

“Our Calling”



VOLUME III



“Ye are called in one hope of your calling.”
(Eph. iv. 4.)

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I Jesus
am the root and the offspring of David,
the bright and morning star.
Surely I come quickly.

MAY the hope of our Lord's return be present to mind and heart as a living reality ; then surely no lark ever sprang up on a dewy morning to sing its sweet song with such alacrity as you and I shall spring up to meet our Lord in the air.

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As to the rapture, in no case is the day or the hour made known ; this is a secret which remains untold. One word of deep and holy import is addressed to us : " Watch ! " Each and all are set on the watch-tower, we are to wait for the Son from heaven. The sense of the nearness of the glory should be cherished by us ; the path is short, the journey rapidly accomplished. One moment will suffice to change our bodies, to clothe us with our house which is from heaven ; then caught up by power divine we shall rise to meet our Lord in the air, never more to part company, we shall be for ever with the Lord.

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The translation of Enoch was the first formal notice of the great divine secret that man was to have a place and inheritance in the heavens. By creation he was formed for earth, the garden was his habitation, Eden his demesne, the earth his estate. But now is brought forth the deeper purpose that God has an election from among men, destined in the everlasting counsels of abounding grace, for heaven ; it is the first notice of the heavenly calling. " Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Nothing peculiar ushered forth that glorious hour, no sign among the nations gave notice of it, no big expectations of its coming ; it was the natural heavenly close of an un-deviating heavenly journey. " He was not found, because God had translated him." This great fact anticipates, in spirit, the hour of the taking up the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

3 Come Quickly.

THE bright and morning star is an entirely new glory. It is a title connected with the affections. How blessed for any who can say, "I have watched through the night to get the first glimpse of Him; my heart is so attached to the Lord, all my blessedness so connected with Him, that I cannot help being constantly on the look out for the first glimpse of Him as He descends from heaven into the air."

Can you say, "It is not the crown, not the glory, it is THYSELF, Lord, whom I want. I am the bride, Thou art the Bridegroom; I am wanting Thee to come and take me home to the Father's house to be the complement of Thy joy there"?

Christ is coming to take up the church; the bride is the vessel in which the closest relationship is formed. The child of God has the affections of Christ in his soul, and gets his rest as the Spirit reveals Christ and speaks of the glory to come.

There is exquisite beauty in that word, "Surely I come quickly," being immediately taken up by the Spirit and the bride. "Even so come, Lord Jesus." Present things may dim the burning of this hope in our hearts, but it ever burns brightly in the heart of Christ, and as soon as the last member of His body has been gathered in that promise will be fulfilled. If the light only shines with a flickering beam in my heart, it is ever in His heart in all its brightness, the thought of coming quickly.

It will be a marvellous scene when Christ presents the church to Himself, when the last Adam takes his bride to share His glory—formed out of Himself, as Eve out of Adam. We are one with Himself, belong to Himself; we are in such a relationship that the Lord Jesus could not do without us. The Bridegroom must have the bride up there.

We are for His own self in the glory where He has gone. Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only object before our souls? He not only says, "I am the bright and morning star," but, "Surely I come quickly," presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness of what He is. Some of us have known Him for years. Have we not found

the attractiveness of His beauty deepening upon us? But what is all we have learnt of Him here compared with what it will be to behold Himself, to look on His face—the One who died for us, the One who loved and watched over us from our infancy—oh, with what tender gentleness watched over us—and has been waiting during the centuries to come and take up the people given Him of the Father. Shall the bride fail in response to the desire of the Bridegroom? Rather let her seek to enter into His desire and say, “COME, LORD JESUS.”

G. V. WIGRAM.

The Lord Delayeth His Coming.

THESE words, quoted from Luke XII. 45, are those of the evil servant, and are said “in his heart.” These inaudible heart expressions had not assumed an articulate form in such a way that others could hear them. They were none the less real, for, after all, the heart is the seat of affection and desire; and in that sense, when the desires are active, it commands the tongue. It is “out of the heart that the mouth speaketh.” Even supposing that no actual language be used, conduct corresponding to the desires of the heart will be displayed. Hence we need to “keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” We long for the gratification of our hearts’ desires; we labour for them.

Now, to say, *in the heart*, that the Lord delays His coming is a very plain though silent declaration that His coming is not desired. It is not the commanding object. The seven years during which Jacob had to serve for his wife “seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her” (Gen. XXIX. 20). His heart was in it, and the years fled as days. Love annihilated time. The story explains the great secret of the potency of an all-engrossing object of affection. Let us carefully appreciate this. Very clear it is that no such object governed the heart of the evil servant. He did not love his Lord, nor did he care for His coming.

The coming of the blessed Lord is presented as the primary hope of the church; it appeals not so much to head as to

heart. It is a matter of chief interest to the renewed affections. He said, in John xiv., "If I go away I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." This is His actual return for His people in order that they should be with Him where He is. It is not the departure of the individual saint, when he falls asleep, to go to the Lord—as "absent from the body and present with the Lord." It is His advent, it is the rapture of all that are in Christ to be with Him in the Father's house. The charm of this familiar passage has attracted the burdened hearts of His pilgrim people throughout all these centuries of waiting; and it attracts and gladdens them to-day. To be where He is is their hope.

The immediate hope of the coming of the Lord is no mere sentiment—no mere craving for relief from "tribulation," for suffering is as fully the church's glory as it is her calling whilst here—but it is her proper and warranted expectation. To "wait for God's Son from heaven" is the normal attitude of every true believer, whatever his experience or attainments. To be with Him where He is must be the climax of all his desires. If I truly love the Lord—if my heart's affections centre supremely in him, I shall assuredly wait and watch for His return. I shall be in the spirit of the early Christians, and in the power of those injunctions of Scripture that invariably command the disciple to watch. What else would obedience or affection do?

But we are told that the so-called fathers of the early church—living in the second or later centuries—do not teach the immediateness of that hope. Perhaps so; but the question is, was this hope expunged from the page of Scripture, or had it lost hold upon their hearts? The latter, alas, was the case. They, perhaps good men themselves, had adopted the inaudible language of the evil servant when he said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming." It was their heart affection that was at fault. So always.

Dark days and long succeeded. At length, when "the even, the midnight, the cock-crowing" had passed and the morning had wellnigh dawned; when the long and lovely day of salvation had nearly run its course, then a cry was made: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet

Him" (Matt. xxv. 6). It was moral midnight, the spiritual darkness was like that of Egypt, when that cry was raised after eighteen centuries of slumber and sleep. It broke in upon a sleeping Christendom and produced astonishing results; many arose and went out, in glad expectation of heart, to meet the Bridegroom in cordial affection. The coming of the Bridegroom was like a voice from the dead, but it was the Bridegroom Himself—the prospect of seeing Him—that thrilled the heart. And a heart filled and thrilled by the love of Christ is the one spring of divine life and power and devotedness and joy.

It was not mere knowledge of "the Second Advent" that appealed to the heart, but the Lord Himself, HIMSELF! Not relief, not crowns nor kingdoms nor glories, but the Lord Himself, that gained His proper place in the heart of that blood-bought bride; for whom He had sold all that He had in order to deliver her from every form of wrath, and fit her to be His companion in suffering to-day and in heavenly glory for ever.

There is abundant scripture to establish these precious facts, but more—much more than doctrine—is needed to make the coming of the Lord an abiding and operative power in the soul.

Let our most earnest prayer be that we may cherish a growing love for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This will prevent our hearts from the inaudible, but really infidel, words, "My Lord delayeth His coming," together with their consequent bad conduct of self-indulgence and strife. All hangs upon heart affection for the Lord.

J. WILSON SMITH.

How long? There is one who knoweth;
And the signs that gather and throng
Speak clarion-like His answer
To His listening church: "Not long!"
Not long ere the voice of the Highest
Shall hush all the discord and strife,
And call from death's slumber
The hearts without number
That broke in the battle of life.

The Christian's Hope.

I HOPE to be all I should like to be, and more, all that God the Father has purposed I should be, and will make me in Christ, in the full, unhindered capacity of enjoyment of all that is pure and holy and worthy of enjoyment, in a sphere where all is of God and worthy of Him; and to be surrounded with companions similarly constituted, all like Christ; and in the full possession of eternal life, in perfect conformity to Him, as a glorified Man, in a scene of glory, where God is all in all; and to be there for ever, to worship and to serve Him evermore.

Romans v. 2. "We boast in hope of the glory of God."

Romans viii. 24. "We are saved in hope."

Colossians i. 5. "The hope laid up for us in heaven."

Colossians i. 23. "The hope of the gospel."

Titus i. 2. "In hope of eternal life."

Hebrews vi. 18. "The hope set before us."

1 Peter i. 13. "Hope to the end for the grace to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Then again the Apostle says:—

Philippians i. 20. "My earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

This is another order of hope; and while the former scriptures speak of what is in or through Christ, this is connected with the energy of faith in Paul and dependent on his carriage to be realized.

1 John iii. 3. "And every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

If the hope is a living truth in the soul, it must necessarily produce its own fruit, similar to the producing cause. Not to purify myself would be proof that no purifying hope possessed me.

EDWARD CROSS.

IF I could be always thinking of what He is I should be perfectly happy, and there would be the reflection in me of that with which my soul was occupied.

Our Immediate Hope.

We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

PHIL. III. 20, 21.

The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

I THESS. IV. 16, 17.

In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . 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.

CHRIST comforted the disciples' hearts by the assurance that where He was going they would find a place. To whom did He go when He left this earth? "I go unto the Father" (John XIV. 28). "I go My way to Him that sent Me" (John XVI. 5). "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." He returned to that eternal home of inexpressible happiness, where He had ever been the delight of the Father's heart; but He returned there as the First-born among many brethren, as the Forerunner who has for us entered as the First-fruits of the great harvest, as the Pledge of the home-bringing of the whole redeemed family. Peter tells us He has gone to heaven (I Peter III. 22). Stephen saw Him in heaven (Acts VII.). From heaven He will descend to carry out the desire expressed in the words: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (John XVII. 24). Our immediate hope, then—our instant expectation, is to be ushered into the holy scene of divine affections—the Father's house. There the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated; there the true Isaac shall welcome His bride; there the Father shall have His joy—shall find His good pleasure in the many sons conformed to the image of His Son, holy and without blame before Him in love.

With this hope no signs are connected, not a hint anywhere in Scripture that any prophetic scriptures have first to be fulfilled. Abundant signs to take place, prophecies many and great to be fulfilled before Christ takes to Himself His great power and reigns, but none before our going to be where we shall see Him as He is.

How will this hope be consummated? By the descent of the Lord from the Father's house. He will come as near this world as possible without coming to it. Scientists and astronomers are agreed that only a comparatively small circle of air surrounds this earth; into this belt of air the Lord will come. As the Lord descends the Spirit will quicken mortal bodies, graveyards and cemeteries, battle-fields and ocean depths will give up their dead; the dust of martyrs scattered to the four winds shall be gathered up, the dead in Christ shall arise and come forth out of their graves—awakened by the last trumpet, every dead body shall be raised.

This is the first resurrection. To be "in Christ" is the one and only title to this resurrection. It is no question of personal worthiness or supreme devotedness. It is not earned by works wrought by us in any shape or form. Have we believed that Jesus died and rose again? Has the body of a believer been put to sleep by Jesus? If so that very body will be raised, the grave shall be robbed of its prey. It may be corrupt like the body of Lazarus, but it shall come forth incorruptible and powerful, no longer a natural body, but a spiritual and glorious one. Sown in weakness it shall be raised in power. When sown it was earthy and in the image of the earthy one, when raised it will bear the image of the Heavenly One.

When this takes place then shall be demonstrated another wonderful result of the work of Calvary. Not only are our souls the subject of redemption, but our bodies also. Satan's stronghold spoiled, death swallowed up in victory, the triumphant cry will go forth, "O grave, where is thy victory?" Faith, anticipating that day, can now exclaim, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57). But the day is coming when corruption shall put on incorruption, mortal shall put on immortality, when death shall be swallowed up in victory in fact as already to faith.

Nor will this trumpet sound affect the dead only. True they will rise first, that which men say is impossible will be brought about to start with, the dust of all the dead in Christ will be instinct with life; but immediately following and

closely connected with this is another mystery, marvel, wonder! Living believers will be instantly changed, all that is mortal in them swallowed up of life. Clothed with immortality their bodies, fashioned after the glorious body of their Lord and Saviour, salvation's work will then be complete, they will be conformed to the image of God's Son, and caught up with the raised companies of dead saints; both dead and living shall meet the Lord in the air, never to part company again.

For the first time the whole of the redeemed will be actually together. Under the leadership of the great Captain of their salvation they will be ushered into those heavenly courts with a "Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given Me!" Then indeed will the Father's joy be complete; then will His heart be gratified, His house filled with the many sons brought into an intimacy an archangel does not enjoy. Then will the First-born rejoice that His toil is over, His work as Shepherd, Priest, and Advocate ended. All that the Father gave to Him He will then present with exceeding joy.

What will be the feelings of the redeemed to find themselves in this holy, happy scene? Heart cannot conceive, tongue cannot tell, what joy 'twill be with Christ to dwell. We shall find ourselves in heaven with its rainbow-circled throne, part of an adoring company celebrating the praises of an Almighty Creator (Rev. iv.) and a matchless Redeemer (Rev. v.). After the sealed book has done its work, out of heaven, from God, this glorified company will descend, in the form of a city filled with the glory of God, to take its place in the air during the millennial reign of Christ. e

Soon our wonderful journey will commence, when with bodies changed before we start we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in our upward journey, and be conducted by Him to the joys of the Father's house, from whence we shall come forth with the King in the glory of the kingdom.

Philippians III. is our starting-point, John XIV. our destination, 1 Thessalonians IV. that which marks our journey to the Father's house. We start with changed bodies; the redeemed, both dead and living, ascend in the clouds and

unitedly meet their Lord in the air, and from thence are conducted to those heavenly courts where God our Father dwells.

Who shall to me that joy
Of saint-thronged courts declare,
Tell of that constant sweet employ
My spirit longs to share?

The moment draws near, it is at our doors ; the cry has gone forth, " Behold, the Bridegroom ! " Awake, O virgin ; awake, O bride, and cry, " COME, LORD JESUS ! "

H. NUNNERLEY.

Philadelphia.

" Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown " (REV. III. 10, 11).

THE conditions of the assemblies in Asia Minor in the days of John the Apostle are prophetically descriptive of the phases of the church's history on earth. We judge that early last century saw the advent of the period typified by Philadelphia, though all down the line *individuals* knew and valued the Lord as " Holy and True "—just as they did in the local assembly to which it was first addressed—but fresh and widespread interest was aroused in long-hidden truths. The " mystery " of the gospel (Eph. vi. 19) had been, like the ancient city of Jericho, " straitly shut up " for centuries ; but the Lord had prepared hearts, and although the truth was hated, no power could shut the door which He had thrown wide open. The heavenly portion of the church became prominent whilst the immediate coming of the Lord was an ever-present hope. The cry " Behold, the Bridegroom ! Go ye out to meet Him " produced its effect. Saints went forth to meet the Bridegroom in earnest desire and true affection.

