corinth has its application to those only who are "chosen out of the world." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16).

From the early history of the world God has had His *witnesses*; both in the shape of living persons as well as inanimate objects—the former to speak in audible tones into the ears of their fellows; the latter to convey great truths, concerning Himself, to the heart, by means of the eye. Psalm xix. shows very forcefully that the heavenly bodies have "no speech nor language," and that "their voice is not heard" (read without the words in italics); yet they "declare the glory of God," "utter speech," and "shew knowledge." If Christians remembered that the tabernacle with all its gorgeous furniture was not intended of God to be *copied* by them, in this period of His *grace*; but rather to be *studied* as one of heaven's silent teachers, they surely would regard it in its true light. For the Old Testament speaks of it as a divinely appointed *witness*. In Numbers ix. 15 we read, "And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the *tent of the testimony*." The same thought is given in Stephen's address in the New Testament in Acts vii. 44; where he says, "Our fathers had the *tabernacle of witness* in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen." And it may be well to remark here,

in this first paper, that nothing whatever was left to the ingenuity of Moses or those engaged in the work. The Lord, and He alone, was the designer of everything in connection with His own house or dwelling-place; for "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make *all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount*" (Heb. viii. 5). Not the ablest or greatest of God's servants was allowed to deviate one hair's breadth from the divine architect's plan! May not the present-day builders in "the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. iii. 15) find a useful lesson here?

This sanctuary is replete with evidence of a most impressive character. It tells of a God Who is glorious, just, merciful, and gracious, and of a Saviour Who suffered—the just for the unjust. It fully sets out atonement by blood, and speaks, unmistakably, of "one Mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus." It throws light upon the calling, present standing, and future glory of the church. From the smallest pin of brass to the solid mercy-seat of pure gold, all is full of instruction as an "example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. viii. 5), or as "figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 24).

A.R.C.

"It is a great thing to minister what the soul is fed with by God. It may be but one thought, but then that thought is the channel between Christ and the heart. The Christ Who feeds one can feed a thousand."

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

III.—THE NEW SCHOOL AND THE FIRST SCHOLAR.

IN the year 1864 there arose in the hearts of some of the Lord's servants engaged in gospel work, a desire to open a Sunday School in one of the rooms which was usually well filled in the evening, but unoccupied in the afternoon. This was made the subject of united prayer, and two or three meetings were convened in my house for the practical consideration of the subject.

The commencement of the work was resolved upon, and I was asked to superintend the new school, three or four willing helpers coming forward for the work. At the last of these preliminary meetings, while we were upon our knees, and just before the breaking up of the meeting, one of the brothers gave utterance to this short petition: "O Lord, we pray Thee to convert the first child that comes to that school."

The following Sunday afternoon I proceeded, key and books in hand, to open the door, where I was soon joined by one of the teachers. The school door was approached by rather a long path from the pavement, and after waiting a few minutes, we were gladdened by seeing two little sisters coming, hand in hand, down the path. On their reaching the school door, I asked the elder, "What is your name?" and was answered, "Mary Ann W——." I wrote it, with the address added, in the admission book, and then enquired of the younger one, "And what is your name?" Answer,

“Eliza W——.” This was duly entered, while the teacher shewed them where to sit, and I turned to look out for the next arrivals.

For several years the work continued and many dear children confessed to having had the word spoken in W——k school made the means of their soul's salvation; still I must own that I had preserved no written or memory record of the time and circumstances under which Mary Ann and Eliza W—— left the school, which event took place before the time of my own removal to another part of London. But though we fail, “He abideth faithful,” and in the condescension of His grace the Lord permitted me to know that He had answered the prayer: “O Lord, we pray Thee to convert the first child that comes to that school.”

Several years after the foregoing circumstances, I called at the house of a Christian brother, when he said: “Oh! Mr. J——, we were talking about you yesterday. My wife has engaged a new servant, who told her she was converted at the W——k school one Sunday afternoon when you gave the address at the close.” To this very welcome announcement I replied and asked: “Can you tell me the name of the young person?” and was answered: “Yes, Mary Ann W——.” How these words brought to my remembrance the brother's prayer, the Lord's faithfulness, and my own weakness and failure in *watching* for His answers of mercy.

Still a few years later, I was asked to give a short address at a meeting of Sunday School

teachers in yet another part of London, and I gave the foregoing anecdote as an illustration of the importance of prayer and the Lord's faithfulness in answering. A few minutes later, the brother who had invited me to the meeting came to me bringing with him two bright and earnest-looking young men, and said to me, "Mr. J——, I wish to ask if you remember these friends; I may say before them that they are two of the most diligent teachers in one of the schools here represented, and they were both of them pupils at W——k school at the time you were there."

T. J.

SALT, VINEGAR, AND MUSTARD.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—You will remember that the Lord in speaking to His disciples said to them, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. v. 13). The figure is not a difficult one to understand, for salt and its uses are familiar to all. You would probably find it difficult to imagine how we could get on at all in the matter of the food-necessaries of life without salt. Its valuable preservative property causes it to be used most extensively. Indeed it has been remarked that we salt almost everything, except salt itself. Being what is termed an antiseptic, its presence in an otherwise perishable article arrests decay and prevents corruption setting in. And in Eastern countries the use of salt to preserve from putrefaction is even more extensive than in our own land.

The Lord, therefore, in speaking of His disciples as the salt of the earth, taught them that as His followers they exercised a quiet but powerful influence in checking the spread of evil. The constant tendency of evil is to disperse itself abroad and corrupt what is good. Of this tendency leaven is the scriptural figure. But the very opposite of this is salt. So that we may say the presence of salt, in a sense, counteracts the presence of leaven.

Every believer is a witness for God and Christ, and a world absolutely without one witness for Him would be a terrible place. It could only be devoted to judgement like Jericho without Rahab, and Sodom and Gomorrah without Lot and his family, and the antediluvian earth without Noah and his family. It is the presence of the faithful man of God that spreads abroad a savour of godliness and righteousness, so that God and His claims cannot be forgotten altogether by the world. The person that honours God in life and ways is a reminder to those who omit to do so, and thus he sheds around him a quiet and (often-times) silent influence for good.

It will be well, therefore, for you, my young friends, to remember these words: "Ye are the salt of the earth." And wherever you may be, cultivate an unceasing regard for what is due to the name of the Lord. Maintain your character as a follower of the Lord Jesus, and never sink down to the level of the world. Against this very danger the Lord warned His disciples in the words we have been considering. "But if the salt

have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men." If you are the only Christian in a company of persons, and you fail in your testimony, there is clearly no testimony at all. And what is the good of you?

No: you must stand for your Master whether it be before the world, or before worldly professors; the latter being, perhaps, the special application of the verse. As to fellow-believers, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark ix. 50).

Salt is also used as a condiment. It flavours the food, excites the appetite, and assists the digestion. And this seasoning property is also alluded to in scripture. "Let your conversation [speech] be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. iv. 6). Our words, therefore, are to be redolent with grace, the love and compassions of God towards us forming our speech. Then in addition it is to be untainted by any corrupt communication (Eph. iv. 29), but seasoned with the salt of God's holiness and truth, making a suitable reply to every person who questions you. Take a simple instance. Someone asks you how you liked the preaching. "Oh, it was very nice indeed." Well, there may be grace in such a speech, but as you invariably say the same words whoever preaches, there is no salt in it. To be always saying that everything is "nice" to you is very insipid indeed. Besides, it implies that all discourses are alike, which is not true. If you had

said, It was solemn, or simple, or instructive, or establishing, or earnest, or forcible, or—whatever was the truth about it, there would have been a suitable flavour with your words.

But remember the word is to be “in grace,” and the salt is only to be added as seasoning. Don’t use too large pinches at a time, or you may develop into that very troublesome and irritating and mostly useless creature—the self-important critic.

Vinegar in scripture signifies a sour kind of wine which was used as a drink by poor people. The Nazarite was to abstain from it as well as from other wines (Num. vi. 3). When Ruth went into the harvest-field at Bethlehem to glean, Boaz said to her, “At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar” (Ruth ii. 14). It was clearly the common drink for the toilers in the field. And the Spirit of Christ in David said, speaking of His coming sufferings, “In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psalm lxix. 21).

This prophecy was fulfilled at the Lord’s crucifixion, as we read in all four of the Gospels (Matt. xxvii. 48; Mark xv. 36; Luke xxiii. 36; John xix. 29). It was at the close of His suffering ere He yielded up His spirit, as John tells us, “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar,

he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

But you must distinguish the vinegar which the Lord received in this manner from that "mingled with gall" which was offered to the Lord at the beginning of the crucifixion (Matt. xxvii. 34). This was a stupefying drink intended to deaden pain [Mark says "wine mingled with myrrh" (xv. 23)]. And this the Lord refused to receive. "When he had tasted thereof he would not drink."

The ordinary vinegar, or wine, spoken of was in taste so sour as to set a person's teeth on edge, as we say, and thus somewhat unpleasant. This fact is used in the Old Testament to point a proverb for the benefit of indolent persons. "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him" (Prov. x. 26). If you are doing anything for a person, do it as smartly as you can. A Latin proverb says, "He who gives quickly gives twice." Don't, then, be a dawdler. You are a stumbling-block in the way of others, like a person slouching along the pavement hinders the progress of others who feel that "time is earnest." "Whatsoever you do, do it *heartily*, as unto the Lord."

Scholars are uncertain as to the identity of what is spoken of in scripture as the *mustard-tree*. Their uncertainty, however, should not prevent us from readily apprehending the force of its use as an illustration.

Its seed is characterized as being "the least of all seeds that be in the earth" (Mark iv. 30-32). It grows up, however, to such a size that the fowls

of the air can come and lodge in the branches of it. From being very small it becomes very large; hence the Lord chose it as a symbol of the kingdom of God. Those who followed Him at first were but few and poor indeed; but as time went on how the numbers of those professing to own His name multiplied! And then it was that the fowls of the air (emissaries of Satan, Matt. xiii. 4, 19) came and lodged in its branches. The figure is one of the present state of Christendom.

The Lord used the same illustration in another connection. When the disciples could not cast out a demon on one occasion, they asked the Master for the reason. He told them it was because of their unbelief; for, said He, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. xvii. 20). And He spoke similarly on another occasion when they said, Lord, increase our faith (Luke xvii. 5, 6), shewing them that the efficacy of faith depends not so much upon its "size" (what could be tinier than a mustard seed?) as upon the Person who is trusted. We do read of great faith and mighty faith, but, after all, it is not the power of the faith itself, but the Lord's power that accomplishes the work.

But I must stop short here, and apologise for being so lengthy this time.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

QUERY.

B.B.—WHO WROTE THE EPISTLE OF JUDE? The principal if not the only direct evidence that we have for the identification of the writer is his own statement that he was the "brother of James" (ver. 1). Now we find that there were two among the apostles named James and Jude (that is, Judas or Judah) who are classed together. And from the various references we gather that the latter had the additional names of Thaddæus and Lebbæus. Matthew gives the pair as "James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus" (Matt. x. 3). Mark reads "James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus" (Mark iii. 18). Luke however, in the Gospel and in the Acts, joins Simon Zelotes with James of Alphæus, and the brother with Judas Iscariot. But as both are named Judas, the former is carefully distinguished from the traitor by being called "Judas the brother of James" (Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13). For the same purpose of distinction from the betrayer, John speaks of him as Judas "not Iscariot" (John xiv. 22). It is therefore fairly conclusive that the writer of the Epistle for apostate times was the apostle Judas, once a companion of that other Judas who was himself such a notorious apostate. The argument that Jude could not be an apostle because he does not call himself such is of little or no weight; neither does the apostle John in his Epistles, nor Paul in writing to the Thessalonians and the Philippians.

Another James and Judas are mentioned as being among the brethren of the Lord (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3); but these are expressly distinguished from the apostolic band (Acts i. 13, 14). We know nothing more concerning them, James only receiving a casual reference, and that on one occasion only (Gal. i. 19).

ONE OF A CITY AND TWO OF A FAMILY.

JEREMIAH'S earlier prophecies were delivered in the reign of Josiah, the boy-king of Judah. They are full of solemn warnings and denunciations against idolatry. It appears the more remarkable that his ministry should take such a character when we remember that there was a very considerable reformation in the religion of Jerusalem during that reign. Idols and idol priests were destroyed. The beautiful temple of Jehovah which had fallen into neglect and decay was renovated. The law itself with its divine requirements which had been forgotten and lost, was discovered and reinstated in its place of supreme authority. But in spite of all this the prophecies call aloud for Judah's repentance of heart, and warn also of an impending doom.

The reason, after all, is not far to seek; it is even declared in the prophecy itself. "Judah has not turned unto me with her *whole* heart," the Lord said. This was the secret. There was a good deal of cleansing, but it was chiefly the outside of the platter; and hence it was before Jehovah that Judah would break out in rebellion again. Josiah would be succeeded by Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. The judgement would then inevitably fall, and the guilty nation would be taken captive to Babylon, even as the ten tribes of Israel had already been taken away by the king of Assyria.

But amid the doleful descriptions of overwhelming evil and overhanging woe, it is cheering to observe that the faithful few are not overlooked. Athwart the lowering heavens shines the rainbow of promise. What has been called an "astonishing accumulation of images of sorrow" is relieved by gleams of Jehovah's merciful consideration for those who refuse to follow a multitude to do evil. If the mass of the people are swept away by the destructions of the Lord, the "little flock" will be safely housed. For He will preserve them throughout the time of the great tribulation, and bring them into millennial blessing beyond. "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely." For "I will take you," saith Jehovah, "I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jer. iii. 14).

But no more is now desired than briefly to draw attention to the divine principle here illustrated of God's particular regard for individuals and for the smallest possible companies. The ones and the twos are here declared to be those who will become the recipients of His special grace. Amid the general apostasy, there were solitary instances of men firm for the truth and loyal to God—just one in a city and two in a family (or clan)—and Jehovah's Shepherd would turn His hand upon such little ones (Zec. xiii. 7) for protection and preservation.

We may see throughout scripture similar instances of God preserving a witness for Himself amid dark days of departure from Himself. In antediluvian times there was such a scene. We

read in the beginning, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). But we read again, "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. vi. 12). The light of testimony however was not altogether extinguished, for amid all the corruption, both Enoch and Noah walked with God (Gen. v. 24; vi. 9).

Take again the rebellion of heart shewn by the children of Israel in the wilderness. They all passed through the sea, and all ate the same "spiritual meat;" but they did not all enter the land of Canaan. For their hearts were filled with unbelief, and their "carcasses fell in the wilderness." But there was one of the tribe of Judah and one of the tribe of Ephraim who followed the Lord fully, and stood for God amid the evil murmurings of the Israelites. "All the congregation bade stone them with stones" for their faithful testimony (Num. xiv. 6-10). But the glory of Jehovah appeared on their behalf.

Look again at the idolatrous corruption which pervaded the kingdom of Israel in the days of Ahab. This king "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." But there was a prophet raised up in Gilead beyond Jordan to carry the word of God to the wicked monarch. Then Elijah was directed to Zarephath, where faith in God and faithfulness were found in a poor widow and her son. Here and there in the land, apparently unknown for the most part, one to another, were no

less than seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. They were *faithful* amid the apostasy.

At the time when all Jerusalem was troubled by the news of One being born King of the Jews, having lost the truth of the promises made to their fathers, there was however an aged Simeon in the temple, ready to take the Holy Babe in his arms, and a widowed Anna to give thanks at the sight also, and to carry the intelligence to others in Jerusalem who were waiting for redemption.

Bethsaida was a place specially denounced by the Lord, inasmuch as it resisted the testimony of His mighty works which would have caused even Tyre and Sidon to have repented long before in dust and ashes. But there were one or two exceptions. "Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter" (John i. 44).

The apostle Paul had to write to Timothy the sorrowful statement that "all they which are in Asia be turned away from me." But amid the general abandonment of the apostle there was a sweet exception in the case of Onesiphorus and his household. He ministered to the faithful servant of Christ not in Ephesus only, but at Rome, where he was not ashamed to own the prisoner in chains as an apostle and a brother (2 Tim. i. 15-18).

The brief epistle of Jude, which treats of the general apostasy of the Christian profession, contemplates the whole period from the deliverance of the faith to the saints unto the Lord's second coming, and it implies a testimony maintained by the beloved of God throughout the dark days.

OVERWHELMED.

"Overwhelmed" ! * 'Twas God indited
Words which else we ne'er might frame,
Passing all our hearts could fathom
Of Thy cross of deepest shame.
Mute we stand before those terrors,
See the breakers rise around ;
Gaze, Lord Jesus, and adore Thee
Who for us hast made "dry ground."

"Overwhelmed" ! "No place of standing":
Such Thy words, O Lord, and we
Wonder as we hear these accents
Echo from that cursed tree :
"Many waters" surging round Thee,
"Deep, so deep" the flood-tides call ;
Precious Saviour, willing Victim,
Thou hast stemmed them, stemmed them all.

Left alone beneath the judgement,
Wringing from Thee that one cry
Which bespoke how keen Thine anguish
In the sinner's stead to die.

"Overwhelmed" ! we bow and worship
At Thy feet, Thou worthy Lord,
Seated now enthroned in heaven,
Risen, glorious, adored.

Seated there beyond all powers,
Far excelling glory Thine,
Thine alone by every title,
Thine by worthiness divine ;
We adore Thee, Lord most holy,
Standing where Thy feet have trod,
Past the swelling tide of judgement,
In the dwelling-place of God.

* See the title of Psalm cii.

Crystal walls *our* way protected
As we passed through death's dark tide ;
Thou didst bear its fullest pressure
When on Calvary crucified.
Sound we then, blest Lord, Thy triumphs,
Thou hast overcome, and we,
Glad, ascribe to Thee the glory,
Now, and for eternity !

H.C.R.

UNSEEMLY MERRIMENT.

THERE is an unseemly and coarse merriment to which many abandon themselves in conversation. I speak not of innocent mirth and pleasantry. Religion proscribes nothing of this. But there is a species of buffoonery, a jesting about everything, sacred or profane, which is unbecoming in a *wise* man, to say nothing of a Christian. "As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity" (Eccl. vii. 6).

And here let me specially warn you against profane jokes, and ludicrous applications of holy scripture. There may be a strong temptation, to some minds, to repeat these. They raise a laugh at the time ; but the mind of the hearers may suffer all through life from distressing associations of this kind with holy writ, which they cannot get quit of.

Then, too, mirth is often at the expense of the character or the feelings of another. Conversation is made up of ill-natured tales and reports, either false, or if true, far better forgotten. All the gossip of the place is repeated—what our neigh-

hours are about, and all the foolish things, or wrong things which they have done, or mean to do.

The conversation of some, especially of young persons, is frequently something worse than this: loose, and filthy communications, inflaming each others fleshly appetites; the repetition of coarse, obscene wit; mocking at sin; or making a shameful boast of success in sin.

Another, and a very grievous sin of the tongue, is the utterance of oaths; a hasty cursing of this or that person or thing from mere momentary irritation. Men may say they mean nothing by it, but God accounts it not so. Whether He be expressly named or otherwise, He is virtually appealed to, and will judge accordingly. Akin to this is the light use of His holy name in those too common expressions, "Good God!" "God bless me!" and the like. Think as you will, that word stands unrepealed against such language, "I will not hold them guiltless."—*Extracted.*

THE YOKE OF CHRIST.

THE voice of Christ that proclaims aloud the gift of conscience-rest to all who will come to Him, goes on to invite the comers to take upon them His yoke. The toiling and burdened ones who respond to that cry and come to the Lord are set at rest before Him by His word. But it is not always that they heed, as they might do, His further call: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke

is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 29, 30). And yet this plain call to pure and faithful discipleship must not be ignored by any who would find that rest of heart of which the Lord speaks.

The yoke is a familiar figure in scripture, and is employed to set forth submission and servitude. Thus when Jehovah sent the word of warning to the nations round about Jerusalem of the coming conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, He commanded Jeremiah to send them yokes of wood, and to tell them that those nations who brought their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon should continue to live in their own lands (Jer. xxvii. 11). The symbol plainly meant that they must submit to the power of the Babylonish monarch. Again, the apostle Paul in writing to Timothy speaks of slaves as those who were "under the yoke" (1 Tim. vi. 1). Further, because the law exacted such implicit obedience to its commands without mercy for its breakers it is called a "yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1). And Peter, speaking in the Christian council at Jerusalem, referred to that law as a yoke, which, said he, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10). Clearly, therefore, to take the yoke signifies to enter into an obligation of obedience and service.

But why should there not be the readiest response to this wish of Christ? The yoke of sin (Rom. vi.) and Satan was grievous indeed; but the yoke of the lowly Nazarene is easy. The contrast is not as it was between the yoke of Solomon and the yoke of Rehoboam (1 Kin. xii.

1—15). The people of Israel besought the son of Solomon at his accession, saying, "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." But Rehoboam followed the counsel of young and foolish men like himself, and said to them, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

The yoke of Christ however is easy. And it is easy just because it brings us into association with Christ Himself. There is nothing to which the new nature within us is so disposed to answer as to a call to companionship with the Lord Jesus. He was under the yoke of obedience to the will of God; for He said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He took upon Himself the form of a servant. He came not to be served, but to serve. He was here to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. And as disobedience characterised the first man, Adam, so obedience characterised the second Man, the Lord from heaven.

Now we are called to take this yoke of absolute submission to the will of God. And in the immediate context we have an exemplification of what this yoke involved in the Lord's own history. We have in this chapter (without going further back) an account of the unbelieving despondency of such a man as John the Baptist. His soul was invaded by doubts as to whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. The general opinion concerning

the Son of Man was that He was "a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." And Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, the favoured witnesses of the Lord's mighty works, were hardened in unbelief. So that the Son of David stood there rejected by the people whom He came to save.

And how does He comport Himself in this time of trial? The yoke is upon Him; and it is easy, too, for He finds His delight in the will of God, whatever that may be. The obedient Son says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." In the sense of the accomplishment of the Father's will He found rest to His soul.

Such, beloved, was the yoke of Christ; and He has said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls." It is in this practical subjection of heart and will that we become like Him. To be standing for and struggling for the accomplishment of our own selfish purposes is utterly opposed to this spirit. For the attainment of our own ends we require that the self-confidence and high-mindedness of the flesh should work within us; but for the exhibition of the Christ-like spirit we need meekness and lowliness of heart.

In order to learn the true nature of this kind of spiritual excellence it is necessary to contemplate the history of Christ on earth, as given us in the Gospels. "Learn of me," said the Lord Himself.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” said the Spirit of God (Phil. ii. 5). On Him then we must look. Mark every word and every act. Everything proclaims the presence of One essentially opposed in principle to all who preceded Him. A single motive was His—obedience to God. And now having marked out the path, He calls for disciples to follow Him, to bear His yoke, to learn of Him.

In that path we profess to be treading. But is that soul-rest which the Lord promised, our continual portion? Lowliness of mind and gentleness of heart are of great price in the divine estimation. They are the reproduction of the traits displayed by God’s beloved Son. May they be in us and abound!

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THIS Epistle has an interest peculiar to itself, as being the first inspired writing of the apostle. It is addressed to an assembly gathered a short time before by his (with others’) labours, fresh in zeal and all due spiritual affections, but necessarily immature in knowledge. This led, it would seem, to the remarkable character of the inscription, “Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, to the assembly of Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” There they are viewed in the closest and highest association,

babes in the Father and the Son (John x.) The workmen used toward them were giving thanks always for them, with mention in their prayers.

Could it be otherwise with those who remembered, unceasingly, not their "work" only but its "faith," their "labour of love, their endurance of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father?" All the great springs of power wrought in their souls and ways, and this in God's sight: what a testimony, as brethren beloved by God, to their election (verses 1—4), and to the power of the gospel, truly in the Holy Spirit and much assurance, according to the life of those who preached it (verse 5)! Hence they became imitators of them and of the Lord, having accepted the word in much tribulation with joy of the Holy Spirit, so as to become a model to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia (verse 7). Nay more: the word of the Lord had sounded out from them, not only in these two Roman provinces, but in every place their faith God-ward had gone forth; "so that we have no need to say anything, for they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you." What a wonder then, or at any time! "And how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to await his Son from the heavens, whom he raised out from the dead, Jesus the deliverer from the wrath to come" (8—10). Yes, it is the faith, the walk of love and truth, and the hope.

In chapter ii. the apostle depicts the true workman in guileless suffering and unselfish love, as pleasing God, seeking no glory from men, but

gentle as a nurse, and faithful as a father, that they should walk worthy of God, "who calleth you unto His own kingdom and glory" (verses 1—12). "And for this cause also we give thanks to God unceasingly that, having received God's word reported from us, ye accepted, not men's word, but even as it is truly, God's word, which also worketh in you that believe." This only brings into living relationship with Him, and keeps there; proved by endurance of suffering for it, as the Jewish assemblies, and the apostles, yea, in the highest degree the Lord Himself, from the envious hatred of the unbelieving Jews, on whom is come wrath to the uttermost (13—16). It is true that Satan may hinder, and grace may call us elsewhere; but he presents the Lord's coming as the unfailing joy when all the fruits of love shall, without fail, bloom in His presence Who produced them. "For ye are our glory and joy" (17—20). To His coming then should we all look thus, which more than makes up for all drawbacks.

From chapter iii. we learn that as persecution followed the apostle, so it pressed on the young saints in Thessalonica; and Timotheus was sent by him to them, that none might be moved by these afflictions, though he had forewarned of all, and that the tempter might be foiled (verses 1—5). But Timotheus on his return filled the apostle with good tidings of their faith and love (6—8), as the apostle attests his joy before God, and prays "our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus to direct our way unto you; and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another,

and toward all, even as we also toward you, unto the establishment of your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (9—13). When He comes *with* His saints, not before, will be manifested in perfection that holiness which flows from and is maintained by love.

In chapter iv. the apostle presses purity and love, proper to the disciples of the Lord Jesus, and called for by habits which ignored both. Not only is He the avenger of unclean wrongs, but God gave us His Holy Spirit as power in sanctification (verses 1—8). So the saints are themselves God-taught to love one another, ambitious of being quiet and doing their own affairs, and working with their own hands, in order to a reputable walk and need of nobody. Not till then does the apostle correct the fancy that the dead saints would lose much at the Lord's coming (13—18). The Thessalonians were so absorbed by that hope as to conceive that only those who survived till then would be in its full blessing. Had they overlooked His own death and resurrection? Did they leave out of His triumph Stephen, James (John's brother), and many another fallen asleep, to say nothing of the Old Testament saints? The apostle assures that God will bring with Jesus those put to sleep through Jesus. So mistaken was it that we, the living that remain to His coming, shall anticipate those put to sleep. Then he explains as a new revelation how this is to be effected. "For the Lord himself with a shout, with archangel's voice, and with trump of God,

will descend from heaven ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we, the living that remain, shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." What cheer so great ?

Chapter v. takes up the manifestation of the Lord with His own when He judges the world ; that is, His day, which was no new truth, but familiar in all prophecy. His day so comes as a thief in the night, and with sudden destruction. It does not so overtake Christians who are sons of light and of day. Such then should watch and be sober, putting on suited armour ; because God set us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, that, whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with Him. "Wherefore encourage one another," etc. (verses 1—10). Then follow short but precious exhortations : to recognise those labouring and taking the lead ; to be in peace among themselves ; to admonish, encourage, sustain, and be long-suffering ; none to render evil for evil, but always to pursue the good mutually and toward all. "Always rejoice ; unceasingly pray ; in everything give thanks, for this is God's will in Christ Jesus concerning you. The Spirit quench not ; prophesying despise not ; but prove all things ; the good hold fast ; from every form of wickedness hold aloof. Now the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and your spirit and soul and body be preserved as a whole blamelessly at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also perform " (11—24).

Then the brethren are asked to pray for the apostle and those with him ; as all the brethren were greeted with holy kiss. And with remarkable solemnity he adjures them by the Lord that the Epistle be read to all the (holy) brethren, and wishes the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with them. None thought less of himself than the apostle ; yet none had so deep a sense of the all-importance to the saints, everyone, of these special communications from the Lord as the Epistles ; and the first from Paul implies this in the highest degree. Compare also 2 Thessalonians iii. 17.

W.K.

POWER AND NEARNESS.

DEMONSTRATION of power never invigorates the soul, unless it is connected with private communion with the Lord, and then it is the communion and not the power which confers the blessing. The power is to give effect to service, but is always followed by depression and disheartenment unless the soul is kept in secret nearness to the Lord.

We learn this from the chapter before us. Here was Elijah after witnessing one of the most marvellous demonstrations of the Lord's power on earth : " The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench " (1 Kings xviii. 38). Besides this, there was also a great rain in answer to Elijah's prayer. So that there had been a double manifestation of God's power ; one to corroborate the

mission of His servant, the other to bless His people.

Yet, after all, we find in the next chapter, that Elijah is so disheartened and fearful, that he fled for his life a day's journey into the wilderness, and requested for himself that he might die ! In this state, the angel of the Lord comes to him to prepare him for a journey to the Mount Horeb ; and then, having eaten nothing for forty days and forty nights, he is instructed that the Lord (as for him) is not in the great and strong wind which rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in "the still small voice." He is in that secret, invisible, noiseless communication which "no man knoweth but he which receiveth it."

When Elijah *heard* the latter, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. His soul responds to the unmistakable voice of the Lord ; for the sheep know His voice. The manifestations of His mighty power had no such effect on him.

And this is our experience if we have but *retirement* and abstraction enough from nature to observe it. The soul must be in a listening attitude in order to distinguish (if I may so say) the peculiar notes of the voice of the Lord. The listening attitude is morally typified by Elijah's position at the mount of God ; alone, and without food ; subsisting only on God's provision for him. When nature clogs, and the world confuses, we shall not easily distinguish the "still small voice" from the voice of His wonders ; nor, on the other

hand, will mere solitude, miserable solitude, under a juniper tree in the wilderness, adapt us for spiritual apprehension. It is solitude *with God at Horeb, unsustained by nature*, which is the true preparation for spiritual judgement and instruction.

We find after performing a great miracle that the Lord constrained His disciples to get into a ship (Matt. xiv.). There they were toiling in rowing, and He saw them, and yet He came not to them until about the fourth watch of the night, and then would have passed by them. The effect of the demonstration of His power in the miracle had passed away, and that event could not avail them now. If it had enlarged their faith in the Lord they would have had a gain from it now; but then it would have been from the Lord, and not from the evidence of His power. The Lord wished to establish the value of Himself to them, and to teach them, that the acts of His power were only proofs of His own value; but that proofs could never suit in emergency without Himself. Miracles were to prove the value of His interest in His people, but in no wise to supersede the greater gain of nearness to Himself.

After the miracle His disciples are placed in such an exigence that unless He *draws near*, there is no hope of escape; but when He *does*, "immediately the wind ceased"; and at this they are amazed, evidently not having learned from the miracle what they ought; even that He Who wrought it was not merely displaying His power on one occasion, but thereby expressing His interest in those for whom His power would at any time be in operation.

Extracted.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

IV.—“ I'M SO TIRED.”

“ Oh, Pa, I'm so tired: will you carry me? ” (or, perhaps, in the true vernacular “ will zoo tarry me? ”) are words I have heard more than once in the lang-syne when going to or returning from the Sunday School. They come back with a vividness of recollection and associations that seem to befit them for our fourth group of “ Reminiscences.”

Well do I remember taking a younger brother of the young speaker, whose words are quoted at the head of this paper, to Sunday School for the first time. The question having been satisfactorily settled that he would like to go with Pa, he let light upon some of the inner workings of his mind by asking the question, “ Will they beat me? ” It need not be said that a happy assurance was forthcoming upon this point, both from the parents before he set out, and when he reached school, by the superintendent who, in this case, had a career in Sunday School work closely approximating, in almost every feature, to that of “ The Old Superintendent ” we spoke about in Paper No. 2.

But the child's question surely suggests useful reflection for us all. How necessary it is that those who are engaged in this work, or are in any way occupied with the care and training of the young, should enter as far as they are able into their thoughts and sympathies. This is, perhaps, best illustrated in the case of the infant class teacher.

It has been my privilege on different occasions, as superintendent, to look in and see how they were "getting on" in the infant class room, and I particularly well remember the success with which a teacher of that class used, by the aid of a picture or a large type text, and with a pencil in her hand for a pointer, to repeat the question (on this letter or that, this word or that, this feature or that), addressed to one child or another, "What is it?" and then with an emulation which drove away drowsiness from their young eyes, the true answer came from this child or that, and the whole class was soon able to reply, with almost military precision, to the teacher's question, "What is it?"

But we must return to the principal thought, "So tired." Before carrying it beyond the experience of the children, I would narrate a circumstance connected, not with the school hour, but with the summer treat. The day had been very fine, and teachers and children had entered heartily into the engagements of sport, tea on the field, etc., etc. Then, at the time of mustering for leaving the ground to catch the train, it was found that it was necessary to hurry beyond a pace which the younger children could maintain. So the teachers and visitors, of which latter I was one, took turns in carrying them. I had taken up one that appeared to need such assistance, but soon found that my little charge was anxious to exercise her own powers of locomotion again, and her restless movements made the task of carrying her one of some difficulty. I therefore stood her

again upon the grass, and took up a little lame child that I noticed was painfully endeavouring to keep up with her companions. I soon found that I had a more easy burden to carry, as the little one settled into my arms so quietly, and with a thankful expression, that made the process of carrying her one of mutual pleasure.

Is there not a lesson for us in this? The more we realise our own feebleness, the more entirely shall we cast our burden upon Him Who careth for us and Whose words are, "I have made, and I will bear."

"So tired!" Yes; how often is it so with the teacher in the class. But should we therefore desist? No, but with one of yore we can say, "Tired in the work, but not tired of the work." I remember one of the teachers in the school which formed the subject of Paper No. 3, who persevered in attending the class although in very feeble health, and, as will surely always be the case, her interest in the children was well reciprocated by their affection for their teacher. Weeks and months passed on, and undoubtedly Miss M—— could have truly said, "I'm so tired." Still she was found regularly at her post, until we heard one Sunday that she was "too ill to come to-day," and then in a few days we learned that the Lord had taken her to Himself.

Those who visited her, both fellow-teachers and children, bore witness to the beautiful simplicity of her resting "safe in the arms of Jesus," and longing to depart when His time should come. Happy Miss M——! her life and labour were but

brief, but the work the Lord gave her to do was undoubtedly owned and used of Him for the eternal good of some, and He is able to make these feeble reminiscences connected therewith to be of use to others.

One more example, differing in important respects, I repeat, as nearly as I can remember it, in the words of the one who told it about himself. He was teacher of the elder boys in a large Sunday School, and one Sunday afternoon had taken up a book and sat reading beside the fire, when his wife said to him, "My dear, do you not see it is nearly a quarter to three, and if you do not make haste you will be late for school."

To this he replied, "Yes, my dear, I thought you would like me to stay with you this afternoon, and had given up the intention of going."

Upon this the lady proceeded to the hall, and bringing in her husband's hat placed it on his head, adding as she did so, "You had better do your proper work, and not make me an excuse for your neglecting it."

He owned that the plain way in which the matter was thus put before him was just the right one for himself, and I repeat it in the hope that it may help others to weigh in the balances of the sanctuary the oft-repeated words, "So tired."

T. J.

"Lord Jesus ! I would like to be
In everything conformed to Thee ;
Thy life in mine yet more reveal,
Thyself on all my actions seal."

THE TWO MITES.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—It is very easy without watchfulness to fall into an error even with regard to matters with which we are familiar, and the more so if it be an error into which others have fallen, because then we are exposed to the powerful effect which their example exercises.