The Lord's presentation of Himself to the Philadelphian assembly was eminently suited to the exigencies of their case ; they were to " hold fast," cheered by the word " Behold, I come quickly." They were also assured that the

hour of temptation which was to test the earth-dwellers would find those who kept the word of Christ's patience taken away, away from its fiery trial; they should be kept from, or out of, the great tribulation, not carried through it—as the Jewish remnant will be—they should be safely housed in a specially prepared “place” where He is.

For some time past there has been a growing tendency to focus attention on the millennial age, the “world to come,” and make everything of that, leaving out the rapture of the saints as a present expectation. It is a very blessed thought that this world, which for six thousand years has yielded nothing to God but thistles, will for the space of one thousand years, materially and spiritually, blossom as the rose. It is also of prime importance that the light of the “world to come” should shine on our path and in our souls now. But we must guard against giving undue prominence to a special phase of the truth, but seek to grasp it as a whole. The catching away of the saints is the next step in God's ways; to lose sight of this is to lessen the appreciation of the imminent coming of our Lord to change the living saints and raise the dead ones and take them to be with Himself for ever.

And with Him shall our rest be on high,
When in holiness bright we sit down,
In the joy of His love ever nigh,
In the peace which His presence shall crown.

DR. OLIVER.

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HEAVEN is a place of affections as well as glories; we are apt to forget this. We think of our calling in connection with glory, rather than in connection with love, relationship, home, and our Father's house. The youngest *child* in the King's family has another kind of enjoyment in the palace than the highest dignitary of the realm—the palace is a *home* to it, not merely the court of royalty.

Oh what a home! There fullest love
Flows through its courts of light;
The Son's divine affections flow
Throughout its depth and height,
And full response the Father gives
To fill with joy the heart.

The Brook that Dried Up.

"And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, . . . Hide thyself by the brook Cherith. . . . And it shall be, thou shalt drink of the brook. . . . And he drank of the brook. . . . And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up" (I KINGS XVII. 2-4, 7).

"THE brook dried up." This is an aspect of the divine providence that soberly perplexes our minds and tries our faith. We can more easily recognize the love that gives than the love that takes away. "How providential!" When do we say that? It is when Cherith is singing and babbling in our ears. We say it when a life is spared, a wish is granted, an undertaking is completed, a need is met. With some people providence is another word for getting what they ask for and being able to complete their own plans. With many people providence has no meaning, or even existence, apart from the glad and successful passages of human experience. They find a friend, a way out of their difficulty, a solution of their personal problem; and lo! there is no doubt that providence had a hand in this. But hunger and pain and death; the hard way; grey days; black nights; lost powers; severed fellowships; surrendered purposes and broken hopes—what do we say of these things? Hot and unwise words at times. The education of our faith is incomplete if we have not learned that there is a providence of loss, a ministry of failing and of fading things, a gift of emptiness. . . . A desperate situation may prove a great and notable blessing. . . . God knows that there are heavenly whispers that men cannot hear till the drought of trouble and weariness has silenced the babbling brooks of joy. . . . In some way or other we all have to learn the difference between trusting in the gift and trusting in the Giver. . . . The lesson of all fading things is not the brevity of life, but the eternity of love. When the pleasant and comforting babble of some Cherith falls on silence, it is but that we may hear the low, deep murmur of the river of God that is full of water. . . . And whensoever in your life and mine some spring of earthly and outward resource has dried up, it has been that we might learn that our help and hope are in God, who made heaven and earth.

P. C. AINSWORTH.

This One Thing.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (PHIL. III. 13, 14).

THUS spake the pattern saint of God, energized by the Holy Ghost that in him God's thoughts for His saints, throughout this present period, might be expressed; he outlines the true path and experience of the Christian upon earth. This ONE THING of which he writes should be the all-absorbing purpose of the CHRISTIAN MAN. It is God's pleasure for us; it should seize upon our souls, forcing into impotence, and out of our lives, every other object that might distract our thoughts from it.

There are not two kinds of Christian life, "the higher life" and the lower, for nothing could be higher than this, and anything lower is not the Christian life. We may feel and confess how little we have come under the power of that which can subdue everything in us to the pursuit of this one object, yet nothing short of this is full and true Christian life on earth. Nor may we plead that it is beyond us, for this was the life of a man of like passions with ourselves, who before Christ laid siege to and captured his soul was moved by as boundless an ambition as any living man to-day. But from the moment that the light above the brightness of the sun shone upon him, and he heard that incomparable voice saying "I am Jesus," one thing only controlled him, and that one thing was to reach the glory of God, where the excellency of Jesus his Lord was rightly appreciated. He had found Him to be infinitely brighter and better than the brightest and the best that the earth could offer, and he made the great renunciation and counted everything in which a mortal man could boast as dung for the excellent knowledge of Christ. Henceforward he wanted nothing else. Of him in this connection J. N. D. wrote: "In Christ, who had appeared to him on the way to Damascus, he had seen divine righteousness for man and divine glory in Man. He had seen a glorified Christ, who acknowledged the poor, feeble members of His assembly as part

of Himself. He would have nothing else. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord had eclipsed everything. The stars as well as the darkness of night disappear before the sun. The righteousness of the law, the righteousness of Paul, all that distinguished him among men, disappeared before the righteousness of God and the glory of Christ.

It was a thorough change in his whole moral being. His gain was now loss to him. Christ was become all. It was not evil which disappeared—everything that belonged to Paul as advantage to the flesh disappeared. It was another who was now precious to him. What a deep and radical change in the whole moral being of man when he ceases to be the centre of his own importance, and Another worthy of being so becomes the centre of his moral existence!—a divine Person, a Man who had glorified God, a Man in whom the glory of God shone out; in whom His righteousness was realized, His love, His tender mercy, perfectly revealed towards men and known by men.”

How encouraging it is for us to know the Lord Jesus is unchanged in His glory since that day when He so fully captured the heart of Paul. The excellencies that so powerfully affected the Apostle shine undimmed in Him in spite of the lapse of centuries, and though we may not have attained to his knowledge of Christ, and may feel that our purpose of heart is very faltering when contrasted with his persistency, yet Christ is there, the prize for us on high, as worthy of our adoration and devotion and service as ever He has been. We may walk by the same rule and be undivided in affection and purpose of heart even as Paul was.

We may be sure, however, that the devil will seek to thwart and hinder such a purpose, and if we are to be kept true to Christ, as the needle to the pole, we shall need careful, prayerful, watchful living—this will alone suffice.

We must beware of becoming self-important, esteeming ourselves better than others. This is always a serious check to any advance in the pursuit of this “one thing.” What is the antidote and the unfailing preventative? “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” He is set before us as our pattern (chap. II.).

We also have to watch against settling down to easy self-gratification, minding earthly things, making our bellies our God, glorying in that which should be our shame. How may we be preserved from this deadly snare? Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour (chap III.). Heaven is our destiny, and pilgrim feet must not lag along the road to it; we must forget the things which are behind, reach forth to those things where Christ sits at God's right hand.

Another danger is in being too much engrossed with the ways and means of livelihood—food, clothing, shelter—of forgetting our high destiny and God's good pleasure for us, in the dreary drudge of "making a living." Let us ever remember that it is written, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (chap. IV.). We have God for our need, therefore we are to "be careful for nothing; but in everything with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," our requests are to be made known unto God. Thus will the heart be free to pursue its God-given object undistractedly, having CHRIST FOR OUR PATTERN, HEAVEN FOR OUR DESTINY, GOD FOR ALL OUR NEED.

J. T. MAWSON.

WHILE our affections are occupied with heavenly things we can trust God for earthly things.

Looking Up.

"I pursue looking towards the goal for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus" (PHIL. III. 14).

WE must look *above* our path to be able to walk *in* it. . . . A Christian who has heaven before him and a Saviour in glory as the object of his affections will walk well upon the earth; he who has only the earthly path for his rule will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it; he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks. The eyes upward on Jesus will keep the heart and the steps in a path comformable to Jesus.

J. N. DARBY.

For a Remembrance.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread :

"And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is My body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of Me.

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. XI. 23-25).

"Remember . . . Jesus Christ of the seed of David . . . raised from the dead according to my gospel" (2 Tim. II. 8).

"Do this for a remembrance of Me." Such is the desire of the earth-rejected but heaven-received and glory-crowned Lord, who, after making good God's rights in redemption, has seated Himself on the throne of the Majesty on high. The Lord's supper recalls to mind Jesus, whose perfect sacrifice has so fully made an end of the question of sins that we can be occupied with Himself who bore the sins, and not with the sins themselves. It is Himself we recall in the broken bread and poured-out cup ; they carry us back to scenes and circumstances which do not now exist. In the act of breaking bread and drinking wine we show forth the Lord's death ; these emblems are for the purpose of recalling Himself to the affections of our hearts.

We delight to trace the solid basis of all our blessings to the One who was "crucified through weakness." Nothing appeals so powerfully to our renewed affections as the love expressed in the forsaking of Calvary ; there the love of God was declared and the glory of God secured. Our eternal blessing is bound up with that love and glory. There also the holy devotedness of Christ Himself ascends as a sweet savour, touches our hearts and wins our affections, as we contemplate Him, loving us and giving Himself for us. In all this it is a "calling to remembrance" of Christ *where He WAS* in death, in the hour of supreme suffering, when in anguish of soul he cried, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

He is no longer there. Turn to 2 Timothy II. 8. Our eye is directed to Christ where He *is*, not where He *was*. Timothy was a weak man bodily, living in a difficult day ; added to this he had all kinds of troubles to face from professors within and the world without. To enable him to "endure hardness" he is exhorted to "remember" Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead, according to Paul's gospel. Nothing appealed to a Jewish mind so powerfully as one of the "seed of David." David was expressive of royal power ; his key could unlock every door ; the sure mercies belonged to him.

Resurrection declared Christ to be the Son of God with power, and took Him outside the region where death reigned. During His life on earth He had displayed power over death in its three stages : Jairus's daughter had just died ; the widow of Nain's son was being carried to the grave, and Lazarus was actually in it ; but the voice of the Son of God summoned them to life. What power can oppose One who can annul death ? Christ in resurrection is the proclamation that Satan is overcome, the mightiest foe in the universe conquered. We are to recall the fact that Christ is now a mighty and a powerful Saviour. He is no longer the despised, rejected One, but the honoured, glorified, exalted Lord, all power given to Him in heaven and on earth, the dispenser of every blessing.

Timothy was to "remember" Christ risen, he was to dwell upon the power vested in his Master, a power upon which he could draw to meet every difficulty in his pathway as a servant.

We are all called to dwell upon Christ in both death and glory ; His sorrows and sufferings were the theme on the holy mount ; they will never be forgotten in the coming day of glory. Our coming together to break bread recalls Himself *where He was*, whilst we are conscious of our union with Him *where He is*. All that Christ passed through is ever before God ; His atoning sacrifice is not merely a two-thousand-year-old fact, but all the infinite value of it is as real as though it had only happened yesterday. God intends His people to remember on earth what is an ever-present reality in heaven ; at the same time those sorrows

are actually over, never to be repeated; the One who endured them is separated from earth and is at the right hand of power.

To keep our affections rightly engaged we should dwell much upon Him when crucified through weakness. If we would be lifted above the powers of evil, and learn what it is to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, we must "remember" Him as David's seed, and think much of Him as the Son of God in resurrection power.

H. NUNNERLEY.

What is Your Mind Set On?

"*One thing I do.*" I do not know how many objects you have before your mind. Perhaps far too many; but the Lord would have us with one positive idea, one motive, one desire. We have been saved to serve, saved to worship, but our controlling desire should be to reach Christ in glory. That was Paul's object; he had got a sight of Christ in glory, and all that he was as a man in the flesh was completely broken down and eclipsed by His excellency. He was blinded to all that the world would make much of. His desire was to reach Christ in the place where He is.

"One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind." If you and I want to be free to run the race, and to be set for Christ in glory, we shall have to know something of what it means to forget the things that are behind. The things enumerated are not in themselves bad things, but all that man as man values Paul was ready to part with—his religion, his splendid learning, and all that he was as a Pharisee and a Hebrew. He says, "I counted them loss for Christ." After fourteen years he did not regret his losses, but counted them dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus had completely displaced all that he once gloried in. Paul was really in the positive blessing and good in his soul of what the cross of Christ had done *with himself* as well as his sins, with his Pharisaism, and all that made much of him as a man. Now he says, "I want to be found in Him,

I want to follow after, to be after Christ." What are we after? Let God by His Spirit put the question to our hearts. What is our business? Can we say humbly before God, "I want to get through this world to His praise and to His glory. I want to be after Christ. He is now risen and in the glory of God, and one thing occupies me, one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind. My path is upward, onward until I am found in Christ where Christ is"? May God graciously help us to forget all that is behind, and, like Paul, reach forth unto those things which are before, pressing toward the mark, quickening any little desire that we have in our souls to be out and out for Christ, to set our minds on things above, where Christ sits at God's right hand.

There is much about the "mind" in Philippians III. 15, 16: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus *minded*: and if in any thing ye be otherwise *minded*, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us *mind* the same thing." Then in verses 18, 19: "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ . . . who *mind* earthly things." Now what are you and I minding? What are we after? Are we set upon the world? "Our conversation and our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour: who shall change our bodies of humiliation, that they may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (vers. 20, 21, N.T.). Are our minds set upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is coming as Saviour? He has saved our souls, but He is coming to conform these bodies of humiliation and make them like unto His glorious body.

May God by His Spirit write these four little words, "ONE THING I DO," upon our hearts and minds, and lead us to study and to meditate over them, until we can say, "I want to be after Christ; I want to follow Him; I want to be found in Him; I want to be minding the things where He is."

J. ROBERTSON.

Love in Us. Love with Us.

GREATER is He that is in you than he that is in the world. What does that mean? It is the mighty power of God, the Holy Ghost dwelling in our souls to meet all the power of evil. "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit." There is a power in us, the mighty power of the Spirit of God, to displace all that we are and all the desires of the flesh. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." Men are wondering at the state of things in the world; the powers of evil are at work; the whole world lieth in the wicked one, but greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. If there is evil in the flesh, the Spirit of God is there to meet it. If there are external forces of evil in the world, the Spirit of God is there to overcome them. The Christian can count on victory. In himself poor and weak, he can say, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Triumph is the note of the Christian. The victory which overcometh the world is "faith."

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." Suppose you were to lecture me until midnight, or I you, on the importance of loving one another, would it effect anything? No. What will? Only seeking to come under the influence and control of that holy love for ourselves. Oh, the deep need there is for men and women filled with divine unction and divine freshness and power coming out from the presence of God in divine love! We are not only begotten of God, but God Himself dwells in us.

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John iv. 12). What does that mean, "perfected in us"? It is the continuation of what came out in Christ coming out in you and me, as we are reciprocating the holy love of God. True fellowship supposes a company of people to whom Christ is precious, standing shoulder to shoulder for the maintenance of the truths of incarnation, atonement, and the holy things of God, and loving one another. It is a question of our being under the influence of the love of God. It is the sensibilities, the graces, and

the affections of Christ, working out in a company down here.

It is an evil day, and the Church has broken down, but God is not baffled ; Christ is being continued and reproduced in His members here in proportion as they are kept under the influence of divine love. The Spirit of God is here, and the body of Christ is here, proofs that God is not baffled ; and the graces and perfections of Christ will be known to-day, if saints are enjoying the love of God, representing Christ in the spirit and character displayed in Him here. The testimony of Christ will be continued in this world.

In this fourth chapter of John's First Epistle we have the love of God for us in the past shown at the cross, the love of God in the present—what it is doing for us now by the Spirit, and what it will do for us in the future. It is all marked out for us in this chapter.

“ Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because, as He is, so are we in this world.” An old lady in Scotland was in difficulty as to her acceptance. A Christian quoted this verse ; she got a great lift from it in finding out that she was as Christ is at the right hand of God. A clergyman came in the following day ; she was so full of it that she spoke to him about it. He went straight to the Christian who told her, and said, “ I understand that you have been telling Mrs. So-and-so that she is as Christ is.” “ Yes, I gave her scripture for it. Let us drop in and see her.” They read the verse together, and the whole three were melted in the presence of God at the magnificence of it. The depth of it will never be fathomed. We are saved completely from the relationship and position we were in as sinners, and set in new ones in God's Son.

John's nine monosyllables, all in a row,
Are my joy and delight wherever I go.

What are they ? “ *As He is, so are we in this world.*”
Could there be anything greater than that ?

It is a lovely thought that God has come into our lives, and He has made us as Christ is. He has not only washed away our sins, but He has begotten us again and has associated us with Christ ; we are as He is now. We can

never be in greater acceptance than we are now. It is the outcome of the work of Christ that we are presented before the eye of God in Him for the Father's pleasure, so that fear is banished. Every believer, rich or poor, high or low, having the Holy Spirit can rejoice that every thought of God is true of them and true for them, but they wait the last finishing touch, which shall give them a body like to His glorious body. There are things in Christianity wrought for us entirely apart from our efforts. God begins and ends in sovereign grace; but every bit of the pathway in between calls for exercise and prayer, and laying hold of God to make divine things good in our souls.

We are now brought into a position that the blessed revelation of the love of God that came out in Christ is continued in us in proportion as we walk with God. Presently we shall be made like Christ, and love can do no more.

J. MCBROOM.

Notes of Address on 1 John iv.

Making God Known.

STANDING beside his altar on Mount Carmel, Elijah prayed, "Lord God of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God." Swiftly the answer came in fire. The assembled multitude saw it descending from heaven until it touched the altar and consumed the sacrifice, and the people cried with one voice, "The Lord, He is the God" (1 Kings xviii. 39).

From Carmel our thoughts turn to Calvary, where Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). He had come down from heaven to make God known, and on that hill outside Jerusalem the living and true God was revealed as light and love. His supremacy was there upheld, the majesty of His throne maintained in respect of sin, whilst at the same time, in the suffering and death of Jesus—the sinner's Substitute—God's love in all its fullness was declared.

Wind, earthquake, and fire, symbols of God's power,

suited the angry prophet Elijah ; but he had yet to learn that God Himself was not in any of these things ; that judgment is God's strange work and that He delights in mercy. God was not in the wind, nor the fire, but in " the still small voice " (1 Kings XIX. 12). How foreign to God's nature was the spirit of Elijah is shown by the rebuke which Jesus gave to His disciples. They had asked that they might " call down fire from heaven as Elijah did," to consume the adversaries of Christ, but Jesus replied, He had not " come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Nineteen centuries have rolled away since the advent of Christ, but are disciples more intelligent in His mind to-day ? Is not the judicial element as much in evidence now as then ? Man naturally is self-assertive ; he loves to occupy the judgment-seat ; hence laying down the law and killing the prophets of Baal are more in harmony with his spirit than laying down one's life in service for others. John's desire to rebuke those that " follow not with us " is yet alive ; the call for vengeance is still heard ; the disciples of the lowly Jesus are still contending " which of them shall be the greatest." Neither legality nor self-importance are in accord with grace, and they obscure the true nature and character of God.

But who can reveal God save God Himself ? " The only begotten Son, who dwells in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The life on earth of Jesus, God's Son incarnate, was the unveiling of God ; His miracles expressed not only the power, but the goodness of God ; whilst His death—which men regard as weakness—laid bare His heart. " Hereby perceive we the love, because He laid down His life for us " (1 John III. 16). These words of John were uttered after he had witnessed the affecting scenes of Calvary. His once vindictive spirit had now given place to one of another kind : " Beloved," he writes, " if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another " (1 John IV. 11). " We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren " (1 John III. 16). *Now* he understands what kind of spirit should animate the followers of Christ. " God," he says, " hath given us of His spirit." This is in order that the testimony of Jesus might be continued through us, His disciples.

Loving each other, we show that "God dwelleth in us," for "God is love."

In prophetic vision, the same inspired writer sees the glorified company of the redeemed coming down from heaven and shedding a light most precious; flooding the earth with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. We shall form part of that company; we now partake of His Spirit, but do we shed that light around us *now*, is God expressed in our lives to-day? Men may speak like angels, but if love be absent from their lives they give no true impression of God; they do not make God known as Christ did; it is only as we love one another we show that God dwelleth in us and His love is brought to perfection in us.

W. TAYLOR.

God has been There.

CHRIST upon earth was perfect goodness in all His dealings with men, meeting them in all their need. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, cast out demons, ministered to their wants in every way. In this lowly Man God has visited a world of misery and wretchedness. Let me get hold of the blessed fact that God has been in a world of misery and wretchedness and toil; here my soul gets a resting-place and a divine acquaintance with the God with whom I have to do. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

But this is not all. I find Christ coming down into my condition, made sin for me, going under the death and under the judgment due to me, and bearing my sins—not merely kind towards my miseries—showing all goodness to me, but altogether alone on the cross suffering the wrath and judgment of God. There, alone with God, the great question of sin was settled perfectly and for ever, not by His sinless, gracious life here, but when drinking the cup of wrath, made sin, made a curse, when bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.

J. N. DARBY.

**The very hairs of your head are all numbered.
 Fear not, therefore ;
 ye are of more value than many sparrows.**

“ THE sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself ” (Ps. LXXXIV. 3).

God fails not to find a “ house ” for the most *worthless*, and a “ nest ” for the most *restless* of birds. What confidence this should give us ! How we should rest in the love and care of that God who says, “ Ye are of more value than many sparrows.” What repose the soul finds that casts itself on the watchful, tender care of Him who cares so fully for the need of all His creatures ! A *nest* and a *house* convey to us a place of security—a shelter from storm—a covert to hide in—a protection from all that can harm—a place to rest in, to nestle in, to joy in ; all this we may find in God our Father.

No event, no circumstance, is too minute for Him who counts the hairs of your head, and suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed. Nothing takes Him by surprise, He knows the end from the beginning and has provided for thy present distress. The cloud that has darkened your life, coming upon you suddenly, like a thunder-clap, overwhelming you with its outbursts, He saw before it was the size of a man’s hand, and has thought of and provided for it.

Act on that gracious word, “ Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” This is your resource at all times. *He careth for you.* His eye never slumbers nor sleeps. His love never changes, His arm never wearies. The night may be dark, the billows high, the wind boisterous, circumstances cheerless, joyless and gloomy, the pressure long continued, but faint not, go again, and again, and again, casting all your care upon Him, until He fills your heart with His peace and lifts you superior to the circumstances ; or rolls the cloud away. Has He not said, I will never—no never—leave thee nor forsake thee ?

“The Beauty of the Lord.”

Ps. XXVII. 4.

BEAUTIES, moral, official, and spiritual, meet in Christ. In Isaiah XXXIII. we read, that as King He shall be seen in His beauty, for then His subjects will have learned His redemptive work and His perfect suitability as Saviour and King. What a contrast there is between the lowly “Man of Sorrows” in whom Israel saw no beauty and the mighty Divider of spoils in His kingdom glory.

Great was the beauty He displayed in His humiliation, but it was moral, and for the appreciation of the heart. Great shall be the beauty of the King when seen in official dignity and splendour. “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.”

But, between the humiliation and the kingdom glory, there is a beauty to be seen in Him while still hidden from our actual sight in those heavens which conceal Him. This, I think, may be learned in the words of the Psalmist (XXVII. 4). “One thing,” he says, “have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD.” Here the Lord is not seen in humiliation, grief, and sorrow; nor in royal glory, but enshrined in the privacy of the temple, withdrawn from mortal gaze.

This apprehension must be purely spiritual, and the seeker must abstract himself from all that would obscure the vision. The “beauty of the Lord is there visible to the eye of faith and to the heart of love. So visible, so attractive, that the writer declares, “One thing . . . will I seek after; that I may . . . behold the beauty of the Lord.” This one thing was the supreme desire of his soul, and that for “all the days of his life”! He was captivated by that beauty; his whole heart was spellbound, but then—

The Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men
That they who meet it unaware
Can never rest on earth again.

Never, never ! Henceforth, like Paul, they cannot see for the glory of that light ; their eye and heart are fascinated by that which eclipses all the sights and glories of earth.

Is this a mere rhapsody, a dream ? No, God forbid we should think so. The sorrow is that we so little accustom ourselves while in the rounds of our far too formal lives to allow that beauty to entrance our souls and rivet our affections.

Yet it is there for the deep heart enjoyment of every one of His loved and blood-bought people. Fain would He disclose Himself in all that He is to such, and cause their enraptured hearts to overflow in adoration and praise. Think how a vision of that beauty lifted the martyr Stephen clean out of all his surroundings and made him reflect some of its rays. Oh ! how sanctifying is a vision of that beauty ; how it transforms the whole life of the disciple. To such an one the Lord says, " I will manifest Myself to him " (John xiv. 21). This manifestation is individual and personal, but unspeakably precious. Let us covet, above all things, personal intimacy with the Lord, and that for all the days of our life, until we " see Him as He is " in heavenly glory.

J. WILSON SMITH.

The Church after the Rapture.

HAVE we any Scriptures which indicate where the church will be in the interval between the rapture and the appearing of the Lord ?

The answer is simple : *we have*. The Lord Jesus tells us in John xiv. 3, that He will come to receive the saints to Himself, " that where I am ye may be also." But his blessed words go further still. He mentions for the first time in Scripture the Father's house (for I do not allude to the temple in Jerusalem, as in John ii. 16), and connects with it His going to prepare a place for His own, the emphasis lying in " I go " to prepare it. In all His path down here His words and works had revealed the Father and thus the Father's house. In going there on the ground of accom-

plished redemption He fitted it as the place for us, and us for the place. "And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am ye may be also." Could anything be more decisive? Then will be fulfilled that which He has demanded of the Father, and which alone can satisfy His heart. "Father, I will they that also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am: that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world," and this as an entirely distinct thing from the glory in which He will display us with Himself at His appearing, "that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (see John XVII. 22-24).

The manner of the accomplishment of the promise is revealed in 1 Thessalonians IV. 15-17, with especial reference to the need of the youthful assembly at Thessalonica, of whom it has been helpfully observed "the principal and living object was the Lord Himself, and they were waiting His return with hearts full of joy and life; but the heavenly side of this expectation had not its place clearly marked in their minds, and they connected the coming too much with the manifestation, so that the earthly character predominated, and the Lord seemed to be shut out from it." Hence verses 13, 14. But the revelation given the Apostle for them puts all in its place, and the dead in Christ first "raised in glory," as we learn from 1 Corinthians xv., and we which are alive and remain, "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, who shall come Himself for us as He promised; "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The air was but the meeting-place, as in contrast with the earth, the vestibule to the Father's house.

I know not that we need go further for any simple soul that loves the Lord, and for whom heaven is "where I am." But there is the strongest confirmation of the meeting in the air being only introductory to the heavenly glory of Christ in Revelation. We must not expect to find the intimate side of the Father's house revealed there; nor the Father as our Father. It would not accord with the divine design and

scope of the Book. Nor, therefore, have we the coming of the Lord to receive the saints that compose the church to Himself. But the glorious results for them of His having done so are clearly presented, when the book is divided for us into its three parts (chap. I. 19), "the things which thou hast seen," namely, the aspect in which the Lord was seen of John in chapter I., "the things which are," that is, the state of things in the church as the responsible vessel of His testimony as long as it exists down here to be addressed, "and the things which shall be after these things" (as more definitely expressed in the original). We know that the third division is yet future. For from chapter IV. on, the church is no longer taken account of in the Book, till the closing words of it (chap. XXII. 16, etc.), answering to the address of chapter I. 4-11 by which it was put into their hands.

Chapter IV. 1 opens with the identical words of the third division of I. 19: "After these things," and the scene in heaven opens to John. Round the throne, and One who sat on it, are four and twenty thrones on which the elders sit, clothed as priests and crowned as kings. We learn who they are from chapter V., who, in the nearest circle round the throne, and the Lamb seen as slain in the midst of it, proclaim Him worthy to take the sealed book and to open the seals thereof, "for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and nation and hast made them unto our God kings and priests and they shall reign over the earth" (as verses 9 and 10 must be read). As in true worship they are not occupied with themselves, so as to define who they are thus redeemed and exalted, but with the worthiness of the Lamb and His work. But it is only the full realization in glory of what they already knew to be their place when on earth as we find in chapter I. 4, 5. The moment He was presented in any of the varied glories that belonged to Him, they could not be silent, but break forth in praise, "unto Him that loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever."