I make this remark because it is not an uncommon thing to hear persons speak of “The widow’s *mite* ;” and, further, there is more than one instance of writers, from whom we might reasonably expect differently, adopting the same incorrect language. This mistake is noticed here not out of a love to find fault with others, but with the object of pointing out how even such a slight slip (as it may seem to some) seriously mars the beauty and force of the incident given in the Gospels.

You are familiar with the circumstances there recorded. The Lord was sitting in the temple over against the treasury. And He saw the rich casting their gifts into the box provided for such contributions. He also saw a poor widow bring her offering consisting of two mites, which make one farthing. Whereupon the Lord said to His disciples, “ Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury ; for all they did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living ” (Mark xii. 43, 44).

Now, to speak of this incident under the heading of “ The Widow’s Mite ” is manifestly incorrect. The widow did not contribute her mite ; she gave

both her mites—all that she had. And it was her whole-hearted, self-denying devotion in yielding up *all* her living to the service of God that drew forth the Lord's commendation and approval. Anything that even suggests that the widow kept back part of her possessions like Ananias and Sapphira is unjust as well as untrue.

Besides the fact of the widow having two coins and parting with them both proves how entire her purpose was. Zacchæus said to the Lord, "The half of my goods I give to the poor;" but this woman gave, not half, but all her goods. If she had had one farthing instead of two mites, she must then have given the whole or none; but having two coins it was within her power to divide her living—to keep one mite, and contribute the other. It is therefore to the widow's credit not to conceal the fact that when she might have given one, she bestowed the two mites. You can imagine the case of a person with the collection box before him and a single shilling in his pocket which he gives. If however he had had two sixpences, the smaller coin would have found its way into the box. Is such an act, think you, of such value in the eyes of Him Who searcheth the hearts, as that of a person who having two sixpences deliberately contributes the two?

It is well to bear in mind that the Lord estimates the value of a gift from what is in the heart, not from what is in the hand. He does not compute in £ s. d. as we do. In His sight the two mites represented more than all the liberal donations of the rich put together. It is not that the Lord will

refuse to accept a larger gift. When Mary gave the alabaster box of ointment, worth more than three hundred pence, He caused His approbation to be recorded (Mark xiv. 3-9). He looks at the motive that prompts the heart to give, whatever the value of the gift. Mary anointed His body beforehand to the burial. The widow gave her mites for the maintenance of the temple, doomed to speedy destruction. The Lord commended both, though the direct purpose of the gifts were so different.

Another point I must just indicate if you have not already observed it. The Lord attached great importance not so much to what was actually given as to what remained after the gift. The rich cast in of their abundance, the Lord said. And when they had made their contributions they were still rich. They had even then enough and to spare. They were put to no personal inconvenience because of their donations. But not so with the widow. She was poor. Her total assets amounted to one farthing. Yet if she was poor in pence, she was rich in grace. And like the Macedonian assemblies (2 Cor. viii. 2), her deep poverty abounded unto the riches of her liberality. She could not give more than two mites; she would not give less, though it left her bereft of everything. And you may be sure that He Who marked her noble gift saw her empty scrip also, and ministered to her, as He loved to do.

I am, yours faithfully,

“YOD.”

P.S.—Amongst other communications, the following display some ingenuity and may excite some of you to seek to improve upon them.

THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(Phil. iii. 2.)

Truth.	John xiv. 6.
Holy One.	Mark i. 24.
Eternal Life.	1 John v. 20.
Son of God.	Matt. viii. 20.
Advocate.	1 John ii. 1.
Vine.	John xv. 1.
Immanuel.	Isa. vii. 14.
Only Begotten Son.	John iii. 16.
Upholder.	Heb. i. 3.
Resurrection.	John xi. 25.
The Way.	John xiv. 6.
Horn of Salvation.	Psalm xviii. 2.
Everlasting Father.	Isa. ix. 6.
Lord Jesus.	Rom. i. 7.
Omnipotent.	Rev. xix. 6.
Redeemer.	Isa. lix. 20.
Door.	John x. 9.
Jehovah.	Isa. xxvi. 4.
Express Image.	Heb. i. 3.
Shepherd.	John x. 11.
Unchangeable One.	Mal. iii. 6.
Sanctification.	1 Cor. i. 30.
Captain of our Salvation.	Heb. ii. 10.
High Priest.	Heb. iii. 1.
Righteousness.	Jer. xxiii. 6.
Immortal.	1 Tim. i. 17.
Saviour.	Titus ii. 13.
Teacher.	John iii. 2.

A. J. K.

"JESUS." (Matt. i. 21.)

Jesus	Acts xiii. 38. 39.	Jesus	Heb. vii. 25, 26.	Jesus	John xv. 5.
Exactly	Acts iv. 12.	Exactly	1 John ii. 1.	Exactly	Phil. iv. 13.
Suits	John vi. 35.	Suits	Romans v. 10.	Suits	Jude 24.
Us		Us		Us	
Sinners.		Saints.		Servants.	

T. E. P.

QUERIES.

W.T.—PLEASE EXPLAIN THE TWO PHRASES, "A REMNANT SHALL BE SAVED," AND "ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED." (Rom. ix. 27 ; x. 26). In the first instance, the apostle is referring to the present hour of grace, when "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 12, 13). Though the veil is upon the heart of the nation as such, and it is under the hand of God, because of its unbelieving rejection of Christ, yet there is a remnant among the Jews who do believe and are saved. We see this remnant in the Acts. And the apostle shews that such a remnant was prophesied of by Isaiah : "Though the numbers of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved."

In the second instance, the apostle is speaking of a future time when "all Israel shall be saved," for the nation will in due time, after "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," turn to the Lord. They will say "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," and their Messiah will come again to them—the Deliverer out of Zion, to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob." And they will be brought into their own land, to dwell in righteousness and peace under the sway of David's Son and Lord. And "so all Israel shall be saved."

W.T.—HOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND 2 CORINTHIANS VIII. 15 ? The subject of this part of the Epistle is the case of the poor. And the apostle shews that as God has dealt with us, so we are to act towards the needy. And in the verse you refer to, Paul recalls how God bestowed the manna upon the children of Israel in the wilderness. He gave to every man according to his eating ; so that

"he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (Exod. xvi. 18). It is this principle that the apostle would have working in the hearts of the saints, so that there should be none among them suffering from the lack of the necessities of life. This result would be brought about if the rich, out of their abundance, ministered to the requirements of the poor; for then the one who had received much would have nothing over, and the one who had received little would know no lack.

W.T.—PLEASE GIVE WHAT HELP YOU CAN ON EPH. v. 2. This is a beautiful call to imitate the devotion of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Be ye therefore followers [imitators] of God, as dear children, and 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." As the children of God the Father, we are to display the family character. And the example placed before us for our habitual walk is the life of Christ in this world. He loved us and He gave Himself *to* God *for* us, an offering and sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. On our account the Blessed Lord surrendered Himself up as the offering and sacrifice. It was a perfect devotion, ascending acceptably to God, Who alone duly measured and appreciated its incomparable worth. And God has given us that love as the pattern and model after which we are to walk.

God is love; and the only manner in which we can be imitators of God is to be followers [imitators] of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1), and to walk as He walked, loving God and loving man.

The apostle also exhorts us to walk as children of light (Eph. v. 8), for God is light as well as love (1 John i. 5; iv. 8). And as we are to look to Christ for love, so we are also to look to Him for light (Eph. iv. 14).

THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

It is a striking feature of the writings of the apostle John that whatever God is shewn to have provided, in His love, for His own glory and the need of man, is also shewn to be closely bound up in and with the Person of Christ. Paul reasons and declaims, setting out the believer's blessing in the form of doctrinal statement. He, as it were, labours to instruct and convince by argument, formally refuting the objections as they arise. So the apostle of the Gentiles proceeds, for instance, in the Epistle to the Romans. But in the Gospel and Epistles of John we feel ourselves to be in altogether a different atmosphere. We are not so much watching the unfolding of truth in its various details, as we are gathered into the presence-chamber of a Person of ineffable grace and glory. Both these modes of revelation are essentially needful. If one provides contemplation for the renewed mind, the other awakens the adoration of the renewed heart.*

When Paul instructs as to the second coming of Christ, he gives many facts as to the manner of that return—how the dead saints will be raised, the living changed, the Lord's descent into the air, the rapture of those for whom He comes, the shout and the trumpet, while also carefully distinguishing this event from the Lord's public advent in glory. But John gives us only the

* It will be understood that this is spoken only of what is characteristic. There are instances when Paul appeals to the heart as John to the mind.

general fact of His coming for us to be with Him and like Him. The Lord's own words to His disciples as reported by him were, "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." The all-sufficient fact of Christ and His company is presented that it may absorb our undivided desires.

Again, as is well known, Paul discusses the subject of the resurrection of the body very fully in a long chapter in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, but a saying of the Lord Jesus sums up the doctrine in a phrase: "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John xi. 25). We must duly receive the teaching of both, of course; but we therein see that distinction between the two parts of scripture, to which we are now inviting attention. It is a propensity of the natural mind to become engaged in the consideration of the truth of God as if it were no more than some abstract proposition. The holy and divine side is thus altogether excluded. In such case the introduction of its connection with Christ's Person induces a more becoming attitude. It was so with Martha; she believed in the resurrection in a general way, and quite realised that the power of God would resuscitate the body of her dead brother at the last day. But the Lord's revelation of Himself as the Resurrection and the Life completely overthrew her theory. There was the One immediately before her Who could raise Lazarus there and then by a word. It was no question of waiting for the last day. The question was whether Jesus

was the Son of God Who "quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21). For every difficulty of the human mind vanishes in the august presence of the Son from heaven.

In like manner we may see that propitiation is, by John, associated with the Lord's person. He does not present it as the work of the Lord: this we have elsewhere. But in the First Epistle of the apostle of love, we read, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2); and, again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). Jesus Christ, then, *is* Himself the propitiation for our sins. This is as infinitely blessed, as it is simple; for if I, as a poor sinner, needed a propitiation for my sins, and I am told that Christ is that propitiation, however little I may be able to explain the meaning of the term, I can rest assured in the fact that Christ being it, it will be more than adequate for my guilt.

But we may gather more than this from the manner of the usage of this truth in John's Epistle. The fact is first introduced in connection with the breach of a believer's communion by a sin. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins." John had been shewing the intimate place into which the child of God is brought—into fellowship with the Father and the Son. But when we walk thus in the light, it gives us to see as nowhere else the fearful

hideousness of sin. We are not to sin ; but if anyone does, and is then overwhelmed by the sense of the terrible nature of sin in the presence of the holy God, a provision has been made. Jesus Christ as Advocate undertakes our case with the Father, duly representing the confession of our sins on our behalf ; moreover He is the propitiation for our sins.

Thus whatever satisfaction the righteous and holy nature of God demanded because of those sins Jesus Christ is that satisfaction. And the value and efficacy of propitiation is therefore in effect declared to be commensurate only with His Person. If therefore we wish to estimate rightly the basis of our restoration to communion, we must think of the eternal excellency of the Son. However we may magnify the heinousness of sin (and we shall never exceed the truth in this respect), we may be sure that it is more than covered by the propitiation of the Son of God. For He did, and He alone could, offer what our sins needed and the glory of God demanded.

But we gather even more from these words in John ; we see what a character of holiness is stamped upon propitiation. We are not left to invest it with whatever degree of sanctity we please. The Spirit of God has hallowed the truth in the highest possible way, and in a way that the veriest babe in Christ can but recognise. *The Son of God is the propitiation for our sins.* " Herein is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins " (1 John iv. 10). The work of propitiation is associated

with all the Godhead glory of the Son. Can we attach too great importance to a doctrine that is set before us in such terms as these? In the mind of the Spirit as expressed by John, the work is merged in the Person; and the value of the work is to be measured according to the intrinsic worth of the Son.

It is important for us to remember this, because the human mind is so apt to belittle the things of God. And how terrible to detract from the Person of the Son, Whom no one knoweth (Matt. xi. 27). Israel in the wilderness sinned by limiting the Holy One in what He would do for them (Ps. lxxviii. 41). Shall the Christian with impunity set the bounds of time and space to the Son of God, Who is the propitiation for our sins, and especially by imposing human limitations upon Him in the performance of that particular work? If any would speak or think slightly of propitiation, let them remember that "He is the propitiation for our sins."

TILL HE COME.

"Till He come," oh, spread the story;
Scatter wide the seeds of life;
"Till He come," the Lord of glory,
Calling us to rest from strife.

"Till He come," oh, hearken, hearken!
Garner every word He saith!
What tho' clouds the prospect darken,
Be thy home the heaven of faith.

"Till He come," when all the shadows
Vanish in the dazzling light ;
Till He calls us to the meadows
Where no flowers decay or blight.

Feeding full on mercy's essence,
In the noon of endless day,
When, for ever in His presence,
Every tear is wiped away.

Higher than than sky-crowned mountain.
Brighter than the sun above,
We shall dwell beside the fountain
Of His everflowing love.

All the mysteries unfolded,
Till each hidden thing is known :
Till each little lamb is folded
Safely, where love dwells alone.

Oh, till then, rest ever clinging
To the One Who joy affords ;
Be thy soul for ever singing
Glory to the Lord of Lords.

L. L.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

(MATTHEW XV. 21—28.)

THE scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem were grievous to our Lord. Full of human tradition, they slighted God's authority and the strongest moral duty. They were hypocrites, and in vain washed their hands, for their heart was far from God. What proceeds from within defiles the man. But how little as yet did the disciples understand ! The heart of fallen man is the fountain of all

corruption and violence. His thoughts, feelings, words and deeds, are only evil; and religious forms serve as a veil to conceal them.

A divine Saviour is the dire need of man, and Jesus is He; but being God no less than Man, He reaches the distant and vile. He can deal with that which is most desperate; only He will have souls in the truth of their position before God in order to be blessed. These He guides, even by His silence, these who have not yet apprehended it in faith. When it is reached, grace flows freely.

The Lord gets away as far as possible from the seat of religious pride, and is confronted there with Satan's power and by one under curse.

"And Jesus, going out thence, retired into the parts of Tyre and Sidon; and behold, a Canaanitish woman coming out from those borders cried out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David: my daughter is miserably possessed with a demon. But He answered her not a word; and the disciples came and besought Him, saying, Let her go, because she crieth out after us. But He answered and said, I was not sent save to the lost sheep of Israel's house. And she came and paid Him homage, saying, Lord, help me. And He answering said, It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the whelps. But she said, Yea, Lord; for even the whelps eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus answering said to her, O woman, great [is] thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour" (verses 21—28).

The woman from the first was deeply in earnest. She knew that no Jew appealed to Christ in vain: to ask the Son of David was to have their petitions. But what title had she thus to approach Him? What claim on Him had Tyre and Sidon? Was not Canaan expressly "cursed"? When He reigns as Son of David, there will be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of Hosts. She must realise her true place, instead of pleading from a position false for her. The Lord accordingly answered her not a word.

Are there not many who appeal under similar mistakes and get no answer? They are not sons of God; and yet do they venture to cry, Abba, Father. No wonder they remain without the blessing they crave. They assume to be God's children, while still children of wrath. Forms avail not, any more than baseless assumption. Lost sinners must learn that they are not sheep but dogs, like the Canaanite, and confess it.

But the grace which drew her to the Lord Jesus gave her perseverance under seeming discouragement. And what a lesson for the disciples who would have got rid of her at all cost, because her importunity vexed them! The Lord however in reply to their request leads the way to explain the cause: "I was not sent save to the lost sheep of Israel's house." It was not lost on the woman, who came and paid Him homage, saying, "Lord, help me." She drops the title, which was of all power for an Israelite but effective (if acted on) only for judgement on Canaan; she simply begs His aid in her indisputable distress.

Does the Lord deny her? Far from it. His answer helps her to discern why there must be delay, if she was to learn the fulness of grace that is in Him. Only because He is infinitely more than Son of David, can she receive all she desires, all she needs for her own soul, and for her daughter's cure. "It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the whelps," or little dogs. The Lord maintains the divine landmarks. If people overlook the privileges of the covenant nation, they must learn them; if they do not recognise their own state of ruin, He will make them feel it. It is due to God, and even to themselves, if they are to know Him truly; and this is of greater moment and of richer blessing than any miracle of power. So was the woman to be blessed; and we are here shewn how it came then, and comes at any time.

For the ear of faith now at length laid hold of all. She owned the depth of grace in God and its freeness too, led by the Lord's answer where unbelief had thought only of a rebuff. "Yea, Lord; for even the whelps eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." She pierced in faith through all barriers; she was sure that there was goodness to meet the need for an accursed sinner who believed in His Faithful Witness. Could the true God deny His grace? Would He allow that a Canaanite heart gave Him credit for goodness beyond what fills His own heart?

The Lord recognised the answer which grace enabled her to make; He welcomed what is so rare. "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done

to thee as thou wilt." Great grace seen in God creates great faith in man's heart. It is the Saviour thus believed in Who works all to His glory. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

W.K.

THE NECESSITY OF DEPENDENCE.

IN the histories of God's people in the scriptures we find continually that humiliation and disaster immediately succeed some signal mark or demonstration of God's power in their behalf. Why is this? Simply because to be signalised is always dangerous, unless the soul is simultaneously kept conscious of the necessity of dependence on God. When the disciples told the Lord that even the devils were subject unto them, He replied, "Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." What God is *to* me is greater than anything God does *before* me.

No sooner is the song for the marvellous deliverance from Egypt ended, than the children of Israel are murmuring on account of Marah. What does the great demonstration of power in the passing through the Red Sea avail them now? They must realise their dependence on God as a very present help in time of trouble. The great deliverance proved to them His value, but Himself and not the proof is the only sure blessing in every time of need; and therefore the needs-be that we should be brought into such trying circumstances.

When David reaches the summit of regal consequence, he numbers the people ; but in his humiliation he learns God in a way and manner that he had never known before ; just as in his fall respecting Bathsheba he had learned the depth and magnitude of God's restoration ; so now he learns in the hour of humiliation a fuller revelation of His mind than ever before made known to anyone. Not that it is a good thing to fall, but God's grace is a greater thing to my soul than the acts of His power, and therefore David advanced more in moments of repentance than he ever did in any season of honour and glory.

Paul found more strength to his soul from the communication, " My grace is sufficient for thee," than from all the evidence of the glory of which he was a wondering spectator.

The source of strength and blessing to man is in dependence on God. The tendency of a manifestation of power is to make me independent of God, as having power on my side. There is ever a craving for power in the natural mind because the thought of man since the fall is, that if he had the power he could do better for himself than God would do for him. Man did not primarily in his nature deny the power of God ; he distrusted His love, and as His power without love could not be trusted, the power was distrusted too, but at the same time it was always desired.—*Extracted.*

TABERNACLE NOTES.—II.

GIVING.

THE cost of the materials used in the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture was immense. It is roughly estimated at £290,000, or more than a quarter of a million of money.* And it is a matter of interest to note how this vast accumulation of treasure was procured; for not only were certain prescribed things to be used, as ordered of God, but everything was to be obtained in God's way.

His mind then was most fully revealed as to this, through human means; for He chose to make known all things by the voice of His servant Moses, as is shewn us in Exodus xxv. There Moses is seen to have been instructed of God to make known His requirements as to what articles were needed for His sanctuary, viz., gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, badgers' skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, onyx, and precious stones to be set in the ephod and the breastplate.

It is well to observe to whom the call for these things was made—"Speak unto the children of Israel." It was by no means a general appeal, but *limited* to the chosen people of God—those who had personally experienced God's salvation, and knew themselves to be a "purchased people" (see Exod. xv. 1—17). In fact, even these were not told to give as a matter of course, or necessity. There was to be the fullest freedom of will—real

* [It is extremely difficult to state accurately in modern terms the cost of the tabernacle.—ED. B.M.M.]

heart work. The words are, "Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering." God had done great things for them, whereof they were glad; now He gave them an opportunity of doing something for Him, as an indication, of a practical kind, of their gratitude for His goodness, as well as their lively interest in that which concerned His glory. They were not to give with any idea of procuring God's blessing, but because such had already been granted to them gratuitously.

How literally Moses carried out the word of the Lord may be seen in Exodus xxxv. He neither omitted a single article from, nor did he add one to, the divinely-furnished list. To have done so would have implied that he was wiser than God. He would not go beyond, nor would he fall short of, the word of the Lord; for his part was only to obey.

The unadulterated message of God to His people proved a power to faithful souls; hence, here we read, "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments" (Exod. xxxv. 21).

Where it was a matter of giving for God's work, it is instructive to consider how those things to which the Israelites were doubtless closely attached and which they highly valued, such as "bracelets, earrings, rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold," were readily brought by those who had "stirred-

up hearts" and "willing spirits," and placed at Moses' disposal in the building of God's house.

The same exemplary spirit may be discovered in Jonathan's action towards David, as he "delighted much in David" (1 Sam. xix. 2), and "loved him" (1 Sam. xviii. 1), as Israel's deliverer from death and destruction; hence, who can wonder that he "stripped himself" of his princely outfit and gave all to David!

The outcome of Moses' appeal was eminently satisfactory. The varied offerings were brought by different ones according to what they had. The poorest could probably bring goats' hair, whilst the rulers might give onyx stones.

What a striking counterpart to this is to be found in the New Testament, as God's mind for the saints to-day! (2 Cor. viii., ix.) Here the apostle makes an appeal to the saints to *prove* the sincerity of their love, by giving where there was a need; and he uses, as an incentive, their knowledge of Christ. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He *was rich*, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Here, again, the all-important requirement is "a willing mind"; then the offering will be "accepted according to that a man hath" (2 Cor. viii. 12).

See how grace begets grace; for in verse 19 we read of the united offerings as "this grace," and here, as in Exodus, we find there was "abundance" (ver. 20), "bounty" (ix. 5), and "liberal distribution" (ix. 13). God's love was proved by the giving up of the dearest object of His heart (His

only-begotten Son), and those who have received Him should delight to give! "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8).

The Israelites are said to have brought "much more than enough for the service of the work" (Exod. xxxvi. 5). They actually had to be restrained from bringing! (Exod. xxxvi. 7.)

If we can say "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," let us also remember that "God loveth a cheerful giver."

A.R.C.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP.

(1 KINGS XIII.—2 TIMOTHY II.)

A CAREFUL consideration of these two chapters will serve to illustrate the divine connection between service for God and fellowship with His saints, as well as to establish the true order of their relations, the one to the other. Thoughts current amongst the Lord's people are often misleading, but when we come to the word of God with subject hearts, desiring to know His will about any particular subject we can never fail to be instructed, besides finding in that study itself a real joy and blessing to our souls.

The testimony of God in itself implies the existence and supremacy of evil in this world, and is, first of all, a vindication of the holiness and truth of God Himself as against whatever evil has triumphed for the time in opposition to

Him. For instance, the truth was departed from, and formally given up, in the case of Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin." Sometimes, in Old Testament days, the testimony against declension aimed, in part at least, at the deliverance of souls from that which was judged and condemned, by re-establishing God's authority and the power of His word in individuals who formed a remnant in the midst of those who were hastening on to the punishment of their iniquity. Such are alluded to in Malachi iii. 16, and in numerous passages in the prophets. It is thus that a sphere of fellowship is formed. Kindred hearts drawn together, fearing the Lord, and conscious of the ruin around, find encouragement in each other's presence, counting upon the goodness of God for them.

Very different from this state of things is the scene presented to us in 1 Kings xiii. Like the evil servant in the parable, who said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," so Jeroboam *said in his heart*, "Now shall the kingdom return to house of David if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem." However deep and widespreading the results of departure from God, the beginning of evil is in the heart. Jeroboam refused to trust God to preserve to him that which He had given him deliberately. Trespassing on Jehovah's rights, the priests and Levites were thrust out from their service to make room for those who would be creatures of his will and be dependent on his royal favour. In such a condition of things the only right course for the Levites and any who feared God was to

depart from the apostate kingdom and take up their residence in Judæa (2 Chron. xi. 13—16).

At this point God is pleased to vindicate Himself by sending a man of God with a message, not to the king but to the altar. To Cain and to his offering God had not respect; nor had He to Jeroboam and his altar. So there was no appeal to the conscience of the one who had openly insulted God in the place to which he had been exalted. The Lord's servant must be fully identified with his Master's interests and must share His holy abhorrence of evil. Fellowship was impossible in such a place, nor was the man of God to return by the way he came. There must be no turning back in the path of obedience.

Up to a certain point he was true to the letter and spirit of his commission, but it was indeed a strong temptation when one who could say, "I am a prophet also as thou art," urged him to accept of his hospitality, and find refreshment in body and spirit in one another's company. The would-be host claimed to have the authority of a revelation through an angel; but God had said, "Eat no bread in this place" and He cannot deny Himself. Whatever our position, "He abideth faithful." The knowledge of this should have preserved the man of God from the snare of the enemy. "By the word of thy lips have I kept me from the path of the destroyer." Every character and combination of evil has been anticipated in the word of God, and we are put on our guard against all that the enemy can do.

Fellowship is a good thing and specially cheering

to the heart of a servant fatigued by the burden and heat of the day. Tried by the opposition of evil to the truth of God, his heart yearns for the enjoyment in fellowship of the blessings God has given. But this can only be safely enjoyed in obedience. Indeed, in proportion to his faithfulness to the Lord will the sphere of his fellowship decrease. His *heart* may be enlarged under a deepening apprehension of the fulness of the grace of God and its suitability to man's need, but fidelity to the Lord will keep his feet in a narrow path.

Now all this has its counterpart in the present day, and 2 Tim. ii. helps us greatly in its application. It is no longer the original presentation of revealed truth, accompanied by such manifestation of the Spirit's power and grace in connection with the newly established church of God upon earth, as commanded the respect even of unbelievers. Then evil was kept out by the presence of the Holy Ghost, giving to the assembly Christ's own character, answering to the efficacy of His work. But soon a condition of things was formed by the profession of Christianity and by the presence in what is likened to a great house of those who are absolutely indifferent to the glory of Christ though bearing His name. Such are vessels unto dishonour, to be avoided by the faithful. It is no question of the costliness or the capacity of the vessel. There are some to honour and some to dishonour. It is not assembly action which is contemplated here, but the individual responsibility of the servant. "If a man therefore purge himself from these

[vessels unto dishonour] he shall be a vessel unto honour" (2 Tim. ii. 21).

Corporate testimony may be gone, the church no longer spoken of as the "pillar and ground of the truth,"* but "He abideth faithful," and in that faithfulness, He will not cease to care for His beloved people.

The ministry of the word goes on to the end under such circumstances indeed as may be humbling and discouraging to the servant. The more he studies to show himself "approved unto God" the more he may be disliked by those whom he would serve. There are those (2 Tim. ii. 22) with whom he can associate, but perhaps few and far between. And this must be specially the care of the "workman that needeth not to be ashamed," seeking the Lord's glory alone. The joys, companionship, and fellowship are oft-times limited. When the Nazarite's vow was fulfilled (Num. vi. 20) he might drink wine; and so may those who are faithful to Christ now. When He shall come forth and serve them, and remove the restraint which faithfulness to Him had involved, "Eat, oh friends, Drink yea, drink abundantly, oh, beloved," will be His word of welcome in that day.

G. S. B.

*We must always remember that all that connects the church with the eternal purpose, the present love of Christ, and the future manifestation in glory is ever true to faith, and establishes a ground upon which the Lord can and does meet us. But this must be in holiness and truth according to what He is Himself (Rev. iii. 7), without false pretensions as in Laodicea.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.*

V.—“ARE YOU WILLING TO JOIN?”

A LITTLE before the breaking out of the war with Russia, 1854, I was passing down Parliament Street, Westminster, and stopped to read some of the printed instructions for recruiting the Queen's regiments. While so engaged I heard a voice behind me, saying: “Young man, are you willing to join?” Turning round, I saw that the speaker was a sergeant of light dragoons, with the ribbons in his cap which showed him to be engaged upon the duty of raising recruits for that branch of the service. My reply to him was in the negative, and so, perhaps, I lost my opportunity of being one of the “six hundred” who, in the Balaclava valley, though

“Fired at by shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well.”

Turning our thoughts from service in the British army, let us now think of the recruiting sergeant's words as applied to that higher service of which St. Paul speaks in Rom. i. 9, “God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.” In the first place, the words were spoken to me by one who was behind me, and we have a striking word in Isa. xxx. 21, “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it,” in the words of which passage the prophet is understood to allude to the custom of Eastern shepherds, in those circumstances when they send the sheep on before them, to direct by

* [These articles have been inserted on the responsibility of the author only.—ED. B.M.M.]

their voice any that are turning out of the way, either to the right hand or to the left. How often, surely, we may say we have heard as it were the voice of the Good Shepherd so speaking to us when we have been, perhaps, ready to turn aside. But the voice which I heard behind me invited me to enter upon a new path of service, and in this connection let us consider its bearing upon the Sunday School work. How many a teacher of long years of service can yet remember the time when he or she stopped their ears to the voice which called them to the work. Of course it is not claimed for this work that ALL should engage in it. I well remember the case of a deeply taught and greatly honoured servant of the Lord who was visiting in a country town where he was expected to preach on the Sunday evening and to lecture on the Tuesday. At the close of the Sunday morning meeting the Sunday School superintendent asked him thus: "Mr. W., may I announce that you will address the Sunday School at a quarter to three o'clock?" "Oh!" said Mr. W., "that work is altogether beyond me." Was not that a good word of encouragement for the teachers, stirring them up to realise the honour the Lord had put upon them in giving them this work to do for Him? In a similar way did Mr. Spurgeon once say: "I would rather have the letters 'S.S.T.' after my name than 'M.A.,' 'D.C.L.,' 'LL.D.,' or 'D.D.'" There is another thought in connection with the question: "Are you willing to join?" The words were addressed to me at a time, like the present, when the great

need of raising recruits for the Queen's army was deeply felt. And surely there is a greater need for Sunday School teachers; not for England alone, but also, and very specially, for other lands. How many of the greatly honoured missionaries to the heathen were first converted at the Sunday School and first served the Lord in the gospel as Sunday School teachers. Dr. Morrison, who sailed for China in 1807 and translated the Bible into the difficult language of that country, traced his conversion to the prayerful and persevering interest in his soul's welfare on the part of his Sunday School teacher. But we must not confine our thoughts to the Sunday School alone, since the work is all one, although carried on in other places than the school room. Another well-known missionary, John Williams of the South Seas, traced his conversion to being taken to hear the gospel by his master's wife when he had planned to spend the Sunday evening with a worldly companion; while Dr. Moffat, the African missionary, traced his conversion to the words and prayers of his mother who, when he was leaving home to go as an apprentice in another town, put a Bible into his hand and made him promise that he would read it every morning and evening. Thus are Christian parents and masters and Sunday School teachers privileged to watch for the souls of the young as those who must give account. Let us take the lesson to heart and give heed to the word behind us, whether it call us to join or, having joined, to invite others to do likewise.

THE WRITER OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—There have been, and are, as you may know, persons who doubt whether the apostle Paul was the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And there have been many more or less wild suggestions made, as to who was the author. But what appears to me the wildest I have seen or heard of was brought before me in a newspaper notice the other day. The notice ran thus: “Dr. H——, in an article which he has contributed to a German review, asserts that the Epistle is the work of Priscilla, wife of Aquila, who is mentioned several times in the Acts of the Apostles. This female origin, he hints, may account for the grammatical vagaries which mark the document, but at all events he has no doubt whatever that he has now found the right solution of many difficulties. Priscilla was in all probability sometimes helped in composition by her husband, but the chief portions of the Epistle are her own.”

I only draw your attention to this for the purpose of warning you against the danger of guess-work in the things of scripture. It is *God's* word; and all that we ought to know He has given us there, and what He has withheld is of no concern to us. When therefore we begin to guess, we begin to go wrong.

Now, that Priscilla wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews is a pure guess, and a poor guess too, giving no credit to Priscilla or to Dr. H——.

But I feel I should like to put before you in a simple way the principal reasons that make it pretty certain that the Epistle was written by the apostle Paul, and that the usual heading in our Bibles should stand as it is.

You know that Paul wrote letters to seven Gentile assemblies:—Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians; and in every one of those letters the first word is "Paul," and usually Paul the apostle. But in Hebrews there is a marked difference. Here we have the opening words: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

Now, from this passage we may see two special characteristics of the Epistle:—(1) the ancient scriptures are used as possessing God's authority, and (2) the Son is God's spokesman, for the phrase "spoken unto us by His Son," implies not only the words of the Lord Jesus, but His works and indeed, all that He is. These features which run throughout the Epistle explain why Paul said nothing of himself as the writer, nor of his own apostolic authority. To the Gentiles he spoke with an authority which was his as an apostle whom God had set first in the church (1 Cor. xii. 28), and sent primarily to the Gentiles (Acts ix. 15; Rom. i. 5; xi. 13). But in this Epistle he appeals to the Jewish believers through the scriptures, which they all knew and loved and revered. There are more Old Testament quotations in the Hebrews than in any of the other Epistles. And the

writer does not speak of what was made known to him personally by revelation, as he does, for instance, in Galatians i. 12.

Beside, Christ is shewn as the One whom God sent to make known and to do His will. In Old Testament times God sent prophets; but in the New He sent His Son. In this Epistle Jesus Christ is called the Apostle (Heb. iii. 1). Hence there was no need for Paul to introduce himself as an apostle.

Again, there was another reason: Paul was the apostle whose mission was specially to the Gentiles and not to the Jews (Gal. ii. 7-8). I think, therefore, you will see that there would be what some might consider a want of propriety in the apostle of the uncircumcision bringing forward his authority to the believers among the circumcision (at any rate Paul will not give any ground for such objection), while it was perfectly legitimate, and likely to be more serviceable for him to shew them the truth concerning Christ and His work out of the scriptures. It was, indeed, in this manner that he spoke to the Jews in the synagogues (Acts xiii. 16-41; xvii. 2; xxviii. 23).

It, therefore, may be well understood why Paul the apostle, in a wisdom wherein he was taught of God, refrained from attaching his name as weight and authority to an Epistle in which Christ and the scriptures were the authorities appealed to.

But, perhaps, you are asking how we know the Epistle was written by Paul, if he did not give his name. The question is a fair one and very natural. And the strongest evidence we have in

the scripture itself. We are told that Paul did write to the Jews, and that this writing was well known in apostolic days. Peter, who was an apostle of the circumcision and who himself wrote two Epistles to the Jews who believed in the Lord Jesus, refers to what Paul also had written to them, in addition to his other epistles. His words are: "Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things [*i.e.* new heavens and a new earth], be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother, Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you [*i.e.* in the Epistle to the Hebrews]; as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things" (2 Pet. iii. 14-16).

It is surely clear from this passage that Paul did write, beside other epistles, one to Israel's believing remnant. And it is really beautiful to observe from this reference the unity and harmony of the apostles in thus working together under the power of the inspiring Spirit for the edification of the church. Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, writes to the saints of the circumcision; and so far from any feelings of jealousy or thoughts of interference, Peter, the apostle of the uncircumcision, commends the letter to them, and tells us who the writer is. Of a similar nature was the divine arrangement that Peter, the apostle of the Jews, should be the first to carry the word of grace to the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius (Acts x.).