Having thus established who the elders are, the representatives of the heavenly redeemed, they that are Christ's

at His coming—I doubt not taking in the saints of the Old Testament times as well as the church period—I only note in conclusion, that not only their place in the highest heavenly glory is given us, but their occupation—worship being the chief as in chapter IV. 10, 11 ; V. 14 ; XI. 16-18 ; XIX. 4. They are also marked by full intelligence of God's purposes and ways upon earth as in chapter VII. 13-17 besides the passages referred to. All this takes place between their first being seen in heaven, as the effect of what is called the rapture, and the appearing of Christ which is not till chapter XIX. 11, when He comes forth from heaven. We last hear of them as taking part in the greatest revelation of joy in heaven over the terrible judgment of Babylon, the destroyer of the saints, and corruptress of the earth—the fearful end of that which had professed the name of Christ, but that being spued out of Christ's mouth had become the fitting instrument of Satan in the apostate system, so designated and judged in chapters XVII. and XVIII. Then just before the Lord comes forth to execute the last stroke of judgment in Person, which will clear the scene for His taking the kingdom, there is the marriage of the Lamb in heavenly glory, His wife, the saints of this present epoch from Pentecost till He comes, while those of old may be those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. If this be so it accounts for the elders being no more seen as such ; they have in fact divided into these two distinct families of the redeemed. None but those who are called since Christ took His place as the risen and ascended Man could be united to Him in glory to be His wife and bride, though all who are of the first resurrection shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. But enough has been said to show from Scripture how the interval between the taking up of the church and the appearing of the saints with Christ in glory will be filled by them, and the place they have with Him. So full and complete is our association with the risen Christ that our place is ever determined by His. Thus there is no possible warrant for the idea that, because the saints meet Him in the air when He comes for them, they shall remain till they appear with Him in glory.

J. A. TRENCH.

Prayer in Luke's Gospel.

TRUE prayer is accompanied by a conscious definite sense of hanging upon God. Too often, when we approach God, we are prone to think that a certain quantity of prayer will be certain to bring a certain quantity of blessing. As the Lord says, "They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." This is not so. Prayer is really the sense in the soul of clinging to God. You are entirely dependent on Him for the thing you want to get from Him. If I ask you to give me something, I am depending upon your generosity to give it to me. The Apostle James says, If you are in affliction, "pray." Prayer means that you want something definite from God, and that He alone can give it to you.

The first chapter of Luke gives us the account of our Lord's foretelling, and the description given of Him by the angel to Mary. The second chapter gives us the account of His actual birth, and a very few notices of His early years. In the third chapter He comes into publicity, and takes His place definitely here as the great Servant from God, the One who was to re-establish the relationships between God and man, that sin had broken, and to show what man should be Godward.

"Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened" (Luke III. 21). He takes His place in absolute and expressed dependence upon God. It is somewhat like the opening of the 16th Psalm, the Psalm which is peculiarly and properly the Psalm that belongs to Christ, "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." The attitude of dependence is there expressed in Him who came to set forth perfectly and properly in Himself the right relationships between man and God. It was the first time that the heavens opened on a praying man.

In chapter v. verse 16 it says, "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed." That was in the midst of active service, for we find Him, in the preceding chapter, teaching the people and healing the leper; but what sustained Him was dwelling in the presence of, and hanging upon the power of God constantly. He retired into the

wilderness away from all the surroundings of the previous part of the chapter, and prays. He not only began His ministry in the spirit of prayer, but He continued it in the same spirit.

Turn to chapter vi. verse 12. Here we have a very remarkable case. "It came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." It may be that none of us have set ourselves to spend a night in prayer. If we did, very likely we should not succeed ; but whether we have done so or not, we should ever have the conscious sense of our need, and be cast upon God continually in the midst of our service. When it was day He called to Him His disciples. He was going to associate others with Him in the great and mighty work He had undertaken. He had to choose those who were suitable to carry the glad tidings.

In chapter ix. verse 18, "It came to pass that as He was alone praying, his disciples were with Him : and He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am ? " He says a little further down, in the 22nd verse, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day." He is speaking now about His passing out of this world, and we find Him in the same attitude of prayer. As He prayed, and His disciples being with Him, He unfolded to them these things about to take place.

A little further down in the same chapter, the 28th verse, we read, "It came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray," and as He prayed He was transfigured. He carries prayer everywhere, at the beginning of His ministry, all through His ministry, and in every detail of His ministry. He came down here as a Man to take His place before God, and to receive everything from God. It was not only that He was to receive it from God, but He was cast upon God to receive it.

Turn now to chapter xi. verse 1. "It came to pass that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray." They desired for themselves that which they saw so beau-

tifully set forth in Him. So He taught them the prayer that is commonly called the "Lord's prayer." This ought to be more properly called "the disciples' prayer," because He taught them to pray just in the circumstances where they were dispensationally. What He taught them to pray contained potentially the kernel of all right desire in the transition age in which they were then found. The prayer was suitable to them at that time, but it does not express all the petitions suitable to the liberty and power of Christianity, founded upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and His present place in glory. But let no one despise this prayer. It was a prayer formulated by Him who had the potential power of all that He will display in glory. Morally, it is suitable for every time. "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth"—done in my heart, just like it is done in heaven. What a beautiful prayer that is. "Do not lead me into temptation"—I am not capable of withstanding it—but "keep me from evil."

A little further down He says, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto Him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves . . . I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him.'" Because he is absolutely shameless—that is the meaning of the word. He comes at twelve o'clock at night, when everybody is asleep,—he comes and knocks his friend up. The man has no shame in him. What is to be done? The only thing is to give him his three loaves and let him be off.

That is the thing here; it is a kind of shameless thing. Have you ever felt like that? I have felt downright ashamed for the things I was asking,—the "like of me" to ask those wonderful things. Then I remembered, "because of his importunity, he will give it to him."

Now we will turn to chapter XVIII. There is a very interesting expression in chapter XVIII. Here is a widow. A widow has nobody to look after her. A widow is the picture of misery, poverty, and helplessness. She goes to this unjust judge, and says, "Avenge me of mine adversary." What does he care about a widow? If a millionaire

came to him he would do it quickly enough ; but this widow has not got anything, so he was not going to interest himself on her behalf. Now mark what follows in verse 4 : " Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." That is how the Lord described it. " Do not say, " I have prayed to the Lord once, and there is an end of it." Pray on.

" Lest by her continual coming she weary me." In the other verse it was the man's shamelessness. Here it is the woman's pertinacity. That is the way to pray ; keep up the unbroken continuity of the thing ; have confidence in God, seeing that He is not impoverished by giving, and He is not enriched by withholding, and He loves to give. Therefore let us look to Him constantly that He may enlarge in our souls the sense of the glory of Christ. It will be His pleasure to do it.

Now turn to Luke xxii. 41-46. " He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed . . . and when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said to them, Why sleep ye ? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." In Gethsemane He entered in anticipation into the great question of good and evil, the mighty powers that were in conflict, when on the Cross He had to bear the brunt of what sin is, and its consequences. " He prayed," and " He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." You never prayed like that. That is the agony of prayer. This is the last time in the Gospel that it is recorded of Him that He prayed.

I would commend this beautiful gospel to your prayerful consideration. Read the first four verses of the first chapter. A well-known infidel, Renan, said of the Gospel of Luke, in connection with these verses, " It is the most beautiful book in the world." Take it up and read it through. It flows like oil. Other books have their characteristics, but they do not flow on in the way this does. It is beautiful reading, and all about a most lovely and prayerful Man. May it lead us all to pray more.

EDWARD CROSS.

Notes of Address.

“Our Calling” in Paul’s Epistles.

PAUL’S Epistles present “our calling” in varied aspects. Romans VIII. shows that it is the outcome of divine purpose, with a view to our being conformed to the image of God’s Son. On this line all things work together for good, everything is under God’s controlling hand who is ever for us, and in all that He permits the ultimate end for which we are called is before Him. Ephesians also connects the will and counsel of God with “our calling.” Paul prays that we might know “the hope of His calling.” This hope is set before us in those verses which unfold the good pleasure of God that we should be brought into nearness and acceptance in the Beloved, and be for the Father’s pleasure in the relationship of children.

Our walk in chapter III. is to be in accord with God’s will, we are to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called. This is to be done in the same lowly and gracious spirit that ever characterized the One in whom we are taken into favour, He is our great example, we are to be “followers of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us” (Eph. v. 1, 2). Chapter II. verse 10 reminds us that there is a special pathway marked out by God for us in which we are to walk; we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. To walk in them is part of our calling, and should lead us to much exercise as to how far we are daily maintaining these good works.

In 1 Thessalonians II. 12 “our calling” is connected with the kingdom and glory of God; we are to walk worthy of God who has called us to share that vast domain over which Christ will reign supreme, and participate in the glory which will permeate every part of it. As that glory is before us it will colour our aims and objects in this world, and thus influence our practical walk.

In Philippians III. 14 we read of “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” This carries our thoughts to that exalted Saviour whose name is above every name, and whose beauty had so entranced Paul that every other thought was eclipsed, and his one earnest desire was to be

found in Christ in divine righteousness—in that blessed scene on high where Christ is everything.

Hebrews reminds us that ours is a “heavenly calling”; we have no portion here, all our blessings are outside earth, we are to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, and set our hopes and desires on that which is heavenly.

Colossians III. 15 tells us that there is a present calling, a portion to be known in the midst of all the disturbing and distracting elements around. We are called to enjoy the same character of peace which Christ enjoyed as He passed through the world. “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to the which also ye are called in one body.” To enjoy this privilege and enter into this calling is the portion of every member of the body. He then adds, “be ye thankful.” We are not to grumble, but take all things from God’s hand in a grateful spirit, knowing that all things work together for good, and that whatever betides us, God is for us, all is under His gracious hand, nothing happens to us without His permission.

Paul makes other references to “our calling” but they have already been dwelt on in these pages, so we content ourselves with reminding each other that ours is a holy and heavenly calling, the outcome of divine purpose, and has for its object our being conformed to the image of God’s Son, and sharing in His kingdom and glory, giving character to our walk, as we wait for the fulfilment of these Divine counsels.

R. K. WILSON.

DARE we entertain the thought that He whose nature and whose name is *love* could send us one superfluous pang, impose a needless burden, or permit the thorn to pierce He knew would pierce in vain? Mercy infinite prevents one drop from mingling in the cup which could have been withheld. Thou God of love, vouchsafe us grace to bow beneath Thy rod; and breathe—although it be through burning tears—“Thy will be done!”

Blessed be God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

“BLESSED is the man whose strength is in Thee.” Are you passing through the valley of Baca—weeping? Comfort yourself in the unchangeable love of God your Father. Full assurance of that unalterable love is an invulnerable shield. To question God’s love in trial is to drop the shield of faith in that word which assures us that “all things work together for good.” Faith rises above our circumstances, and affirms that all happenings are permitted by Him who is perfect love. Faith always vindicates God and His word, however heavy and sweeping the stroke. It calmly rests in the truth that the same love which gave an only begotten Son will never cause His child a needless tear. Faith in God will turn the dreariest desert into a fruitful field, change disappointment and distress into an ocean of richest blessing. However long the trial may continue God would have us confide in His love alone, and learn what He is to us, however painful the process.

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THE valley of humiliation and sorrow became a well of blessing to Paul, when in answer to his thrice-repeated cry for deliverance from the trial he was in, the Lord said to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness.” He gloried in that which had been so humbling and painful, He rested in the love that had ordered everything for him, and on the all-sufficiency of the Lord who was with him. Rain from heaven filled the pools. He had known the Lord in the height of glory, now he learns the same blessed One in the depths of sorrow, and rejoices in Christ’s sufficiency; no longer desiring his circumstances altered, but turning his “valley” into a “well” that has refreshed God’s saints in trial ever since. Paul’s Lord is ours; and the grace which met him is there to-day for us.

One Thing I Desire.

PSALM XXVII.

"THE Lord is my light and my salvation." Is not that beautiful? "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Why does the Apostle Paul tell us to rejoice? Things were going badly with him when he wrote Philippians, but he is not afraid. If he is not afraid we are not to be afraid. The Psalmist was not afraid, though there was the wicked one, enemies, war. Because the Lord was light, the Lord was salvation, the Lord was strength, why should he be afraid?

But if there is anything else in which your confidence is placed, failure will follow. Your confidence should be in the Lord. If in the Lord, He will prove sufficient no matter what the circumstances may be; we are only a poor feeble people, so our joy and strength and confidence must be in the Lord alone. He will prove sufficient whatever happens, and if we tell Him our troubles He will give us the peace that passes understanding. "One thing" engaged Paul, "One thing" the Psalmist desired. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the *beauty of the Lord*, and to enquire in His temple." Is that what we desire? Is that what we seek after? We may be very nice Christians, speaking after the manner of men, and know very little, or nothing, of "beholding the beauty of the Lord."

It is everything to have the Lord before us. You need not isolate yourself; if you are in a tramcar, or anywhere else, you can get alone with the Lord. The great lack to-day is we so little dwell in the presence of God, so as to see the beauty of the Lord.

Then we are to "enquire in His temple." It is the place of light where we get guidance. Why is it that one Christian says a thing is right, and another says it is wrong? It is just this, one or other of them is not in the light of the temple. It is not enough to have Scripture at our finger-ends. We may be well up in our Bibles, may know our

Bible wonderfully, and still know nothing about guidance in a difficulty. We must get into the presence of God if we are to get real understanding of the Scriptures and light from God as to our path. Differences of judgment are because we dwell so little in the presence of God, and we are so much formed by one another. We run to one another and say, "What do you think about this?" and "What do you think about that?" We must get alone, the door shut—the door of our hearts, these poor foolish hearts of ours that go out here and there—that God may speak to us, like Mary sitting at the feet of Christ, and hearing His word, that God may make His mind clear to us. That is what the Apostle Paul did. He dwelt so in the presence of God that he had the mind of God in a wonderful way when many were otherwise minded. He was in a time of trouble, but nothing troubled him, nothing made him afraid.

The Psalmist said, I will offer in Thy tabernacle sacrifices of joy. Why? Because he was in the presence of God. In spite of the difficulties, in spite of the enemies he could rejoice and sing. In myself I am a poor thing, and I need the Lord every day and every moment of my life, and I cannot get on without Him. Glorious as my position is in Christ, glorious as the prospect is before me, yet in myself I am a poor thing; so feeling my weakness and the condition of things I turn to God, not being able to bear them alone, and I pray, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies." We are such poor things, and we need Him every moment. Whoever forsakes us—and the dearest may forsake—yet the Lord will be sufficient. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." If we get into the secret of God, if we get alone with Him, so that He can speak to us and we can hear His whisper, then He comforts our hearts with His complete superiority to everything, and then we can turn to others and say, Be of good courage. Do not fear. If you trust in man be afraid. If you are trusting in circumstances, be afraid. If you are trusting in some grand things that are going to happen, be afraid; but if you have got the Lord before you, you need not fear. Be of good courage, and He shall

strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord, be much with Him, and know what it is to be shut in with Him, and hear His voice, in that region, so to speak, where the voice of man does not penetrate, and then we can be strong for God in this scene, and invite others to be of good courage, because the Lord is the Lord, and nothing can disturb Him.

COLONEL JACOB.

The City of God.

REV. XXI. 10.

THE city most familiar to John was Jerusalem, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, whose praises psalmist and prophet celebrated, where God had once recorded His Name, and which was designed to be a centre of light and blessing for all nations. But it had failed to answer to its privileges, insomuch that when Jesus beheld the city He wept over it.

Having refused Christ, the true light, it was covered in darkness at the crucifixion—apt picture of the moral darkness in which it is now enshrouded under the government of God; but in Revelation XXI. John had another city in view, where tears are not; a metropolis which will answer in every way to the bright design of its great Architect and fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people of God.

John, having lost earthly blessing and sharing in the rejection of Christ, was cheered by the prospect of the full display in the heavenly City of the light which men refused when Christ came. He saw the City descending out of heaven from God having the glory of God. Its general appearance was like that of jasper, clear as crystal. Its walls were of jasper, as also its first foundation. In the breast-plate of Israel's High Priest, jasper symbolized divine grace; in the heavenly City it has the same significance. Grace divine shines in every part. The first stone in its foundation, and its walls, all indicate that the people who form this City will express "the exceeding grace" of God (Eph. II. 7). It is in the mind of its great Builder that "they should be to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. I. 6).

It rejoiced the heart of the lonely exile in Patmos, that the light which now shines in darkness will one day fill the universe, and that the nations of the earth will then know "that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Other precious stones shedding various rays of refracted light, garnished the City's foundations, symbols which speak of the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii. 10), His nature and character, and the beauty of His workmanship (Eph. ii. 10).

John saw no temple therein, for the City, protected by its walls "great and high," is holy in every part. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. There is no veil to shut off the holy place; worship is offered in the immediate presence of God revealed in the Lamb.

Nothing that defiles can enter in; idolatry, man worship, and deceit, are excluded from a sphere where everything is of God. The street of the City is of pure gold, like unto transparent glass, so that no girdle is required to hold up the garments from defilement; everything there is pure and holy. The City has no need of the sun or moon: bright with the effulgence of God it is itself a light-bearer.

In John's vision the New Jerusalem is a garden city (Rev. xxii.). From it flows the river of life, the stream which makes glad the City of God. In the midst of the river and on either side, is the tree of life, ever fruitful, always in season, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, and yielding its fruit every month, with its fadeless leaves, for the healing of the nations.

Thus, in metaphor and symbol, are described some of the spiritual blessings which God has planned for His people, and which are realized by faith even now. "He that cometh to Me," Jesus says, "shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35). "He shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not" (Isa. lviii. 11; John vii. 37-39).

The gates of the City are of pearl. So dear is the City to the heart of Christ, that it is called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." He Himself has likened the Church to a "pearl of great price," so highly valued by the Merchant that He sold all He had in order to possess it.

John was told to write what He saw in a book and to leave the book open. "Seal it not," the voice said, "for the time is at hand." Its title is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." If we are His servants we shall seek to understand the book, and thus gain a right idea of a future state of bliss. We shall long for heaven not as a retreat from service, but because it is the home of our affections, the place where Christ is.

We shall love His appearing, because He will then be in possession of His rights: the world which now rejects Him will then be under His beneficent sway. The night of sin, with its weeping, and its curse, will have vanished, and "everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord." Filled with His Spirit, we shall not, meanwhile, forget the lost and the perishing around us—the poor sinner away from God—but, knowing that the City's gates are open, we shall echo the cry: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It is well to examine our outlook. If we are self-centred, the heavenly City will have no charm for us; our minds will be set on earthly things. But if we are Christ-centred, we shall look for the City which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Cities of earth have no real foundations; they will perish as Nineveh and Babylon. But when Babylon the Great is no more (Rev. XVIII.), the City of God will come into view, and remain for ever. The Christian's civic interests are there already, "Our commonwealth is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour," who will shortly "subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. III. 20-21). "He which testified these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Do our hearts respond: "Even so come, Lord Jesus," and as strangers and pilgrims here do we seek the City which is to come? W. TAYLOR.

CHRIST did not love us because we were worthy, but by loving us He made us worthy. How invincible is the love of Christ! It is "strong as death" (Cant. VIII. 6). Death might take away His life, not His love.

THOMAS WATSON (1686).

Warnings and Helps to Pilgrims.

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the 1st Epistle of Peter, the pilgrim character of Christianity is emphasized. In both these Epistles converts from Judaism are addressed. Judaism, be it remembered, was a God-given religion, but an earthly one ; it set up an established system on the earth, and produced anything but a pilgrim character in those who were under it. Bearing this in mind, the divinely given suitability of the contents of these Epistles becomes evident.

Seeing that the public profession of Christianity has gravitated to the level of Judaism, and that the great desire of the majority is to establish systems down here, or to perpetuate those that have been established, these Epistles have a very loud voice from God to us to-day, and we do well to take good heed to them.

In Hebrews, chapter III., we are warned by Israel's failure, through unbelief, to enter God's rest in Canaan. In chapter IV. it is stated that though Israel did ultimately enter Canaan under Joshua, at no time did they enter into God's rest, proving from the Psalms that the rest of God is still future, a rest now vastly widened in scope and meaning, being a heavenly and not an earthly one.

In connection therewith we find three striking exhortations, setting forth our responsibility as pilgrims going to the rest ; and also a plain statement of the three great helps for our journey, by means of which we may be triumphantly carried through.

"Let us therefore fear" (ver. 1). Not, of course, with a fear that is slavish, but rather filial. In the gospel of God's grace fear is excluded—"perfect love casteth out fear"—nor is there an "if" to tarnish its brightness. Responsibility is connected with God's government ; holiness marks it. The pilgrim path is one of testing ; the world is alluring, and the flesh not only weak but treacherous. In such a connection an "if" very appropriately comes in, and fear becomes a necessity. Godly fear is not a blot upon a Christian's character, but rather an adornment.

“ *Let us labour, therefore* ” (ver. 11). The idea of working to *earn* the rest does not enter into this expression. The word in the original is not the usual one for “labour” but one translated elsewhere “be diligent” (Titus III. 12), and “endeavouring” (Eph. IV. 3). The force of the expression is, “Let us be diligent therefore to enter into that rest.” No moral feature is a greater asset than diligence. Just as with a schoolboy diligence and application are more valuable in the long run than brilliancy, so with a saint are they more valuable than shining gifts. Let us remember that though to bring in human effort in connection with salvation mars the grace of God, to use the doctrines of grace as an excuse for lazy Christians is equally harmful in the opposite direction.

“ *Let us hold fast* ” (ver 14). To hold fast our profession is the very antithesis of apostasy, against which such solemn warnings are uttered in this Epistle. It implies steady perseverance, and maintenance of the Christian name and character in the face of both the opposition of Satan and the seductions of the world.

Were we writing for anxious sinners we should impress upon them that there is *nothing to fear* because of the full character of the grace of God: we should tell them that there is *nothing to do* because Christ has done it all: and we should urge upon them, not the necessity of their holding fast, but rather that having been taken up on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, *He will hold them fast*. But the very things which as anxious sinners we are *not* to do, we ARE to do as saints and pilgrims. In this connection nothing is more appropriate than godly fear, the result of recognizing the difficulties of the journey and our own weakness, coupled with diligent endeavour in pursuing the way, and steady perseverance in maintaining our pilgrim character, and the confession of Christ’s name in connection with it.

Lest the contemplation of our responsibilities might have a depressing effect upon us, and tend to produce in our hearts an unworthy fear which would be dishonouring to God; the Spirit of God immediately directs our thoughts to the resources which are ours upon the journey.

The first of these is the WORD OF GOD. It is living and

powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Many different properties are possessed by the Word of God, as we learn from such Scriptures as Acts xx. 32, and 2 Timothy III. 16 ; but the one feature singled out for special mention here is its cutting and discerning power. It acts upon the soul as Röntgen rays act upon the body, and the most secret thoughts and motives are exposed.

Such action is in the highest degree good for us. Have we not found again and again that our greatest difficulties are in connection with ourselves ? We frequently speak of the difficulties of the path, but sometimes forget that the real difficulty lies within us.

Sooner or later therefore practical questions arise which demand a spirit of self-judgment and careful scrutiny of one's motives. Those who have most conscientiously set themselves to the task best know how difficult it is. How perplexingly do fleshly motives lurk behind even our most spiritual desires ! What strange mixtures of opposing principles do we find within !

At this juncture the Word of God comes to our rescue, laying bare and unravelling the tangled skeins of our thoughts and motives. It unerringly distinguishes between soul and spirit, discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart and presents us with a standard by which we may test ourselves. It gives us also, especially in the Old Testament, many most useful sidelights from the lives of saints of old, permitting us to see the principles on which they acted and the mistakes they made. Thus are we warned as well as instructed, and brought consciously into the presence of God. The way in which the Spirit of God in verses 12 and 13 almost insensibly glides in thought from the Word of God to God Himself has often been noted. Should it not teach us the great importance of reading God's word not only for information or to be able to help others, but that we may thereby be brought under the all-seeing eye of God, to be searched and humbled and helped.

Should we shrink from this process it is well to remember that the Word of God is closely connected with the PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. This gracious provision is evidently

introduced here in order that two things may be specially emphasized. In verse 14 the emphasis lies upon the greatness of the Priest. As to His office, He is not only a Priest but a *High Priest*, nay, even more, a *great High Priest*. As to His position, He has "passed into," or as it should read, "passed through the heavens": that is, the heavens are conceived of as chambers, inhabited by angels or other intelligences, and leading to the highest heaven, the immediate presence of God. Through all the heavens, past every created being, the great High Priest of our profession has passed, never stopping until He took His seat at the right hand of God. As to His person, He is Divine and human—Jesus—the SON OF GOD.

In verse 15 the emphasis lies upon the grace of the Priest. He is *touched* with the *feeling* of our *infirmities*. The three italicized words should be carefully noted. *Infirmities*, not sins; for His temptations here were wholly apart from sin. While infirmity merits sympathy, sin merits nothing but condemnation. Further, He is concerned with the *feeling* of our infirmities, not with the knowledge merely. When trouble assails us and sympathy is offered by our fellow-Christians, we quickly know the difference between that which flows from knowledge merely and that which springs from the feeling begotten by having been already in similar circumstances. Apart from sin, He has been "in all points tempted like as we are." And then with the feeling of our infirmities He is *touched*. He regards us not with the cold interest of the philosopher, but with the warm affection of the Lover of our souls. The warm tide of the sympathy of our great High Priest is ever flowing. Could anything be sweeter than this?

Lastly, there is the THRONE OF GRACE. The effect of the Word of God is to make us conscious that we need it. The effect of the priesthood of Christ is to embolden us to draw near and avail ourselves of it. Every Hebrew must have been familiar with the idea of God having a throne, but to them it was the symbol of everything that was awe-inspiring. To us it is the very symbol of grace. What has wrought the change? God's Priest sits upon that throne! He came forth as Apostle, declaring the rights of that

throne, He died as Surety fully meeting its claims, and now as Priest He has taken His seat upon the very throne that He vindicated, crowned with glory and honour. It has become a throne of grace. From that throne is dispensed the mercy and grace needed by us, and sufficient to carry us along the whole of our pilgrim way to the rest of God. The whole of our pilgrimage is our time of need, with our entrance into the rest the last trace of need will vanish for ever.

Careful remembrance of the three exhortations will make us more practical and diligent in utilizing the helps so graciously provided. Let us then more thankfully expose ourselves to the searchings of the Word of God ; more diligently cultivate the habit of communion with our great High Priest about everything ; and more boldly and frequently approach the throne of grace in definite and believing prayer. So shall we be carried happily through our pilgrimage into the rest of God.

F. B. HOLE.

A Fixed Heart.

" My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed : I will sing and give praise " (Ps. LVII. 7).

THIS Psalm recounts the many calamities David was under, his circumstances dark and gloomy as the cave he was now in ; distressed and besieged on every side, no *way* open to relief but that towards heaven. He was flying before Saul's cruelty, driven out to join consort with the untaught harmony of the woods, wandering like a vagabond, he had nothing *fixed* but his heart, *fixed* in the midst of agitations, serene within, when all around was storm and tempest.

How divinely great is that man whose inward harmony no jar and discord of outward affairs can alter and destroy. He knows the secret of fetching down his consolations from above.

B. GROSVENOR (1708).

Cullings.

HEAVEN is our home. Are we at home there ?

IF we let Christ practically out of our hearts, it costs a deal to bring Him back again.

OUR joys are spiritual ; seek them not in that which is carnal.

LOVE has now made me a child, so loving obedience to the Father becomes me.

How our hearts cultivate things that are not of Christ ! Whatever is not fit for His presence is not fit for my heart.

PRAYING for saints gives a person the power of seeing all the good in them.

If we prayed more for the saints we should have more joy in them, and more courage about them.

WE are not only blessed individually as sons, but corporately, as the body of Christ and the bride of the Lamb. Believers are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost ; he that is " joined " to the Lord is one spirit.

IN the day of the kingdom, all creation will utter its voice, everything that hath breath will praise the Lord, but we have a richer portion ; we can adoringly say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and hath blessed us with them *now*.

WRATH is cruel, anger is outrageous, and who is able to stand before envy or jealousy ? But *error in religious judgment may be the most cutting of all*, and this in proportion to the earnestness with which it is embraced ; for the thought of God is then abused to exclude every atom of human, not to say of brotherly, kindness.

The Word—Logos—Made Flesh.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

JOHN I. 1-14.

JESUS is God no less than the Father is, or the Holy Ghost ; but He is the Word in a way in which the Father and the Holy Ghost were not. It was Jesus Christ the Son of God who alone was the Word of God. He only after a personal sort expressed God.

The Father and the Holy Ghost remained in their own unseeable majesty. The Word had for His place to express God clearly, and this belonged to Him, it is evident, as a distinctive personal glory. It was not merely that He was the Word when He came into the world, but “in the beginning was the Word,” when there was no creature. Before anything came into being that was made, the Word was in the beginning with God, not merely in God, as if merged or lost in God, but He had a distinct personal subsistence before a creature existed. He “was in the beginning with God.” This is of immense importance.

We find His creation glory stated afterwards. “All things were made by Him.” There is nothing which more stamps God to be God than giving existence to that which had none, causing to exist by His own will and power. Now all things exist by the Word ; and so emphatically true is this that the Spirit has added, “and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

But there was that which belonged to the Lord Jesus that was not made: "In Him was life." It was not only that He could cause a life to exist that had not before existed, but there was a life that belonged to Him from all eternity. "In Him was life." Not that this life began to be; all else, all creation, began to be; and it was He that gave them the commencement of their existence. But in Him was life, a life that was not created, a life that was therefore divine in its nature. It was the reality and the manifestation of this life which were of prime importance to man. Everything else that had been since the beginning of the world was only a creature; but in Him was life. Man was destined to have the display of this life on earth. But it was in Him before He came among men. The life was not called the light of angels, but of men. Nowhere do we find that eternal life is created. The angels are never said to have life in the Son of God. They were kept by divine power and holy. Theirs is a purely creature life, whereas it is a wonderful fact of revelation that we who believe have the eternal life that was in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and are therefore said to be partakers of the divine nature. This is in no way true of an angel. It is not that we for a moment cease to be creatures, but we have what is above the creature in Christ the Son of God. If He was the Son of God, and had the full consciousness of it, He was also the obedient Man, essentially and ever perfect and sinless. He was all that a child ought to be, but it was the Son of God who was so. His relationship to His Father was as well known to Him as His obedience to Joseph and to His mother was beautiful, becoming, and perfect. The very essence of Christianity is the immediate personal connection in incarnation between God and the creature—God and Man in one Person. The simple faith that Jesus was God and Man in one Person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. His early days were spent in the physical and mental growth of the true humanity which He had assumed. Perfection is in Jesus.