There are other reasons which all tend to strengthen the Pauline authorship of the Epistle, but for those who are ready to accept the testimony of scripture this will suffice. Aquila and Priscilla were faithful servants of Jesus Christ, and there are many references to them and their work. But I do not admire the Doctor's ingenious suggestion of the worthy pair putting their heads together to write this Epistle and correcting one another's bad grammar. If he had the opportunity, like Apollos, of an hour or so with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii. 26), he would probably be himself set right on a few points, and perhaps on the subject of the "grammatical vagaries" as well.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

QUERIES.

IOTA.—WHAT LESSON MAY WE LEARN FROM THE FACT THAT THE SILVER TRUMPETS WERE TO BE ALL OF ONE PIECE (Num. x. 2)? The two silver trumpets were used by the sons of Aaron for summoning the congregation of Israel together, or for sounding the alarm of war. They were of beaten or wrought work (see R.V. of Num. x. 2), or possibly they may have been drawn out of the pure metal, and so formed in one piece. We do not know what this fact may be intended to convey, but should be glad to learn.

IOTA.—IS IT POSSIBLE FOR AN EARTHEN OR WOODEN VESSEL TO BE A VESSEL UNTO HONOUR, AND FIT FOR THE MASTER'S USE (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21)? The passage taken in its entirety seems to indicate that the vessels of gold and silver are the class unto honour, and those of wood

and earth that unto dishonour, the verse in this sense being connected with 1 Corinthians iii. 12. But the point for the faithful man of God to determine by the word of God is not whether certain vessels are wooden or golden, but whether they are to honour or dishonour. Neither do the directions given indicate a way whereby an earthen vessel becomes fit for the Master's use. A man is not to ask himself whether he is wooden or not, but if he is associated with vessels unto dishonour in the great house of Christendom, he is to purge himself from them ; for by such means he will become a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use.

The mode of fitting oneself personally for a service to which the Lord has called one is stated elsewhere (1 Tim. iv. 14—16 ; 2 Tim. ii. 15), but here the question is purely that of association, and of the responsibility of the faithful to clear themselves from all defiling and dishonouring connections in the professing church of God.

C.M.—WHAT IS THE WORK OF GOD IN JOHN VI. 29 ? IS IT THE MIRACLE PREVIOUSLY PERFORMED, OR FAITH IN CHRIST ? The work of God is to believe on Him Whom God had sent. The Lord told the people to work for the meat which endureth unto eternal life (ver. 27). They asked how they could work the works of God (ver. 28). The Lord then told them that the work of God was faith in His Son (ver. 29). Miracles certainly attested the truth (Acts ii. 22), but the Lord did not accept the faith that rested on miracles only (John ii. 23—25).

M.—WHAT WAS THE USE OF THE TONGS SPOKEN OF IN CONNECTION WITH THE CANDLESTICK (EXOD. XXV. 38) ? The golden tongs were no doubt used for trimming the lamps, while the snuffdishes, mentioned in the same passage, were receptacles for what was removed.

CHRIST THE PROPITIATORY.

It has been already observed in a former paper that propitiation is, by the apostle John, intimately associated with the person of the Son of God (1 John ii. 1, 2; iv. 10). It is no less true that Paul, by the Spirit of God, speaks in perfect agreement with John, using terms modified to suit the character of the communications he was inspired to give.

In the Epistle to the Romans the great theme is the demonstration of the righteousness of God, especially in His provision of a righteousness for unrighteous and guilty man. And in the first part of the book the dazzling search-light of the truth of God sweeps the broad face of the habitable earth, revealing the intractable evil of the universal heart and ways of all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. Unrighteousness was to be found everywhere; righteousness nowhere. And what thrilled the great heart of the apostle of the Gentiles with joy was that he was commissioned to proclaim in the gospel that, when it had been fully proved that a man could not provide a righteousness of his own for God, God had Himself provided one for him. What had been foreshadowed and foretold by law and prophets for so long was now at length revealed.

“Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. For there is no differ-

ence: for all sinned, and do come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 21—26).

In this very full and rich passage there are two main subjects brought forward which can now be no more than indicated: viz. (1) the righteousness of God which is offered to all; and (2) the vindication of God's righteousness in so doing, and in making the believer righteous. Nothing can be more essential for man in having to do with a righteous God than righteousness. This man does not possess in himself, but the God of grace offers it through faith in Jesus Christ. The offer is made to all men, and the righteousness is bestowed upon all who believe. Not a single soul is excluded from the opportunity of accepting this justification, for all alike have sinned, and fall short of God's glory; whilst each believer is justified freely by His grace.

But is God righteous in thus justifying the ungodly? Had He not declared under the law, "I will not justify the wicked" (Exod. xxiii. 7)? On what ground then does God righteously impute righteousness to the believer? The apostle, replying as it were to such a question, points to the Person of the adorable Son of God. It was

Christ Jesus in Whom God shewed forth His righteousness in justifying those who believe. Prior to this time God's gracious dealings were only secretly, not manifestly, set upon a righteous basis. The foundations of His righteousness in grace could not be revealed till Christ came.

And what was the result of Christ's coming? That God was shewn to have been righteous throughout Old Testament times, as indeed He is now in blessing every soul who received the gospel. "Whom [Christ Jesus] God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare [1] his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare [2] I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). God's righteousness is therefore said to be declared in regard to His remission (or, strictly, the *præter-mission*, that is, forgiveness based on that which was coming) of the sins of Old Testament believers, and also in regard to His present act of justifying the believer in Jesus.

Now, observe that this public declaration of God's righteousness is connected with Christ as the propitiatory. It is in this character that Christ displayed God's righteousness: "Whom God set forth a propitiatory . . . to declare his righteousness." For it is a remarkable fact that a different word is used by Paul from that used in John's Epistle. This fact can be verified by anyone having the slightest acquaintance with

the Greek tongue, and is noted in most versions. In John's Epistle Christ is said to be the "*hilasmos*," but in the Epistle to the Romans He is called the "*hilasteerion*." We have one other instance only in the New Testament of the use of the latter word, which establishes its meaning beyond just question. The apostle, when enumerating the furniture of the Holy of holies in the ancient tabernacle, spoke of "the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat" [*hilasteerion*] (Heb. ix. 5). From the two passages, therefore, there can be no doubt that Christ is the Antitype of the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, as He is also the "*hilasmos*" or propitiatory sacrifice (1 John ii. 2 ; iv. 10), whose blood was sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat (Lev. xvi. 14).

It will be remembered that Moses was to make the mercy-seat of pure gold, and to place it upon the ark of testimony. "There I will meet with thee," said Jehovah, "and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat" (Exod. xxv. 17—22). Fine gold was emblematical of the intrinsic righteousness of God, as brass was of His judicial righteousness. Hence when the blood of the victim, on the great day of atonement, was sprinkled upon the golden mercy-seat, the act clearly signified, in type, that the claims of Jehovah's righteous nature were glorified thereby. And the seven-fold sprinkling before the propitiatory indicated that a foundation was thus laid for communion with Jehovah, as He had said to Moses.

In the Epistle to the Romans (to which we have been referring) we find the mercy-seat, the blood,

and the righteousness of God, all associated together. For Christ Jesus is shewn as the propitiatory through faith in His blood to declare God's righteousness. This declaration He has made. As the exceeding riches of God's grace will be declared in coming ages (Eph. ii. 7), so God's righteousness has been already declared "at this time." Moreover, it was done here below. For this Epistle deals with the position of the believer in this world, not in the heavenlies, as is done in the Ephesians. So the moral history of the world is summarized to prove it guilty before God; and where the fruits of man's unrighteousness abounded, there—not in heaven—God's righteousness in justifying the ungodly was demonstrated. In Old Testament times, as may be seen in the book of Job, the possible relation of unrighteous man to a holy God was unknown; but now Christ has declared it to be consonant with God's righteousness by becoming a propitiatory. In His own blessed Person lifted upon the cross He formed the blessed answer to all the righteous demands of God.

Is there a difficulty in that Christ is the sacrifice, and, moreover, the mercy-seat where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled? It is no greater difficulty than in Christ being both the Shepherd of the sheep and the Door through which He leads them (John x.). It was unbelief that could not understand how Christ could be both David's Son and David's Lord. Such paradoxes do not stagger faith. All the difficulties vanish when we remember He was "God mani-

fest in flesh." An ancient writer* has put it: "The Lord Christ is God, and the Mercy-seat, and the High Priest, and the Lamb, and in His blood He has worked out our salvation." Christ is indeed all. His Person is one, and His work is one.

Herein was the great distinction between the Antitype and the types. They were many and varied and terrestrial, and they were, by reason of their very nature, in all points exceeded by the Antitype, as the heavens are higher than the earth. To insist on the necessities of the type in the Antitype is to speak derogatorily of the Person of the Son. In the type you must have a person to take the blood of the sacrifice from the altar to the mercy-seat; but in Christ the sacrifice and mercy-seat coincided, and hence there was no necessity for such transference of His blood, as in the type. And, on the word of Christ Himself, the work was finished when He bowed His head, and dismissed His spirit (John xix. 30).

Moreover, the fact of the closure of the work was attested by the veil of the temple being supernaturally rent from the *top* to the bottom (Mark xv. 38). The veil signified of old that the way into the holiest of all for communion with God from above the mercy-seat was not then made manifest (Heb. ix. 8); but when rent thus it proclaimed that a new and living way into the holiest had been dedicated; so that by the blood of Jesus we may enter with boldness. But the veil was emphatically a figure of Christ's *flesh* (Heb.

* Theodoret.

x. 19, 20), and plainly points that the work whereby the restrictions of the most holy place were removed was accomplished in His flesh* on the cross, and not in heaven after death. For Christ's death (the rent veil) declared the way open, which implies that the work on which this could be righteously done had then been accomplished, and moreover accepted by Him for Whom it was accomplished.

CHRIST'S VICTORY.

"Defeated"; not by shot and shell,
But by the Spirit's sword ;
"Defeated"; not by bayonet thrust,
But by the Word of God ;
The strongholds that His love hath stormed
Are those of sin and hell ;
The prisoners once were Satan's slaves,
Whose worth no tongue can tell.

"Defeated," if by Law's demands
These souls had sought relief,
Nay, 'twas by grace, through Jesus' love,
His anguish, toil, and grief ;
The victory is Christ's alone,
In which they bore no part ;
'Twas through His blood, and oh ! how real
The peace it doth impart.

* Compare Colossians i. 22—" You . . . hath he reconciled in the *body of his flesh* through death." Scripture speaks of no atoning work of Christ in the disembodied state.

The cannon's roar may not alarm
The guilty souls of men,
But conscience speaks in louder tones,
Beyond all human ken ;
When once aroused to face the truth,
How sweet it is to know
That Jesus died and rose again ;
Thus Mercy's streams can flow.

"I will in no wise cast you out,"
Such are His gracious words,
To which, when Faith doth set her seal,
It instant joy affords ;
"Defeated" are our many foes,
By Him Who lives on high,
And, through the triumphs of His cross,
We're now to God brought nigh.

"Obedient unto death" was He,
The Father's blessed Son,
His wound-prints are the token true,
Of how the fight was won ;
Our sins forgiven, and saved by grace,
At His dear feet we fall,
Surrendered to the King of Kings,
We own him Lord of All !

The Lord of Hosts hath won the day,
Through suffering, death, and loss,
Redeemed by blood, we're His for aye,
The trophies of His cross ;
No longer in sin's bondage held,
But in the chains of Love,
We soon shall see His radiant face,
In glory bright above.

A WORD ON JOHN IV. 10, 13, & 14.

It is said that pious souls have been known to wish to shut themselves in, as it were, to certain verses of scripture, or rather to some special verse at a time, and so to exclude all else from their contemplation, that they might the better drink in its inexhaustible fulness. Of such a character undoubtedly are the verses before us, so majestic are they in their depth and fulness and grace. Of course it would be impossible so to do, if desirable. Still, it is well to weigh the words of God. It is not the amount of the Bible that we get through day by day that profits, but the attention we bring to bear on our reading. Let us listen then a moment to these well-known words of our Lord.

It was an entirely new thought to the woman of Samaria that God is a Giver, though she could talk glibly enough of "this mountain" and the worship of her fathers. Still, after these words of the Saviour had fallen upon her ears, she no longer sought to entrench herself within whatever sense of propriety remained in her, and perhaps marvelled no longer why a Jew should converse with one who belonged to an alien people, with whom Jews had no dealings. Evidently our Lord's wondrous words were making a growing impression on her, for now in reply (verse 11) she makes use of a term of courtesy ("Sir") which she had previously withheld. It was no doubt but a dawning sense of the greatness of the One Who had addressed her. She did not as yet recognise

Him as the Christ, still less as the infinite Son of God, Who had everything to give, yet deigned to ask a poor sinful woman for the humblest of services, a drink of water, that He might find a readier access to her heart, and give her a draught of "living water." Had she known the "gift of God," how eagerly would she have asked for that priceless boon, instead of standing upon conventionalities that had their origin in spiritual declension and national estrangement.

But there is more. Surely her request would have been still more earnest, as well as reverent, had she known Who it was that spake to her. She was ignorant of the twofold incentive which our Lord now revealed to her. For Jesus, though the humblest and lowliest of men, knew the fitting season to impress upon His hearers the infinite greatness of His Personality, and to assert claims, which, had He been only man, would have proved Him to be neither lowly nor humble. The woman, needless to say, was entirely in the dark as to His person. Nothing was further from her thoughts. "To her," as one has eloquently said, "He was but a Jew, and herself but a woman of Samaria." She had yet to learn that He was the true God and Eternal Life.

Another striking point in our Lord's words is the collocation of "thou wouldest have asked" with "He would have given." There was no question of denial. To ask was to have, for such are the ways of God's grace. But it is unnecessary to seek to enlarge on what is so beautiful in its simplicity of gracious sequence. And what Christ

would have given—what in fact He soon gave to this poor outcast—was no temporary, still less illusory, boon, as is all that this world can give, but a well of water springing up into everlasting life. If a man once drank of that water, he would never thirst. It is interesting to note the precision of the original, lost in Revised and Authorised Versions alike, but unmistakable. In the case of earthly water the force conveyed is of habitual drinking; in that of the heavenly stream it is as given above, “If a man once drink.” And in keeping with this is the emphasis on the pronoun, “the water that *I* shall give him.” There is this and much more in these cardinal verses.

R. B.

POWER AND COMMUNION.

MEN may own God's *power* abstractedly, but His love—never. They, therefore, seek the one to accomplish what their own love for themselves, not what God's love for them, would seek for in it. They have no faith. Man would use any borrowed power, and personally glory in it; consequently, the moment man is engaged by the power of God, apart from communion with Himself, it must be a snare to him, and must leave his soul barren and unfruitful. It is God Himself Who strengthens the soul. “The Lord *stood by me* and strengthened me.” The consciousness that the Powerful One *loves* me and is beside me is the true invigoration of the soul. When Elijah heard the “still small voice,” he returned to his work like an omnipotent

man. When David was at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he was in spirit and intelligence more advanced than ever he had been before. And when Paul said, "I take pleasure in infirmities, &c., that the power of Christ may rest upon me," he had reached the summit of moral glory.

I like to see the power of God that I may magnify His name; but the more I do so, the more do I desire in my own soul to realise, in an unseen, unmistakable nearness, that He is *my* God; and the latter is always dearer to me than the former, because the more distinctly I know Him, the more sincerely can I join in magnifying Him. Have we not seen gifts and distinct powers from God become a snare to the church, and the possessors of them, over and over again? The soul is more occupied with the expression than with the heart of Him from Whom it came. Powerful teaching blesses me just in proportion as I can realise the love of Christ, of which the teaching is the exposition. If I am engaged with the exposition, as I might be by a poem, then it is mental and not spiritual. It is, in fact, beyond me, and if my conscience demand at some time hence my accordance with the results of the exposition, I discover that I received the exposition, and felt the power of it, without appropriating it to myself as the very sentiments of God's heart toward me. The consequence is, I am worse off than if I never heard, for I am humbled when I reckoned on gain. Real power, after all, consists in the inward sense it produces, not in the outward

demonstration of itself. Paul would rather speak five intelligible words than possess the gift of tongues as a mere demonstration of power. People sometimes wonder at the manifestations of God's power, as if they were total strangers to the manner and greatness of it in their own souls. An undue place is given to that which nature can more readily apprehend, for with nature it is always from the outward to the inward, instead of *vice versâ*.

May we be spiritual enough to own every gift and power from God *as given to the church, from the church, and for the church*; but also may we know the "still small voice," the secret communion, the unseen link which should be our real resource rather than and beyond any demonstration of power.—*Extracted.*

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

HERE the address is in substance as in the First Epistle, but a little enlarged to meet the need. Hope was enfeebled by a Judaising error intended to alarm (ii. 2). Hence after the salutation the apostle and his two fellow-labourers say, "We ought to thank God always for you, even as it is meet, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth." But there is nothing now to say of

their endurance of hope as before, though it is added that "we ourselves boast in you in the churches of God for your endurance and faith in all your persecution and the tribulation which ye sustain." They were still faithful, though their hope was darkened. Apprehension of the day of the Lord had displaced their longing joy in His anticipated coming.

Hence he thus early in this letter points out that those afflictions they were enduring had nothing to do with that day, but were an evident token of the righteous judgement of God, to the end of their being counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they were suffering. That day is, on the contrary, to destroy the wicked and usher in the kingdom of God, when those that suffer now shall reign with Christ. So he appeals to its indisputable principle: "If at least it is righteous with God to requite tribulation to those that trouble you, and to you that are troubled repose with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with angels of His power, in flaming fire rendering vengeance to those that know not God, and to those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus [Christ]." For that day is directed against not one class but two, not only the nations ignorant of God, but the Jews who rejected the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus.

Why then fear? It was for both so described, who were such as should pay penalty in "everlasting destruction from the Lord's presence, and from the glory of His might, when He shall have come to be glorified in His saints, and to be

wondered at in all that believed (because our testimony to you was believed) in that day." Can anything be plainer than that here we have the retributive character of that day in correction of unfounded alarm? "To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of the calling, and fulfil every good pleasure of goodness and work of faith in power; so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and [the] Lord Jesus Christ" (vers. 1—12). It will be apparent, the more the words are examined, that he does not speak thus far of our Lord's coming to meet the saints caught up, but of His judicial revelation or His day, as to which they had been misled.

In chap. ii. the apostle directly refutes the false teaching; for this it was, not ignorant and mistaken inference about the Lord's coming or its issues, as in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13—15. Here it is a spurious notion for which the highest claim was made, bringing terror on the living saints; there it was a hasty deduction of their own as to the dead saints. "Now we entreat you, brethren, by [or for the sake of] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, to the end that ye be not quickly shaken in [or from your] mind, nor yet be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is present" (vers. 1, 2). Thus the blessed hope of His coming to gather them to Himself is the motive for asking them not to be disquieted by the groundless notion, not

without fraud, that His day had arrived with its terrors. How could it be? The saints were still here, not gathered up to Him; and the frightful evils which His day is to avenge were not yet manifested. "Let not any one deceive you in any manner; because [it will not be] unless there have come the apostasy first, and there have been revealed the man of sin, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself above every one called God, or object of veneration, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that while yet with you I told you these things" (vers. 3—5)?

Before that day there must be first the falling away, the abandonment of the truth, next the revelation of the lawless one, in contrast with the mystery or secret of lawlessness at work in the church even when the apostle wrote. These three must not be confounded. The man of sin is the future adversary of the Lord, the Man of righteousness, the antichrist of the First and Second Epistles of John, the wilful king of Daniel xi. 36—39, and the second beast of Revelation xiii., identical with the false prophet of chap. xix., as he is the antithesis of the true prophet of Deuteronomy xviii., if we heed the apostle Peter (Acts iii.). The restraining power and person (for both are true) is the Holy Spirit in His governing action providentially, not limited to the Roman empire; for He still restrains, though the empire exist not; and when it reappears under the dragon's influence, it is exactly when the Spirit ceases to restrain. Till then the powers are ordained of God; after it,

Satan will be allowed to set up the lawless man as God even in His temple, whom the Lord Jesus will slay (*or* consume) with the breath of His mouth and annul by the manifestation of His coming, having already gathered His saints to Himself on high.

No solid ground appears for regarding either the apostasy or the man as successional, like the mystery of lawlessness. They are both future at the consummation of the age, the former preparing the way for the latter. Nor is it well founded to view the "consuming," if that word were read, as gradual through the word: compare Isaiah xi. 4, xxx. 33. The Lord's antagonist is unique and arrayed with portentous power and signs and wonders of falsehood, according to Satan's working retributively to deceive and destroy those who refuse the love of the truth and had pleasure in unrighteousness (vers. 6—12).

In contrast with such, it drew out thanksgiving always that God chose the brethren from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and faith of the truth. This was shewn when He called them "through our gospel" to obtaining our Lord Jesus Christ's glory. So they are exhorted to hold fast what they were taught, whether by word or by "our epistle;" and as in closing chap. i., so here in chap. ii. he prays that our Lord, and our God and Father Who had so loved and blessed, might encourage their hearts and stablish them in every good work and word.

Chapter iii. opens with asking their prayers that the word of the Lord might run and be glorified,

even as also with them, and for deliverance from unreasonable and evil men; for faith is not of all. But the Lord is faithful; what a strength to stablish the saints and keep from evil!

And the apostle trusted that what he enjoined they both were doing and would do, and prays that the Lord would direct their hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. He was waiting above; let them wait here below. But the act of withdrawing from disorderly idlers, serious as it is, should not be confounded with purging out the wicked person in 1 Corinthians v., which last only is excommunication. They were therefore not to esteem one that shirked work as an enemy but rather admonish as a brother. Leaven, on the contrary, has to be peremptorily purged out as unclean. Again, he prays the Lord of peace Himself to give them peace through everything in every manner, and Himself be with them; for such things are apt to disquiet and lead to errors if not judged. As he abjured them by the Lord to read the First Epistle to all the holy brethren, so here he salutes by his hand as the mark in every Epistle, and wished the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with them all.

W. K.

“The concluding words of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians resemble greatly while they differ sensibly. ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you,’ says the First—be ‘with you all,’ says the Second. The more decided emphasis is where and when it was most needed; whilst the same farewell of divine love appears substantially in both.”

“A PECULIAR TREASURE.”

(EXODUS XIX. 5.)

WHEREVER the He'brew noun, “*segullah*,” occurs, it is said to denote a possession, or treasure, which the owner regards as peculiarly choice, on which his heart is set, and which he neither shares with others, nor resigns to the care of servants. “It means,” says an old writer, “a special treasure, or most precious riches, which one esteemeth most of, and which he taketh most special pleasure, and contentment in; as his jewels, rich, precious stones, etc.”

Hence, the term is used of gold and silver (1 Chron. xxix. 3), and of other treasures (Eccl. ii. 8). It is also used of God's people (Mal. iii. 17): “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (*Segullah*).” Again, the word spoken to Israel was, “Thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people (*segullah*) to Himself above all people that are upon the earth” (Deut. vii. 6). And again, “For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself; and Israel for his peculiar treasure” (Psalm cxxxv. 4).

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament the word representing “*segullah*” is generally “*periousios*,” “peculiar,” “precious,” etc. And this word is used in the New Testament of believers: “That he might purify to himself a *peculiar* people,” etc. (Tit. ii. 14). But in Malachi iii. 17, another Greek word is used, “*peripoieesin*,” “purchasing,”

"possessing," etc. This word is also applied, by the Spirit, to Christians in 1 Peter ii. 9: "But *ye* [are] a chosen race . . . a people for a possession," etc. (New Translation).

Now in all the above scriptures, both from the Old and New Testaments, the leading sense is that of "select, precious, endearing, something exceedingly prized, and sedulously preserved." Thus we may see the value God has always set upon His children. They are of priceless worth in His sight, and nothing else can compare with them.

But God's choice, in Israel's case, as now, depended upon His sovereign will, and not because there was anything good in the descendants of Jacob to commend them to His favour; for they were weak, wayward, and failing. Herein is seen, therefore, the superabounding greatness of God's grace displayed in choosing such worthless objects, and making them His precious treasure. As such they were guarded by Him with jealous care; so that the word is, "He kept him as the apple of his eye." Again, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Deut. xxxii. 10; Zech. ii. 8). How beautifully this figure expresses the tender regard which Jehovah cherished in the past, and will always retain for His own people. It is a well-known fact that no member of the human body is more susceptible to pain, nor more carefully protected by us than the eye, especially the "apple," "pupil," or aperture through which the rays of light pass to the retina. Thus are God's solicitous thoughts respecting His children brought down to the level of our apprehension, by

this simple figure which is understood by everyone.

Protection and nourishment are denoted by the figure of the bird gathering her young under her wings, thus shielding them from the elements and from their enemies. Hence, said the Spirit, "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust" (Psalm xci. 4; Deut. xxxii. 11; Matt. xxiii. 37). Eph. v. 29 speaks of the Christ nourishing and *cherishing* the church. And this word "*thalpei*" "to cherish," is used in the Old Testament for a hen brooding over her young or eggs (Deut. xxii. 6).

Thus, then, we see, that both Old and New Testaments combine to shew, in a very full and unmistakable manner, God's love for His children; and the high place He has set them in His affections; far above all created beings of whatever order, whether angels or archangels. All have a subordinate place to sinners saved by grace. And this truth which runs through the word of God is also concentrated in the word "*segullah.*" Truly then every word of God is pregnant with meaning and worthy of our careful meditation.

W. T. H.

"Down beneath the sunless waters
He from Heaven has passed,
He has found His heart's desire,
Found His pearl at last.
All He had His heart has given
For that gem unpriced—
Such art thou, O ransomed sinner,
Yea, for such is Christ."

GOD'S PURPOSES CONCERNING MAN.

IN all the varied dispensations and ways of God in relation to man, His Son was the centre of all His thoughts. It was even so before He displayed His creative power in forming the heavens and the earth. And is it not marvellous, and should it not call forth praises from the heart of every true believer, that in the divine counsels of God such as we were marked off as His own, not only to be saved from the coming wrath, but to be to the praise of His glory for ever and ever ?

Yes, and this will be accomplished in spite of the enemy's work which brought in sin and death, but which at the same time gave an occasion for the manifestation of His love in a way which could not have been known otherwise.

The Word was made flesh that He might dwell among men ; not, however, to improve man in his ruined and lost condition, but to bring to light the effect produced by the entrance of sin, viz., the hatred and enmity of the heart of man against the One Who in perfect love had come to open the way to God through laying down His life, and thus accomplishing redemption work by His precious shed blood, by which alone every sinner who believes in Him is made clean and fit to dwell with Christ in glory, and that to the praise of God's grace—God's grace in His kindness towards us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

VI.—“I ALWAYS DO.”

UNDER this brief sentence let us gather up a few final reminiscences. “Final” so far as our present act of committing them to writing is concerned, but not, we trust, in respect of each one, writer as well as readers, reflecting upon other incidents which in the experience of every one of us are calculated to provide matter for profitable consideration. A complaint made against Israel of old was, “My people doth not consider” (Isa. i. 3). It was at the close of school one Sunday afternoon, at W——k (see paper No. 3). The teachers and classes were leaving, and I was speaking to one of the children, who evidently felt a real interest in what she had listened to in the class and in the address after school. I concluded my remarks by saying, “I shall pray for you,” and then added, “And you can pray for yourself and me too,” to which she immediately replied, “I always do.” How truly had this dear child already learned the power of the exhortations in Eph. vi. 18, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” These words gave me a cheer something like that which is told of Luther and Melancthon when they overheard two school boys behind a hedge praying together, and caught the words: “O God, bless Luther and help on the Reformation.” Nor did she discontinue these encouragements, for when the time came, through

removal to another house, for me to leave the school, as I was quitting the place of several years' happy work, she put into my hand a book-marker, upon which she had worked in silken letters the words: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love" (Heb. vi. 10). Among the memories of Sunday School meetings, the following appears to be also worth recording: We had assembled for a teachers' tea-meeting at which several schools were represented. As two of the teachers sat, cups in hand, talking together, another, well known to both, entered the room, which gave occasion for one of the two to say: "Here comes Mr. —, what a man he is amongst children;" to which the other replied, "I don't agree with you at all; I should say, what a child he is among children." Perhaps there is no sphere of gospel work beside the Sunday School which affords a better opportunity for seeking to be like Paul when he said: "I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 22).

I remember a visitor to one of the schools saying this word for the encouragement of the teachers: The Lord's words to you are (as in Luke v. 4), "Let down your nets *for* a draught," *i.e.*, not uncertainly but expecting a blessing. Adopt the teacher's motto: "All my class for Jesus." And I may here add I can speak of at least one class in which I have seen the teacher surrounded by the children, each one of which was unmistakably converted to God. That teacher is now with the Lord, and what a crown of rejoicing

will those children be to her in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. (See 1 Thess. ii. 19.) I remember one Sunday afternoon, the classes being well attended and all proceeding happily except for the trying drawback of the late arrival of two or three of the teachers, to the distraction of their own classes and more or less of the whole school. The course I felt free to adopt under these delicate circumstances was the following: When about to close the school I gave out Albert Midlane's beautiful hymn—

“There's a friend for little children,
Above the bright blue sky.”

The hymn having been sung through, I said: “Children, we will sing a new verse this afternoon,” and proceeded to give out one line at a time, asking the children to repeat each line that we might be assured they had learned it:

T.: “There's a crown for earnest teachers,”

Children: “There's a crown for earnest teachers,”

T.: “Who early come to school”;

Children: “Who early come to school”;

And so for the remaining six lines:

“And show by their example,
Th' importance of the rule ;
That when 'tis time to open,
With singing or with prayer ;
Whoever may be absent,
I'll strive that I'll be there.”

The verse was given out again, two lines at a time, and sung at least as heartily as the regular ones which had preceded it, and as we were walking home I remember one of the most punctual of

the teachers said to me, "I thought that was a most happy method you adopted to remind us of the importance of the teachers setting the example of punctuality." No doubt, but all will agree that it is more orderly for the teachers to await the arrival of the children rather than the reverse.

But I must draw these memory jottings to a close. I think it was nearly thirty years ago, a devoted labourer in the gospel was about to leave London for the West of England and expressed the desire to meet as many of the young men known to him as could come together for a word of "exhortation and comfort." The meeting largely consisted of Sunday School teachers, and after prayer he drew our attention to 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

What a wonderful place the word "continue" has in the exhortations of the word of God. May we know more of its power. May we search that word with more diligence, so shall our own souls' profiting the more appear, and we be the better enabled to help others also. And when those we have met in the Sunday School come across our path, or with "ink and pen" call upon us to remember them and the work of the Lord in prayer, may we be able truly to respond: "I always do."

T. J.

"It is dangerous to smite those with our tongues whom God has smitten with His hand."

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

THE KNOWN ISAIAH, by W. Kelly : 88 pp., paper, 8vo ; Cheverton, 1894.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, by W. Kelly : new and enlarged edition, 485 pp., cloth, demy 8vo ; Weston, 1897.

HINTS ON ISAIAH, by W. Kelly : 8 pp., 8vo ; Weston, 1900.

The pre-eminence of Isaiah among the Old Testament prophets is unquestioned, and the frequent quotation from his prophecies in the New Testament shews the importance of his testimony. Perhaps the most among many striking features of value and usefulness in the works named above is the help they render in observing the purpose of this prophetic book as a whole, both in relation to itself and to the other parts of scripture.

"*The Known Isaiah*" gives a concise summary of the prophet, indicating the main divisions and sub-divisions. It, in spite of "higher criticism," establishes the unity of the prophecy, shewing how unwarrantable is the prevalent theory that chapters xl.—lxvi. were written by some unknown person, and not by Isaiah at all.

The "*Exposition of Isaiah*" is a much fuller treatise as the title itself implies. It consists of a valuable Introduction, followed by a new translation of the prophecy by the author, with expository remarks throughout. In the first part of the Introduction the subject of prophecy in general is dealt with, giving its true character as treating of Israel and the nations of the earth rather than of the "partakers of the heavenly calling." Particular attention is called to this portion of the volume as many even of those who have learned not to confound Zion with the church of God, are, to their own loss, not at all clear that the future of the church does not figure in the prophetic scheme.

We commend the following extract to the careful

consideration of our readers. Speaking of the earth as the scene of coming glory, the author asks :

"Does this surprise or offend any ? It was here the Son of God, Who created all, became man, and lived, and died, by the grace of God. It was here was manifested the wonder of a divine person humbling Himself in obedience unto death—yea, death of the cross. It was here God was glorified in the Holy One made sin ; and here that Satan was vanquished. . . . If heaven and God's throne be the worthy reward, this earth shall be delivered and reconciled."

The first edition was published some thirty years ago, but the numerous additions in the present issue have almost doubled the contents of the volume. The clear and bold printing, we must add, is a welcome "sight for sair e'en."

In the eight-page tract, "*Hints on Isaiah*," we have the subject and design of the prophecy again given, in this instance as may be imagined, on the "ox-in-the-teacup" principle. The price, Fivepence per dozen, irresistibly suggests the good work of distributing good things.

SONGS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE, by Newman Hall, LL.B., D.D. S. W. Partridge & Co., 8 & 9, Paternoster Row, E.C. Price Sixpence in paper ; One Shilling in cloth boards.

This is a collection of 100 original songs of a devotional character. The tone is sober and pious. The language is clear and occasionally striking, with an easy flow of expression such as is best suited to sacred verse for general reading. But we do not think even poetic license is a just excuse for addressing the Lord as "Brother." The limits of reverent Christian intimacy seem to us to be overstepped, probably without such an intention, in lines like the following :

"Friend of sinners, Lord of glory !
Lowly, Mighty ! Brother, King !"

And again :

"Come to the wedding, Jesus, Friend Divine,
As Brother come, and ratifying Priest !"

THE PRIEST TO MAKE PROPITIATION.

ONE of the chief purposes of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to bring out the personal glories of the Messiah for the enlightenment and establishment of believers particularly those who were of that nation which so flagrantly dishonoured Him, even unto crucifixion and death. For there were those in the Apostles' day who, while they believed in Jesus as the Anointed One of God, still clung with veneration to the law and the prophets. Like impulsive Peter on the Mount they would make as it were three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Christ. And the Epistle to the Hebrews is the voice coming from the "excellent glory," as the heavenly rebuke did to Simon, son of Jonas, setting forth Christ as the Son of God; and since He is the Son of God, all the splendours of the ancient types and shadows fade away by reason of the radiant glories of the despised Nazarene. Beautiful and instructive and impressive as the ceremonial observances of the ancient economy were, they nevertheless could not but be limited, and imperfect, and not in any sense or particular the "very image" of Him Who was coming. And because of the inherent defects of the Mosaic sacrifices and priesthood, the "glory that excelleth" in the Antitype becomes the more manifestly declared, and that too, by way of contrast rather than by comparison.

It is certain that the degree of fulness and perfection* in the fulfilment of Old Testament type depended altogether upon the Person Who was the Fulfiller. Who was to be the Priest that should suit God and man in every particular? Certainly not one taken from among men, for all such were compassed with infirmity (Heb. v. 1—3). Whatever a man "compassed with infirmity" did, must itself be marked by infirmity too, so that every priestly act of old was necessarily weak and inadequate. And for that reason it was the common thought of the Jewish worshipper that weakness and inadequacy were in some degree or other inseparable from the priesthood. Hence they were in danger of attributing these imperfections to the priesthood of Christ as well.

The apostle, to correct such unworthy thoughts, brings out in the very forefront of his Epistle the unsurpassable glory of Christ's person—Son of God (chap. i.), Son of Man (chap. ii.). Before a word is written as to His pontifical or sacrificial perfection, the truth as to His person is unfolded in a grand dioramic display. And is it not so presented in this order that our hearts may bow in worship in presence of the overwhelming majesty of the Son, ere we proceed to learn the blessedness of Christianity, based as it is upon the perfections of the Great High Priest and His sacrifice? We can always suffer to have our hearts enlarged as to our thoughts of Christ. However exalted they

* Assuming for the moment that it is permissible to speak of degrees of perfection, as is commonly done in reference to human things.

may be, they fall infinitely below the mark. How needful then to have the mind of the Spirit, of Whom the Lord said, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John xvi. 14).

The Godhead of the Lord Jesus secured a perfect performance of His priestly and sacrificial work, while His spotless manhood constituted Him a perfect representative of those whose sins were atoned for. We read "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same": "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make* propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii. 14, 17). Now on reference to the Old Testament ritual we find that it was specially on the Great Day of Atonement that Aaron officiated *without* those resplendent garments of glory and beauty that were his as the high priest. On that day he had to perform the solemn functions in the ordinary linen attire of the priesthood, and not in the beautiful robes peculiar to him (Exod. xxviii. 1—39). The fact was Aaron had to offer sacrifice for himself and the other priests ("his house") as well as for the sins of the people. And when clad only in the holy linen garments, he was, to use the New

*It is generally accepted that the verb here (*hilaskomai*) should be translated "to make propitiation" and not "reconciliation." The converse applies in Romans v. 11, where "reconciliation" should replace "atonement."

Testament phrase, "made like unto his brethren." The gorgeous apparel proper only to Aaron would be assumed subsequently, after the propitiatory work was accomplished. The ephod, the breastplate, the Urim and Thummim were all connected with Aaron's intercessory work for the people to maintain them in that relation to Jehovah which was *theirs in consequence of the blood being upon the mercy-seat*. Thus the work of the high priest in the linen garments (propitiation) was introductory to the work in the glorious garments (intercession). And such is the order in which the work of the Great High Priest is set before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews,—(1) propitiation for sins (chap. ii.); (2) intercession and help that we may not sin (chap. iv. etc.).

And the tenor of the passage that speaks of the merciful and faithful high priest making propitiation for sins is that the Lord Jesus came down from above to do so. For this He was made a little lower than the angels; for this He took part in blood and flesh; for this it behoved Him *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren. So that propitiation was His work in the days of His flesh. There is not a word that speaks of His going to heaven to propitiate (or make atonement for) sins. He descended in grace to work a work that sins might be atoned for and many sons be brought to glory. And He Himself said to His Father of His work here: "I have glorified thee *on the earth*; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John xvii. 4).

ISAIAH'S VISION.

They veil'd their faces* with their glowing wings,
 Whose whiteness was but shadow, when the rays
 Of that Essential Light with blinding blaze
 Smote their prone pinions—for created things
 Are nought in presence of the King of Kings—
 E'en blessed Seraphim, whose exalted ways
 Are high above our dust—not theirs to gaze
 Upon Jehovah, thron'd 'mid thunderings.

Yet was He "seen of angels," when He came,
 Jehovah-Jesus, Man with men to dwell ;
 And they were keener† to discern His fame
 Than men, who knew not that Immanuel
 Himself was there to die a death of shame,
 As He was there of grace and truth to tell.

R.B.

THE WAY OF FAITHFULNESS.

THOSE who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be in no respect accounted of; nor encouraged by the prospect of *human* praise. If you make an exception that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say, beware of this, for you may turn them into a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive. All such motives are a poison and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God.

It is not the fact that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian

* Isaiah vi.

† 1 Peter i. 12.

must be contented to labour under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. *The man of God must walk alone with God ; he must be contented that the Lord knoweth.*

It is such a relief to the natural man within us to fall back upon human countenance, and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it " brotherly love," when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow-worm.

You are to be followers of Him Who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice you are not alone, because the Father is with you, that you may give glory to God. Oh, I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been accessible to the praise of men, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, pleased and happy in doing with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand. Here was the victory of Jesus. There was not a single heart that beat in sympathy with His heart, or entered into His bitter sorrow, or bore His grief in the hour of His bitter grief, but His way was with the Lord, His judgement was with His God His Father, Who said, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the perfect glory given by the Father to the Son, that in flesh and blood such a trust to God was manifested.

And this is what you are called to, not as He was, but you are called to see *God in Him*. God has come near to you in Christ, and here you have a human heart—a perfect sympathy—as well as the heart of God, and to this you are ever carried. And if there be any other sympathy with you in the wide universe, whether on the sea of glass, or still on the earth, it is only as the *pulsation of the life that flows from Christ to His members, that it is to you of any account*. Feed upon it, and remember you are thus to walk in the world, not hanging upon one another.—*Extracted.*

CHRIST EVER SUPREME.

WE may have observed in John's Gospel the zealous and decided way in which the Lord Jesus sets aside all honour which man might bring to Him, in order that He may establish the grace of God, or the love of the Father, to poor sinners. In that Gospel He shines in the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, as full of grace; and He will not shine in any other glory. Men may propose to honour Him as a Teacher of heavenly secrets, as a Doer of wonders, as One suited to be great in the world as a Judge, or as a King; but He sets all aside with marked and indignant earnestness, and will be received only as the witness of the Father, the minister of grace to sinners.

This gives character to the Lord's way in the Gospel by John.

In a corresponding way, we may see how zealously, so to speak, all through scripture, God sets aside all that would stand as in company with Christ to share His place with Him (and, still more, all that would dare or affect to *displace* Him), that He may fix and establish Him as His one great ordinance.

There is, let me say, a very blessed correspondence between these two things. In John's Gospel, or during His ministry here among us, Christ the Son is zealous in hiding Himself, that the grace of God, the secret of the bosom of the Father, may appear; and God, at all times, during the different dispensations, is zealous that Christ, and Christ only, should be accepted and honoured as His own one great ordinance.

Of this latter truth, I would notice some striking pledges and witnesses, as we pass down the current of scripture.

Nadab and Abihu, with bold and infidel daring, set aside the fire which had come down from heaven. That fire, symbolically, expressed the acceptance of the services of Aaron, and was, in this way, the seal which God was putting upon Christ and His work; for He is the true Aaron and the true Victim, the Priest and the Sacrifice for God.

The hand of God awfully and peremptorily judges this sin, by slaying them on the spot. Penal fire avenged the strange fire which had displaced the fire which had borne witness to Christ. This is full of meaning. (See Lev. x.)

Moses and Aaron exposed themselves in like

manner, though not in like measure. They trespassed against the Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. It was not in the spirit of infidel daring, like Nadab and Abihu. No, indeed. Far otherwise. It was, through sudden temptation, under the provoking of the people. But still, they did dishonour God's great ordinance at the water of Meribah. They did not sanctify God in using the rod with the Rock, according to the divine word. Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips. He trespassed against the Rock which followed Israel, and that Rock was Christ; and that is enough. He and Aaron are judged for this sin. They are told that they shall not bring the people into the land—a judgement which is never repented of. God is not to be moved from avenging the wrongs of Christ upon His choicest servants, be they who they may, even a Moses and an Aaron. The judgement was pronounced on the spot, and maintained till it was executed to the very letter. There was a great moral distance, I know, and as I have already said, between the offence of Nadab and his brother, and that of Moses and his brother. The haste and unadvisedness of the latter are surely not to be condemned as the bold, infidel insult of the former. But still, God avenged the controversy of Christ upon each and all of them. (See Num. xx.)

When we come to New Testament times, we find the same jealousy touching the honours of the Christ in the mind of God. In ignorance, as not knowing what he said, or not knowing any better, Peter, on the holy hill, proposed to give equal

place to Moses, Elias, and Jesus. But "the excellent glory" could not be silent then. The honour of Christ is not to suffer at the hand of anyone. It may be but ignorance, and not unadvisedness, as with Moses; or infidel presumption, as with Nadab—it may be neither scorn nor temper, but only from want of knowing better. Still, God's hand or God's voice will be ready to avenge the dishonour of His Christ. The voice from "the excellent glory" lets Peter know that "the Beloved Son" alone is to be heard. (See Luke ix.)

Then, what God thus, by hand or voice, began to do in this matter, the Spirit in His vessels continues to do. God in "the excellent glory," the Holy Ghost in His vessels, and, I may add, every saint, are one in this zeal and jealousy.

The disciples of John Baptist were somewhat moved by the multitude seeming to pass by their master for the younger Jesus. They resent this—as Joshua, ages before, had done in the cause of his master Moses, when Eldad and Medad began prophesying. But John, in all gentleness, and yet in all decisiveness, answers this. As in the name of all the prophets, as standing at the end of the line of them, and uttering their mind, he hides himself that Christ alone may be seen and heard. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above"—"He must increase, but I decrease," he says, replying to the words of his disciples. Though but a vessel of the Spirit, though but an Elias, he speaks the language of "the excellent glory" on the holy hill. The voice of God there called away Moses and the prophets

from the eye and from the ear of Peter ; so here, John's word withdraws himself and all his fellow-servants, the Bridegroom's friends, from the eye and ear of his disciples (and indeed from all beside), that the same " Beloved Son " may alone be known or thought of. John and " the excellent glory " have, in this way, the same mind about Jesus the Christ, God's great ordinance. (See John iii.) This is all consistent, and all blessed. The glory as on high, and the Spirit in His vessels here, are agreeing together to give all honour to the Son.

After John, we listen to the Epistles ; each of them, in its way, does the same service. It is jealous over Christ, careful to maintain His place and honours for Him alone. But in that to the Hebrews, we see this purpose prevailing in the mind of the Spirit throughout ; I may say, it gives its character to that Epistle.

That Epistle is a setting aside one thing after another, in order to leave the Lord Jesus, the Christ, God's great ordinance, only before us ; and having brought Him in, to keep Him there : and each thing, as it comes up, is set aside with a strong, decided hand, as in ancient days, the days of Nadab and Abihu, or of Moses and Aaron.

Angels are first withdrawn from our sight, and He, Who has obtained a more excellent name than they, is brought in ; and this, too, upon the authority of scripture after scripture (chaps. i., ii.).

Moses is then set aside, as but a servant in the house of another, and He, Jesus the Christ, the

Son, is brought in as lord over His own house (chap. iii.).

Joshua is to give place, as one who gave Israel no rest, while Jesus, the true Joshua, is revealed as giving God's own rest to us (chap. iv.).

Aaron, the priest, is then shewn as yielding to Christ, the true Melchisedec, the Priest in the power of an endless life (chaps. v.—vii.).

The old covenant vanishes before that covenant of which Christ is the Mediator, and which abides now for ever (chap. viii.).

The sanctuary under the law is taken down, and the better and more perfect one, where Christ serves, is raised in the stead of it (chap. ix.).

The victim provided for the altar by the law is slain no more, and the one sacrifice of Christ is established in its efficacy for ever (chap. x.).

Thus, God's great ordinance is set in its place. Christ is brought in, and all, one after another, have to go out. Angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, the old covenant, the first tabernacle, the legal sacrifices, are made to leave the scene, that He and He alone may fill it; and being brought in, after this manner, by the Spirit, Christ is set before us for ever—as we read just at the end of the Epistle, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

All is thus in earnest and consistent jealousy around Jesus, from first to last. The hand of God avenging, the voice of the Father rebuking, the Spirit in His living vessels or in His written oracles renouncing, all slight upon Him, the Christ of God, God's one great ordinance.

And what has thus been done by the divine hand and voice, and by the Holy Ghost in His authorised, authoritative ministers, is still done, and that every day and all the earth over, by all elect, and ransomed sinners. The faith of the saint is one, with all beside, in this jealousy.

Paul, as a saint, will say, as Paul, as an inspired teacher will teach, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ": and again, "Christ is all." John will say, with intense jealousy watching over the name of Jesus, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed." This jealousy touching Him, this glorying only in Him, is the common instinctive property of every renewed mind, the inwrought, and thus, indeed, the natural sense and judgement of every saved soul.

What harmonies are these! Harmonies of heaven and of earth, of all times and dispensations, of "the excellent glory" and of poor earthen vessels! And the harmonies that utter the song or form of music take for their subject a theme of loftiest conception, and of most precious and joyous meaning—the glory and worth of the Lord Jesus, the Christ of God, Who is to know no one to emulate Him throughout the eternal ages.

Extracted.

"The path of each believer is always new. Among the thousands and millions who have gone before, not one treads in the path of another. There is that in the path of every believer which is peculiar to himself."

INTERCESSION.

CALLING some time ago on a dear old Christian lady who was ill, and who is nearly blind, she spoke to me of her daughter, who but a short time before God had called home. She said, "I do miss her so; she always used to read with me every morning and evening, and she had a real gift in prayer. Now, I don't feel myself that I can always give expression to the thoughts that are in my heart; I can't shape them into words."

"Well," I said, "it is well to remember that He knows the desires of the heart, and in the eighth chapter of Romans, you know, it speaks of the Spirit making 'intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.'"

"And," I added, "do you know what the next verse says? It struck me very forcibly the other day." And I repeated to her the 27th verse: "And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God."

"Do repeat it again, please," came the request; and I did so.

Then she said, "I never noticed that verse before. God knows the mind of the Spirit, and He will not ask anything which is not good for us, or, according to God's will; and He also searches our hearts and knows just what we are wanting to ask for, both for ourselves and for our dear ones, and often does not give us what *we*

ask because it is not according to God's will ; it's just wonderful."

We had a little further talk about Him Who has graciously provided One to make intercession. After prayer together that He would teach us more of Himself, I left.

It was some weeks before I was able to call again. She is too blind to recognise faces, and when I asked, "Do you remember me, Mrs. A——?" she said, "I don't think I do"; but when I told her, she took my hand in both of hers and exclaimed, "Oh, yes, I know your voice now, and I'm so glad you have come, for I've been wanting to tell you that I can see it all clearly now—*He* maketh intercession for us according to the will of God. It has been such a comfort to me, when I could not give expression to what is in my heart."

Dear fellow-Christian, do we realise as we should that "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," and that it is "according to the will of God?" It is not a "gift in prayer" that we need, for a mere flow of language may be mistaken for this. But the Spirit working in us teaches us what to pray for. Then, our requests will be according to God, and as a consequence we may confidently expect the answers (1 John v. 14).

E. N.

"Whenever the hour of trial comes, parley not with trial ; but take it at once to Christ. Remember, whatever your trials are, the merciful High Priest is the gift of God the Father's love to meet those very trials."

THE WOMEN OF GALILEE AND OF BETHANY.

THERE were two distinct parties of women, which severally had communion with the Lord Jesus, but who are never seen in communion with each other. The character of their relationship to Him differed very much—though they were entirely one in the common love of His person, and in the zeal that would serve Him earnestly. I allude to the Galilean women, and the sisters at Bethany.

The Galilean women were with the Lord in the scenes of His ordinary activities. They had not much knowledge of Him, but they loved Him dearly. When we are first introduced to them, we see them serving and following Him (Luke viii. 2, 3). And at the end we find them still with Him and serving Him, having followed Him from the distant north to Jerusalem, when He went there for the last time. And there we find them after His death and resurrection; and waiting also for His promise after He had left them for the heavens (Mark xvi. 1; Acts i. 14).

The sisters at Bethany were not commonly with Him; but what they wanted in familiarity was more than made up to them in intimacy. With less intercourse, they had more knowledge. When we are first introduced to them, we see them learning as well as serving; and not following Him, but receiving Him into their house (Luke x. 38-42). And in a further scene of their history we see them

still learning lessons on the secrets and glories that belonged to Him (John xi., xii.).

Here are characteristic differences between these two families, as I may call them, though each of them was precious to the Lord, and is precious in the recollections of the saints. Those of Galilee were serving and following Him; those of Bethany were learning of Him, and receiving Him. He accepted services from the one, and with all confidence gave Himself to their company; but He was at home with the other.

But I would pause here for a little. There is a great deal for faith to do in such a scene as this world, and in such circumstances as human life furnishes every day. It has to reach its own world through many veils, and to dwell there in spite of many hindrances. It is "the things not seen" and "the things hoped for" that faith deals with; and such things lie at a distance, or under cover; and faith has therefore to reach them through veils, and beyond intervals.

In John xi. we look on a scene of death. Every eye there, but one, saw nothing else. The disciples, Martha, and her friends, and even Mary, were full of thoughts of it; but Jesus, in the midst of all this, eyed life and talked of life. He moved onward through the scene, in the consciousness of it. He carried light through the darkness that was overspreading that hour.

The end, however, instructs them all. It lets the sisters at Bethany know that Jesus was "the life," and that under His hand there is resurrection *from* the dead. Lazarus, their brother, comes forth at the voice of the Son of God.

And then, having *learned* this lesson, this secret among the glories of Christ, they *enjoy* it. It was learned, as it ever is when learned from God, to be used and enjoyed—poorly indeed by some of us; but so we own it, that we are to use in living, practical power in our souls, that which we have received as a divine lesson. And thus, as a family in the light of resurrection, Lazarus and Martha and Mary are seen in the Lord's company, serving, sitting, worshipping. They either wait on Him, listen to Him, or make their offerings to Him (John xii. 1).

And in all this, we see a very advanced character, as I may observe. Martha, though still serving, as in Luke x., does not complain of her sister, as she did there. Mary, still at His feet, is there, not listening to some more elementary lessons, as we may say she was doing in Luke x., but in worship, filling the house with the odour of the ointment, greeting Him as with the honours that were to be His in His place of victory over death and the grave. And Lazarus, not seen before save in the grave, now takes an honoured place at the table with his Lord, as one seated in heavenly places, a witness of resurrection from the dead. Here, indeed, is *Bethany*. Light in the knowledge of the glory of Christ fills the dwelling there.

And this light separates them. They are not seen after this, at the empty sepulchre, with the women from Galilee. Mary Magdalene and her companions are there to learn certain lessons about the glories of the common Lord, which these sisters had thus learned already.

Faith *acts* on the instruction it receives as well as *enjoys* it. If the sisters enjoyed at the supper table in John xii. the lesson they had learned at their brother's grave, in John xi., they act on the instruction in John xx., by not being at the sepulchre of Jesus with Mary of Galilee. They could not go to seek the body of Jesus, since they had already received at the hand of Jesus the body, the raised body, of their lately dead brother. The grave, they knew, could not hold Him Who had already bidden it to give up their brother. His own sepulchre must surely be empty, since He had Himself already emptied the sepulchre of a poor sinner whom He loved. They cannot, therefore, go to the garden, and look for the body of Jesus. Love would have had them there, but faith kept them away. Their thoughts had been regulated according to the light and mysteries of God; and they could not seek the living among the dead. This would have been surrendering the truth they had already learned; and well did they know from whom they had learned it. It would be worse than the disciples forgetting the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and how many baskets of fragments they had taken up. A brother had been restored to life—something more even than a multitude fed in a wilderness.

But further: having learned this lesson, Bethany was the place which the Lord sought, when Israel had fully, finally, and formally rejected Him. See Matthew xxi. 17; Mark xi. 11.

In this way, or at such a moment, Bethany was a kind of heaven to Him. He retired to it, when

the earth, represented by the Jew or in the Jew, had refused Him.

They were, as I may say, a kind of Kenite family in the midst of the Israel of the evangelists, the disciples of the Lord Jesus in the day of His sojourn here. They were separated; not however from any unsocial or self-righteous temper, but from a peculiar order of Nazaritism or sanctification arising from the light which they had in the knowledge of the glory of Christ.

But I must add this, that though these two companies of women are thus distinguished, and actually kept asunder all through their walk in the Gospels, yet are they essentially one. And sweet indeed it is to know their real, intrinsic, personal oneness, in the very face of this temporary, present and necessary separation.

There was nothing of a *moral* character in this separation. It arose, as we have now seen, from different measures of knowledge, from a different character of relationship to the Lord, or of communion with Him. It does not cause any uneasiness or pain, when we think of it. Other separations among the saints of God, which we see in the scripture, arose from something moral, and it is humbling and painful to look at them. But this was not of that class.

The separation between Abraham and Lot, unlike this of the Galilean women, and the women of Bethany, was *moral*. It was the love of the world that did that mischief. Lot eyed with desire the well-watered plains of Sodom; and there he dwelt in the midst of a people that were sinners

before the Lord continually, while Abraham was sojourning where best he might find a place to pitch his tent in. And the breach was never healed in this world. He who looked towards Sodom sinks at last behind the still more distant mountains of Moab ingloriously, leaving another pillar of salt to warn us all of what may be the sad issue of learning not to be content with such things as we have.

It was much the same in the case of Elijah and Obadiah. The stranger who had denounced and left the kingdom of Ahab, could scarcely admit of companionship with him who was still a chief officer there. But these two did meet on a very solemn, striking occasion; and Obadiah, Ahab's officer, sought all he could to reconcile Elijah, and to share the privilege of communion with that man who walked as a stranger to the corruptions around him. But it would not do. Elijah could not admit this. The world had already separated these men of God, and nothing but the victory that overcometh the world could put them together again. The efforts of an uneasy mind are not allowed to succeed (see 1 Kings xviii. 1-16).

In apostolic days there was another separation; I mean between Barnabas and Paul. The cause of it was *moral* also, but not of so sad and humbling a kind. It was not the well-watered plains of Sodom, nor the palace of king Ahab that threw up the partition-wall in this case. It was not the world, but natural affection, the strength or claim of human relationship unduly admitted in the midst of the service of Christ. Barnabas would fain take his sister's son to the work; Paul judged

his fitness to be in it, not by nature or relationship, but by Christ; and they walked no more together (Acts xv. 37-40).

In the case of these two companies of saintly women, which I am now considering, we see not this painful, humbling, *moral secret*. It was neither the love of the world, nor the undue force of natural partialities, that are called to account for the distance between them, and for the fact that they are never seen together. It was different measures of light in the knowledge of the Lord, and a different character of relationship to Him, as I may say, accordingly.

They did not combine, and yet I will answer for it, they loved each other. But Galilee was not Bethany; Mary Magdalene was not a sister of Lazarus. And though Martha and Mary would have delighted personally to company with her, they could not go with her to the sepulchre.

But, I must ask this, Did Bethany take no interest in Galilee? When it was told the house of Lazarus what had passed between the risen Lord and the Galilean women, was that household unmoved by the tidings? Did Mary and her sister grudge Magdalene, because she had been the more active one, and had the joy and service committed to her of bearing the good tidings of the resurrection back to the city, to Peter, to John, and to others? Let our common Christian sympathies and charities answer these questions. One thing I know and am assured of, we ought to be able to answer them. And it is this ability we all of us want more abundantly—ability in the Spirit to rise

above the jealousies and self-seekings which nature inspires. I believe the family at Bethany had it, and I believe we all need to cultivate it.

I would, however, add this, that the ignorance about the resurrection which the Galilean women betrayed was not an *unguilty* ignorance. The Lord had often rebuked His disciples in earlier days, while He was yet with them, for their not knowing the scriptures. And now the angel says to them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead"? It was therefore a rebukable condition of heart which brought them to the sepulchre, and thus separated them from their sisters of Bethany, though, as we said before, the secret of this separation was not of that *moral* character which kept Abraham and Lot, or Elijah and Obadiah apart.

Oh, the various lessons which the soul may gather from God's most perfect word!

Extracted.

FRAGMENT ON LUKE IX. 28, 29.

No doubt our blessed Lord went up into the mountain to be transfigured, though it is not put this way, *i.e.*, in so many words, in any of the three synoptical accounts. On the other hand St. Luke says that "He went up into a mountain to *pray*." This is expressly stated to have been the reason of the ascent. Obviously both reasons played their part but does it not fall in admirably with the Holy Spirit's design in this Gospel, that here only we should get this touch, marking, as it does, the Lord's moral perfection as a man?

Again, the Lord went up to pray and was transfigured. This in a divine and infinitely august literal sense of course. But we also may be spiritually changed into a closer likeness to Christ when we make prayer our object; the fashion of our countenance too may be transfigured.

R. B.

SEEING JESUS.

LORD JESUS, Son of God, to Thee

My soul doth lowly bow.

Thee, having purged my sins, I see

In heavenly glory now.

The heavens above, the earth's vast frame,

Are all sustained by Thee;

Yet, Thou to rescue me from shame,

Did'st die upon the tree.

The fullest answer Thou hast given

To all God claimed from me;

While He has answered too from heaven

By glorifying Thee.

But more than this—that I might know

The fulness of His grace,

To man He hath been pleased to shew

His glory in Thy face.

O precious Lamb of God, in Thee

My soul would find her rest,

And, free from all distraction be,

While leaning on Thy breast.

Could heart of man e'er wish for more

Than what Thou'rt shewn to be?

'Tis this which makes God's heart run o'er,

Thy fulness filleth me.

THE FIELD OF THE SLOTHFUL.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—A person said to me some while ago that if he had a difficult task requiring unremitting diligence and attention, he always, if possible, gave it to one whose hands were already full of work. This seemed strange, and at first, somewhat self-contradictory. But, on reflection, it was evidently quite consistent, for it is the active and industrious person who can generally find time to squeeze in a little more labour, while by systematic effort he accomplishes perhaps twice the amount of work in half the time that some lackadaisical individual occupies.

I think my young friends should take care lest they fall into slothful ways; and of course I refer especially to spiritual matters. Idle, inactive habits in a Christian, breed much mischief. For if the ways of goodness and truth are not laboriously cultivated, the opposite will spring up on their own accord.

“I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I beheld, and considered well; I saw and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as a robber; and thy want as an armed man” (Prov. xxiv. 30—34, R.V.).

It is ever so. Sloth says, “Put off work till to-morrow. Another time will do quite as well.” So things are allowed to drift. No weeding.

No digging. No sowing. But all the while the nettles are growing; the thorns are silently creeping over the flower beds, and the stone wall is toppling further day by day. Presently there is a crash. You rush out to investigate, and you find your trim garden has become a wilderness. All around you are the consequences of your own sheer neglect.

Can you apply the apologue to yourself in any way? Or shall I put it more plainly? Is it quite clear in this form, for instance? I went to the house of young Mr. Slothful; and lo, his Bible was altogether concealed by many other books, and thick dust had covered the back and sides thereof, and his regular habits of daily prayer were quite broken down. I saw all this and considered it well, and I knew the reason. Young Mr. Slothful had been indulging in a little more sleep in the mornings, and a little slackening off with the usual duties, a little more self-ease in all things. And now spiritual poverty has come upon him like a robber. He is cold in heart and estranged in ways, But it is all the fruit of his own simple neglect. There was first of all just the leaving off the regular habit for once, then the same thing was repeated, and then again, and between each repetition the interval was shorter, until now the well-ordered Christian life has become a disorderly wilderness of evil weeds.

It is well for you to bear in mind that the spiritual life is one of constant activity and effort. If you rest you rust. You are swimming up stream, and if you relax in the struggle you are swept back by the current, and the position you thus lose is not regained without the expenditure of great energy.

Take it as a fundamental principle of your inner life, that the practical virtues to which you are exhorted in the scriptures are not acquired except at the cost of continual self-denial and labour. It is the diligent soul that is "made fat." You must be prepared to sacrifice a good deal of ease and pleasure and worldly advantage in order to make progress in the divine life. The spiritual sluggard shuns all these things for the sake of self-ease, but the result of his slothfulness is that the fruit of the Spirit becomes choked by the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19—21). From all these things may you be kept clear.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

HOLY BIBLE; WITH REFERENCES, INDEX, AND MAPS.
 Sunday School Supply Co., 26 and 27, Paternoster Square, E.C.

This edition of the Bible appears with the New Testament placed designedly before the Old. We think the appearance of the scriptures in such a form is a matter of grave regret, and the more so since the avowed object is to decry the value and importance of the Old Testament. To talk of the Hebrew scripture as "an obstruction to intellectual and spiritual growth" is an expression of the rankest unbelief. In no such strain did the Lord or His apostles speak. The law the prophets and the psalms, all pointed to Him, and testified of Him.

In brief, this mis-arrangement of the sacred volume is the dangerous freak of an irreverent person utterly blind to the unity of scripture.

QUERY.

IOTA.—WHAT IS THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST? AND WHAT CONNECTION HAS IT, IF ANY, WITH BAPTISM? (Col. ii. 11). It is shewn in this connection how all that Old Testament rites signified and foreshadowed are secured to the believer in Christ. Hence possessing the substance in Him, we may well forego the shadows (Col. ii. 17). Circumcision was the distinguishing mark of God's ancient people, so much so that they are referred to as the circumcision, and the Gentiles as the uncircumcision (Gal. ii. 7—12). The typical significance of the rite was the putting off of the body of the flesh; and this is true of the believer not by the performance of the carnal act, but because of his connection with Christ. The circumcision of Christ referred to here is His death, when He closed His connection with the flesh, in virtue of which we do also (2 Cor. v. 16). "In whom [Christ] also ye were," says the apostle, "circumcised with circumcision not done by hand [in contrast with the fleshly rite], in the putting off of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ." Hence, "we are the circumcision" (Phil. iii. 3) now, that being accomplished in us spiritually of which the carnal observance was but a type.

Baptism is, as it were, a step further than circumcision, being emblematical of burial with Christ, as the latter is of death with Him. But as we get the former in Him, so we do the latter. We are "buried together with him in baptism," for we are linked with Christ in His death, burial and quickening, as the verses go on to shew. And this is so in order that we, as believers in Christ, may occupy an entirely new place here on earth—a position wherein the life of Christ may display itself in us, rising above all that is fleshly and natural.

OUR COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST.

ONE of the chief features of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the very explicit way in which it shews how the believer benefits through the absence of Christ on high. The Jewish saints were accustomed to expect the fulness of their blessing only in connexion with the Messiah's presence upon earth. But, contrary to this expectation, Christ had ascended up to where He was before; and His followers needed to be taught in what manner it was expedient for them that He should go away. It was a puzzle to many how it could be possible for the Lord's absence to be better for them than His presence. They knew that when the Lord reigned in Mount Zion He would subdue every foe, and give His people peace and joy in all their borders. But what could He do for them on high, before "that day" of power and glory dawns on the earth? This they had to learn, and the Spirit of God, in this Epistle, introduces the subject of the present work of the Lord on high. Let us glance at the bearing of the early chapters from this point of view.

It was first necessary that the Hebrew Christians should have a clear testimony as to the glories of the Person of the Apostle and High Priest of their confession. Such a testimony is rendered in the first two chapters of the Epistle. Therein they are shewn that the One in Whom they trusted differed immensely from any and all of the servants of God in past ages. The apostle, however, does not proceed to compare Christ feature by

feature with Moses and Aaron; but he demonstrates Him to be God, become Man for the suffering of death. Such a fact concerning the Lord Jesus, without making any formal statement of comparison, proves Him to be immeasurably above and beyond all the Old Testament persons and institutions.

This superiority is displayed in detail throughout chapters i. and ii. So that the saints might learn from thence that the One Who had gone into heaven was, in contrast with former leaders and commanders, an ever-living and unchanging Person. Aaron had died on Mount Hur; and Moses, on Mount *Pisgah*, closed his connexion with the people of God. But Jesus was not such a one as they. Received up in glory, He had taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, crowned with glory and honour. His interest and relationship with this world had not ceased; on the contrary, He is the appointed Heir of all things, and, though we see it not in actual accomplishment, all things are put into subjection under His feet.

Here, then, we discover a supreme reason why the death of Jesus was in no wise a bar to present help and blessing from Him. It was undoubtedly so in the cases of Aaron and Moses. The people of Israel on their decease were taught to look to Eleazar and Joshua. But the glorified Jesus, though He had tasted death, was still the object of faith and the source of blessing for the saints, in an enhanced degree, proportionate to His glorification above. This followed necessarily

from the intrinsic worth of His person and the efficacy of His work.

As pilgrims through the wilderness, as followers of the despised Nazarene, as sufferers of persecution for Christ's sake, the saints needed continual supplies of grace and strength. Who was their Captain and Guide? Who could rightly understand their peculiar and trying circumstances, and sympathize with them in the sorrows that came upon them because they were the disciples of Christ? Those to whom they had been accustomed to apply for sympathy, and advice, and assistance—the Jewish priests and elders—turned from them with that scornful and loathing hatred with which they had regarded their Master. Was there no one who cared for them, and could help them in their weakness and trials? The Epistle answers that there is One, and it bids the holy brethren to consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of their confession (iii. 1). In Him the suffering saints would find an inexhaustible store of compassion and strength for their succour. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to help those that are tempted."

From this point, the apostle—having introduced the fact that the absent Christ, so far from forgetting them in all their trials and sorrows, is there in heaven to serve them still by such effectual sympathy and succour as none but He can render—at once proceeds to enlarge on their wilderness way and its dangers during their passage to the rest beyond (chaps. iii. and iv.). The verses in which this is done have caused

many a godly soul to shudder in the sense of its own inherent weakness, and in the dread lest it should after all fail to enter into the rest of God. The scripture is intended to produce such a distrust of self. The province of the word of God is stated in this very connexion (iv. 16) to be for the manifestation of the workings of the heart and what is within. It is good for us to be laid bare in this fashion.

But the error often consists in stopping at the discovery of one's own inability to go forward in one's own strength, in being overcome by the sense of the severity of the trials and the power of the enemies, and, as a consequence, in feeling ready to give up in despair. The truth is, however, as the apostle declares, that there is a divine provision for this infirmity of ours. He points to the Christ no longer on earth but in heaven. He was there for them. They were not to give up, but, on the contrary, to hold fast. "Having then a great high priest passed, as he is, through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we have not a high priest unable to sympathize with our infirmities, but having been tempted in all things, in like manner, apart from sin. Let us then approach with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for seasonable help" (Heb. iv. 14—16, N.T.).

Weakness, however excessive, was therefore no occasion for despair. It was rather an occasion for proving divine sympathy and the fulness there is in Christ to supply suitable grace and strength for every sorrow throughout the pilgrim-

age. Moreover, He has qualified Himself for such priestly ministrations by the trials He endured in the days of His flesh. The Lord suffered by reason of His faithfulness to God amid a sinful world. He met the power of Satan. Hence the compassion of our great High Priest in whatever befalls us by the way. He is still the same as when He wept with the sisters of Bethany before He gave them back their dead brother. He enters into our sorrows ere He delivers us out of them.

Without dwelling further on this point, it is evident that this compassionate regard for the suffering saints and the ministry of effectual aid in the hour of weakness and trial form a special feature of the Lord's priesthood in its present exercise.

The question of our sins is entirely another matter. Here it is one of infirmity. As to sins, the saints were reminded that Christ made purification for them before He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. i. 3). The propitiation once made for sins (Heb. ii. 17) is the foundation of His priestly action now going on. But atonement did not strictly fall within the functions of the high priest as such—a fact indicated in that Aaron fulfilled his solemn duties not in his high priestly robes, but attired as an ordinary priest (Lev. xvi. 3, 4). It was in fact a special occasion on which Aaron represented the people *in their sins*. This Christ did on the cross. And not until His ascension did He enter upon His priestly work in connexion with our encompassing infirmities. It is this work which is the particular subject of the former part of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE CANDLESTICK.

THIS vessel of the sanctuary was made of pure gold. It consisted of a central shaft or base (Heb. thigh), and a hollow "branch," or stem, adorned with four bowls, and their knops and flowers; out of the sides of the shaft, where the bowls were placed, proceeded six branches, three on each side. Each of the six branches was fitted with three groups of ornaments, similar to those of the central branch. And on the top of each of the seven branches was placed a lamp for the light.

"Thus this vessel stood a seven branched candlestick, characterised by the distinctness, and yet unity, of its centre and sides; complete in itself, and yet complete because of its appendant branches." And as the number seven here seems to mean perfection, as seen by God, we have in the candlestick and its light, union, completeness, and testimony in perfection, according to the Divine estimate.