J. N. DARBY.

Paul's Nephew.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present
help in trouble.

PSALM XLVI. 10.

ALL we know of him is that he was a "young man" (Acts XXIII. 16). He appears but once, and vanishes from the page of Scripture. But he was God's instrument, ready for His use at a very critical moment in the life of Paul, who was at that time in Roman custody, securely imprisoned, when forty of his enemies bound themselves under a great curse that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Somehow his nephew, by one of those mysterious providences, as they are called, got into the secret of the conspiracy for the assassination of his uncle.

Young though he was, and at great personal risk, he determined on doing all he could to defeat the would-be murderers by giving information of the plot to Paul. Led by one of the centurions to the chief captain, who "took him by the hand," and had a private interview with him; who, after hearing the story from his lips, enjoined silence on him. His work done, we hear no more of Paul's sister's son. He was God's instrument for the deliverance of this great servant of Christ. In the case of Peter an angel was the instrument, and miraculous was his deliverance from prison. Here it was a youth who disappointed the band of assassins and prolonged the days of the Apostle.

*"Say not, my soul, from whence can God relieve thy care:
Remember that omnipotence hath servants everywhere."*

His servant may be a "little maid," or "a lad with five barley loaves," or a flock of ravens, or "a widow woman," as well as an angel or a "sister's son"; but everywhere, and at all times, God is able to pick up and send a servant when all hope in expected channels is gone.

This is full of encouragement, and well it is for our oft-troubled hearts to remember that our God is just as omnipotent as He is omniscient, and that His love is as great as His power. He can employ a "young man" in His service as He can use an Apostle in His ministry.

May we have "faith in God" at all times.

J. W. SMITH.

The Church and the Gospel.

IN the figure of a " pearl of great price " (Matt. XIII. 46), the church is set forth in her preciousness. Matthew XVI. 18 sets forth her indestructibility, as partaking of the rock-stability of her Founder, so that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her. She is more in the estimation of Christ than all His glory besides. She has cost Him more to purchase, and in her is His highest delight, as in her His brightest glory shines. " He went and sold all that He had, and bought it." " Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish " (Eph. v. 25, 27). It is His chief object to-day in all that is going on. The gospel is not so spoken of. Not that it is of less moment in the sight of God ; and, seeing that God Himself, in the fullness of His being, His nature and His character, is the subject-matter of it, possibly it might be said to be in itself of wider import ; but plainly, the love of Christ for the church, as of a man for his wife, is said to be unique and paramount. Therefore by all means let us hold to the gospel ; without it there would be nothing for God ; but on no account let us lose sight of the church, for without it Christ would not have the object of His heart's desire. Moreover, in it also glory is to accrue to God through the ages, evermore (Eph. III. 21).

We have, then, in the first two scriptures named above the preciousness of the church to Christ, and her indestructibility as founded on the Rock ; while in the Epistle to the Ephesians we have her proper destiny, and the glory that belongs to her, according to the eternal purposes of God. The Apostle is occupied here not with what is negative, or with the failure of the church in her responsible history, but with what is positive, as she is " filled up to the fullness of God," and presented to the Son, in the perfection of creative power. The epistle begins with what is positive, coming down from eternity, " chosen in Him before the foundation of the world " ; it carries us on in the positive glory of the

church's place "throughout all ages, evermore," and all along the line we are learning that which is positive, in the place and blessings that belong to her. Accordingly she is viewed, not according to what she is historically, and in her responsible failure, but as a new creation in Christ, and as the fruit of the work of God therein, to be presented to Christ, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, pure and perfect, to the glory of God and the delight of Christ, and to the infinite and ineffable blessing of those who are to be associated with Him there, in the heavenly places.

It says, Matthew XIII. 44: "He went and sold all that He had, and bought it." It is not said here that He "came," but that He "went away." Where did He go? It is written again, Ephesians IV. 9, 10: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Again, Psalm CXXXIX. 15, 16: "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, what days they should be fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Have we not here mystically set forth the import of the death of Christ, when He "went away" to lay deep down in obedience the eternal foundation of the glory of God, and to purchase for Himself a corresponding prize, in the Bride that is to be the answer to His heart? He descended into the lower parts of creation, and then He ascended up far above all the upper parts of creation, that He might fill everything, absolute fullness flowing out from Him, in the amplitude and plenitude of that which is in Himself personally, and properly, as the Son of God. He has thus cleared the whole ground from the bottom to the top; and He can say therefore, as in the third chapter, "the fullness of Him who filleth all in all." Here all is, so to speak, "fair sailing," and in these waters our souls can progress. He has fought the great fight; He has made peace, in order to put our souls in the full, changeless, unassailable enjoyment of all that God has been pleased to set before us, that it

might fill us, that we might be filled up to the fullness of God. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God"—this is the goal; there He stops—"unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ."

That which gives character to the church is the Head of it; and that which will settle and establish our souls is the knowledge of Christ, and of the fullness that is in Him; so that we be no longer babes, without understanding, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, in the sleight of men, in unprincipled craft, making for the systematizing of the deceit with which the church has been from the first assailed. But contrariwise, being truthful, or sincere, in love, may grow up in everything to Him, who is the Head, Christ, from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the energy in its measure of every several part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love.

EDWARD CROSS.

Satisfaction, Worship, Testimony, Communion.

WHAT variety and freshness may be seen in that which the Holy Spirit portrays in Scripture, so that it is difficult to ascribe precedence to any special truth where so much is excellent; the heart is bowed before the lavish display of God's grace and goodness.

The love of God in the gift of His Son, and with Him "all things"; the grace of Christ in veiling His glory, coming into the world and finishing a work by which we are brought to God, and establishing a basis on which we shall be conformed to the image of His Son, together with the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide into all truth, and build a habitation of God composed of living stones, are what might be termed some of His gracious activities *downwards*.

Wonderful as these are outflowing from such a God as He has shown Himself to be, they are yet perhaps more comprehensible than His work in us in order that the

longings of His heart may be gratified by worship from those whom He has sought and found. This may be termed the *upward* effect of His downward grace.

This response may be progressively illustrated in four cases, in each of which the outflow of praise is the result of the *eye* of the worshipper being engaged with Him who had first attracted by His loving voice the ear of the beholder.

The report of the fame of King Solomon brought the Queen of Sheba from distant Ethiopia to Jerusalem, but when she was confronted with the glories of his court and heard the wisdom of his lips in the answers to all her hard questions, she had no more spirit left in her. Though incapable of expressing her appreciation of all she saw and heard, yet the spices presented to Solomon were more precious, of a more grateful odour, different from and unequalled by any others in his great stores of wealth.

Surely it is not too much to say that when the eyes of the saints are fixed on the true Solomon, seeing His glories, and having the ears filled with the gracious words that proceed out of His mouth, and their lips opened in praise, it ascends as sweet incense ; an offering valued in heaven, for “ whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.”

No gift is so acceptable as that emanating from a heart overflowing with adoration, no spices so full of grateful odour to God the Father, as worship spontaneously rendered—fruit of our lips confessing His name.

The worship of the blind man of John ix. is a step in advance of that of the Queen of Sheba. Cast out by parent and priest, leaderless and objectless, until found by Him who was likewise cast out. The Lord Jesus presents Himself to this desolate man without any outward distinctions. Not clad in soft raiment, but in the ordinary garb of the poor amongst whom He has graciously chosen to cast His lot, He declares Himself to be the Son of God. There was a test for faith ! but the once blind beggar, whose ears had heard the sweet tones of the voice of Jesus, has now his spiritual eyes opened to the moral glories displayed by this wondrous person at whose bidding he had washed and “ came seeing.” Entranced by the sight he fell down at His feet in adoring worship. The Queen of Sheba turned

and went to her own country, but here the blind man is left prostrate at the feet of Jesus, detained by the mighty attraction of the One who had captivated his affections.

Ephraim, in Hosea xiv., felt too the magical effects of having heard, and then observed, Him. All that once held him was cast aside, and not only did he find a charm for himself in the presence of his Lord, but he becomes a *testimony* for him too—a green fir tree.

A still further effect of *seeing* and *hearing* Him is to be found in Revelation III. 20: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me.” He will anoint the eyes of those who hear His voice; disclose Himself to them. Consort with them, partake of what they could give Him, and then transport their souls to the place where He is at home, the place of true joy, true wealth, true communion!

Satisfaction, Worship, Testimony, and Communion result from having the ear attentive to the wisdom of Jesus, and the eye filled with His glories.

S. SCOTT.

Colossians.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 2. The Epistle is addressed “to the saints and faithful brethren.” Is it intended to convey the thought that some have attached to it, that two classes of Christians are indicated?

The form of the original will hardly admit of this. I read rather with the New Translation, and the margin of the Revisers, “to the holy and faithful brethren in Christ;” faithful being possibly added to the more general character of holy brethren, because of the danger of being removed from the faith they had received which the Apostle has to contemplate in verse 23, and in such warnings as follow in chapter II.

Verse 5. "The hope which is laid up for you in heaven." What "hope" is meant here? In what way is it "laid up" in heaven?

It is "the hope of the gospel" referred to in verse 23, and in verse 27 as "the hope of glory." It is that of the heavenly glory of Christ, in which when the time comes we shall be manifested with Him (chap. III. 4). The saints are not in this Epistle seen as seated in Him in the heavenlies, but as risen with Him and walking on the earth; and the object of the Apostle is largely to fix their eyes on hopes and objects presented to them in heaven, so as to preserve or deliver if necessary from the effects of fleshly ordinances and philosophy, which would tend to becloud union with their Head on high and connect them with man and his world. But the springs of Christian life being yet fresh in them, faith in Christ and love to all the saints in view of the hope laid up for them in heaven, the Apostle finds ground for prayer and thanksgiving on their behalf, seizing upon that which was of God in them, as ever, first, as the ground upon which what was lacking may be met later.

Did the reception of the "truth of the gospel" produce fruit in the lives of those who knew the grace of God in truth, or does it mean they themselves were the "fruit"?

Both, in fact, are true. The gospel that had brought them this hope, connecting their hearts with heaven, was bearing fruit and growing (as added by all critical texts); in all the world it was so, as among those of Colosse also. Thus there was the inward fruit in life as also the outward progress of the gospel "since the day ye heard it and knew the grace of God in truth."

Verse 7. It has been said that Epaphras—not Paul—was the means of their conversion. Have we any evidence that Paul had personally visited Colosse?

Epaphras (one of themselves, IV. 12) had ministered that grace faithfully to them; as it would seem certain, from chapter II. 1, that the Apostle himself had not personally laboured there; and when now a fellow-prisoner with Paul (Philem. 23) he was still striving (the word is the same as in chap. I. 29) for them in prayer. Through him Paul

had learned of their "love in the Spirit," which confirms that he had not been there.

Verses 9-11. What do you consider are the chief points in Paul's prayer for them?

The prayer is not here, as in Ephesians 1., for the knowledge of God's counsels and the work of divine power that gives saints part in them; but for the full knowledge of God's will, to give an intelligent walk according to the heavenly objects revealed to them; the Apostle doubtless having in mind the total contrast such a walk would present to that of subjection to the ordinances and commandments of men to which he refers in chapter 2., verses 20-24. But for the soul to be informed and lit up with divine intelligence in such a way involves, as ever, a spiritual state formed in communion with God, wherein alone "wisdom and spiritual understanding" will be found as the sphere of that knowledge. Then, too, the Apostle desires for them a "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" who has Himself made such a way for them by going before them in it, and who will be personally known in what is worthy of and well-pleasing to Him as we set Him before us, with no other object and motive—"being fruitful in every good work and increasing therein by the full knowledge of God." The prayer for the walk of saints is then found to be based upon the wonderful deliverance wrought for them, opened out in all the extent of the commission of Paul of which we learn in Acts xxvi. 17, 18; and the resources of strength for it are only to be measured by "the might of His glory," so that there may not be merely a bright start, or a fresh spurt now and again, but all patience and endurance with joy.

Verse 12. Is every believer "meet"?

There can be no question of this, as it is the first ground of thanksgiving—"giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet"—and this at the very entrance of the path, even before one step is taken in it: so far is it from a gradual process only complete when we reach the end. All our meetness is Christ, and found for us in Him; as with the thief on the cross, made meet companion for the Son of God in the brightest spot in all the heavenly glory,

that first moment that the eye of his faith was turned from self, found out to be justly condemned, to the Just One who suffered for the unjust to bring us to God.

What is the force of the inheritance of the saints in light ?

It is not here the inheritance of all things over which Christ is seen as Head in Ephesians, and upon which we look down as it were, from our heavenly position as heirs of it in Him, nor is it indeed the same word, but more simply "the portion of the saints" which is then characterized by the cloudless light of the presence of God ; and to which we look up, in full accord with the hope laid up in heaven.

Verse 13. In what way are we delivered from the power of darkness ?

We learn something of the fearful extent of the power or "authority" of darkness, under which we were once held, from Luke xxii. 53. We see it in its full sway in the heathen world ; but we have all been under the bondage of it, until we were delivered by faith in Him, who through death brought to naught him who had the power of death, and transferred us from the dark sphere of Satan's authority to His own.

What aspect of the kingdom is presented in the expression "hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" ?

It is the same kingdom into which we have entered by grace, but, as here only, characterized by the place the Son has in the Father's love, the object of His predilection and delight—surely a most precious aspect of the kingdom. And He is the One "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." But thus the nature of God has been introduced in its two essential characteristics, light and love. And the whole work of deliverance, and redemption in which it was wrought, is infinitely enhanced by the glory of the Person in whom it is ours, which follows in a wonderful concentration of the light of it.

Answers by
J. A. TRENCH.

Answers to Questions.

I

Q. Was Christ the Logos—the Word—before He was made flesh? (John I. 1).

A. Unquestionably. According to John I. He did not become the Word when made flesh, but from the “beginning” was the “Logos,” ever and always.

II

Q. Was Christ a real Man, or did He only assume manhood as a condition, or a cloak for His Deity?

A. He was a veritable Man, truly born of a woman, possessing soul and spirit as well as a human body (John IV. 6; XI. 33; XII. 27).