Does not this vessel then illustrate Christ, and the church in her connection with Him? Thus, as the centre shaft of the candlestick produced the six branches out of its sides, so Christ is the source from whence the church proceeds, and of which He is also the head (Col. i. 18).

Again, as the branches were joined to the central stem and together with it formed a complete whole, so believers *individually* are said to be members of Christ's body (Eph. v. 30); and, in the *aggregate*, they form together with Himself that mystic man which is called "the Christ" (1 Cor.

xii. 12). Thus completely are believers identified with Him; and this because by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body; and by that same Spirit we are joined to Him in indissoluble union where He now is in the glory. Hence, believers are said to be complete in Him, and the church is the "fulness" or "complement" of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 23, Col. ii. 10).

We have, further, in the description of the candelabra, seven lamps mentioned as sending forth their light during the night; and it is important to notice that although there were seven lamps, scripture speaks of them as one, and the lights as one (Exod. xxvii. 20, Lev. xxiv. 2).

This lamp was fed with olive oil, beaten to make it more clean and pure, and the oil is a figure of the Holy Ghost in action. In lamp, light, and oil then, we have what answers to a distinct and united testimony by the church, as God's witness in a world of darkness, in the power and energy of the Holy Ghost. The Lord's word to His disciples was, "Ye are the light of the world." A united testimony was to be theirs. Again, our Lord's expressed desire to His Father was, that not only His disciples, but those also who should believe on Him through their word might be one, that thus the world might believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (John xvii. 20—21).

For a brief moment the Lord's desire was met in the fair picture presented in Acts iv. 32, when the multitude of believers were of one heart and soul, and had all things common. Thus, and

then the line of demarcation between the church and the world was boldly defined. And the testimony was so clear and unmistakable that it carried conviction to the hearts of sinners. But this beautiful scene was soon marred; "covetousness, which is idolatry," first shewed itself in the assembly (see Acts v.). Afterwards grievous wolves came in, not sparing the flock. The word of God was adulterated to suit men's purposes, and for gain (2 Cor. ii. 17). The saints at Corinth were blamed by the apostle for the party spirit displayed amongst them, in dividing themselves as they did. For each one followed the teacher he most preferred, to the neglect of the others (1 Cor. i. 12—13). Here was the evil germ, which soon grew and spread, and produced as fruit the divisions and sects which are seen to-day in what is called "the church." Where then, in this chaotic state of things, is the corporate testimony to God's love of the world (Jno. iii. 16 and xvii. 21)? Alas, it is completely lost through the church's failure to maintain the unity of the Spirit in a visible manner.

But, although, as the assembly, or "church" Christians have miserably failed in this respect, yet individual responsibility remains the same. God never lowers His standard as to this because of man's faithlessness; therefore, He claims from every Christian obedience to the injunction, "Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3, N.T.). And this unity of the Spirit, need one say, has not been marred by man's failure, but still remains

intact as ever. What has been lost is the manifestation of that unity, in a practical way, by a united assembly. Hence, Christians are not called upon now to make a unity, as many have attempted to do, and Rome professes to have done; but to act according to the instructions given in the word of God for the guidance of all. God has not left us to *guess* our way. He has given us His word, which, if we search in humble dependence on the Holy Ghost to guide us aright, we shall not miss the way God has marked out for us. And this way is, that we cherish love to all the saints, and come together in the name of Jesus, with those who are willing to meet thus. And if it be only two or three thus gathered, provided it be *really in His name*, He will own it by His presence in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20). But He cannot own an assembly in fellowship with the world (2 Cor. vi. 14—18), nor one in which sin of any kind is allowed (Eph. v. 11, 1 Jno. i. 5—7). Neither can He own a human system, that is, a body organised by man, without the authority of the word of God, even though it may be composed, perhaps, of only true Christians. Such bodies are works of the flesh, called in scripture, “heresies” or “sects” * (see Gal. v. 19—20, Acts v. 17, xv. 5). But the “works of the flesh” are evil; and the word says, “Cease to do evil.” Therefore, it behoves the Christian to see that he is in no way associated with anything that is not in keeping with the mind and word of God on this matter.

* Heresy is a Greek word, and sect is an English word, both of the same meaning but not necessarily implying heterodoxy.

Again, it is the privilege of every Christian to manifest Christ in his walk and ways down here. While He was in the world the life in Him was the light of man. The believer has now life in Christ, and thus becomes light in the Lord, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life. And that the light be not uncertain, let each one seek to walk as He walked, in purity of conduct, thought and word, thus "shewing forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

W.T.H.

GIDEON'S BAND.

BEFORE considering the nature of the public service Gideon was called upon to render to God and for the deliverance of His people, and the methods he was led to use, there is one point of exceeding beauty which cannot fail to be of profit to our souls as we look at it. The Lord having sanctified the vessel and prepared His servant for the position of leader, the question arose, Who were to be his followers and associates?

This is a most trivial question indeed for those who, having no apprehension of the holiness of God and the unprofitableness of flesh, are fain to look to numbers as a guarantee of power and success; but important enough, as we see from this history, for God to take into His own hand and answer in His own way. "The people that are with thee are too many" (Judges vii. 2). We

should have said, "The more the better"; for the enemies of Israel proved a mighty host and particularly mobile (Judges vi. 5). And the thirty two thousand who had responded to the trumpet call was surely an insignificant army to oppose the Midianites *without number*.

God had early anticipated the boastfulness of the flesh (Deut. viii. 17), which would readily enough profit by the blessing and then claim as its own that which is due to God, in contrast with faith which never assumes but gives God the glory. Hence we have the application of the written word of God by Moses two hundred years before (Deut. xx. 8) to Gideon's host. All hearts were searched by it, and twenty two thousand fell out of the ranks owning their want of faith in the God Who had brought them out of Egypt, and from Whom they had received nothing but good hitherto.

It must have been a painful experience for Gideon, but he was stronger after they had left him. Yet a more severe test had to be applied, for there is a courage not of faith, a courage belonging to man, a boldness which is not of faith, a philosophical indifference to pain, and even to death itself, which, however admirable, is not of God. Peter professed it as all the disciples (Mark xiv. 9—31), but at the crucial point they all forsook Him and fled (ver. 50).

The written word is not the test on this occasion, for many men may be strong in points of doctrine, very orthodox, very clear in their exposition of God's word, very strong morally and

intellectually, but yet wanting in that devotedness which will put Christ and the things which are Jesus Christ's (Phil. ii. 21) in the first place and subject everything to Him Who is Lord. That this is spiritually the significance of the second test I doubt not; of course it was no question at the moment of personal character and fitness for service, and no doubt many of those rejected were used afterward (compare Judges vi. 35 with vii. 23). Its value for us is however great.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, "The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there, and it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, 'This shall go with thee,' the same shall go with thee."

The Lord alone can test our hearts thus, and well He knows how to do it (John vi. 67). Cold water is welcome to the thirsty soul, and there is much in this world that appeals to our weary spirits, but it is ever a question of receiving with thankfulness and using all in subjection to Christ.

Very few can stand the test of prosperity. Not many can say with Paul, "I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Many who are able to maintain a measure of faithfulness and courage in times of difficulty and trial become enervated in prosperity. Brought down to the water they give themselves entirely up to the enjoyment, relaxing the tension of service. Thus ceasing to be watchful *they are rejected as soldiers, and sent back.*

The three hundred men that lapped as a dog lappeth represented those who, recognising that the time is short, use this world as not abusing it (1 Cor. vii. 29—31), they are approved of God and accepted. It was not a very dignified position nor indeed a flattering comparison which the Holy Ghost made—as a dog lappeth. But they are the little company who go forth unto Him bearing His reproach, esteeming it greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Holy vigilance is maintained; the yoke of Christ is cheerfully accepted; the loins are girt about with truth; the cross is taken up with the stigma attaching to it. Such are the men whom God uses for the blessing of His people.

We may say they had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. They have their prototypes to-day (but alas, how few) in the faithful men who shall be able to teach others also (2 Tim. ii. 2). The nature of the manifestation of divine power by such instrumentality is well illustrated by the dream which a Midianite related to his fellow—an incident spiritually prepared by God for the strengthening of Gideon. It completely succeeded, for did it not speak of Him Who, coming into the world in the most unpretentious way and in humble circumstances, shall yet “overturn, overturn everything” that man has built up and which exalts itself against God, enslaving the people of God. The Man “whose right it is” shall by judgement establish God’s glory in this rebellious world and lead His people to victory and peace.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THAT the pastoral Epistles should have a common character distinct from those to the saints is easily understood; and that each has its own peculiarity is a plain matter of evidence to the attentive reader. The difference is conspicuous in the two letters to Timothy; for the first is as careful to insist on order as the second is to provide for a state of disorder, that the godly might even then have divine directions for their walk bound, as they were, and we are, to take account of so sad a change. That to Titus comes between the two extremes.

I. "Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus according to command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timotheus, genuine child in faith; grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." The prefatory words, as usual, give a clear insight into the scope of what follows. The apostolic title is as important for authority here as for the truths of the gospel and of the church to the Roman and to the Corinthian saints, to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians. "According to command" assimilates this letter and that to Titus, while it differentiates both from the second Epistle to Timothy. "God our Saviour" is also very notable here and to Titus, bespeaking the universal testimony of God's grace in the gospel, and strongly contrasted with Judaism. God in love goes out actively to man in the death of the Mediator. Christ is the hope, and unfailing,

if cherished. The exhortatory injunction to Timothy was first and foremost to guard the truth from all alien teaching, and specially fables and interminable genealogies which are such as yield questionings rather than God's dispensation that is in faith (3—7), the end of it being love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned faith. These are the substantial blessings of the gospel, and missed by such as turned aside to vain discourse, wishing to be law-teachers. This was the early plague, imagination, and legalism which assails grace as antinomian while itself tending to that evil, whatever its own contrary claims. It is not that the lawful use of the law is denied, which is to convict lawless and insubordinate persons. The gospel alone witnesses of Christ to save sinners (of whom the apostle specifies himself as first) to whom, in his ignorant unbelief, mercy was shewn—Christ's whole long-suffering (12—16). This draws out his praise, after which he repeats the injunction laid on Timothy, that he might war the good warfare, maintaining faith and a good conscience. For such as put away the latter make shipwreck of the former; of whom he holds up Hymenæus and Alexander, whom he had delivered to Satan for their dishonour to God (18—20). How practical and personal it all is! And what is truth but a sham and a shame if it be not so?

II. Here we find the public attitude of Christianity. All should breathe of loving good-will toward man and the chiefs of the world, even if heathen and persecuting. "I exhort therefore first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions,

thanksgivings be made for all men ; for kings and all that are in authority, . . . for this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who wisheth that all men be saved and come unto full knowledge of truth. For there is one God, one mediator also of God and men, a man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony in its own times ; to which I was set preacher and apostle (I speak truth, I lie not), teacher of nations in truth and love" (1—7). Grace rises above all natural thoughts, feelings, and ways, and calls on those who believe to bear a living witness of "God our Saviour," Who is willing to save all that bow to Jesus, the ransom for all. Such is the testimony ; and now that the cross on man's side proves the guilt of all, Jews and Gentiles, the same cross on God's side proclaims salvation to all that believe. Paul was herald of this grace, but apostle in full authority, and teacher in patient wisdom, that even besotted Gentiles might believe and know the truth. But reverence and divine order become those who profess the truth. "I will therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up pious [*or* holy] hands, without wrath and disputation." All the faithful were holy brethren ; and it was no longer the question of a Jewish sanctuary more than of a Gentile high place. They were free and invited to pray everywhere. The women were to cultivate modesty and discretion, instead of fashion and finery, with good works their true ornament. Learning is their place, not teaching, nor authority, but quiet subjection ; for which he cites the case of Eve, who,

deceived, brought in transgression, whatever mercy may do even in her chief natural sorrow.

III. Then Timothy has directions for the local charges of bishops (*or* overseers) and deacons. "Faithful is the saying: if one is eager for oversight, he desireth a good [*or* right] work." The requisite qualities (2—7) are moral or spiritual, rather than the possession of an express gift. Absence of reproach, husband of one wife, sober, discreet, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach; not quarrelsome over wine, not a striker, but gentle; nor fond of money; ruling his own house well, having children in subjection with all gravity (for how could one command respect in God's house who had it not in his own?) And again, not a novice, nor if destitute of a good report without. All this is of so much the more moment as it has been slighted habitually by the greatest systems down to the least. But we cannot wonder where the office itself is turned to ecclesiastical and even worldly show. Those to be entrusted with the diaconate are briefly described in 8—13, and in this case the women or wives, who might be useful or a hindrance. The subject gives occasion, not here to a doxology, but to a solemn presentation of that church in which the apostle, Timothy, elders, and deacons, and indeed all saints, each called in his special place, have to walk. "These things I write to thee, hoping to come to thee rather soon; but if I delay that thou mayest know how one ought to behave in God's house, which is a living God's assembly, pillar and support of the truth. And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness: He

who was manifested in flesh, was justified in Spirit, was seen of angels, was preached among nations, was believed on in the world, was received up in glory." Godliness depends on and is the fruit of the truth in Christ, the secret no longer hidden but revealed; which as a whole, therefore, is in ways wholly distinct from and above a Jewish Messiah reigning in visible power, and known as we Christians know Him. Compare 2 Cor. v. 16—18.

IV. With this the apostle draws a dark contrast. "But the Spirit speaketh expressly that in latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons by hypocrisy of legend-mongers branded as to their own conscience, forbidding to marry, [bidding] to abstain from meats which God created for receiving with thanksgiving by those faithful and well acquainted with the truth; because every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be rejected if received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through God's word and prayer" (1—5). Asceticism is no more Christian than moral laxity, though it assumes a fairer form. It is a pretentious assault on the Creator and Preserver of man by setting up a superior sanctity, which ends in turpitude against nature. Monachism is unconscious war against God. Timothy would be a good servant of Christ Jesus by laying the contrary good teaching of benign and faithful Providence before the brethren, and avoiding what he calls profane and old wives' fables. For piety or godliness is profitable for everything, having promise of the present

life as well as that which is to come; our God is Preserver of all men, especially of the faithful. He must not be deterred by such as objected to his youth, but meet the reproach by an example in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Reading, exhortation, and instruction are enjoined till he came. The gift that was conferred on him he was not to neglect, but to be diligent in these things, and wholly in them, that his progress might be manifest to all. A divided heart ruins the service of Christ. Self-vigilance, too, is imperative, to save both himself and others.

V. Here we have the proprieties of that work, which cannot be slighted without danger and harm. An elder he was not to rebuke but exhort as a father, younger ones as brethren, elder women as mothers, and younger ones as sisters, with all purity (1—2). Widows were to have special and careful consideration (4—10), and younger ones to be shunned, in which case suited directions are laid down (11—16). Elders or bishops were to rule, and those who ruled well to be counted worthy of double honour, especially those labouring in word and teaching: a scripture important to bear in mind; as it is also to receive no accusation against one, save with two or three witnesses. Those that sin should be convicted before all, that the rest, too, should fear. He adjures Timothy solemnly to observe these duties without prejudice and without favour, cautious against haste in sanctioning others, lest it might compromise him; he even deigns to counsel liberty where his scruples might injure health, before he closes the warning he had

begun, lest he should unwarily be a partaker of other men's sins.

VI. Christian slaves are not forgotten, as to whom grave and gracious counsels are given, in the face of different teaching, which is exposed sternly, though the last clause of verse 5 is a spurious accretion. Godliness or piety with contentment, the reverse of making it a means of gain, is great gain. For as we brought nothing into the world, neither can we carry anything out. Having food and covering, we will be, or let us be, content therewith. How true that those who will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition! For the love of money is a (*not* exactly "the") root of every evil, which some too eager after wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. Timothy is then urged, as God's man, to flee these things and to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness, to combat the good combat of faith, to lay hold on eternal life, according to the good confession he confessed. Then follows a deep and lofty injunction which crowns this Epistle, and urges his keeping it spotless and irreproachable till the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in its own seasons the blessed and only Potentate shall shew, the King of those that reign and the Lord of those that rule, Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; Whom none of men hath seen or can see, to whom be honour and might everlasting. Amen.

Thereon Timothy is told to charge the rich

to rest, not in uncertain wealth, but on the living God, to be rich in good works, laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold of what is really life. Timothy, in fine, is to keep the entrusted deposit, avoiding profane vain babblings and oppositions of falsely-named knowledge. How trenchantly the apostle speaks before he wishes him grace !

W. K.

THE HOLY PLACE.

Oh, what glories richly mingled,
Cluster round the Holy Place,
Where the precious blood once sprinkled
Speaks upon the throne of grace !
Where, gone in with holy grandeur,
In perfection all His own
Jesus, in His peerless glories,
Sits upon the Father's throne !

Typified of old by Aaron,
In his holy robe of white,
Hidden by the cloud of incense
From that ne'er-approachèd light,
Incense, "perfume pure and holy,"
Rising from the living coal
Off the altar, where was burning
Daily, the burnt offering whole.

With the blood that made atonement
Entered he within the veil ;
Sprinkled there that blood, and left it,
Knowing well it must prevail.
While, far off, the fire consumèd
In the distant "outside" place,
For the sin, the sinless victim—
Marvellous type of matchless grace !

Picture fair !—but ah, far fairer
Is the glorious Antitype !
Every glory found in Jesus
Far exceeds the grandest type !
Entered in, but oh, not hidden
By the incense, which there tells
How divine His varied sweetness,
How it human thought excels.

Oh, how rich that cloud of incense !
Every perfume of “like weight,”
Mingled in divine perfection,
“Beaten small,” yet rising great
From the fiery coal, and filling,
As its solemn wreaths arise,
All the atmosphere of heaven
With eternal glad surprise !

Jesus ! Him did Aaron picture :
Of Himself the incense tells,
His the blood that made atonement,
His the glory that excels :
He the offering once offered
Unto God, and wholly burnt ;
In the sacrifice consumed
We His substitution learnt.

There we enter ; there we worship,
Without fear we now draw nigh :
In Himself we are accepted,
With Him “Abba, Father” cry.
Not on *us* God's eye is resting,
But on Him who entered in
Once, and on the throne is seated,
Proof that He has purged each sin !

THE TREE OF THE FIRST PSALM.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—You know, probably as well as I do, that the figure of a tree is frequently used in scripture for the purpose of conveying moral and spiritual lessons. The one used in the first psalm in reference to the “blessed” man is very suggestive. There is no doubt that the only person who ever answered with absolute exactness to the description there given is the Lord Jesus Christ. For it is certain that all which is excellent in a man was found in the fullest perfection in Him. And when we read, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night,” we know this had a prophetic bearing and was to be pre-eminently true of God’s coming man.

Such words could be applied to the Lord Jesus each day and all the days. For He ever kept Himself separate from sinners, and He continually lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. Jehovah’s law was His meditation day and night.

But then, in this pathway of perfect obedience and consequent blessedness, He left us an example that we should follow His steps. So that it is ours—mine and yours—to go after Him, shunning every evil way and association, and loving to learn the will of God from His word.

Then in the psalm we come to what is the subject of my letter : " And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers [streams, R.V.] of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Here the godly man is compared to a tree. But it is to be observed that the comparison is not with any tree, however it may be situated. A tree might be planted in a vineyard or by the wayside, but neither position would adequately convey the truth of the text. This tree was planted by the streams of water. And in Eastern countries such a situation was of all others particularly favourable for growth and fruit bearing, rain being so uncertain and infrequent.

You will find Ezekiel uses a similar figure to illustrate the power and greatness of the Assyrian empire. " Behold," said the prophet, " the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature " (Ezekiel xxxi. 3). The cedar was one of the most striking images that could be employed to portray national dignity and pre-eminence. But it is more in connection with our subject to observe how Ezekiel goes on to picture the cause of the prodigious growth of this tree. " The waters made him great ; the deep set him up on high with her rivers running about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of

waters, when he shot forth." Clearly the cause of this cedar's magnificence was its proximity to the waters. They formed an unfailing source of nourishment and strength to its roots. So that in point of fact it was the waters that "made him great."

We may see from hence the force of the psalmist's comparison of the godly man with a tree planted by the rivers of waters. He has a constant supply of life and strength. Underneath the ground the great tree sends out its main roots each with its multitudinous tiny rootlets exploring in all directions for moisture. By and by they tap the ooze of the river-bed, when every little hair-like filament becomes a greedy mouth to obtain as much nourishment or food (if we may call water food in this case) as possible from the damp soil. Then from the tip of the tiniest root which may be farthest from the stem or trunk this food of the tree is conveyed to the tip of the highest leaf on the topmost bough. Cut off the supply of water, and the tree must wither and die. Stint it with an insufficient supply, and the fruit becomes poor and scanty, while the leaves turn from bright green to dull brown. But plant it by rivers of waters, and it brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

I am sure, my young friends, you all know the lesson underlying this simile. As believers in Christ you should bear fruit in your season. "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit." To do so you must have your own private and unseen communication with the rivers of water—Christ, as revealed in His word. Love Him, and live upon

Him daily, and just as the tree grows and fructifies, quietly and unconsciously, so will you bring forth fruit for the Husbandman (John xv.). But do mark the *necessity* of secret communion.

Fruit is first, as to importance, then the unwithered leaf, which we may take to illustrate testimony. Fruit is for God; testimony is rendered to others who are about us. Such actions and words as commend Christ in the eyes of others are the green leaves of testimony. But if there is no water there will be no greenness. Be careful then, everyone of you, to keep up your prayers and Bible reading.

You may, perhaps, be reminded of the very solemn lesson which the Lord taught in one of His parables. I refer now to the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soils. You recollect how that the seed which the sower scattered fell on four varieties of soil, viz., (1) by the wayside, (2) upon rocky ground, (3) among thorns, and (4) upon good ground. And it is the life history of the second class that illustrates by way of contrast what I have been writing to you about.

In this instance the seed sprang quickly into life, and was characterised by very rapid growth. But when the burning rays of the sun shone fiercely upon these luxuriant young plants they were so scorched that they withered and died. There was a great deal of green stalk and leaf displayed, but there was no corresponding root development. At the crucial moment, therefore, when they needed it most they "lacked moisture" (Luke viii. 6), and so they withered away. They

had no subterranean communication with springs or streams of water, such as was the case with the tree of the first psalm.

We are not left to conjecture the meaning of the parable. This second class represents such as hear the word of God and receive it very readily and gladly. But this condition only lasts for a while; for when "affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are stumbled" (Mark iv. 17). There is no inward source of life, growth, sustenance, nor consequently of fruit-bearing—"no root in themselves." And hence there is the melancholy spectacle of the withering leaves.

Think over these things, my young friends, and be sure of this, unless your spirit is in living touch with the "waterbrooks of life" you will be barren and unfruitful, faded and sickly. But we hope and pray for better things.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

QUERIES.

IOTA.—WHAT PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS DID CHRIST MAKE A SHOW OF? WHEN? AND TO WHOM? (Col. ii. 15). These constitute the highest class of evil rulers in the unseen universe. Against such we are to battle (Eph. vi. 13). Christ is above all such (Col. i. 16), and on the cross they were subdued by Him, for there He engaged all the concentrated might of spiritual wickedness. The victory was gained, and the manifestation of His triumph made *upon the cross*—that is, in effect. The open display was at His ascension, as we are told elsewhere (Eph. v. 8). Even then not to the

world, but, we suppose, to other principalities and powers (compare Eph. iii. 10). To us it is a matter of faith, on the authority of God's word.

IOTA.—WHAT THINGS ARE TO PERISH WITH THE USING? KINDLY EXPLAIN THESE VERSES (Col. ii. 20—22). The apostle is bringing out how the believer's death with Christ delivers him from all the ordinances of a fleshly religion such as Judaism which imposed restrictions as to what might be touched or handled or tasted. These dealt with the perishable things of this world, not with things eternal and spiritual such as characterise Christianity. The Lord condemned the commandments and traditions of men as to the washing of hands, cups, etc., shewing that a man was defiled, not by what he ate, but by what he thought and said and did (Mark vii. 1—23). The apostle states in effect that the believer by his association with Christ, being no longer alive in the world, is not subject to fleshly prohibitions, such as "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

IOTA.—IS THE REVISERS' READING, "PUTTING OFF OF THE BODY OF THE FLESH" CORRECT? IF SO, WHAT DIFFERENCE IN DOCTRINE DOES THE CHANGE MAKE (Col. ii. 11)? The words, "the sins of," should undoubtedly be omitted. While it is true the believer's sins are gone, this is not the teaching of the passage, but rather that he is delivered from the body of the flesh, which is the root of sins, by the circumcision of Christ. The power of true Christian walk lies in knowing what the new life in Christ delivers us from. The experience of a person ignorant of Christian deliverance is delineated in Romans vii. There we see a full sense of a spring of evil ever present within the heart, but an utter absence of power to remedy such a state of things. At last there is the cry, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Then comes immediate relief through looking to Christ: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The freedom from sin lies *in Him*, and is apprehended, like all our spiritual blessings, solely *by faith*.

THE MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY.

WHEN the apostle is shewing how the sympathies of our Great High Priest are in constant exercise towards His suffering and sorrowing saints, he, at the same time, shews how the Lord's own pilgrimage through this world perfected Him as the lowly and obedient Man for the performance of this blessed part of His present priestly functions. Hence, we read: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15; v. 8, 9).

In this manner the Spirit of God instructs the believer as to the perfect way in which the Great Sympathiser is qualified to help him through a lifetime of suffering, which is the direct result of a life of pious obedience. The pathway of the lowly Nazarene, so incomprehensible to the ordinary Jewish mind, is, by this means, turned to account, as it were, for the saint's blessing.

But there is another requirement of the Christian life which is contemplated in this Epistle, also forming in itself a contrast with what was true in Old Testament days. Just as the walk is one

of adversity in contrast with worldly ease and prosperity, so the worship of the believer is spiritual and heavenly in contrast with what was carnal and earthly with the Jew. And the Epistle goes on to develop how the Lord Jesus, as the minister of the sanctuary on high, supplies every weakness and deficiency of the saint in this respect also.

The believer learns, therefore, that if meekness characterised the Lord Jesus on earth, majesty crowns Him in heaven. He is our High Priest. But what a Priest! He has passed through the heavens and taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty there. The glory of the Aaronic priesthood, in spite of its impressive ritual, its brilliant robes and its venerable lineage, all paled before the splendours of the new Priest that had arisen. For the one saluted by God as high priest was of the order of Melchisedec, and not of the order of Aaron at all. And the seventh chapter of the Epistle demonstrates the exceeding superiority of this order, and hence of Him Who is pre-eminently of this order—Jesus, the Son of God, our ever-living Priest before the face of God.

Now, the apostle shews how this heavenly Priest suits us, and that not because of the sorrows of our pilgrimage, but because of the dignity of our worship. It is our privilege to draw near to God, even into His immediate presence—the holiest of all (Heb. x. 19—22). How can we do so? How can we act becomingly in the sanctuary? Because we, poor and feeble ones as we are, have this great High Priest over the house of God.

And "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). In coming near to God, therefore (for the verse of course applies not to sinners but to saints), we are permitted to do so with boldness, because whatever the greatness of our infirmities He is able to save to the uttermost.

Because, therefore, of the intimacy of our heavenly relationships and exercises, we need such an one on high for us. Indeed, such a necessity is stated most strikingly in the scripture itself; "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26). The fact that we have been made holy, and partakers of the heavenly calling, in contrast* with the ancient earthly people, made it necessary for there to be one to represent us on high and to intercede for us in our approach to God. Such an one, exactly suited to the spiritual worship now introduced, we ever have in our adorable Lord.

Christ then is in the sanctuary above for us. His priesthood is superior to that of Aaron or Melchisedec, though it is of the *order* (not yet of the exercise) of the latter. The sphere of His priestly service is in heaven, not on earth, but in

* The contrast is illustrated in Luke i. 9, 10. While Zacharias was in the temple (*naos*, the holy place) the people were without. "His lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord; and the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."

the holies above, the true tabernacle "which the Lord pitched and not man."

"No temple made with hands
His place of service is ;
In heaven itself He stands,
A heavenly priesthood His.
In Him the shadows of the law
Are all fulfilled, and now withdraw."

An earthly sanctuary, therefore, has now no place nor meaning according to the Epistle to the Hebrews. The sanctuary has been changed as well as the priesthood. And the holy place on high is the sphere of the Lord's service. His priesthood was not of the order that ministered in the holy place below. "If he were on earth," the apostle says, * "he should not be a priest" (Heb. viii. 4). On the contrary, He has obtained a "more excellent ministry" (Heb. viii. 6) which He exercises in the sanctuary on high.

"The blessedness of the ministry of Him Who ministers for us in the true tabernacle, is, that it is entirely independent of us. It is *by Him for us*. Our conscious enjoyment it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-judgement, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God."

* The reference in this passage is not to the work of propitiation which is a basis laid once for all by a unique and exceptional priestly act (Heb. ii. 17), but to the service of priestly intercession and aid now carried on above.

THE KING OF GLORY.*

“Lift up your heads, ye ancient gates,”
“Ye everlasting doors,”
The “King of Glory” cometh in,
Whom all the Earth adores.
Great David’s son, the King of Kings,
In battle great and strong,
The Universe is His by right,
And doth to Him belong.

Chorus.

Then lift your heads, ye ancient gates,
Ye everlasting doors,
The “King of Glory” cometh in,
Whom all the Earth adores.

This “King of Glory,” who is He?
Thus doth the challenge run,
And answering millions make reply,
“’Tis David’s greater Son ;
The Lord, who ‘strong and mighty’ is,
‘The Lord of Hosts,’ His name,
’Tis He the ‘King of Glory’ is,
Who fought and overcame.”

Chorus—Then lift your heads, &c.

Behold ! the God of Jacob comes,
Once “Man of Sorrows” He,
Who bore the judgement, won the fight,
On Calvary’s blood-stained tree ;
No longer now the suffering One,
He knoweth no defeat,
The kingdoms of the world are His,
Their rulers at His feet.

Chorus—Then lift your heads, &c.

* Psalm xxiv. 7—10.

'Tis He alone Who's pure of heart,
Whose hands are ever clean,
"The Mighty God," the "Prince of Peace,"
The lowly Nazarene ;
He shall ascend to Zion's hill,
And sit on David's throne,
Its rightful Heir, and Lord of all ;
Worthy is He alone.

Chorus—Then lift your heads, &c.

The crown of glory now He wears,
Our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend,
We triumph in His matchless worth,
Whose kingdom knows no end.
From pole to pole His glories shine,
His conquests never fade,
The earth and all its fulness, His,
Who all God's will obeyed.

Chorus—Then lift your heads, &c.

In righteousness and peace He'll reign,
And rule from shore to shore,
All enemies will He subdue,
Till Death shall be no more.
All things to Him shall subject be,
Creation, and its powers,
Till God Himself be "All in All,"
Who's Israel's God, and ours.

Chorus—Then lift your heads, &c.

S. T.

"It would be well for Christians could they say, as Erasmus, "I desire riches no more than a feeble beast wishes for a heavy burden. Cares are bound to crowns. Anxiety disfigures the face of prosperity."

GIDEON'S VICTORY.

WHEN we come to consider the great service which Gideon and his followers rendered to God and to His people, there are many things which may well surprise us. Was it for this that God had so carefully prepared Gideon and tested his men until an army of thirty-two thousand had been brought down to three hundred? Were they now only fit to *stand still*, every man in *his place*, that they might blow a trumpet—which each man held in his right hand, while holding a lamp in the left hand? Most peculiar method of service, traversing all rules of ancient and modern warfare, and apparently calculated to lead to nothing else than their own complete destruction.

“Why,” they might have reasoned, “the Midianites will soon recover themselves from the shock; they will soon discover what an insignificant company we are, and how little fitted to cope with a mighty army. We shall all be massacred.”

Where were their weapons of attack? Certainly in such a position no one had an opportunity of using a sword, had he possessed it, until the Lord had Himself *gotten the victory*, and made it clear that the enemy was completely demoralised and routed.

It was evident that the Israelites themselves were thoroughly ashamed of their deliverer, *at this point*. Although, afterwards, they were anxious to get some of the credit and to glorify the *man* and to make him a leader who, after all, was only a *vessel* unto honour, used of God, for their deliverance.

The elders of Succoth and Penuel derided the little company, and Gideon and his men "faint yet pursuing" could do nothing, at the moment, but accept the reproach; and may we not say it was in principle "the *reproach* of Christ," which Moses, in his day, esteemed of more value than all the treasures of Egypt (Judges viii. 4—9).

We may be certain that no acceptable service amongst the Lord's people or true testimony to Him, can ever be maintained apart from this reproach. To be approved of God is to be despised of men.

In this warfare, however, there was perfect order, although man could not appreciate it—God is not the author of *confusion*. It was divine order against human organisation, and, wherever this has been maintained, God will vindicate it. Patient service, faithful testimony, bearing His reproach—the fruit of such will be manifest in the day of Christ, Who will, at His appearing and kingdom, put honour upon those who were despised for His sake here.

"Look on me and do likewise," was Gideon's first command. The Lord Himself must be our object and our pattern: God invites us to this. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth" (Isaiah xlii. 1). He has used many for *great* services in the world in whom He has had no delight—such as Jehu, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. But He looks to have His own joy in us while we are treading the path of service and at the end He will bid such to enter into the joy of their Lord.

The blessed Lord Jesus from His lonely path of

self-denying service repeats that command (also an invitation) to our *hearts* to-day (Mat. xi. 29). After He had closed His earthly service, having begun and ended in faith, the Spirit of God by the pen of an apostle commends it likewise (Heb. xii. 1—3).

There is no difficulty as to the spiritual meaning of what was made use of. The trumpet, "to blow withal," always in scripture denotes testimony amongst the people of God, which aims at bringing all into subjection to Himself, that there may be *united action* and *prayer*. The mind of God, as to His people, is understood by those who are near to Him and interpreted by such, that all may act upon it (Numbers x. 1—10).

The lamp contained for a time in the pitcher is the treasure which we have in earthen vessels—the revelation God has made in our hearts of the glory and the grace of Christ. The vessel must be broken that the light may shine out; "We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake"; we have "the sentence of death in ourselves." It is the secret of all true service for God.

We are required to stand, "every man in his place," for Christ has set us there and we dare not leave. Let the world and the Lord's people too, accuse us of indifference to the need of souls, of incompetency, of wasted energy ("Why was this waste of ointment made?"). Let us give ear to Him Who has left us an example that we should walk in His steps and whose voice to our souls is, "Look on me and do likewise."

G. S. B.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

The second Epistle to Timothy assumes a deeper character because of the grave disorder of a general kind which was before the eyes of the Holy Spirit. The regular means would not meet that which already and most seriously disclosed departure from God. Hence in the address it is no longer "according to command" &c., but "by God's will according to promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus," anticipating in measure that on which the apostle John falls back for the last time. Individual fidelity is the more required, yet in no way giving up but maintaining the divine association of saints.

I. The value of unfeigned faith rises before the apostle's heart in this last word of his to his beloved child, to whom he again wishes grace, mercy, peace. He thanks God whom he serves from his forefathers in a pure conscience, with increasing remembrance of Timothy and his tears, and longing to see him that he might be filled with joy. He speaks even more decidedly of the faith which dwelt first in Timothy's grandmother and in his mother, as in his child also. He puts him in mind to stir up the gift of God in him through the imposition of the apostle's hands, and bids him not be ashamed of the Lord's testimony, nor of Paul His prisoner, but suffer evil with the gospel according to God's power. He it was saved us with a holy calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace that was

given us in Christ Jesus, before everlasting ages, but now manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, annulling death as He did and bringing to light life and incorruption through the gospel, unto which Paul was appointed herald and apostle and teacher of Gentiles. For this cause he was suffering thus, but not ashamed; "for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard for that day my deposit." Hence he says, "Have an outline of healthful words which thou heardest from me in faith and love that is in Christ Jesus; the good deposit guard through the Holy Spirit that indwells in us." Scripture alone is reliable, as afterwards expressly said, not human tradition, of all things the most uncertain. Timothy knew the cowardice of many—that all those in Asia, specifying two, had deserted Paul. How different Onesiphorus, for whom and whose house he asks mercy, because he often refreshed him, and when in Rome the more diligently sought him out when a prisoner, besides his loving service in Ephesus.

II. Faithful as Timothy had been, the apostle is most earnest, "Thou therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things thou heardest from me among many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, such as shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore take thy share of suffering evil as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one on service entangleth himself with the businesses of life, that he may please him that enlisted [him]. But if one also contend [in the games], he is not crowned unless he have

contended lawfully. The labouring husbandman must first partake of the fruits." These maxims need only to be correctly represented to carry their weighty sense. It was no rite, but truth which had to be communicated but suitably an earnest devotedness is pressed, and subjection to the Lord's will, and as the labourer first to share the fruits. "Remember," says he, "Jesus Christ risen from the dead, of David's seed, according to my gospel, wherein I suffer evil unto bonds as a malefactor, but the word of God is not bound." Royal rights gave Him no exemption. On the contrary, death was His portion, and what a death! Him Paul followed and imitated as far as this could be, as he urges on all in verses 11—13, and on Timothy to put them in remembrance of these things, instead of wordy fights worse than profitless. His earnest zeal should be to cut straightly the word of truth, warned by two others whom he names as samples who had strayed in asserting the resurrection as past, overthrowing faith under so spurious an exaggeration. This gives occasion to an instruction of great and general value. "Nevertheless the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, the Lord knoweth those that are His; and, Let everyone that nameth the Lord's name depart from unrighteousness." From individual comfort and responsibility he goes on to corporate condition and duty. "Now in a great house are vessels, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earthenware, and some to honour and some to dishonour. If one therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel to honour, sanctified,

serviceable for the master, prepared unto every good work. But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." If the Lord's secret is with Himself, responsibility is mine if I call on His name, I am bound to have done with iniquity. No presumed usefulness can justify my persevering in wrong. But does not God's house abound in anomalies? Am I to leave it? No, I dare not cease from the public profession of the Lord's name with all the baptised; but I am here commanded to purge myself from the vessels to dishonour in that house, and instead of isolation to follow every Christian duty with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It may cost much but it is plain and obligatory in all times and places. And while moral care is ever incumbent, He claims my soul also, with a peaceful and gentle bearing, "in meekness instructing those that oppose if haply God may give them repentance unto acknowledgment of truth, that they may wake up out of the snare of the devil, taken as they are by him, for His will."

III. Next comes a solemn warning of the outlook in Christendom, for many would expect progressive good on earth. "But this know that in the last days difficult (*or*, grievous) times shall be there. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, uncontrolled, fierce, haters of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers, having a form of piety [*or*

godliness] but deniers of its power; and these turn away from." One might have shrunk from a course so peremptory, had the apostolic charge been less plain. It was direct to Timothy, but for every Christian also. The evil was at work even then, and the apostle severely characterises not only the corrupt misleaders, like Jannes and Jambres, but the misled as silly women laden with sins, led by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to right knowledge of truth. As the false or senseless teachers have their limit set, Timothy is told how he had closely followed Paul's teaching, course, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecution, sufferings. Such is the ministry of Christ the Lord, with persecution endured, and the Lord delivering out of all! What is more, the apostle assures that all who desire to live piously in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted, but wicked men and impostors shall advance for the worse, deceiving and being deceived. How sad, yet how true! What is the resource or safeguard for Timothy and for all saints? "Abide thou in those things which thou didst learn and wast persuaded of, knowing of whom thou didst learn them [they were no mere traditions of unknown source]; and that from a babe thou knowest the sacred letters [those of the Old Testament] that are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture [of New Testament or of Old] is God-inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction that is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished thoroughly unto every good work."

IV. Not less solemn is the apostle's direct charge. "I testify earnestly before God and Christ Jesus that is about to judge living and dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will be when they will not endure sound teaching, but according to their own lusts they will heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear; and from the truth they will turn away their ear, and will be turned aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer evil, do evangelist's work, fully perform thy ministry." Be it observed that Christ's appearing, not His coming as such, is immediately connected with His kingdom. He comes to receive His own to Himself and for the Father's house; He appears to establish His kingdom, and all shall see Him, and then in the same heavenly glory. "For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is all but come. The good combat I have combated, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept: henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me in that day; and not to me only, but also to those that love [have loved and do] His appearing." Here again, as His coming is the expression of sovereign grace, His appearing is the display of His righteous remembrance of faithfulness, and, of course, of the want of it.

Then the apostle bids Timothy be diligent to come unto him quickly; he valued his loving presence, and knew that Timothy reciprocated it.

He speaks of Demas with grief. Whatever he might be as known to God, he deserted the apostle through love of the present age. Crescens and Titus had their work, and only Luke was with the apostle. He wished Timothy to take up on his way and bring Mark with him. There indeed he had joy, if sorrow over Demas. For Mark, says he, is useful to me for ministry. He had no longer Tychicus whom he sent to Ephesus. How interesting in these ministerial matters, to have the apostle—while writing an inspired pastoral epistle—telling Timothy to bring the cloak which he left behind in the Troad with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments! Hence we learn of the Christian liberty the apostle exercised as to these outward things for body and mind. He preferred to have a cloak brought than to buy another, and he asked for his books there, which had their interest or use for him, though looking for death he knew not how soon. He would not so speak of the scriptures. If he put special stress on “the parchments,” or unwritten material of a costly and durable nature, was it to have his Epistles correctly copied and multiplied?

Next, he alludes to the hostility of Alexander, the coppersmith, not in a prayer, but in the grave conviction that the Lord would render to him according to his works; for he shewed much evil against the apostle, who warns Timothy also to beware of him. He pathetically names how all deserted him on this repeated imprisonment when his first defence came on; but the Lord stood by him, turned it for all the Gentiles to hear, and de-

livered him from most imminent danger, as He surely would from every evil work, and preserve him for His heavenly kingdom. He wishes salutations to his old friends Prisca and Aquila, and to Onesiphorus' house. He tells of Erastus at Corinth, and Trophimus left sick at Miletum; for a sign of healing (as the rule) did not apply to a Christian who came under the Lord's government. He gives the greeting of Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren; he prays that the Lord should be with the spirit of Timothy, and grace be with him and others there.

W. K.

TABERNACLE NOTES.—III.

THE FOUNDATION.

This remarkable structure had frequently to be set up in the wilderness wastes, and it was consequently exposed to the fierce howling winds of the desert; hence the need of its being firmly grounded, or it must have been blown down. The shifting sands were surely no fit footing for the ponderous boards which composed the frame-work or walls of this divinely planned and most unique building; there must be something solid, weighty, firm, and imperishable as a foundation; hence Moses was instructed to make SOCKETS OF SILVER for this purpose (Exod. xxvi. 19—25).

It is deeply interesting and instructive to observe that the silver which formed these large blocks of a talent weight each, or taking an average from three different writers' estimates, about 104 lbs., was that which was demanded by the Lord from

the people, and paid by them as ransom, or *atone-ment money, for their souls* (Exod. xxx. 12—16 and xxxviii. 27). God required of them that which He first gave to them, thus making it possible for them to answer to His claims. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Haggai ii. 8). By power divine the silver was brought into existence in the earth; otherwise it had been quite impossible for any Israelite to offer such in response to the command so to do. David could say, as the mouth-piece of the people, "Now therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. But what am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. xxix. 14).

For man, "sold under sin," God demanded a *ransom price*: "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, &c." Oh, the riches of His goodness! Who, as the just claimant of the ransom man could never have produced, said in His grace, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24).

The same principle may be seen in Exodus xii. 3, where the word was to be spoken from God to all the congregation of Israel, that in the tenth day of the month they should take to themselves every man *a lamb*. Where must the lambs come from? Who could supply them? Psalm l. 10 gives us the answer: "For every beast of the forest is *mine*, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." God first placed at man's hand what He

claimed from him in satisfaction for sins. And this is strikingly illustrative of the heaven-sent Saviour of men. He was freely given of God to meet the holy requirements of His nature, and the deep, deep need of sinners. It was He Who could say, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. x. 5). To Him does Peter refer when he says, "Ye know that ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a *lamb* without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

The Old Testament is very conclusive that "it is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul," and the same verse supplies the Lord's statement, "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls" (Lev. xvii. 11). The New Testament declares the same fundamental doctrine: "and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

As God's material house was founded upon that which procured redemption—the *silver*—so His spiritual house must, likewise, find its basis upon a costly ransom price. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. xxviii. 16). It is well to realise that there is only one ground of salvation, and better still to have the sweet assurance of being upon that immovable and indestructible basis. Like the little Irish boy, who, asked if, though a Christian, he did not think that after all he might be lost, said, "Oh, sir, sometimes I trimbles on the Rock, but the Rock never trimbles under me, sir!"

A. R. C.

UNSELFISHNESS.

THERE are, in the apostle Paul's writings, little touches of unselfishness, which shew plainly how closely he followed his Lord and Master.

The Lord Jesus, in His prayer to His Father, says, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (John xvii. 24). How gracious and how tender to will that His poor people should have the deep, deep joy of beholding His glory—a sight far beyond anything that we could have imagined, if God had not revealed it to us by His Spirit! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," and yet, as we quietly meditate on the blessed truths of God's word, and bask in the sunshine of the prospect before us, we do, by the indwelling of the Spirit, get glimpses of the happy future, and long earnestly for the coming of our Lord, and our bliss when we are with Him.

Oh! that matchless love of His! "For the joy that was set before him" He "endured the cross, despising the shame"! Unselfish love, indeed! What an honour for us that we should be permitted to see some of the secrets of the Lord's heart; and to know that for "the joy set before him," He "endured the cross"! Let us think of what He bore; the scorn, the spitting, the "contradiction of sinners against himself,"

and the hardness of heart of many among whom He moved and walked! How truly He was our great Exemplar! We cannot follow Him in a path which He, as divine, alone could tread; but He has left us an example that we "should follow his steps." "Even Christ pleased not himself." He was "meek and lowly in heart."

Now, the apostle Paul imitated his Lord, and was willing to "spend and be spent" for others, taking a humble place so that he might help, or minister to, the converts. He desired that fruit might abound to *their* account, for their sakes, and not for his own. Let us listen to his words, "Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that *ye* should do that which is honest, though *we* be as disapproved." His heart yearned for *their* blessing. "For *we* are glad when *we* are weak, and *ye* are strong; and this also we wish, even *your* perfection." (2 Cor. xiii. 7—9). Let us ponder this, and seek to imitate the apostle Paul, as he imitated Christ. Thus shall our unselfishness grow.

H.L.R.

BIBLICAL DIFFICULTIES.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—There is a certain class of persons who endeavour to satisfy themselves and others as well that they are to be excused from believing the scripture, because it contains so many things they do not understand, as well as a great many things that appear contrary one to another. They assume very lofty airs of superior wisdom, and affect to regard the Bible as a book

which can be of no importance to them, for the very simple reason that it is beyond their comprehension. They lay it down as an axiom that they are to believe only just what they understand. It has been very neatly and properly retorted that the creed of this particular class of individuals must necessarily be very brief.

The fact is there are very few things even in the natural realm that any of us understand, using the word "understand" in its fullest sense. And when we come to God's revelation we ought to be perfectly sure that it contains very many matters far above our ken. The very presence of such "deep things" proves that its origin is not human but divine.

Seeing that the Bible has divine authority, as being the word and words of God, what does it demand from us? *Faith*, unconditionally. God speaks, and we are bound to listen with reverence. What He tells me, I must accept because He says so. It is no question of waiting until I understand before believing. On the contrary, faith is the very means whereby we do understand. "*Through faith we understand* that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3).

The act of creation is of all things a question of faith. To speak of *understanding* how the world or anything in it could be brought into being is absurd. It is just what the most eminent men of science fail in understanding, as in fact they allow. But to the believer it is perfectly simple, because he accepts it as the result of God's

omnipotent word and will. "He spake and it was done."

In like manner the man of faith accepts all the marvellous events narrated in the scriptures. They are presented in the way of divine testimony, and however they may appear to be beyond all human power to execute they are nevertheless to be believed because there is always the power of God which can never be circumscribed, and which therefore fully accounts for every one. That water should issue from the rock in the wilderness when smitten by Moses' rod is altogether beyond human imitation. Apart from the exercise of the power of Jehovah such a thing was impossible. But receive the fact on this ground, and see what an illustration you have of God's particular regard for the pressing needs of His people, and the effectual way in which He can provide for them.

Obviously, however, it would be useless to ask a dozen questions as to *how* the miracle was performed and to refuse to believe until your curiosity was satisfied. Because, apart from the circumstances of the phenomenon which are recorded, it is impossible to answer any questions of detail. And no professor of physiography could give you a practical demonstration in his classroom. Faith then, and faith alone applies in this instance as the secret of obtaining the needed instruction from the incident.

But perhaps you are one of those persons who have no difficulty about the miracles. Do you believe in the ark and the flood?

"Oh, yes; it is quite clear to me," you say, "that the world that then was, was destroyed by water with the exception of Noah and those with him in the ark."

You are quite convinced that the Israelites passed through the waters of the Red Sea?

"Oh, perfectly. I quite reject the unbelieving notion of the nation going over a ford at low tide."

You have considered the miracle of Jonah, and the great fish, I presume?

"Certainly, I accept the divine statement. The words of scripture are very plain and definite as to it."

Then as a matter of course you believe all that God has made known in the scripture, the truth of election, for example.

"Well, no; I can hardly say that I do. I am not quite clear as to that. You see such a doctrine presents a great many difficulties."

But then the point was not whether you understood election, in the sense of being able to account for it. Do you believe the saints of God were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world?

"One of my difficulties is how we could be chosen before we were born. And then——"

Pray do not proceed further with the enumeration of your difficulties. Why do you allow matters which you do not understand, nor ever will understand, to prevent you from exercising faith in what God distinctly declares in His word? He has said of believers that they are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Pet. i. 2).

But you will not believe it because predestination is above your comprehension. There are many things connected with the flood, the passage of the Red Sea, Jonah in the fish's belly, that are beyond your comprehension. You believe them however in spite of the difficulties; yet when it is a question of spiritual truth about yourself, as one of God's children, you attempt to dispose of it by putting it on one side as too difficult for you. You want faith, my young friend. Believe God's word about it first, and you will then at any rate be in a more likely frame of mind to learn a little more of what God has revealed in connection with that subject.

You must not suppose from what I have said above that I wish to discourage you in the desire for information, or in the practice of making inquiries for that purpose. On the contrary, an awakened interest in the scriptures displays itself in asking questions. But the effect of the question on the education of the spirit depends altogether upon the motive that prompts the inquiry. If the question springs from a simple and honest desire to know God's will as revealed, it will result in blessing. But if the question originates from a wish to find objections to the truth it can certainly be of no profit to the soul.

We have many an example in the Gospels of the patience and readiness of the Lord in answering the queries of His disciples and others when they came to Him. For instance, after the Lord had spoken certain similitudes of the kingdom of

the heavens to the multitude, His disciples came to Him in the house, and said, "Declare unto us the parables." And we read, "When they were alone he expounded all things unto his disciples" (Mark iv. 34). Again, the Lord's comprehensive prophecy on the Mount of Olives was delivered in response to the inquiries of His disciples, who said, "Tell us, when shall these things, [the destruction of the temple] be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. xxiv. 3).

The Lord however did not gratify mere idle curiosity. One said to Him, actuated by a desire simply to know something that no one else knew, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" The answer would be of no moral or practical value to anyone; and so the Lord ignored the question but pressed earnest endeavour to enter at the strait gate (Luke xiii. 23).

On another occasion, the chief priests and elders came to the Lord as He was teaching, and asked Him, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" But the Lord knew the workings of their hearts. They were desirous of finding some plausible excuse for their unbelief. By a question of His own He made manifest their incapacity, and then absolutely refused to give them any answer (Matt. xxi. 23—27).

I think perhaps that even from these one or two instances a little light may be seen as to the difference between proper and improper questions.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

BOOK NOTICE.

WORK OF THE LORD, by J. N. Darby ; 4 pp.
T. Weston, 1900.

This is a practical word of weight and wisdom on Christian service. We need to consider it well. We are too apt to increase our activities to quiet our uneasy consciences. The following are the concluding sentences :

“ I never met with anyone making service prominent who knew what it was to sit at His feet. But, thank God, I know indefatigable workers who enjoy sitting at His feet above any service. And it is clear that they who sit most at His feet must be competent to serve, and most in His confidence, which after all is the clue to all efficient service.”

QUERIES.

IOTA.—WHAT SAINTS ARE REFERRED TO IN JOB V. 1 ; XV. 15 ? THESE VERSES HAVE RATHER PERPLEXED ME, AS THEY SEEM TO FAVOUR THE PRACTICE OF PRAYING TO THE HOLY DEPARTED. The saints, or holy ones, are such persons as are God's in the sense of being consecrated, or set apart to Him. The term is used both in Old Testament and New Testament in this signification, and is applicable to the people of God as a class, and not exclusively to those eminent for piety. See the expressions, “ the assembly of the saints,” “ thy saints in Jerusalem ” (Ps. lxxxix. 7 ; Acts ix. 13), as well as many such. It was quite a human idea to canonise persons after death, adjudging them a place in the calendar of saints so-called, while prayer to them was a supplementary fable.

Eliphaz, who is the speaker in both instances, had no such notions. In the first instance, he seems to be seeking to impress Job with the uselessness of any appeal under his afflictions. “ Call now, if there be any that will answer thee, and to which of the saints wilt thou

turn?" There is nothing to suggest that the saints to whom he alludes were not in the body.

In the second instance, Eliphaz is contrasting the holiness of God and the corrupt nature of man. "What is man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job. xv. 14—16). Saints here may refer to the angels, as in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, and Psalm lxviii. 17.

IOTA.—IN LUKE XIII. 18—21 TWO SIMILITUDES ARE GIVEN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD WHICH IN MATTHEW XIII. 31—33 ARE SAID TO BE FIGURES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. WHY IS THIS? IS THERE NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD? The terms are used according as they are suitable to the context. The kingdom of heaven (*or*, of the heavens) is used especially in Matthew. It implies a rule of the earth from heaven, and Christ will establish this in manifested power during the millennium (Dan. ii. 44). Now, while He is hidden on high, the kingdom of heaven is in a mixed condition, evil being mingled with good. This the Lord shewed in a parabolic way would come to pass, *e.g.*, in the parables you refer to. But Christ being depicted in Matthew's Gospel as the promised King of the coming kingdom, we have this term specially used, thus giving a plain link with the prophecies of Daniel.

In speaking generally, the two terms you refer to are identical, only while, by the kingdom of the heavens, you are reminded that the seat of government is heaven, not earth, by the kingdom of God the Person Who governs is brought forward as the central idea. Hence those in the kingdom of God should be marked by godliness. The kingdom of God comprises such as profess obedience to Him. They are not, however, all real in heart, as Luke xiii. 18—21 shews.

DRIFTING AWAY.

A DEAD tree-trunk blown into the upper waters of the River Amazon on the eastern slopes of the Andes is presently discovered on the western shores of the Scandinavian peninsula. It has had a tortuous journey of many thousands of miles. Yet, of itself, the balk of sodden timber could not move an inch. Still, by being left just to the force and the mercy of the circumstances in which it was found it is eventually landed at such an immense distance from the point of departure.

Brethren, there is a danger of our becoming like so much driftwood!

This is an old exhortation. Paul used it in writing to the Hebrews; though, as to its exact force, it was disguised in the Authorised Version. This reads: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should *let them slip*" (Heb. ii. 1). The idea conveyed by this language is that we are holding on to certain truths, and we are to be careful not to let them go. But the text is rendered more correctly by the Revisers: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we *drift away from them*." We see from this amended translation that the truth once delivered to the saints is regarded as fixed and permanent, and we are exposed to the danger of being carried away from the truths of God—*drifting* away from them.

Most saints would strenuously resist open and violent efforts to rob them of the truth; but they

often, to their own discomfiture, ignore the subtle influences of the undercurrents of human opinion which ever set counter to the truth. And if such influences be unheeded the inevitable result must be open declension from the declared mind and will of God.

There was such a drift-current which set in at Antioch, and which all but carried away Peter, Barnabas, and many other Jewish Christians. The bed-rock of truth made known to Peter, the rock-man, was that he should henceforth call no man common nor unclean (Acts x. 28), and as a consequence of his own preaching in the house of Cornelius the centurion, the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on the Gentiles who believed, as it had been previously upon the Jews. But there was a natural fleshly feeling against this truth of the Gentile being, through grace, admitted into equal privileges with the Jew. And even Peter came under its insidious influence and separated himself from the Gentile brethren at Antioch. "Before that certain came from James [to Antioch], he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. ii. 12, 13). It might seem an insignificant event to some; but the apostle Paul saw that in it they were not walking "uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel." He judged it to be an indication that spiritual energy had ceased to act in testimony to the characteristic

truth of Christianity, and Peter with the others were *drifting* away from it.

Through the bold and decided action of the apostle of the Gentiles they were saved from further departure; but the incident solemnly and strikingly illustrates the necessity of continual watchfulness lest we be carried away also. We are ever in danger. The natural tendencies within and around are in favour of yielding and slipping and drifting away from the things we have been assured of. But the truth abides ever, and as ever. May the truth therefore abide in us that we also may abide in the truth!

MULTIPLIED OIL AND MULTIPLIED LOAVES.

2 KINGS iv. 1—7; JOHN vi. 1—14.

I think the connection of these two scriptures is to be found in the *similarity* of the *gracious* acting of divine power in each case. All the miracles of Elisha are simple and beautiful in themselves and have too a prophetic character foreshadowing what God will do for His poor sinful people in a future day. Here we have the people of God humiliated in the presence of a creditor who has a lawful claim upon them. The prey is taken from the mighty and the lawful captive delivered, not in mercy, but by power acting in righteousness (Isaiah xlix. 24)—in this God maintains His own character and the holiness of grace. The creditor is satisfied and silenced. The bondslaves are delivered and have a reserve to live upon.

Of course this has its *present application* in these last days of ruin and spiritual bondage; souls have been emancipated and blessed, not by any fresh revelation or the bestowal of any fresh gifts to the church, but God has been exercising people's minds as to what had been already given.

"What hast thou in the house?" is a challenge to the church to-day. The oil, type of the Holy Ghost, abides for ever, and may be counted upon to meet whatever need exists. Bring empty vessels inside, the more the better. Shut the door upon the family that they may be marked off from the world. Evil being shut out, the power of God will work in filling souls with Christ, setting them apart for His use (2 Tim. ii. 21).

In the gospel I find the same gracious power adapting itself in all simplicity to human need and using what God has already given ("For what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"). It is a case of hunger—spiritual destitution if you will.

It will be a part of Messiah's work in the coming day to satisfy the poor of Israel with bread, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd," and they are blessed who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

But it is the Son of God Himself acting here, and not a servant merely. He has a right to exercise the hearts of His servants as to the existing need, and He uses it to the full. Alas for our hearts! The highest thought of Philip could only contemplate as a possibility "that everyone of them may take a *little*"; but in result they had "as much as they would," and left thereof. Of course the great difficulty is to "make the men sit down"—to take

the low place and receive the blessing. Self-importance comes in the way.

Then the Lord blesses the provision of His grace, gives to the disciples who distribute to the multitude. It is here that the blessing is multiplied; "He that watereth shall be watered himself." And after this wonderful day of grace is over there shall be twelve baskets remaining, enough to satisfy the twelve tribes of Israel, who will come in as gleaners in the harvest field (Lev. xxiii. 22). Note that this comes in between the feast of Pentecost—type of the outpouring of the Spirit and the blessing of the church—and the solemnities of the seventh month, speaking of the gathering and sanctification of the earthly people.

G.S.B.

CHRIST IN GLORY.

O Lord, we're longing for the time
When we shall sin no more,
Our joyous hearts all unrestrained,
To praise Thee o'er and o'er.

But most of all we long to see
Thyself, our dearest Lord;
The thought itself now thrills us through—
What joy will sight afford?

Precious, most precious, 'tis to us,
Our hearts with joy expand,
To know Thou art, as here below,
A *Man* at God's right hand.

Thy face, once marred and sorrow-stamped,
Thy brow that wore the thorn,
Thine eyes, compassionate, that wept,
Or drooped, with sleep out-worn,

All these we'll see ; but oh, how changed,
In heavenly radiance there !
Transformed, and yet the very same
As when Thou journeyedst here.

The nail-prints in Thy hands and feet,
The spear-wound in Thy side,
Remain unchanged, and always there
Love tokens will abide.

Weeping and weariness and woe
For ever passed away ;
Thine own blest smile will welcome us
To everlasting day.

T.D.

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

THERE does not appear to be enough of external marks to decide when the apostle wrote this Epistle to his genuine child and fellow labourer. But internally we may gather that it was after the First Epistle and before the Second to Timothy, with which letters it has closer links of connection than with any others. For on the one hand it treats like 1 Timothy of official government ; on the other it speaks like 2 Timothy of the hope of life eternal which the God that cannot lie promised before times everlasting. As in the former it is our Saviour God who commands ; it is not the law, but faith of His elect, a common faith.

I. "Paul, bondman of God, and apostle of Christ Jesus, according to faith of God's elect and acknowledgment of truth that (is) according to godliness

in hope of life eternal, which the God that cannot lie promised before times everlasting, but manifested in its own seasons, his word in a preaching where-with I was entrusted according to our Saviour God's commandment, to Titus genuine child according to a common faith: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour" (vers. 1-4). Truth according to godliness is to be acknowledged. National or birth privileges, so prized in Israel as in the world, vanish before a revealed and believed Christ, in whom was life eternal before all ages, but now in virtue of His word preached in its own due time, as authoritatively entrusted by a God of saving love to the apostle, who writes to Titus with his usual Christian salutation. "For this cause I left thee behind in Crete that thou mightest set right thoroughly things remaining, and appoint city by city elders, as I directed thee: if one is unimpeachable, husband of one wife, having children faithful, not accused of excess or unruly. For the overseer must be unimpeachable as God's steward, not self-willed, not passionate, not a wine-sitter, not a striker, not a base-gainer; but hospitable, loving, good, discreet, just, pious, temperate, holding to the faithful word according to the doctrine, that he may be able both to encourage with the healthful teaching and to rebuke the gainsayers. For there are many unruly, vain-speakers and beguilers, chiefly those of circumcision, who must have the mouth stopped, who upset whole houses, teaching what they ought not for the sake of base gain. Said one of themselves, a prophet of their

own, Cretans, always liars, evil wild beasts, lazy gluttons (*or*, bellies). This witness is true; for which reason rebuke them severely, that they may be healthful in the faith, not heeding Jewish fables and commandments of men turning from the truth. All things (are) pure to the pure, but to those that are defiled and faithless nothing (is) pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. God they profess to know, but in works deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and for every good work worthless" (vers. 5-16).

Thus we see that elders (not gifts) required apostolic establishment, direct or indirect, and that moral weight was sought, and a good report in themselves, and their households, to cheer those who valued healthful teaching and to rebuke adversaries. For already disorder was at work largely, and evils had entered within like the world's without. Epimenides is cited as a prophet, not of God but of their own, frankly and unsparingly denouncing what Titus was to rebuke severely, helped on as it was by Jewish professors who set Jewish fables and human ordinances before them, not the truth. Thus man and his deceits cover impurity, while our souls are purified by obeying the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love. To the pure all things are pure; to the defiled and faithless is nothing pure: yea, both their mind and their conscience are defiled. Professing to know God only aggravates the case of those who deny Him in their works, being loathsome in themselves, disobedient to God, and for every good work reprobate. What a picture of

the Christian confession before the first generation passed away! How like that which we have to face to-day!

II. Titus, however, was not only to ordain elders, such as the apostle describes, and to so carry out the moral government which the Lord enjoins suitably to the need of souls; he is instructed also in his own charge to the same end. Hence his duties are laid down toward elder men and elder women, young women and young men. Bondmen have a large place; and it is after dealing with them that the apostle speaks so grandly of the saving grace of God that appeared for all men, and its all-important teaching for such as received it meanwhile, and await the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Separateness and zeal for good works become those redeemed to Himself, a people purified. He was to speak exhortation and rebuke with all authority. "But speak thou the things that beseem the healthful teaching, that elder men be sober, grave, discreet, healthful in faith, in love, in patience; that elder women in like manner, in mien beseeming sacred things, not slanderers, not enslaved to much wine, teachers of comeliness, that they may train the young women to love husband, to love children, discreet, chaste, home-workers, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God be not reviled. The younger men in like manner exhort to be discreet, as to all things affording thyself a pattern of comely works; in the teaching incorruption, gravity, sound word not to be condemned, that he

who is opposed may be abashed, having no evil to say about us; bondmen to be subject to their own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things, not gainsaying, not purloining, but shewing all good faithfulness, that they may adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God hath appeared saving to all men, teaching us that, having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live discreetly and righteously, and godlily in the present age, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify for Himself a people for His possession zealous for comely works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all command: let no one despise thee" (vers. 1-15).

Here we learn how momentous it is, that those who are the objects of God's grace in the gospel should be to its praise by a walk in every relation of this life formed, strengthened, and guided according to Christ; and how inconsistency or disorder in these respects gives occasion for the enemy to blaspheme. How touching is that grace which is developed in its rich and direct bearing immediately after the exhortation as to slaves! Beyond doubt it was for all the faithful, and for every relation among them; but how considerate our Saviour God's care to tell it out at that point in the chapter! The law of God was imposed on one people; *the grace of God appeared* with its saving character to all men, as it teaches "us" who believe that, having denied ungodliness and worldly

lusts, we should live discreetly as to ourselves, righteously towards others, and godlily in the highest respect. Nor is this all; but awaiting the blessed hope and *appearing of the glory* of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. And how assuring for the heart to remind us here, that He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a people for His own portion, zealous for works excellent and suitable!

III. But there are other relations more external which are not overlooked. The self-will, which breeds emulation and strife in the homes and in the assembly, is not less disorderly, evil, and destructive in the world. "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to revile no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, shewing all meekness toward all men." It was not so always in our case. Grace it is that made the difference in us that believe. "For ourselves too were once senseless, disobedient, going astray, slaves to various lusts and pleasure, spending our time in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness and the philanthropy (or, love to man) of our Saviour God appeared, not from works in righteousness which ourselves did, but according to his mercy he saved us through washing of regeneration and renewing of Holy Spirit, which he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, justified as we were by his grace, we should become heirs according to hope of life eternal. Faithful [is] the saying, and as to

these things I would have thee insist that those that have believed God be mindful to maintain comely works. These things are comely and profitable to men; but foolish questionings and genealogies and strifes and legal contentions shun, for they are unprofitable and vain. An heretical man after a first admonition and a second avoid, knowing that such a one is perverted and sinneth being self-condemned" (vers. 1—11).

How mighty and worthy of admiration is the goodness and the special affection of our Saviour God that appeared in Christ! What a contrast with man's philanthropy, which might be in Jew, Heathen, or Mahometan, and either gives a little out of its abundance, or compounds for sins by a superstitious and self-righteous poverty to enrich the priesthood! The Christian was proved in himself utterly evil and ruined, when God's love wrought in saving goodness according to His mere and sovereign mercy; wherein He saved us through washing of regeneration, which totally changed our state from that of fallen Adam to the risen Christ, and renewal of Holy Spirit, not only in a sinless life given which loves holiness, but in the Spirit's power which He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. But thus it could not be till He wrought redemption and was glorified; and thus it was that being justified by His grace as well as purified, we should be heirs according to hope of life eternal. "Hope" it is, for that life has not its full consummation till the body is as instinct with it at Christ's coming as the inner man is already by faith; and only

thus has hope its glorious fruition. The apostle would have Titus occupied with these things, which deliver from evil and give us communion not only in the good and comely ways of divine mercy, but with God Himself the conscience too is exercised that there might be moral conformity in good or comely works, the fruit of love, shunning the idle and barren speculations of Gnostic philosophy and legal battles, where peace with God is unknown. But there is another evil to be avoided, not only "heresy," as a split from the unity of the Spirit is called (see also 1 Cor. xi. 19, Gal. v. 20), but any sanction of him who is self-condemned in leaving the church of God. "When I shall send Artemas or Tychicus unto thee, be diligent to come unto me at Nicopolis, for there I have decided to winter. Zenas the lawyer and Apollos zealously forward that nothing be lacking to them; and let ours also learn to maintain comely works for necessary wants that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Salute those that love us in faith. Grace [be] with you all" (vers. 12—15). Paul desired the presence of Titus, but not at the expense of the saints and the work in Crete where he was sending his fellow-labourers, Artemas or Tychicus. But jealousy of other workmen not so connected was alien to his heart; nay, he would have all learn to maintain comely works to help in this and other fruitful ways for the necessary wants. He gives the salutation of all, and wishes it to those who dearly loved them if in faith, and that grace too be with all, which all needed,

DEAD UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD.

ROMANS VI.

GRACE always sets us in liberty. Even in holiness, liberty is the character of its separation. It is liberty from the bondage of sin. It is willing, joyous, consecration to God.

This chapter is most practical, yet deep—very deep—as everything is that comes from God. For everything that comes from God returns to God. Man is his own end by nature, and all his thoughts and actions begin and end with *self*; but Christ could not come down here and walk in righteousness without doing everything *to God*, so the incense of the meat-offering all went up to God. So this new life, of which the chapter treats, as it comes from God, so it goes to God. It brings forth fruit of course, but that is not its end. Its end is presented in Ephesians v. 1, 2: “Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love.” This is Christian morality; but then it is God’s nature, God’s life, expressed in men: life that flows from God, and must go to God. But it is added, “as Christ also hath loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice *to God* for a sweet smelling savour.” The life God gives goes to God, and when that is wanting, all is wanting. Beloved, that is everything—because a man is not what he does, but what his motive in doing it is. Two men may do the very same thing from the most opposite reasons: one, for

example, may labour for his family ; another, to spend what he earns on sinful pleasures. How different the act, though they do the same thing, and equally well, for their employer !

Everything in the new nature goes back to God. Hence we have to judge ourselves. For even the Christian, when walking blamelessly before men, may suffer other things than simply *pleasing God* to come in and spoil the sweet odour. Oh, how dreadful, when self comes in and spoils the odour—it may be not to others, but to ourselves !

In the 3rd chapter of this Epistle we get the way in which the blood of Christ met actual sins, whether of Jew or Gentile. In the 4th we have the full character of Christian faith, reposing in God, Who had come in power, and had raised One who was under death to His own right hand. Looking at Jesus as a man under death, we see divine power coming in and raising Him up. In the 5th chapter, this principle is applied to justification ; and we have the joy which is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. Then the law, which is contrasted with grace, and was brought in by-the-bye, after man had become a sinner, itself righteous, and thus demonstrating the sin of man.