III

Q. Can we form a right conception of the Person of Christ now, without taking into account the fact that it embraces the human and the divine, God and Man one indivisible Person?

A. The Person of Christ is an inscrutable mystery; but we hold it as a vital and essential article of the Christian faith, that He is both God and Man, and that His person is indivisible. We refer you to the first article in this number. We heartily concur with all J. N. D. says in it.

IV

Q. Have ALL true believers on the Son of God eternal life?

A. Most assuredly they have, and it is the privilege of *all* believers to know that it is now theirs (see I John V. 13).

V

Q. Is Christ or the Bible the “Word of God”?

A. Both. Christ is the living Word, the Bible is the written Word. All Scripture is God-breathed. The Bible not only contains the Word of God, but *it is it* from Genesis to Revelation, and every part should command our unqualified faith and implicit obedience.

Bethel.

SCRIPTURE is prismatic, and just as the spectrum displays the various colours which blended together form what we call light, so Scripture unfolds in wondrous ways the varied glories enshrined in Him who is the Light of the world and the Living Word.

The names of persons and places recorded in its pages are significant and contain much spiritual instruction. Bethel is an instance, it signifies the "House of God."

The history of Bethel in Scripture strikingly illustrates the corruption of everything in man's hand. It is first mentioned in connection with Abraham, when separated from kindred and country, at the call of the God of glory; he erected an altar and pitched his tent between "Hai" and "Bethel." The former signifies a heap of ruins, apt indication of what the house of God has become in man's hand. Abraham, having left the land of promise and gravitated to Egypt during a famine, at God's bidding retraced his steps and set up his altar again at Bethel, calling upon the name of the Lord. It is Jacob, however, who named the place "Bethel," saying, "This is none other than the house of God," when that wonderful vision of the ladder with angels ascending and descending was beheld by the fugitive fleeing from his father's house (Gen. xxviii. 19). Here he received that free and unconditional promise which has been the stay of faith from that day to this, the assurance that God would not only "never leave him" nor forsake him, but would bless him and restore him to his own land.

How all this speaks to us of God's faithfulness! No matter what we have been or what we have done, the God of Bethel is the unchanging and unchangeable One who ever will greet us with His restoring and recovering grace. He is ever the same, ever ready in the plenitude of His mercy to pour joy into the heart of every repentant saint or sinner.

In Genesis xxxi. 13, Jacob, in the land of servitude, oppressed by Laban, who changed his wages ten times, is reminded that God is the God of Bethel, and is encouraged to return. Then after failure and wandering, the powerful and heart-searching words fell upon his ear: "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there" (Gen. xxxv. 1).

"Arise!" Grovel no longer in the scenes of strife and contention around you—fruit of this sin-blighted world—but go up to the house of God and dwell there. Do not pay it a passing visit or treat it as an inn or lodging place, but "dwell there." Let it be your centre, and its interests those with which you are identified permanently; it is the place of power, strength, and blessing.

We learn from Paul's letter to Timothy that the "house of God" is the church or assembly of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. If we would know the behaviour suitable to the place, we must study both of Paul's letters to Timothy. The first describes it in its due and proper order, the second in its *Hai* character, as ruined in man's hands, and speaks of the conduct which becomes the man of God in the midst of such a state of things.

The history of Bethel contains an analogy to the history of the professing church, as we shall see if we briefly trace and examine the passages where the name occurs. Between Genesis and Joshua we have no mention of it. The reason is obvious: Bethel was in Canaan, Israel sojourned in Egypt, but on their return we find Bethel apportioned to Benjamin (Judges xviii. 13). It was conquered in conjunction with Joseph's sons.

Deborah dwelt between Ramah and Bethel, and there judged Israel (Judges iv. 15). Here is the first sign of departure from God's order; a woman takes the lead, not only in judging Israel, but in leading them to battle, the whole nation having wandered away from God. Still the good hand of God wrought for them, and the Song of Deborah celebrated their deliverance at that time.

Bethel is next mentioned in 1 Samuel i. 16, as part of Samuel's circuit. Three significant places are here linked together, Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, Mizpeh, the watch-tower, and Bethel, the house of God, whilst Samuel's

altar and home were at Ramah, which signifies the heights. Here we get individual recovery whilst things were wrong nationally in Israel, and Samuel, the man of prayer, shows us there is a path which is pleasing to God in the midst of outward ruin. Then in 1 Samuel x. 3, we read of three men laden with wine, bread, and young goats journeying to Bethel to present that which typifies Christ and His work. They witness that there were others beside Samuel who still valued the place where God first made known, in the vision of that mystic ladder, the day of Millennium glory when earth and heaven will be in communion, and all the promises of God be made good to the seed of Jacob. We may see in these three men a picture of those who unitedly call upon the Lord in a day of declension.

Alas! The journey of these three worshippers was followed by departure of a serious nature, and the "down grade" in Bethel's history begins when Jeroboam made it a centre of false worship (1 Kings xii. 29-33). Raised to the throne of Israel on the severance of the ten tribes, he could not trust God to maintain him. As a matter of statecraft he set up the golden calves and plunged the nation into idolatry from which it never recovered. Henceforth, in place of Bethel being the synonym for holiness, truth, and separation from evil, it is marked by declension and corruption. God, however, raised up a witness, a man of God was sent to testify against the place and the altar (1 Kings xiii. 1). This unnamed prophet not only denounced this false worship, but prophesied its destruction, naming Josiah, long before he was born, as the one who would accomplish this; even then the altar was rent, the ashes poured out, and the impious arm of King Jeroboam, who had dared to usurp the priesthood, was dried up.

Later on, Hiel, a Bethelite, during the reign of Ahab, in the darkest day of Israel's apostasy, defies the word of God, and with the boldest effrontery dares to rebuild Jericho, and falls under judgment in consequence (1 Kings xvi. 34).

Jehu perpetuated Jeroboam's sin and caused Israel to worship the golden calves, thus maintaining the down grade (2 Kings x. 29). This was followed by judgment, and

Israel was carried captive to Assyria and foreign nations planted in their land. The Lord having sent lions to destroy them, they asked for a priest to teach them the way of the God of Israel. In response a priest was sent to Bethel who still further corrupted the way of the Lord. The result was the spurious Samaritan religion, so sadly described as ostensibly fearing the Lord, whilst actually serving other gods (1 Kings xvii. 33).

The next mention of Bethel is in 2 Kings xviii. 4, 15, 17, 19. Josiah fulfilled to the letter the prediction of the old prophet and utterly destroyed the altar and the calves, but had respect to the prophet's sepulchre and would not allow it to be desecrated.

Historically the story of Bethel ends here, but the prophets have something to say as to it. Jeremiah tells us (chap. xlviii. 13) that Israel's confidence in Bethel only produced shame, as Chemosh would Moab's. Amos—who prophesied in the days of Uzziah the king, smitten with leprosy through daring to usurp the priesthood—warns the transgressors in Israel that Bethel's altar should be swept away in judgment (Amos iii. 14), and calls upon them to seek the Lord and not Bethel, for its doom was unquenchable fire (chap. v. 6). Finally it is called the king's "chapel." There his sanctuary and court were combined, an idolatrous king and a false prophet being its last representatives. The one doomed to die in a polluted land, the other having judgment pronounced on his house. This impious king and false prophet set forth the last phase of the house of God, their counterpart yet to be seen in a day not far distant.

Its history has a warning voice. It tells us that the Bethel of Abraham, and Jacob, must have conduct suitable to the place. Jacob, bidden of God to "arise and dwell there," answered to the holiness of the place, and bade his household to change their garments and put away their strange gods. These he buried, and, having reached Bethel, God appeared to him again, changing his name from Jacob to Israel, confirming all the promises. He was in moral conformity to his calling, and afresh raised his pillar to God—the God of Bethel.

Does this not remind us that if we are to answer aright to the house of God, mere intellectual clearness as to right ground, or clear perception of what is doctrinally correct is insufficient? There must be also a corresponding godly and faithful walk, and a right condition of soul. Communion with God, lowliness and dependence are essentials in order to answer to the mind of God.

Our lot is cast in days similar to that of Amos, but our resource is in God, and it is still possible to turn from its golden calves, and false worship, to our altar of unhewn stone, with its oil poured upon it, and worship God in spirit and in truth, in simplicity and sincerity, and in separation from evil.

C. S. ROMANES.

Leah's Sons.

GEN. XXIX. 31-35.

MYSTERIES abound in the Old Testament. The deep sleep of Adam when a bride was formed out of his side points to the mystery of Christ and the church. Joseph exalted, becoming the sustainer of the brethren who had hated and rejected him, points to God's ways with Israel in a coming day when Christ will restore the Jewish nation. The names of the sons of Leah born to Jacob, whilst Rachel was barren, intimate other mysteries.

Israel was betrothed to Jehovah, her Maker became her Husband. She was fair through the comeliness He had put upon her. This is typified in Rachel. Both proved themselves barren. Israel, like the fig tree on which the Lord sought fruit, bare nothing but leaves. In vain the care bestowed upon her, by servant after servant; it all ended in barrenness, no fruit for God, and as a result "Lo ammi"—Not My people—was written upon her. The wife first loved was unfruitful in order for God to unfold fresh secrets of grace. During the time of Rachel's barrenness, Leah—figure of the church in its aspect of being gathered from among the Gentiles—is then brought into blessing. Her reproach taken away, she, who had not obtained mercy,

now obtained mercy. The names given to her children tell their own tale of sovereign grace.

The name of her firstborn intimates an entirely new thing in God's ways. Reuben's name means *Behold a son!* It tells us the day of bondage is now passed; the servants are no more to possess the house. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" The Son of God has visited this world and given us the freedom of the house, the title and privilege of sons, so that we have no longer "the spirit of bondage again to fear." The spirit of adoption is ours, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." Your place and mine, for the "fullness of time" has come. God has sent forth the spirit of His Son, and we are no more servants but sons.

How sweetly does her next son carry on the story of grace, his name unfolding the principle on which we are brought into this privileged place, for she called his name "Simeon," which means *Hearing*. The Apostle asks, was it by works of law or by the hearing of faith, that ye received the spirit? By the "hearing of faith" surely. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by God's word. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." Simeon typifies God's principle of action in this present dispensation—grace by the hearing of faith. All our blessings flow from grace, and are ours by faith. It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."

Leah bare another son, and called his name "Levi," whose name means *Joined*; for she said, "Now will my husband be joined unto me." He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. We are not only severed from our connections with the first man in the death of Christ, but united to Him risen and glorified, eternally associated with Him in an indissoluble union. This is now the portion of all God's children. They are not only saved, but "joined" to the Lord, and should enter into this blessed fact, and enjoy it as their proper privilege.

How fitly does her next son—completing the story of grace—bear the name of "Judah"—*Praise*. It is our

privilege, as those who are sons of God by pure sovereign grace—once afar off, now made nigh—to offer up “the sacrifice of praise to God continually”—“that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

It is meet that we should praise the Lord, and call upon all that is within us to bless His holy name, since He has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. In seeking worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth, He has sought and found us; let us then not forget that our holy, privileged occupation is to be continually praising Him.

In Levi we get priesthood, and we are—though after another order—a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We are also a royal priesthood (for we are linked with kingly Judah), and the kingdom shall be ours in joint-heirship with Christ. He that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, hath made us a kingdom, even priests unto God and His Father.

How these names remind us of our privileges during the day of Israel's rejection. It is sons, not servants, who are being conducted to glory under the great Captain of our salvation. This privileged place is ours wholly apart from works, fruit of God's sovereign grace, outcome of His purpose before all worlds to have sons before the Father's face for His special delight.

H. NUNNERLEY.

Deliverance.

ROMANS sets before us God's intervention on man's behalf, to deliver him from the dominion of sin, in order that he may be a servant to God (see Romans VI.). By nature man is a servant of sin, and when a servant of sin he is “free from righteousness”—terrible freedom to be “free from righteousness”! That is what the Apostle says the Romans were before their deliverance; they were not servants of righteousness, but servants of sin, and no one can serve sin and righteousness at the same time. They needed deliverance

from the power of sin. That is what every one feels when God works in the soul. You would like to stop sinning, but you find you are not able to do that. You would like to go in the way of righteousness, but you find an evil influence in you that carries you in the way of sin. The good that you would do, you do not; and the evil that you hate, and that you would not, that you find you are doing. What you want is deliverance from the old master, *sin*, that you served so well and so faithfully, and that now you do not want to serve any more. You have found a new master, and that master, to use the language of the latter part of chapter vi., is righteousness; and you want to be a servant of righteousness, and you do not want to be a servant of sin, but a servant of sin you feel yourself largely to be, and a servant of righteousness you feel you are very little.

The way of deliverance is set before us in chapter vi. There are two things you get there. One is a new place in Christ; a new place for man, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, you get a man in a new place, and that is the place for all the redeemed. It is no longer a man in the Garden of Eden; no longer a good and righteous man on earth, if such could be found. Moses says a man that keeps the law shall live. Where? On earth. But when you come to Christ risen, you come to an entirely new order of man, and you come to an entirely new place for man in relationship with God—the very place Christ occupies.

Our position in reference to sin is set forth administratively in baptism. “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” is the question at the beginning of the chapter. “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” I quite understand that question falling startlingly on the ears of a Roman. Dead to sin! “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” It seems a contradiction. How can a man be both dead and alive? How are we dead? He says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?” Baptism is looked at here as your burial unto Christ’s death. In Colossians you get a rather larger

idea; there you are dead to the elements of the world, but here the point with the Apostle is deliverance from sin, and he does not apply the truth of baptism beyond the question of your deliverance from sin. "We are buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." That is the place administered to us. Galatians goes a step farther (chap. III. ver. 27): "For as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ." You have put Him on where there is neither Jew nor Greek. Where is that? In this world there are Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female, but in the new creation all Christians are one in Christ Jesus.

There is nothing vital in baptism. It does not place a man in relationship with God. It gives him a certain status, a certain attitude with regard to certain things, but it is not vital. So he says, As many as were baptized to Him have put Christ on. To use an old expression, you have "changed your man."

Romans does not go so far as Colossians or Galatians, though in a certain sense both are involved in its teaching. Take verse 8, "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." Remember he is speaking of Christ, not of you and me. He is telling us something about Christ, the One that we have put on, the One to whom we are baptized. Death has no more dominion over Him. He has passed beyond the reach of it altogether. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once." Christ never was alive to sin as we are, yet in a certain sense He had to do with it, because He was in a scene where it was all around Him, and where it was in every person except Himself. He was constantly dealing with it in others, enduring the contradiction of sinners, and then at last was made sin on the cross. But sin is looked at in this chapter not so much as characteristic of our nature, but as a master that rules over you, controls you, makes you do what he will, and when you have served faithfully gives you death as wages.