There are two ways in which man might stand before God : he could be righteous, or he can be saved. There is no other way. He could be, indeed, innocent ; I mean, as Adam was ; but by the entrance of sin that is lost for ever. So now he can only stand on the ground of sovereign grace. The law is a good law, and if lived in, it would make any man happy—it would make

angels happy. For to love God with all one's heart, and one's neighbour as one's self, is practised in heaven. But it could not, in the form in which it was given at Sinai, be given to an innocent Adam. For the law always supposes sin to be there, and it comes in to bring out its real character.

Having shewn us that as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous—thus shewing us that God traces the family of sinners up to Adam, and the family of righteous up to Christ. He takes up, in this 6th chapter, the objection that this seems to make it indifferent how we walk: thus, if by one man's obedience men are made righteous, and we are looked at in the head to which we belong, our actions are no matter, not being the ground of our acceptance.

The flesh would say this. For the flesh will turn everything to evil. It will take the law itself, which was given to *convict of sin*, to make out *righteousness* by it; and grace, which is the power and way of holiness and communion with God, it will turn into an occasion for sin.

Adam and Christ however are brought before us as the two heads of the two families of men. But Adam becomes a sinful man—sin has been accomplished in his condition ere he becomes a head. Christ, too, accomplished righteousness ere He becomes the head of His family. And as we come into the state which was accomplished in Adam, so do we into that which was accomplished in Christ. And as there was a life in us which

liked the state in which we found ourselves by Adam, even so, when we find ourselves justified in Christ Jesus, there is a life in us which likes this state.

The apostle's answer, then, to the use the flesh would make of the truth of our being made righteous by another's obedience, is drawn from the very truth which gave rise to the objection. The Christ, in whom we are, as our Head, has died and risen again. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" In Christ we have died to sin. It is never said that we ought to die to sin, but that we *have died* to it. We are set in Christ. Where is my place as a believer? In Christ, dead and risen again. If I have this justification, it is in Him in whom I have possession of this life. If I have not the one, I have not the other. The apostle is not now talking of motives, he is laying down what *must be* from the nature of our union with Christ. If I believe that I am saved by the blood of Jesus, then I find in the blood, put on my ear, my hand, and my foot,* a motive to walk in consistency with its claims; but here he is not talking of motives, but of resurrection. How have you got this justification? By death and resurrection. I am treating you as dead, for Christ is dead, and you are in Him. If I am dead, I cannot live in that to which I am dead. That is the doctrine. We are to mortify our *members*, but *we* are not commanded to die.

Extracted.

*See Leviticus viii. 23, 24.

UPON PRAYER MEETINGS.

“How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” Indeed this unity is essential to our spiritual well-being, and also to the ensuring of an answer to our prayers. What a happy prayer meeting is that wherein every soul present yearns up to God, that He will grant the earnest request; wherein fervent zeal is openly manifest, and the thread of prayer remains unbroken. But alas! it would often seem that the chief purpose of the prayer meeting is forgotten, for instead of burning appeals, how often are we compelled to listen to long dreary, platitudes, and frequently to covert exhortation which is utterly out of place.

The prayer meeting loses all its power when used as a medium for advice or reproof, and surely, it should be our endeavour to exclude at such a meeting all that is not supplication to God.

Often the speaker seems to inform God at length of what He has done, and mingles with his discourse a few indefinite prayers which aim at generalities and nothing in particular; and thus the unity of the assembly is not only not maintained but is cast to the winds, with the result that the petitions are unproductive of result.

It was the privilege of the writer of this paper to be present at a small meeting where seven soldiers met together for prayer, and where each one in turn cried up to God for a fellow-soldier who, though somewhat exercised at heart, was yet stubborn against God. The result of the fervent

and united prayers of strong men, who, in their supplicatory efforts had shed tears, was evidenced two or three days later by the conversion of the soldier in question.

In a lucid little work entitled "*Sur les Réunions de Prières*," written anonymously in French and published in 1875, the author speaks of a "lack of power and efficacy," "formality and routine." He says that God desires us to come before Him with our real wants, and surely one and all of us should be of one mind in our determination as to what these wants are. Furthermore he says, "It often happens that what we call a prayer is not a prayer at all, but merely an exposition of certain known and accepted truths, of which the constant repetition becomes most wearisome: what can be more dreary than to listen to a kneeling man teaching principles or expounding doctrines? Is it possible for us not to ask 'Is this man speaking to God or to us?' If to God, then nothing shows a greater lack of reverence than to try to explain things to Him; if to us, then it is no prayer at all, and the sooner we leave the attitude of prayer the better for us; the speaker should be standing, and we, as his hearers seated."

Again, the author of this little book speaks of the great length of most modern prayers, and says, "The long prayers in our assemblies are extremely tiring, and truly in many cases they are a positive calamity. Perhaps it will be said that the Holy Spirit cannot be restricted for time; far be such a dreadful thought from us! but how is it that we never find long prayers in scripture?"

Vain and formal repetitions are powerless to help, but short, burning appeals, in which all can join, are what we require. Search the scriptures through and where do you find a single prayer that would have taken more than five minutes in its recital. Our Lord's own prayer in John xvii. which was so full and beautifully inclusive would hardly have occupied so long! Surely if a common object, and a definite, well-limited object, was at heart, many would add their little waft to the ascending cloud of incense, who, knowing the practice of long discursive prayers, have for years remained silent.

What we require is shortness, simplicity and precision, which will contribute to edification, consolation, and blessing. Importunity as distinct from vain repetition is repeatedly urged to be a lesson which our Lord zealously presses upon us. Let us be agreed about the "one thing," and lay it before the Lord with all our heart and soul, otherwise our prayer meetings will, through our own fault, continue to be cold and unproductive of the desired results.

L.L.

[NOTE.—The writer, of course, would not deny that public prayers must be of sufficient length and intelligibility as well as audibility that the hearers are able to say, Amen. 1 Cor. xiv.—*Ed. B.M.M.*]

"When worthy Mr. Heron lay upon his death-bed, his wife with great concern asked him what was to become of her and her large family; he answered 'Peace, sweet heart; that God who feeds the ravens will not starve the Herons.'"

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—It would be well for you not to lose a firm grip upon the fundamental truths of revelation which are now being continually questioned by scientific men and freely conceded by religious men as points of no particular consequence. There are certain facts which rest for their authority upon the written word of God, and therefore it is highly becoming for every young believer (and old one too for that matter) in such cases to preserve his heart intact from the debasing influences of doubt and suspicion, and much more so, of unbelief.

Take now the fact of man being in the image of God. We have a very plain statement as to this in the account of man's creation—an account which God alone could possibly furnish, in the first instance, at any rate. And God said, "Let us make man in our image." . . . So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him" (Gen. i. 26, 27). And a similar testimony is recorded in the New Testament: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. xi. 7). The latter scripture is important as shewing that the entrance of sin into the world and the consequent fall of the head of the creation did not destroy man's position as being in the image of God. That image is undoubtedly disfigured by the presence and power of evil, but he does still represent Him of whom he is but a bruised and battered image.

You know there is another word closely associated with "image." I refer to "likeness." But I do not wish to say anything as to that connection now, only I would mention that the two terms should not be confounded, and that the chief thought in the word "image" is representation, and in the word "likeness" resemblance. It will be sufficient on the present occasion to consider a little of what is involved in the fact of man being God's representative on the earth.

We are instructed in the first two chapters of Genesis as to the exalted position in which man was placed at his creation in regard to the lower animals. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. i. 26). Clearly then, man was given a place of supreme authority. All species of animal life were subordinated to his rule and government as the vicegerent of God upon earth.

An instance is given us of the display of Adam's powers in this capacity of head of God's creation upon earth. We read that "out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field" (Gen. ii. 19, 20). In this act

the lower animals themselves acknowledged Adam as the one who was constituted the representative of God upon the earth. He was the image of God to them. The authority of God was conveyed to them through him.

In accordance with this high and dignified position given to man above the beasts, we are shewn that a marked distinction was made in the manner of his creation. The birds and beasts are said to be formed "out of the ground" simply (Gen. ii. 19). Man also was formed "out of the dust of the ground," whereby his link with the lower created orders is shewn us. But an additional fact is revealed concerning him in the account of his creation. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, *and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*; and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). Here you will observe the great difference. Man, unlike all other creatures, became a living soul by the direct inbreathing of Jehovah. And because of this "inspiration of the Almighty" which formed his "inner man" in contrast with the outer body or framework, man was fitted to be in the place of dominion, the image or representative of God on the earth. Whatever general resemblance there may be between the bodies of men and of beasts there abides the fact made known by God Himself that He imparted to man at the beginning that which enabled him to receive communications from God, and to act for God in this world.

Why do I say this to you? To remind you of the dignity of man, who only of the denizens of

this earth has an immortal spirit, and to whom only is offered a revelation from God which it is to his eternal interest to accept, and to his eternal loss to refuse.

Why do I say this to you? Because you may be asked to discard the sacred record in Genesis and to accept such a theory as the following: "Man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the old world;" or practically the same theory stated more fully in such words as these: "Born of electricity and albumen, the simple monad is the first living atom; the microscopic animalcules, the snail, the worm, the reptile, the fish, the bird, and the quadruped, all spring from its invisible loins. The human similitude at last appears in the character of the monkey; the monkey rises into the baboon; the baboon is exalted to the ourang outang; and the chimpanzee, with a more human toe and shorter arms, gives birth to Man."

The real effect of such a theory is of course the denial of any special act of the Creator in the origin of man, such as we know from the Bible was actually the case. Man was developed in the ordinary course of events, after many, many millenniums, from a mere blob of jelly sticking to some primeval rock. Such a theory is in itself repulsive to the believer in the scriptures of God, lowering man as it does to the level of the "beasts that perish." You may perhaps have heard the following lines which justly ridicule the idea of man being a lineal descendant of the monkeys:

“There was an ape in the days that were earlier ;
Centuries passed and his hair became curlier ;
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist—
Then he was Man, and a positivist.”

I do not at all propose giving you the scientific reasons for rejecting the evolutionary theory. There are such of course, but it is not at all necessary that you should examine them to arrive at the truth as to man's relative position in the order of the animal life of this world. However ignorant a person may be of science his Bible will instruct him not only that man stands at the head of creation (your scientific professor seldom disputes this), but that he has been placed in a position of direct responsibility and trust to God which is true of no other creature upon the earth. He was in fact created in the image of God.

Of course in a fuller, deeper, and absolutely perfect measure Christ was “the image of God” (2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15). He represented God completely here below in the world, not as Adam who disobeyed and brought in sin and death, so that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” But grace however triumphs amid the general ruin, and the child of God is said to “have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. iii. 10). From this scripture it is clear that the believer is in the “image of God” in the higher and better sense of a *new* creation.

I am, yours faithfully,

“YOD.”

BOOK NOTICES.

THE PREACHING TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON ; by W. Kelly. 140 pp., cloth, 12mo. T. Weston, 1900.

A great variety of interpretations have been propounded as to 1 Peter iii. 18—20 from the time the Epistle was written to the present day. Both superstition and religious infidelity have sought to find in it some justification for their baseless dreams. The above work is an exposition and a defence of the orthodox view that the spirits referred to are those of the world of the ungodly which was overthrown by the flood in the days of Noah. The simple person will find in its pages the truth stated in plain terms, while the pious scholar will appreciate the defeat of many a learned divine with his own weapons.

The practice of referring to authors whose views are cited by the initial only necessitates caution when consulted hastily. Thus "B." means Bellarmine (p. 60), and "Dr. B." refers to Bishop Browne (p. 18), Dr. John Brown (p. 94), Dr. Bartle (p. 101), and Dr. E. W. Bullinger (p. 119). This slight confusion in the case of persons having the same initial might easily be avoided in a future edition.

THE OFFERINGS OF LEVITICUS ; by W. Kelly. 120 pp., cloth, 12mo. T. Weston, 1899.

Leviticus was the Jewish priests' handbook, and it gives specific details as to the various offerings. It is therefore full of rich instruction as to the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ, though the word itself in Hebrews warns us that while

the sacrifices had "a shadow of good things to come," they were "not the very image of the things." Even when all are taken together, the sum of the many-sided types falls as far short of the Antitype as finite things come short of the Infinite.

The above-named work is an exposition of the first seven chapters of Leviticus, illuminating these shadows of the Old Testament by the light of the New. A new translation of the chapters is given which is of itself a valuable help to the understanding of the chapters. Another important feature is the indication of the divisions and subdivisions of the text which are not always apparent from the A.V.; for instance, the connection of vi. 1-7 with chap. v. and of vi. 24-30 with vii. 1-21.

GOSPEL BOOKLETS; by Heyman Wreford.

E. Marsom, Exeter.

These are neat gospel booklets of a suitable size for insertion in letters. The ones before us form part of a penny series, the subjects being:—The Gospel of our Salvation; The Logic of Faith; A Glorious Invitation; When is Christ Coming?

QUERIES.

IOTA.—WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN SEEING AND ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD? DO SOME SEE BUT FAIL TO ENTER? (John iii. 3—5.) Clearly, from the two passages there can be neither seeing nor entering without the new birth. So that if a person be born again he both sees and enters; and there appears to be no warrant for thinking he can do one without the other. The first word of the Lord is evidently

addressed directly to Nicodemus. The Jewish rabbi professed to "see." We know, said he, Thou art a teacher come from God. But this opinion only proved there had been no work of God in his soul, or he would have recognised Christ as the Son of God, not as a teacher only. Though the kingdom of God had come not openly to every eye, yet the eye of faith saw it in the Person of Christ.

The Lord's second word shewed that the new birth was essential to entrance into the kingdom of God. It was not a question of natural descent from Abraham, as Nicodemus might suppose. The kingdom of God consisted of those who "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13). Hence the Lord says, "Except a man be born afresh, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

IOTA.—IN WHAT SENSE SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND THE EXPRESSION "ABIDETH ON" IN JOHN III. 36? DOES IT MEAN THE SAME AS HANGETH OVER? The passage is: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The expression you inquire about hardly conveys the thought of hanging over. It states the continuous and unvarying condition in which an unbeliever remains in relation to the wrath of God—in principle now, of course, but in inevitable execution by-and-by.

IOTA.—"DESCENDING UPON THE SON OF MAN." DOES THIS IMPLY THAT HE WILL BE ON EARTH WHEN IT TAKES PLACE? (John ii. 51). The general thought is the service and homage of the angels to Him who "was made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. ii. 9). This will be specially manifest in the coming millennial day of Christ. There were angels at Mount Sinai; there will be angels at Mount Zion. But the verse should begin "Henceforth," not "Hereafter;" and so it was really true from that moment.

THE SHIELD AND THE REWARD OF FAITH.

It is necessary for the growth and advancement of the man of faith individually that his soul should be in conscious personal relationship with the Lord. A person may be called to the performance of some public service for the Lord, and it may be carried out wisely and well, and moreover honoured by the seal of the Lord's public approval. Then it is all the more needful that his heart should still lay hold for itself on the word that God has spoken, realizing the unspeakable blessedness and assurance that follows from having a word direct from Him to oneself.

Abram had acted publicly for God in the overthrow of the victorious armies that had captured among others his nephew Lot. He was enabled to recover the captives and the spoil. On his triumphal return he was met in the valley of Shaveh by Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who blessed him in the name of Jehovah, the most high God. But Abram, in the true magnanimity of faith, declined to receive anything from the hand of the king of Sodom, who subsequently offered him the whole of the goods recovered from the foe.

The occasion was undoubtedly an epoch in the life of Abram. The rout of the confederate hosts by him and his three hundred and eighteen trained servants was a proof of the strength and energy of the man's faith, while his dignified reply to

Bera, king of Sodom, sprang from his lofty trust in the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.

But in immediate succession to this notable event it would seem that Abram's soul needed to be strengthened, for we read: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. xv. 1). But then had he not so to speak just proved the truth of this very promise? Had he not pressed on to attack the victorious army with his little band, strong in the confidence that the Lord of battles was his buckler and his defence? And had he not received the reward of this faith in the destruction of the enemy and the blessing of Melchizedek, king of Salem? Assuredly so. Abram appears to have acted quite under the influence of this assuring promise which the Lord subsequently recited to him in a vision. The God Who had called him out from Ur of the Chaldees had been before him as his shield and as his reward.

The need, however, for the solemn reiteration of this word was disclosed by Abram's exclamation. There was unrest in his soul. He was uneasy as to the future. Jehovah had said, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered" (Gen. xiii. 15, 16). But years had rolled by, and Abram was still a childless man. And the depositary of promise became

full of anxiety. "Lord God, what wilt thou give me," said he, "seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" "Behold," he went on, continuing his complaint, "to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir" (Gen. xv. 2, 3). Through faith he had smitten the enemy, and pursued them unto Hobah. Through faith also he had repudiated the flattering gifts of the king of Sodom. But as he brooded over his circumstances in the quiet of eventide his faith appears to have lost grip of the living God as to what immediately concerned himself and his own household.

May we not say that the Lord saw the cloud of unbelief and doubt stealing across the patriarch's soul? And, in answer to the thought of his heart, He said, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Then his unbelieving thought was formulated into the words quoted above. But how tenderly Jehovah deals with him. He assures him that he shall have an heir. He bids him observe the starry radiance of the skies above him as an emblem of his abundant posterity. Then Abram "believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

One may meditate with much profit on the terms of this word of assurance that came to Abram—how the shield speaks of protection in present circumstances, and how the reward guarantees both immediate and future recompense for the self-denial and suffering of faith, while the subsequent history of Hebrews xi. shews how suitable the word was for the man of faith in his

strangership and pilgrimage. But it must suffice at present to ask whether it is not frequently the case with us that in the very point on which we have gained a public victory there follows a secret failure to maintain that measure of faith in the presence of the Lord? A public testimony often requires that our faith should be strong and active and valorous; but before God faith is more often called to patient waiting and endurance. But strenuous effort in spiritual matters is usually more to our taste than quiet and humble submission. Yet it is in the latter attitude that we best learn to appreciate the excellent promise—"I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

CHRIST ON HIGH FOR US.

IF we reason about ourselves, we should say, I cannot be accepted, I find evil in myself. This is just the work of the Spirit convincing of sin. The more we see of the holiness of Christ, the more we shall marvel at the sin and unbelief of our hearts; and if you have not discovered the selfishness, the impurity, the everything opposite to Christ, you know very little as yet of the holiness of Christ. But the same Spirit that reveals sin reveals to us the perfectness of the risen Saviour. The blood shed gives us rest. The more the Holy Ghost shews us the evil of our own hearts, the more are we thrown on the free grace of God, and the more we see that the free gift was of many offences unto justification.

Our salvation, our portion, is to see the Incarnate Word as Priest for us. This is the ground on which we rest. Faith sees Jesus in glory, but we are still here in trial and difficulty, and our hearts are distracted with the things around us, so that we doubt the principle of all that is working in us, and this naturally causes us to fear for our state. Here the priesthood assumes another character; not only is our High Priest standing for us as the glory of righteousness effectual on our behalf, but as exercising intercession on account of that which is *not* righteous in us, the leaven of the old nature still left in us, though we are accepted in the Beloved and dwelt in by the Holy Ghost.

As Christ *is*, so are we in this world, He standing there for us within the veil in the Holy of Holies, in the presence of the Father. This is the simple estimate of faith. But if we turn from the brightness of God to look within, how many inclinations we find that never came from the Spirit of God! How much darkness and dimness of the glory our eye rests on here! And *then* we feel the value of the priesthood of Christ. These failures reach not God; the righteous one is placed between us and God, as the bright witness of the church before God. These things never pass through Him. He has paid the debt for us, and now presents our names, as perfected, to God on the breast-plate.

Our failures only reach (so to speak) the ear of Jesus: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." Our own unhindered enjoy-

ment and peace, then, is beholding ourselves in Him. The Holy Ghost sent down is the witness of all that Jesus is doing to keep up our communion. It is not that Christ is doing it on high and we are in the *dark*, but the Spirit is sent to reveal it to us. He takes of the things of Jesus and shews them unto us. All the circumstances in which man has ever been placed have only been the exhibition of failures from the very outset. But there is *One* who *never failed* in any circumstances, and this *One* is presented to faith in our Lord.

For this reason our eye is directed to Him entirely, and we find blessed comfort and rest in looking to Him under every circumstance as the wisdom of God, the glory of God, the strength of our souls. He is our meeting-place of union and communion with God; and in all His perfectness we can see love to us because it is all *for us*. All that Jesus did was love in the fulness of power. He was never wearied in the exercise of love. Inviting loving-kindness is the character written on all that Jesus did.

J. N. D.

ON EPHESIANS I. 3.

WE are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Not only so, but we are to come down in the power of those blessings and abound *here* in every good word and work. It is in heavenly places these blessings are, and we must *sit there* if we would enjoy them.

J. L. H.

THE CHRISTIAN MARINER.*

YES, billow after billow—see they come
 Faster and rougher, as his little boat
 Nears evermore the haven. Oftentimes
 It seems to sink and fall adown the wave,
 As if borne backward by the struggling tide ;
 Yet mounting billow after billow, wave
 On wave o'erriding, tempest-tossed, and shattered,
 Still, still it nears the haven evermore.
 “Poor mariner ! art not thou sadly weary ?”
 Dear brother, rest is sweeter after toil.
 “Grows not thine eye confused and dim with sight,
 Of nothing but the wintry waters ?” True ;
 But then my pole-star, constant and serene,
 Above the changing waters, changes not.
 “But what if clouds, as often, veil the sky ?”
 Oh, then an unseen hand hath ever ta'en
 The rudder from my feeble hands the while ;
 And I cling to it. “Answer me once more,
 Mariner ; what thinkest thou when the waters beat
 Thy frail boat backward from the longed-for
 harbour ?”
 Oh, brother, though innumerable waves
 Still seem to rise betwixt me and my home,
I know that they are numbered ; not one less
 Should bear me homeward, if I had my will ;
 For One Who knows what tempests are to weather,
 O'er Whom there broke the wildest billows once,
He bids these waters swell. In His good time
 The *last* rough wave shall bear me on its bosom
 Into the haven of eternal peace.
 No billows after ! They are numbered, brother.
 “Oh, gentle mariner, steer on, steer on ;
 My tears still flow for thee ; but they are tears
 In which faith strives with grief, and overcomes.”

Anon.

* “So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.”

Psalm cvii. 30.

B

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

HERE we have a letter of marked distinctiveness, placed after the pastoral Epistles though clearly written about the time when the great communications were made to the saints in Philippi, Ephesus, and Colosse. Its occasion was the return of Onesimus, a runaway slave, now a Christian brother, to his master Philemon; which calls out by the Spirit the most admirable application of grace and truth in Christ. It stands in full contrast with law, and exemplifies the gospel in its practical power and effect, turning a worthless man's wrong into the exercise of divine affections in consonance with redemption, the holy fellowship of the faithful, and the deep and delicate proprieties withal of their social relations.

"Paul, prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timotheus the brother, to Philemon the beloved and our fellow-workman, and to the sister Apphia, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the assembly at thy house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 1—3). Each word and the entire scope alike express grace, not official authority. It is as Christ's prisoner Paul introduces himself, as later on he appeals. Timothy figures simply as "the brother." Philemon is addressed as "the beloved" according to his known character (ver. 1), and honoured as a fellow-labourer in the Lord's work. And what is most unusual, his wife is associated

in the address, not "the beloved" as in the A.V. and the later copies, but "the sister" as in the ancient and best MSS. That she should be addressed was most fitting in the circumstances, and the mode is no less becoming. Next is Archippus, designated as "fellow-soldier" in sharing the conflicts of the truth, and lastly the church at Philemon's, whom the apostle includes in the address to fill up the communion his heart desired, with the usual benediction.

From verse 4 he lays the ground for his appeal with thanksgiving. "I thank my God, always making mention of thee at my prayers, hearing of thy love and the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and unto all the saints, so that thy fellowship in the faith may become effective in acknowledgment of every good that is in us Christward. For I had [the true reading] much joy and encouragement over thy love, because the bowels of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother." He puts forward Philemon's love, but in no way omits to add his faith, so that his sharing in the faith might work every good, "not in you," which though true is commonplace and feeble, but "in us" according to the best authorities, that is, in other Christians from Paul to Onesimus as regards Christ, owning his joy and cheer in what Philemon had been shewn to be in refreshing the affections of the saints.

Then in the body of his letter (8—20) he tenderly presses his suit. "Wherefore, having much boldness in Christ to enjoin on thee what is fitting, for love's sake I rather exhort, being such

a one as Paul, aged and now too prisoner of Jesus Christ, I exhort thee for my child whom I begot in the bonds, Onesimus, that was once of no use to thee, but now to thee and me of good use, whom I sent back himself to thee,* that is, mine own bowels; whom I would have kept with me, that for thee he might minister to me in the bonds of the gospel. But apart from thy mind I wished to do nothing, that thy good might not be as of necessity but of willingness. For perhaps for this reason he was parted for a time, that thou mayest have him back for ever, no longer as a bondman, but above a bondman, a brother beloved, specially by me, but how much more by thee, both in flesh and in the Lord. If then thou holdest me as partner, receive him as me; but if aught he wronged thee or oweth, put this to mine account. *I* Paul write with mine own hand, I will repay: that I say not to thee that thou owest me besides even thyself. *Yea*, brother, I would have profit of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in Christ. Being confident of thine obedience I write to thee, knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say."

"But withal prepare me also a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted to you. Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workmen. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit."

The apostle in no way denies or forgets his position, but he prefers to exhort for love's sake,

* The common text here reads, "Thou therefore [receive] him," &c.

on one side as Paul the aged and now also prisoner of Christ, on the other for his child begotten in bonds, Onesimus. Grant that he was once a useless slave to Philemon, was he not now of good use to both Philemon and Paul, and sent back to his master himself, as it were Paul's very heart, though he would have kept him with himself to do him service on Philemon's behalf in the bonds of the gospel? Only apart from Philemon's mind Paul wished to do nothing, that his good might be of free will, not of constraint. And how beautiful the turn that grace gives! "Perhaps for this reason he was parted for a time, that thou mayest have him back for ever, no longer as a bondman, but above a bondman, a brother beloved, specially by me, but how much more by thee, both in flesh and in the Lord." So simply is it urged in all its power that one can but repeat rather than explain. Then follows the point of fellowship. "If then thou holdest me a partner, receive him as me; but if aught he wronged thee or oweth, put this to mine account. *I* Paul write with mine own hand, I will repay: that I say not to thee, that thou owest me besides even thyself." For it would seem that Philemon too was indebted to the apostle for receiving the truth. "Yea, brother, I would have profit of thee in the Lord," he says, referring to the name of Onesimus, "refresh my bowels in Christ"; would he refuse to Paul what he had done hitherto to the saints in general, as in verse 7, "Being confident of thine obedience I write to thee, knowing that thou wilt do evenmore than I say"? Who can doubt that

Philemon would receive Onesimus lovingly and set him free to the joy of all? But it is on no ground of human rights, or human benevolence, but shewing him "the kindness of God," the grace of Christ, the fellowship of the faith. It is the counterpart of the riband of blue on the fringe of the garment, the heavenly ornament in our character on earth, grace governing in our relationships here below, as it reigns in God's dealings with us for eternity.

W.K.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST.

ROMANS VI.

Next as to the manner. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." I do not get a half Christ. If He has died, and our sins are put away, then also He is risen, and our place is in Him as so risen. (For justification is not in this part of the Epistle. Justification is not presented as His having put away sin, but that He, in His person is the accepted one; [raised again for our justification] and we in Him). "Our old man is crucified with Him, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Serve sin! He is talking in the language of a country where they employ slaves; talking after the manner of men. You are servants now of righteousness, and yet not servants, for indeed it is liberty. The idea is that

of one person who is at the will of another. He was the slave of sin. It is the same thing to be under the law and to be under sin (see John viii.). "The servant abideth not in the house for ever." If you are under law you cannot abide for ever—you are only servants—you may be turned out, or (as told of slaves) killed if you do not serve well. But if you are a son you are a part of the household, you are free and you abide for ever.

Now you cannot charge a dead man with anything. His master cannot bring a dead man under guilt. You cannot mortify till you have somebody to mortify. The life to which guilt could be charged has gone out of existence. We are dead. How can I talk so? Christ is dead, and we are dead in Him. "Now he that is dead is freed from sin." Ah! but you say it is not done with. Are you wiser than God? He says that it is done with in Christ. It was all attached to Christ, laid on Christ, for us by grace, and He has died, and there is an utter end of it. For all that I see in myself, evil principles, and an evil nature, that is what He died for. It is done with in Christ. And now I am to mortify all that savours of it. Therefore "reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,"—reckon—that is the word—and there is liberty—liberty *from* sin, and not *to* sin.

Liberty is thus connected by the apostle with death and resurrection: "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," "If we be planted together in the

likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

What Christ have you a part of? A dead, or a risen, Christ? Is Christ divided? We do not get a half Christ. If we die with Him, we also rise—"that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life." There is our walk. And see the standard of that walk—the measure that is set before us—"the glory of the Father."

I stop here to examine this wonderful expression; for whatever shows us the excellency of Christ gives us power. What I see is this, that there is not a single thing that makes the Father glorious that was not concerned in the raising of Christ from the dead. Take divine power—it is God that raiseth the dead. Take death as the ruin of man—out of it God raises Him. Take the love of the Father, it is in special exercise. Does ever the love of the Father appear so drawn out as because of the death of Christ? Never. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." A new motive is added, as it were, for the Father to love His Son. But, besides, it was the Father's Son Who thus lay under the power of death, and, therefore, He cannot be left there. For His glory's sake, the Father would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. Take righteousness—the Father's righteousness was magnified. "I have glorified thee on the earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self." The Father having been indebted, so to speak, to the Son for

having been glorified on the earth, had to see to it that He should now obtain His reward. Thus, everything that constitutes the Father's glory was at work in raising up Jesus to His own right hand. There would have been a gap in heaven, a fearful gap, if Christ had not been raised. But it was not possible that He should lie under the power of death.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He does not say *realize*, though that be all right in its place; but, *reckon* yourselves to be dead, since Christ is so, in the power of this risen life. It is here I get this life—even in Christ risen. I get my soul elevated into the apprehension of the Father's glory, and character, and relationship to Christ, in seeing every divine perfection displayed in the raising of Christ, and being made partaker in Him of the life in the power of which He is raised.

How does this associate me with it? Why was He there in death? He was there for my sins, and this connects this risen life with my everyday affections. It is not mental power or penetration that enters into it. It is the soul in the power of the Holy Ghost entering into the excellency of the person of Jesus—seeing that He was such a sort of person as could not be holden of death, and the glory of the Father engaged in His resurrection. Oh, when we know the person of Christ, then we know that He could not be holden of death. It was to the knowledge of this that the Lord led the woman of Samaria. He first deals with her con-

science, "Go, call thy husband;" and then after telling her "all that ever she did," He leads her on till He can say, "I that speak unto thee am he." So that the person of the Lord Jesus fills her heart and soul.

It is when God has made the soul to apprehend, through the power of the Spirit, that it is a dead Christ Who is raised that we get the power of life. I enter into union with Himself as risen, but as once dead for my sins, and come, by grace, into the condition I was in; raised up out of it by the glory of the Father. How near it brings the Lord to us. How could you or I rise up to heaven to see the Father's glory? But here I see the Father's glory enter into the place where Christ was dead for my sins. He has been concerned for me—exercised for me. And do not suppose, for a moment, that it is mental wisdom that gets to this. It is knowing that you are such a sort of sinner as that Christ was in the grave for your sins. First, conscience is reached by the power of the Spirit of God, then, the whole issue of its conflicts is seen in what takes place in His person wholly under the burden of our sins.

We see that all the power and glory of the Father was concerned in raising Him up, and the heart follows Him up there.

The great question is, how can we get rid of sin in our nature? We must kill it. We must put ourselves to death. How can I do that in that nature itself? I must get another life before I can kill the one I have,—a new life, before I can begin to crucify the old, otherwise, I put to death

the only life I have, but I get this new life, and so I can mortify what is of the old. It is my *members*, too, that I mortify—not me. I, the old I, has died in Christ's death, as it is written, "I am crucified with Christ," but, it is added, "nevertheless I live;" the new life is *me* now. I live. I have a new life, though the old one was put to death, and I can now afford to exterminate all that belongs to the old.

I make two remarks. While fruits are surely produced in me, the grand doctrine of Christianity is, that I am saved by a mediator. If I am to be saved by myself, all is gone all is lost. Therefore the whole doctrine of salvation is this—there is a daysman. As to myself, as Job says, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." But there is a daysman. One who can lay His hand upon both. And this daysman is Christ. He is my life, and of course I bring forth fruit; and I am made the righteousness of God in Him.

Still you say I find sin alive, nevertheless. But let me ask you, Is Christ all this for the sins that you have, or for the sins that you have not? Of course for those you have—those you find out. Those are the sins for which Christ died. The jealousy is all good, but with the jealousy remember the grace which has put them all away.

If we are dead we also live. I am brought, through connexion with Christ, into a new state of existence, in which nothing can come against me—sin, Satan, nor death. There is not a thing which could reach me as a sinner into which Christ has

not gone for me, and He has got out of it all. We are set in quite a new place, like Israel the other side of the Red Sea.

He died unto sin once. If He had shrunk from going through all that weighed down upon me as a sinner, I should not have escaped—I should have no liberty. “But He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” He was put under obedience to the uttermost. He was put through everything to see if unwillingness to obey could be found (and that is sin), and it could not. Therefore, in this death, there is not only expiation, but the moral perfection of the Redeemer. Christ never asked any other cup to be put away; but that cup He could not wish to drink. It was suffering for sin—the hiding of God’s face. So in the garden, He chose rather to have God’s face hidden than fail to obey. Now He lives beyond it all. Now mark, what is your position? You are dead, are you not? “Dead, indeed,” but yet alive. There we get the proper Christian position. It is not, “if you are not this you will not get the value of the blood,” but you *must be* this because Christ is. I do not exhort one who is not my child to live like my child.

“Likewise, reckon ye yourselves,” &c. I get the position and the consequence. I am to reckon that I am dead. This is faith. It does not say “experience,” but reckon, and the consequence will come. By grace I have the title to reckon myself in like manner to be risen, then I live to God. I now get the justified position of living for God before the world, as before I got the con-

demned position of the sinful life of Adam. He does not say, yield yourselves to morality, but yield yourselves unto God. Whatever comes from God goes to God. (I hate myself when I find myself doing a good thing, if it is not done to God. Alas! I find it. And in speaking of the best thing there may be the worst sin). Now I yield myself to God. One of the first things I saw in the Gospels was, that Jesus never did anything for Himself. He had not time to sleep. Prayer occupied His night, or He rested in peace in the tossed ship. He is there in obedience, not merely in the things commanded, but because they were commanded. Oh, what liberty! If you are a Christian you know what it is to be a slayer of sin and self, and that is the most blessed thing you can know. I have a right to have done with myself.

Extracted.

TO-MORROW.

THE anxiety that dreads an evil thing on the morrow is nothing but unbelief. When the morrow comes the evil may not be there; if it comes God will be there. He may allow us to taste what it is to indulge our own wills, but if our souls are subject to Him how often the dreaded evil never appears. When the heart bows to the will of God about some sorrow that we dread, how often the sorrow is taken away, and the Lord meets us with unexpected kindness and goodness. He is able to make even the sorrow to be all blessing. Whatever be His will, it is good. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

TERRY M'GOWAN'S CONVERSION.

TERRY M'GOWAN, the cock-fighter, lived near Maguire's Bridge; and one market-day, making for the cock-pit, he entered the town with a game-cock under his swallow-tailed coat. On turning a corner he found two men* before him on horse-back with black caps. They were making the street resound with the accents of his mother-tongue.

Terry stood and listened eyes and all. They talked of the great and terrible day, when sin shall be all uncovered, and the righteous shall shine like the sun at the Lord's right hand. Then they called loudly on every sinner there to lose no time, but surrender at once to the Lord Jesus Christ before it was too late. Terry knew not what a finger had touched him. The cockpit had gone clean out of his mind, and he thought that the judgment day was fast coming. He wanted to lift up both hands and call upon God, and the one which had been keeping guard under his coat-tail forgot its charge. The two hands went up together to present the publican's prayer, and the game-cock was gone.

Terry prayed and wept, and cried aloud again and again, entreating for that mercy which he heard God would grant, and for the sake of that Jesus, Who, he knew, died for men. There, upon the street, He, Whose mercy endureth for ever, heard the cry of poor Terry, and blessed his soul. A peace and gladness, such as before that moment

* The Irish preachers, Gideon Ouseley and Charles Graham.

he never knew, were shed abroad in his heart, and his spirit began to rejoice in God his Saviour.

Home he went bounding to tell wife and children the strange way in which he had been made a winner that day. They heard, but did not understand. He made them all go down upon their knees to give thanks to God for the deliverance He had granted to him. His wife told one of the children to go to the house of a neighbour and beg them to hasten away for the priest, because Terry had come home from the market out of his mind. In the poor woman's idea, the duty of the priest in this case would be to charm away the madness; or, if he owned that he could not do that, to advise what must be done with the madman.

When the priest arrived, he inquired what was the matter.

"Never better in my life," said Terry.

"Nonsense," replied his reverence; but he soon saw further into the case than the poor wife had done. "Did you hear the Blackcaps?"

"I did, thank God."

"So I thought. Those fellows would turn the world mad. Well now, Terry, just mind your own business, and go to your duty next Sunday."

"I will, if your reverence will do one thing for me."

"What is that, Terry?"

"It is to come with me to Maguire's Bridge, to get the Lord to *undo* what He did for me there this day."

"What did He do for you?"

"He said to me there, 'Terry M'Gowan, your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.'"

This was more than the priest could stand. It was as if his business had been taken out of his hands and claimed for a higher tribunal.

"I give you up as a lost case," he said to Terry, and took his leave.

Thus left to his new-found way, Terry went on, led of the Lord, from strength to strength. After a while he began to go about holding prayer meetings; and plain man as he was, he was made a blessing to many.—*Extracted.*

ON DEUTERONOMY VII. 2—II.

LET us take our stand in redemption. Why? Because God loved us. Whatever we may see or feel in ourselves to the contrary (being believers) we *are* redeemed, and He does love us. Do you think God did not know what the creatures were on whom He set His love? Do you think His love can be more changeable than Himself? If God chooses to love, who or what can hinder or make Him change? He *is God*, and *will be God* unto us—and He is faithful.

When there is growth in grace it is just our learning His faithfulness, and it is shewn out in contrast with, and drawn out by, our unfaithfulness.

His dealings with us are according to what He is, not what we are. He giveth no account of any of His matters. He loved us because He would love us. May we daily learn more of God's character as it is drawn out by our necessities.

J. L. H.

INFIDELITY AND SUPERSTITION.

THERE are two spirits, be it never forgotten, struggling for mastery in the world now: one is that of infidelity, the other that of superstition. Of course, the spirit of superstition is what triumphs in Romanism. But we must also remember that, although these powers be so opposed in appearance, there is between them a real link of connexion and of kindred source under the surface. For in sober truth superstition is as really infidel in the sight of God as scepticism. The only difference is that scepticism is the infidelity of the mind, while superstition is that of the imagination. They are both veils which shut out and deny the truth of God, as they both have their spring in a real ignorance of the true God, substituting what is of the first man for the Second. One of them in a reverent tone and with appearances of devotion which outdo the truth which is according to godliness, bows down even to lick the dust of the earth, or anything else that will abase man before his earthly priest as the visible emblem of God; for this is the essence of the system. It is man abased, not before God but before man. The sin of the enemy is evident. Every mind taught of the Holy Spirit in this can see without hesitation that God has not His place; and that, consequently, infidelity is the real root of Popery no less than of open, profane scepticism.

Hence they both work so as to help each other on; because the grossness of superstition provokes and produces infidelity as a reaction, whilst

the barren misery and desolation of infidelity exposes souls to the high claims of superstition to meet the cravings of the natural heart, where God is unknown and self is unjudged. Thus scepticism leads persons indirectly to superstition. The cold blank of infidelity, the hopeless absence of truth, its negative character, in short, causes the heart to yearn for something positive, something to lean on; and if they have not God and His word to believe, by an abuse of His name they have man at any rate to confess to. Thus to regard man is superstition; but it is evident that the deliverance from it is not giving up scripture, but bowing to God instead of man. W. K.

WAITING FOR THE SON.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I was writing the other evening, when somebody—or something—said to me (it is really no matter whether it was a body or a thing, but it said something inaudibly): “During the whole of this year you have not written a single line to those young believers on the coming of the Lord.”

“Nonsense, I must have done,” I said, somewhat taken aback, however, especially as I had just been feeling rather at a loss for a subject for the next letter.

“At least,” I went on, as there was no more said, and I endeavoured in vain to recollect when I had written anything upon it, “the Editor must have done so, or one of the contributors.”

The body or thing, however, did not vouchsafe a reply nor repeat the charge; still, I felt it was not disposed of. And so I got down the numbers for 1900, and sure enough, from January to October, nothing really upon the subject, beyond the merest allusion, had been inserted. I felt, therefore, that the timely hint of this little voice, if I may so call it, should not be neglected. And the heading to this letter is the outcome.

It is a sure thing, my young friends, that we all should be waiting for the Son of God from heaven. Such a position is continually inculcated in the New Testament. The attitude of expectation should be as habitual with us as that of prayer, or the giving of thanks. Is it so with you?

You must not raise the plea that you are too young to understand such things. We find that in the early days those who had been converted but a short while were commended by the apostle Paul for the very pronounced manner in which they made it clear to all that they were awaiting the Lord's return. It was so that the apostle spoke of the Thessalonian converts, to whom he wrote shortly after his visit to their city. They received the word of the preaching, not as the word of men but as the word of God. Hence it wrought effectually in them, and the change was so remarkable that the report of their faith Godward was spread abroad everywhere. It was unnecessary for the apostle himself to say what had been done in Thessalonica, since it was noised throughout the two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, that these persons had "turned to God

from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 5—10).

Hence, you see, there was that in the life and testimony of these young saints that testified not only to their open renunciation of their heathen idols and their loving obedience to the word and will of God, but also to their momentary expectancy of the return of Jesus, Who was raised from the dead and Who had delivered them from all fear of coming wrath.

"Oh, but then," you say, "there is so much to learn as to the coming of the Lord. It seems such a difficult subject. I am sure it is quite beyond me. Perhaps when I get older I shall understand about the abomination of desolation, and all the beasts, and the king of the north and the king of the south, and Babylon, and Armageddon. But I must confess I do not know much about them yet."

Now I feel sure that the Thessalonian converts knew very little indeed, if anything at all, on these topics; and yet they were waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. In their cases, it was certainly no question of advanced spiritual intelligence, for we find that the apostle had a good deal further to teach them as to the subject in both of his Epistles. But for all that they were definitely expecting the Lord to come again from heaven.

The truth is that the hope of the Lord's return for His saints is in no way connected with prophecy, but rests just simply on the Lord's own

words before He left the world. He said, as you know, "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). Is not this sufficient to assure us that He really is coming back again? The matter becomes so beautifully simple, if we look at the hope as resting solely on the Lord's promise. And for this reason the youngest believer can be looking day by day for the fulfilment of His word. It was so in Thessalonica. The apostle made known the promise of the Lord Jesus. The converts believed his testimony, and consequently they set themselves to expect the Saviour at any moment without further warning from Him.

Of course, many questions will arise, as they did arise with the very persons of whom we are speaking; and these points are fully dealt with. But whatever their value and importance in their places, they are not necessary to know before you begin to wait for Christ. And that is just all that is before me now.

I am, Yours faithfully,

"YOD."

P.S.—I only wish, in connection with the subject, to quote the lines of the following fine and familiar hymn:

The night is far spent, and the day is at hand
 No sign to be looked for; the Star's in the sky;
 Rejoice then, ye saints, 'tis your Lord's own command;
 Rejoice for the coming of Jesus draws nigh.

What a day will that be when the Saviour appears !

How welcome to those who have shared in His cross ;
A crown incorruptible then will be theirs,
A rich compensation for suffering and loss.

What is loss in this world, when compared to that day ;
To the glory that then will from heaven be revealed ?
The Saviour is coming, His people may say :
The Lord whom we look for, our sun and our shield.

Oh, pardon us, Lord, that our love to Thy name
Is so faint, with so much our affections to move !
Our coldness might fill us with grief and with shame,
So much to be loved, and so little to love.

Oh, kindle within us a holy desire,
Like that which was found in Thy people of old,
Who tasted Thy love, and whose hearts were on fire,
While they waited in patience Thy face to behold.

QUERY.

NEMO.—IF TIMOTHY AND TITUS MIGHT ORDAIN ELDERS, WHY NOT OTHERS SUBSEQUENT TO THE APOSTLES' DAY?—The cases of Timothy and Titus ordaining or appointing elders or bishops are quite unique. Ordinarily it was an apostolic function (Acts xiv. 28). In the special wisdom given alone to them for the planting of Christian assemblies, they chose suitable persons to be over the saints in the Lord, usually several in each assembly (Acts xv. 2 ; xx. 17). From prison Paul wrote to these two servants, instructing them as to the necessary qualities of bishops and deacons. The letters constituted a written apostolic authority on which Timothy and Titus were to act. But as this warrant was issued to them personally, no one else can claim a similar right.

THE LORD OUR SANCTUARY.

ISAIAH prophesied before the ten tribes were carried away captive from the land of Israel. He solemnly denounces the iniquities of the people, and warns of the woes that should fall upon them because of the anger of Jehovah which was kindled against them. He would bring upon them the king of Assyria in "all his glory," and great should be the havoc among that guilty nation which had so grievously departed from the ways of the Lord.

But amid the dark prophecies of impending judgement there are many choice assurances for such as abide faithful to Jehovah and His word in spite of the surrounding declension. There would be ruin and devastation all around, but the prophet is bidden to counsel the little remnant not to lose heart nor to be terrified: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary" (Isa. viii. 13, 14). Oh, what a sweet word of encouragement and solace! Their land might be full of the confusion and the desolation caused by the ravaging armies of the Assyrian, yet their hearts should still be stout. Let Jehovah of hosts Himself be sanctified before their eyes. Let His name be duly honoured and feared. Then the Lord Himself would become their *sanctuary*. Many of the glorious evidences of divine power and blessing, such as were so abundant in Solomon's day, would have certainly departed. But what if the Lord were their sanctuary?

How the very word breathes of peace whatever turmoil may be outside, of order though confusion reign everywhere else, of security though Assyria and Babylon seem to trample under foot the chosen of the Lord. Everything else might be lost, but if Jehovah would be their sanctuary they would thereby be compensated for the loss of all things.

We find a very similar assurance given by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel. He prophesied in the land of the Chaldeans, and in his visions he saw the glory of Jehovah depart from Zion, the city of the Lord. Referring to those of the ten tribes "dispersed among the Gentiles," he says, "Thus saith the Lord God, Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come" (Ezek. xi. 16). What a comfort in a day of scattering to know that the Lord still makes Himself the resource and joy and centre of all such as look only to Him.

In the New Testament we see those in Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 7—13) answering to this promised display of the Lord's faithful love. They are in the last days; they are opposed by the synagogue of Satan; they have little strength. But they value Christ, and what is Christ's, above all beside. They keep His word, because it is His. They do not deny His name, because it is His name, the holy and the true. And this faithfulness and this devotion on their part is pleasing in the eyes of the Lord of the churches. When He

said, I will be your sanctuary, they reply, Yea, Lord, Thou shalt be our sanctuary. It is such a response to His faithful promise as He loves.

And the reward to the overcomer is in accordance with the prevailing characteristic of his devotion. "To him that hath shall be given." Did he find the Lord his sanctuary amid the ruins of the church on earth? The answer of the righteous Lord is: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

THE FATHER'S OWN LOVE.

"THE Father Himself loveth you" (John xvi. 27). This is a truth of which the Lord evidently deemed it necessary to remind His disciples; a truth, too, that we are sometimes in danger of forgetting. That the Lord Jesus loves those who trust in Him is the blessed knowledge of all who own Him as their Saviour. But many who are clear as to this are slow to enter into the equally blessed truth of the Father's love. Hence, even in worship, such are apt to limit their direct address to the Son. There seems, too, to be forgetfulness sometimes that the Father seeks worshippers; due, perhaps, to the failure to realise the Father's love. Perhaps this is also why good hymns addressed to

God the Father are comparatively rare. Most essential, of course, that the Son should be worshipped, for He, equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is God. Nay, more, we never honour the Father more than when we honour His only-begotten Son. This is indisputable. But the truth about Christ in no way clashes with the equally important truth about the Father. The real difficulty is the one-sidedness that is natural to us as creatures, and from which believers are not exempt. Hence the manifold and reiterated injunctions on one topic or another found in the New Testament, whether uttered by our Lord Himself or by His apostles.

Now it would be interesting and profitable to consider this truth of the Father's love—in connection with the context in which it is set—with the gracious reason which the Lord assigns for it, with the new order that He instituted as to prayer, as also with the solemn and pathetic occasion on which these important words fell from Christ's lips. It is all so full and so suggestive that one can hardly fail to be conscious both of the vastness of the revelation and one's own incompetency to touch upon it in any adequate way. We can, however, listen to the Saviour's words, so marvellous and so simple; we can repeat them and weigh them till they sink into the heart, and we begin to realise something (very little indeed, even with the most spiritually thoughtful) of their profound and gracious meaning.

"The Father Himself"—we know how often the word "Himself" is found in relation to our

Lord—"Jesus Himself;" "I Myself;" &c., &c., and how the fulness of His personality is thus impressed upon us. But here we have the emphatic pronoun in conjunction with the Father, doubtless to shew the amazing grace of Almighty God. The Son (Who, let us not forget, is equally God with the Father—there can be no grades in Godhead) has stooped to our low estate, and, being men, it is easier for us to realise the love of Him, Who "drew us with cords of a man," the *God-man*; the

"Light of men, that left the skies,
Light that look'd through human eyes."

But the Father, He never became flesh. Hence the need of Christ's declaration. And so He, Who came to declare the Father's name, Who, in the comprehensive prayer given before to His disciples, had put the hallowing of that name before any petition, He now assures them of His Father's most certain love.

Thus does scripture present the truth in its fulness. On the one hand it lends no support to the theories of those who affect to rest merely in vague generalities about a fatherly Creator (most true in its place), while, on the other, it enjoins upon believers not to forget that they are all the *children* of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

R. B.

"Oh, deeper than our longing and our love,
More wondrous than our bliss,
His love that waited while the ages rolled
To welcome us as His!"

SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE distinctive character of this Epistle is at least as plain and as important as that of any other. It is expressly anonymous; for he who wrote it, though himself an apostle, did so as a teacher, resting its authority on the Old Testament, supplemented by the Son of God come, and deigning to be Apostle in the highest sense and rank. This gives a divine and heavenly character to His communications, which were to Israel—represented now by a believing remnant—and sanctified for glory with Him on high, till the new age arrive, when the then remnant shall become a strong nation, and the new covenant formally and fully comes into force with the two houses of Israel as such. Then the Lord Jesus, Who was Apostle and Prophet on earth, and is the Great Priest in the heavens and above them, shall reign as King not only in Zion but over all the habitable earth. It may be observed that even this Epistle, like the rest, says nothing of that royal position so amply revealed in the Old Testament prophets. It dwells on the present and intermediate place of Christ above, and so on the heavenly calling of the saints.

Chapter i. opens with His personal glory as Son of God, abundantly attested by the Psalms and the Prophets; as chapter ii. 5 and onward follows with His glory as Son of Man, according to Psalm viii., in answer to His work of redemption, qualifying Him to be a merciful and faithful

High Priest as none else could be. Hence in chapter iii. the believers, addressed as holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, thus distinguished from the earthly calling of the chosen nation, are exhorted to consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, before Whose worth, dignity, and power, Moses and Aaron were but shadows. The saints, like Israel, are passing through a wilderness of temptation and danger. Profession may be only profession, and many may not only slip but fall and perish. Living dependence on God is essential; and the beginning of confidence to be held fast firmly unto the end. Unbelief is the great snare. Chapter iv. pursues this: we, who have believed, are not in God's rest of glory but going on to it. Adam did not enter, though God sanctified the sabbath as its sign; Joshua did not lead into it, but only into a Canaan that typified it; for long after David spoke of it as still future. Meanwhile, we have to fear even seeming to come short; and we need to give diligence, for the time still calls for this. The rest remains. And God has provided two invaluable means to bring us through: His word (answering to the apostleship), and Jesus the Son of God, a great High Priest before God as He went through the heavens; so that we may approach the throne of grace with boldness, that we may receive mercy and find grace for seasonable help.

In chapter v. the Aaronic priesthood is compared to shew the incontestable superiority of Christ's. He Who had commanded learnt obedience, not only as man, but in suffering beyond

all. Perfected through death and resurrection, He is addressed or saluted of God as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. The danger for the saints here is of remaining babes, instead of growing to full age (perfection) by receiving the solid food of Christ. Chapter vi. solemnly warns against not pressing on to this status of majority, lest, even after great privileges were known, the mere elements* expose to falling away and irretrievable ruin. But the writer was persuaded better things of those who had shewn life in love, as he desired for them full assurance of hope, for God had laid indefectible ground for strong consolation. Chapter vii. expands the surpassing excellence of Christ's office as Melchizedek priest, not in exercise (set forth as Aaronic), as it will be, but in its order; for He answers fully and now to what His prototype was in figure, His being one sole intransmissible priesthood.

Chapter viii. gives a summary of the aforesaid, and adds the greater excellency of Christ's ministry as Mediator of a covenant better than the Mosaic; not man's failing to obey, but God's effectual work in grace, the very title of "new" writing death on the old. In the earlier verses of chapter ix. is shewn that under the law the way into the holies was not yet manifested: man could not go in, as God had not come out. Christ has verified both. In Him God came; in Him man is gone in. How transcendent is the

* It is an unhappy rendering to say "first principles;" for these we never "leave." It is really "the word of the beginning of Christ," what was known before His death, resurrection, and ascension.

Christian's blessedness who reaps the fruit of both by His sacrifice and priesthood! In this chapter the fact of a testator and "testament" is turned to good account (verses 16, 17); everywhere else it is "covenant," as the context proves. Christianity is not man tested, but God Who has wrought for His own glory in saving grace toward man. Chapter x. applies the blessing fully to those who believe, and this on the basis of Christ's one perfecting sacrifice. Hence He sat down in perpetuity at God's right hand, as He has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified. Why wonder? It is God's will, Christ's work, and the Holy Spirit's witness. The believers, with whom the inspired writer joins himself, are exhorted to act now on these precious privileges in verses 19—25, and warned of the peril of apostasy in slighting or abusing Christ's sacrifice by sinning wilfully, as they were in chapter vi. of not going on to full growth. But they are again reminded of better things, and told not to cast away their confidence, though they had need of endurance. It is not all the truth that the unjust are justified by faith (Rom. iv. 5); for "the just shall *live* by faith."

Hence in chapter xi. we have the roll of faith differently but invariably displayed in God's noble army of confessors long before Israel, of whom the Lord Jesus is the leader and completer (chapter xii. 2). As to chastening, they were neither to despise it nor to faint under it. The danger here is failing from, or lacking, the grace of God, *i.e.*, losing confidence, through unbelief of His love; and Esau's profanity stands as a beacon. Then

we have a grand contrast of what Israel came to at Sinai, with our having come by faith to the entire scene of blessing flowing out of Christ and His redemption: from Zion the highest point of royal grace on earth, up to heavenly glory, and God Himself, and then coming down to the spirits of just men made perfect (the Old Testament saints), and to Jesus with fullest mercy and joy for the earth as Mediator of a covenant that is not only "new" but as "fresh" as ever. This changes even a warning into a promise to faith. But let us have grace by which to serve God acceptably with reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire.

Chapter xiii. closes the Epistle with urging that brotherly affection abide, hospitality, and kindness to sufferers; that marriage be honourable in all, or every way, and conduct be free from love of money. Next, departed guides are to be remembered; but if they were gone, Jesus is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Hence they were to be firm against various and strange doctrines. Grace confirms, not meats which profit no devotees even. Jesus that suffered without the gate, Whose blood avails within the holiest, is the key of the Christian position. "Therefore let us go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." The middle place, beloved of Judaizers and philosophers, is the place of apostate Jews, and now of effete Christendom. "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually;" yet sacrifices in doing good have also their real place. Next, living guides are to

be obeyed. This is their use, to lead others who might not so readily see the path of Christ. They shall give account, not of the souls led but of how they led them. No one valued the prayer of saints more than he who here asks it, after his first imprisonment and before the second. With Timothy set at liberty he hoped to see them again. How suited is his prayer in verses 20, 21, not only to them, and the writer, but to this Epistle! It seems to be beyond just question what Peter in his Second Epistle refers to (iii. 15), as written by Paul to Christian Jews, to whom Peter addressed both of his (1 Peter i. 1, and 2 Peter iii. 1).

W. K.

AN EAR TO HEAR.

I WOULD note what a great thing it is to have an ear to hear. It was the grand mark of distinction between the corrupt mass of Israel and the true followers of Jesus Christ (John x. 26, 27). And in the Apocalypse (Rev. ii. and iii.) we are shewn that it is still the distinguishing feature between the dead and the living.

Surely the hearing ear is the gift of God. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. xiii. 11). But, like every other gift, we must prize it if we would enjoy it. "Unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark iv. 24). Now the subtlety of Satan is seen in this, that he seeks in every way possible to steal the ear from God. He well knows that if he can but get

our ear, he has access to the heart ; that if we but enter into temptation, we have no power to resist it. Moreover, we are no match for his wiles. Eve listened, and she was undone. Now it is not merely positive error that is seductive : everything that is not Christ, everything that is not linked with Christ, everything into which I enter without Christ, tends to draw away from Him. If I listen, without Him, I have no power to judge nor to exclude the lying vanity which would draw me away. If I open my ear to what is not of God, His word will lose its place and power, and I shall judge by the sight of my eyes and the hearing of my ears. "When the woman [Eve] *saw* that the tree was good for food," &c. (Gen. iii. 6), the word of God lost its hold over her heart, and she became a prey to the deceitfulness of sin.

Oh, the divine wisdom of shutting the ear to the ten thousand vanities which would steal the ear from Christ, and divert us from walking as partakers of the heavenly calling. And everything that is of man—science, politics, literature, amusement—tends to divert thus. Everything that occupies the heart without Christ is an abomination that maketh a lie. It corrupts the affections from Him. What is of the world keeps the heart in the world. If called to a thing by Christ, He will be with me and keep me in it ; but whatever else I am connected with will drag me down into death. Hence the great blessing of having an honest calling in which we can serve the Lord Christ ; and the danger of those who have "fulness of bread and abundance of idleness,"

and who strengthen not the hands of the poor and the needy. The house may be swept and garnished, but it is empty; and if Christ is not in, there is no power to keep Satan out.

Hence the unspeakable preciousness of the word of God. Coming from God, it leads to God. By it He gave us life at the first, and by it He nourishes the life He has given. Nothing else can feed the new man. It is by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God that man lives. If it abides in us, we shall abide in the Father and in the Son. It will maintain the soul in known communion in the midst of seduction all around and all deceivableness of unrighteousness. For there we find Jesus, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. It is the mirror in which His glory is reflected: and beholding in this glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image. Thus is Christ formed in us in truth and power.

Now, nothing will compensate for this personal fellowship with Jesus in the word. Alas! that our hearts could live a day without it. How lovely is this in the Song of songs! The bride cannot do without her Beloved. He is everything to her. It is true she is slothful at one time, and at another careless; but *she has no other Beloved*. And when she has for a moment lost Him or grieved Him away, there is no rest until she finds Him again—"Him whom her soul loveth." It is such living affection towards the Lord Jesus which we so much need. And it is by the revelation of His love towards us in the word that they are

begotten, and when these are satisfied, then precious to our souls are the words of His lips, more precious than gold and silver, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

Here comes in the great importance of an ear to hear. "For doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice?" But where is the opened ear? The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and "behold, a greater than Solomon is here." And He has said in that same chapter of Proverbs, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (Prov. viii. 34). Compare John xx. 31.

God grant to us, as the earth drinketh in the rain which cometh oft upon it from heaven, so to thirst for His precious word that we may know Him and grow up into Him in all things.

Extracted.

ALONE—YET NOT ALONE.

"ALONE, yet not alone,"

For Christ is at my side,
And in His presence what can harm
The one for whom He died?

Around me nought I see,
Save mountains grand and tall,
One word from His almighty lips,
And lo! those mountains fall,

"He spake, and it was done,"
Commanded, it stood fast,
Creation into being came ;
Through Christ, "the First and Last."

He would not dwell alone,
Though He were Light and Life ;
By Jesus Christ came grace and truth,
To this dark world of strife.

His pathway here was Love,
Unmingled, full, and free,
His meat to do His Father's will,
God's Holy One was He.

"Alone, yet not alone,"
For thus the record ran ;
My Father and Myself are one,
So spake that sinless Man !

But lo ! on yonder mount
A mystery I see,
The One by whom the worlds were made,
Laid down His life for me.

Self-emptied in His love,
That lowly Nazarene,
The Man of Sychar's well, my Lord,
Between two thieves was seen.

Alone in those dark hours,
'Mid mocking, rage, and scorn,
The willing Victim bows His head,
Which men had crown'd with thorns.

Alone—yes, *all* alone,
In Calvary's bitter pain ;
He bore the sins, endured the wrath,
And for His foes was slain.

But hark ! that piercing cry
From yon accurséd tree,
"My God, my God," said He, "Oh ! why
Hast Thou forsaken Me" ?

Though smitten deep and sore,
He murmurs not, nor sighs,
But, "Father, glorify Thy Name,"
'Tis thus the Saviour cries.

Yes, spite of ceaseless scorn,
From Gentile and from Jew,
"Father, forgive them," Jesus says,
"They know not what they do."

'Twas on that blesséd head
God's solemn judgement fell,
For thee, my soul, His blood was shed,
To rescue thee from hell.

But Calvary's passed and gone,
And, seated on God's throne,
Now lives the Man who died that I
Might never be alone.

In glory's highest height,
And raised by power divine,
Yea, crowned with many crowns I see,
The Jesus who is mine.

In sweet communion still,
May I with Him abide,
My deepest joy to please and serve,
The One who's at my side.

S. T.

"Suffer others to be praised in thy presence, and entertain their good and glory with delight ; but at no hand disparage them, or lessen the report, or make an objection."

FRUIT UNTO HOLINESS.

ROMANS VI.

IN the 5th chapter we have one, ungodly in himself, under the judgement of unrighteousness; here, one under the dominion of sin—like Israel of old, making bricks without straw. They did not like it, but they could not help it. Well, but you say, Sin has dominion; I am afraid I am not right. Where are you? You are putting yourself not under grace. You must be under grace, and then go to God and get power against sin. Therefore chapter v. is before chapter vi. You must get under grace. Grace is not to a holy being—that is love. Grace is to one unworthy of it. “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace,”—you have God on your side against it.

Men will say that if you give man perfect peace he will forget God. Alas! it is in our wretched nature to do so at all times, and to abuse the relief of our conscience to do so. But the power of resurrection in Christ in which we have this relief sets us free from sin. How can he that is free be a slave? “If we are led of the Spirit we are not under the law.” The Holy Spirit will never lead us into sin. “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” When I speak of your being servants, I speak after the manner of men; for after all it is real liberty to serve God. Now mark there is fruit in righteousness. What fruit had we in sin? Its end was death; but righteousness, serving the will of

God, bears blessed fruits. Not merely is there righteous fruit, but there is fruit in righteousness. "We have our fruit unto holiness."

What is holiness? Separation unto God. Adam was not holy—he was innocent. God is holy. He knows good and evil, loves the good and hates the evil. So it is with Jesus, and so with us. We love good and hate evil. I, as a creature, cannot estimate the difference between good and evil. So I must have God as an object to make out the full measure of good, and thus judge and be separate from the evil. The affections drawn to Christ are the channel and power of it. In this latter sense, Christ could not have an object, though ever regarding the Father, and as man looking to the joy that was set before Him. But He had no need to have His affections drawn to an object to sanctify Him. He had them in perfect communion and truth. And indeed, as taking this resurrection place, He sanctified Himself, set Himself apart as the resurrection man through the revelation of Whom we should be sanctified through the truth. He Himself was the object of God's delight on earth (Matt. iii. 16, 17). Elsewhere He is ours in heaven (Acts vii. 56).*

There is no fruit from sin. It is the perishing down into death of that which is degraded by having lost the image of God. Now I must walk in righteousness. What is the consequence? I get withdrawn from the spirit and ways of the

* When I say on earth, I speak as when actually revealed. He was ever God's delight. See Proverbs viii.

world; I get away from the influence of the things which govern it; my heart is more abundantly occupied in the practical liberty of the new nature, with that which is of God; confidence in Him is increased; prayer has a larger sphere; the heart is drawn nearer to Him, and, living in intercourse with Him, He Himself is more fully known. It is not merely that there are fruits, for besides this practical walk in righteousness, there is connected with it the consecration of the heart to God, and the having knowledge of Him. If we live to God there will be the knowledge of what good and evil is in the eye of God—not simply that you live to Christ as to outward devotedness, but you will get your heart withdrawn from the influence of the things which drew it formerly away.

Therefore in plain common life, oh! let God be everything! Be not like one slipping and getting on, and slipping and getting on, as Christians often are, but be advancing quietly and steadily, increasing in separation to God; then you will have fruit unto holiness, you yourselves being servants—it is not said unto holiness, but—*unto God*. There is the spring and glorious excellency and liberty of service. You may be a servant unto righteousness to satisfy your conscience and worry yourself to death. But what I get here, through grace, is liberty through righteousness, and then Christ's will the motive of all I am to do. O blessed thing! It is liberty indeed. There must indeed be the practical everyday fruit; but besides this, there is the joy of serving God, positive joy of serving God. And it is sweet after

all—after shewing us this practical way of getting righteousness and true holiness, even the image of God—to learn that eternal life is altogether of grace, the free gift of God. I had rather have eternal life as the gift of God than earn ten lives; for, having it so, it is the proof of His love, and that is bliss.

The Lord give us, in everyday common life, to live in the secret life of the heart, and hence in the outward life of our daily service *to Him*, founded, as it is, on reckoning ourselves to be dead and alive again, yielding ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.

Extracted.

A BOTTLE FOR OUR TEARS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—There are many tender and beautiful figures used in the scripture to express God's loving care and interest in His children. And the one referred to in the heading of this letter is not the least striking. The Psalmist is speaking of the enemies that daily oppress and persecute him. But in the face of all their evil threatenings he looks up confidently to God as His preserver. "What time I am afraid," said he, "I will trust in thee." And then he gives utterance to his implicit reliance on the individual interest that God was taking in all his circumstances of trial. "Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle" (Psalm lvi. 8).

The figurative expression is not a difficult one to understand. To put tears into a bottle conveys at once the idea of preserving them as being precious. It appears to have been customary in the East to put up in bags or small bottles, secured with a seal, any small articles of value, such as gold or silver ornaments, or precious stones. Hence the general sense of the words seems to be that of God regarding David's tears as of such value as to be treasured up by Him.

Tears are the outward expressions of inward sorrow and suffering. In a world where sin reigns unto death tears are inevitable. None of the children of Adam are exempt. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job. v. 7). It is therefore comforting to know that there are some circumstances in which tears are of actual value before God, while they also afford occasions in which we may experience what is really so wonderful in itself—divine sympathy.

Much depends, of course, on what causes the tears. They may flow from a sense of the painful results of our own folly. Esau bartered away his birthright for a mess of red pottage. But when he realised that the blessing of the firstborn was gone from him, and the utter foolishness of his bargain was thus made manifest to him, he wept in the bitterness of his spirit. His tears, however, did not avail to regain the blessing. So the apostle Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, referring to Esau," who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," says, "Ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the

blessing, he was rejected ; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it [the blessing] carefully with tears " (Heb. xii. 17).

There are tears of discontent with the path in which the Lord is leading His people, such as those of the children of Israel when they wept because they loathed the manna of the wilderness and longed for the fish and the flesh and other foods of Egypt (Num. xi. 4—6). Such tears were displeasing to the Lord.

It is, of course, far too lengthy a task to enumerate here all the varied causes of tears, some praiseworthy and some blameworthy. One or two instances only must suffice, specially in illustration of the subject of this letter.

We see what particular interest the Lord, during the days of His flesh, took in those who sorrowed and wept. You remember the case of the widow woman of Nain who was met by Him just as she was accompanying the dead body of her only son to the tomb. When the Lord saw her weeping He was moved with compassion, and said to her, Weep not. Then He gave her back her son. But it was the same love that preserves the tears of the saints in His bottle which first of all, before raising her son, said to her, Weep not.

Mary Magdalene standing before the opened but empty sepulchre of Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow. The body of Him she loved and adored was not there. Peter and John went away to their own home. But Mary " stood without, at the sepulchre weeping." Then One marked those tears from afar. He drew near and addressed to

her that tender and gentle inquiry, Woman, why weepest thou? May we not say that the tears of that faithful and devoted soul were tears for His bottle?

Perhaps the most striking incident of this kind given in the Gospels is in connection with the bereavement of the sisters of Bethany. It proves most absolutely how the Lord enters into the feelings and circumstances of those who are sorrowing. We read those significant words, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." It was into this happy domestic circle that death came. Lazarus died and was buried. And not until he had been dead four days did the Lord come to the sorrow-stricken home in Bethany. Then the tears of the bereaved flowed at His feet. Should the thought arise even in our hearts whether the Lord was regardless of those tears, His own tears utterly deny such a thought. "When Jesus therefore saw her [Mary] weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him!" (John xi. 33—36). Every tear was eloquent of the exquisite sympathy of the Saviour. And how precious did He count the tears of those sorrowing sisters! May we not say that they too were tears for His bottle?

Now it is good to bear in mind that the Lord's love and sympathy are the same now as ever. And the inevitable sorrows and trials of this world

call them into exercise towards us, affording us opportunity for such an experience of His compassionate grace as we could not otherwise have.

“We thank thee, Lord, for weary days,
When desert springs were dry ;
And first we knew what depth of need
Thy love could satisfy.

We thank Thee for that rest in Him
The weary only know—
The perfect, wondrous sympathy
We needs must learn below.

We know Him as we could not know
Through heaven's golden years ;
We there shall see His glorious face,
But Mary saw His tears.

The touch that heals the broken heart
Is never felt above ;
His angels know His blessedness,
His way-worn saints His love.”

It may be, my dear young friends, through the mercy of the Lord that your tears have hitherto been few, but they will visit you sooner or later. Remember there is One Who counts your every tear-drop. They may be tears of sorrow in bereavement, or because of the wilfulness of others, or because of the suffering that comes upon you on account of your faithfulness to the Lord and His word. In every case, let them be such tears as He can put into His bottle.

I am, Yours faithfully,

“YOD.”