You say, "What has 'In that He liveth, He liveth unto God' to do with me?" Look at the application the Apostle makes of it in the next verse. "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Him." How does that follow? If a thing is true of Christ, why should it be true of me? Why should I be exhorted to reckon something that is true of Him to be true of me? Because we are in Him. If we have believed the gospel, we are in Christ. But what is it to be in Christ? It is to be "as He is." To be in Adam was just to be what he was. What was he? A fallen sinner. What was I when I was born, before I did good or evil? A fallen sinner. Where was Adam when he fell? At a distance from God. Where was I when I was born, before I did good or evil? At a distance from God. I was not born in a place of blessing. I was born in a place to which the fallen sinner was driven out when he sinned. That was true of Adam, it was also true of me.

If I am in Christ, what is true of Him is true of me. Is He dead to sin? Yes. So am I. If I think otherwise, I am falling short of my place in Christ, because, to be in Christ is to be "as He is." "As He is, so are we." When? Now. Where? In this world. "As He is, so are we in this world." "In that He died, He died unto sin once." What about you? In that He lives, He lives to God. What about you? What are you alive to? To sin, or to God? He is dead to sin, and alive to God. Are you in Him? That is the question. You are not left to find out whether you are dead with Him or not. No, the act that introduces into Christianity, outwardly, expresses the very truth that embodies your attitude with regard to sin and to God. We are buried with Him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, we should walk in *newness of life*. What life is that? Your old life? There is not any newness about that. It is the old thing over again, baptism or no baptism. No, you are to walk in newness of life. Why? Because you are to reckon yourself alive unto God in Christ, for what is true of Him, He says, is true of you. That is your deliverance. The Apostle says to the Romans, "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form

of doctrine which was delivered you," and where was it delivered to them? It was delivered them in the ordinance that gave them professedly the place of Christians. It was administered to them in that, and they had obeyed it by submitting to it. Then he adds, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies." Why? Because, whomever you serve, you are that person's servant. If sin, you are sin's servants. If obedience unto righteousness, you are the servants of righteousness; the servants of God. You are to reckon yourself dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and if you do, he says, you will have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Ah, it might be said then we have eternal life through our obedience, and through righteous walk. No, he says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." He does not leave the subject until he assures us that eternal life is the *gift of God* in Jesus Christ our Lord, and not the fruit of our obedience.

JAMES BOYD.

Colossians.

VERSE 15. In what way is Christ the image of God?

Image is representation. Adam was made in God's image; he held the place of representing and presenting God. But Christ (of whom he was the figure) is the image of the invisible God. In His own essential Being God is invisible, dwelling in inaccessible light, whom no man hath seen or can see (1 Tim. vi. 16). In Christ incarnate He has made Himself known (John 1. 18). He is characteristically the living representation of the blessed God and this in a man. And so it will be for ever. If the gospel is the light of the glory of Christ He is the image of God (2 Cor. iv. 4); the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ.

Verse 15. "Firstborn of every creature." Is this a title indicating pre-eminence in creation, and "Firstborn from among the dead" pre-eminence in resurrection?

If as the image we have His place Godward, in "the firstborn of every creature" it is that which He has in relation to the creature, in virtue of being the One, "in" whom characteristically (as the Son of His love), "by" whom

instrumentally, and "for" whom as the end and object of the whole, all things were created. This necessitates that if He takes a place in creation He must be the firstborn in rank and dignity, hence the object of angels' worship (*cf.* Heb. i. 6). It is part of the pre-eminence "in all things" that is His, which also includes the place He has taken in resurrection, *i.e.* what He *becomes*, "Head of the body, the assembly; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." But verse 17 gives what *He is* in Himself "before all things," not merely firstborn as a consequence of being their Creator, nor indicating pre-existence as to time, but as divine in nature and wholly above all.

Verse 18. "Head of the body." In what way is the church called the body here? Is it as a living organism or a corporate company?

The church—or "assembly," as truer to the original—is defined to be the body of which He is Head in resurrection, as in verse 24 and chapter II. verse 19: though, as may be observed, it is not the object of the Apostle to bring out its place and relationships and fullness of blessing, as in Ephesians, but to occupy us with the glory of the Head which is given in far fuller development. The assembly is indeed a living organism instinct with the life of its risen Head; and everywhere, save in Ephesians i., involves either all who are Christ's on the earth at any given time since Pentecost, or those of any locality who are regarded as the body in that place—a corporate assembly by its constitution, even though all might not be assembled. But your next question brings us back to the connection of the Apostle's thought.

Does verse 19 refer to Christ on earth?

A. Read "For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell." It is the glory of His Person as manifested on earth. He who is the Son could say "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and as to the Spirit, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" shows what was in the Apostle's mind—all the fullness of the Godhead—Father Son, and Spirit.

Answers by
J. A. TRENCH.

Sunshine.

YES ; “ truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun ” (Eccles. XI. 7). It makes the heart glad. And as the wise man said, “ A merry heart doeth good like a medicine ” (Prov. XVII. 22). It does good to him who has it, and with it he can carry good to him who needs it ; and it is not without reason that the Apostle wrote to his beloved children in the faith, “ Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you ” (1 Thess. v. 16-18). And if Jesus warns His disciples, saying to them, “ In the world ye shall have tribulation, He adds, “ But be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world ” (John XVI. 33). Similar thoughts to these passed through my mind on hearing the following reflection from a beholder of the wonderful change brought about by a few hours’ brilliant sunshine, causing the dull earth to bedeck herself in the hitherto hidden beauty of her spring attire.

“ How wonderfully the flowers have come out in the sunshine ! Flowers all unseen, which nobody knew a bit about until the sun came out, then they came out with it. What will it be when the Sun of Righteousness arises, with healing in His wings ? ”

It coincides too with the remark of another, years ago, “ It is wonderful how much damage one fine day will remedy ! ” This was said after a long spell of bad weather, culminating in a devastating storm, and followed by the calm of a gentle breeze, with the recuperating warmth of a splendid sun.

Yes ; it is wonderful how much damage can be quickly recovered, when the Lord puts His hand to it. Then, the sorrow of the past will be forgotten in the everlasting joy of the redeemed. “ Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed : . . . for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy Husband ; the Lord of Hosts is His name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall He be called ” (Isa. LIV.)

And should we not seek to live in the same spirit, seeing that it is the essential element of Christianity, and our very life? Is it not well to cultivate it; and that not only for our own sakes, but for the testimony of the Lord, and our healthful influence on others? We are naturally so prone to despondency; pessimists, looking at the dark side; like the disciples, as they wended their sorrowful way to Emmaus, little knowing how near they were to the "sun-rising" (Luke i. 78), the Harbinger of the day that knows no night (Rev. xxi. 25); the joy of seeing "Jesus, risen from the dead"! EDWARD CROSS.

New.

THE word *new* in regard to things temporal is *relative*; in connection with things spiritual, *absolute*. That is to say, things *temporal* deteriorate, decay, perish. They become old. The process starts immediately. But in *divine* things new is always new. What a thought! How comforting! Let countless æons of æons—ages of ages—roll by, and that which is divinely new is still new, absolutely new. No mark of time shall be on them, for time shall cease to be. "And He that sat upon the throne said, *BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.*"

There are THREE NEW THINGS we would briefly consider, viz. :—

1. A *new* being.
2. A *new* body.
3. A *new* world.

God begins with what is vital and essential. He gives the believer a *new* spiritual being. All else is involved in this. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

This gives the believer *new* life, *new* desires, *new* aspirations, *new* delights, *new* pursuits, *new* relationships, *new* prospects. How blessed! We are thus brought morally into accord with God, and God's things, and God's world. In the Holy Spirit given we have a capacity for what is

beyond the keenest natural intellect. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it" (Job xxviii. 7, 8). The keenest vision or the greatest strength is alike powerless here. It belongs to another range of things altogether, and into these things we enter by the Spirit given to us of God.

The believer having this *new* spiritual being is still in his body of humiliation, still linked up with a groaning creation which is passing away. He is

"Here in the body pent."

This is an anomalous state of things, as if a king were clad in rags. How needful then to accustom ourselves to consider the brevity of time, and fix our eyes upon eternity, upon the new and abiding things which are not seen.

A new spiritual being involves A NEW SPIRITUAL BODY. This the believer will get when the Lord comes. It is part of the salvation that is nearer than when we believed.

If the believer has passed away, how touching is the description of what will take place at the resurrection. How surpassingly glorious is the prospect! His body

IS SOWN	WILL BE RAISED
in corruption	in incorruption
in dishonour	in glory
in weakness	in power
a natural body	a spiritual body

"We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 52).

The living saints shall be caught up at the rapture. Nor are we left in any doubt as to their condition. "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2); and this includes all saints, whether those who have passed away or those who are alive at the rapture.

What a prospect ! a body of glory like Christ's.

Nor is this all. A *new* spiritual being clothed in a *new* spiritual body has as its destiny A NEW SPIRITUAL WORLD.

Eye has not seen that glorious abode, but ear has heard the report brought by the Spirit from the Father and the Son, and faith delights to anticipate the glories of that " world of bliss " which awaits every child of God.

This earth has been the theatre of the greatest possible sin at the cross. The darkness did not comprehend the light. Man hated incarnate good. The Son of God was crucified. Then the world is full of sadness ! Cemeteries, asylums, prisons, hospitals meet our gaze on every hand. The material earth is often scarred by convulsions of nature, dealing death to thousands ; but all this will be swept away, "*every trace of sin's sad story*" blotted out.

God's dealings with men in grace and government, judgment and mercy, will come to an end and be replaced by the fulfilment of that magnificent promise from Him who sits upon the throne, "*Behold, I make all things NEW*" (Rev. XXI. 5).

The seer is enraptured as he saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth ; " for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea " (ver. 1). The eternal state will be the fulfilment of this. There righteousness shall dwell in a universe of supreme bliss. God, complacent in His love, will have His tabernacle with men, and dwell among them. The contemplation of it even now brings unutterable and unspeakable calmness and joy to the spirit.

In that new world things will be fixed, not in eternal monotony, but in perennial freshness and supreme delight. Everything *new*, eternally *new*, never to grow old in the smallest sense of the word—God shall be all in all, supremely blessed, every purpose fulfilled, His heart satisfied !

" And He that sat upon the throne said, BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW."

And you and I, beloved Christian reader, will be there, supremely blessed and happy. May such a prospect have its effect upon us now, and give us to be exercised about going on with what is *new*.

A. J. POLLOCK.

For our Learning.

THE Bible, we are told, is given for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Rom. xv. 4). Do we search it to learn Himself? What learning is this for which they are written? Some search this precious book from end to end; study its history, scan its poetry, learn its botany and natural history, and they are called by their fellows "learned." Is this the learning that the Spirit of God speaks of here? Such things have their place, but you may know all these things and miss the great subject, the great purpose, the great object of the learning for which the Scriptures are given, which is that we may learn Christ, for in no other way shall we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures have hope. It is only as the Scriptures bring to our souls the preciousness of Christ, that the true comfort of God is ministered to our souls; tracing the pathway of patience in which Christ walked, learning the beauty of the moral traits that came out in Himself, in order that we may answer to the exhortation, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." That wonderful mind which took Him to the bottom, where every man was seeking to go to the top. He came from the very top, and came down and down so low that there was no lower point to be reached, "even the death of the cross." Let us get that ideal before our souls, that blessed Man here upon earth, who would go down that God might be glorified.

The people of God are being tested to-day, especially those who seek to walk a little closer to the Lord, and in obedience to His blessed word. Here are two or three, not thinking anything of themselves, just seeking to walk in dependence upon God, and the more real that purpose is, the less they are thought of by others. You say, "Surely these things of God, if they are so great, ought to make more way in the world," but was it so with the Lord Jesus Christ? Look at Romans xv. 3: "For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me." Just turn to Psalm LXIX., where you have the passage from which this

is quoted, and read verses 6 to 9. From that blessed ONE there was ever flowing out the deep well-spring of love to His brethren after the flesh, to His mother's children, and yet He was a stranger to the one and an alien to the other. Need it surprise us, if in the midst of the world, where such treatment has been meted out to our Lord and Master, that those who seek to walk closest to the Lord have often to walk alone? We should not be discouraged. It is because we understand so little of the wonderful moral pathway of the Lord Jesus Himself that we get discouraged when things look small. Let us keep close to Himself, in the assurance that God is going to accomplish all the wonderful purposes of His will for all His people. It may be that he who follows Christ closest now must needs walk alone; but let us remember even Christ pleased not Himself. It was ever before Him to please God, though no one understood Him, and those nearest to Him often failed to apprehend His meaning; yet He loved them, He bore with their infirmities. He sought their edification, to build them up in the true knowledge of God.

God is for us now causing all things to work together for our good, that we may be conformed to the image of His Son, and if we have Him before our hearts, and distinctly and clearly defined this mighty purpose of God that He has purposed in His grace, shall we not seek to walk a little more in the footsteps of our Lord, while we are waiting for Him? Keep the eye on Him. Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed according to the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.

JAMES GREEN.

AN avaricious Christian (nominally such) is nothing better than an avaricious heathen. "We know," says John, "that the whole world lieth in the wicked one"; and again, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." . . . Where are our hearts? What is our joy? Are we seeking the world, with its pleasures and its gain? If so we are entering into Cain's portion, we are the "enemies of the cross of Christ."

J. N. DARBY.

Our Privilege.

I AM not charged with the mission of setting the world right, nor of setting the church right, nor even with setting right all the Christians where I am locally; my primary concern is to see that I, as an individual Christian, am right. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if *any man* hear My voice, and open unto me, I will come in unto him, and will sup *with him*, and he *with Me*." Could anything exceed the grace of this invitation? The two disciples who invited the Lord into their house at Emmaus to sup with them had their eyes open to perceive they had a wonderful guest; in the act of giving thanks they recognized it was none other than the blessed Lord Himself.

It is our privilege to sup with Him. What blessed intimacy, unparalleled in the history of the church, is the privilege of the believer in these very last times. Individual communion with the Son of God is the privilege of all who open the door to Christ. In spite of the profession all around, each Christian has the privilege of the most precious communion with his absent but coming Lord. May we ever be disposed to sit as learners at His feet, drink in the melody of His voice, open the door of our heart to His word.

The One who joined the disciples on the way to Emmaus is the same Jesus who addresses your heart and mine, saying "Open the door, I will come in and sup with you, and you shall come and sup with Me." What a blessed antidote to indifference, and what an incentive to be an overcomer is in the thought that the Faithful and True Witness, who was an Overcomer throughout the full test of Satan's wiles, is coming very shortly to share His glory with His own, over and over again assuring us that He is coming and coming quickly.

DR. OLIVER.

LOVE in you is very different from love in God, acting in His own eternity, showing love by giving His Son to give you life, and power, and love. Love in God comes out with this thought of separating us from all that we are, into His own blessedness.

Colossians.

CHAPTER I.

Q. In what way can the fullness be said to make peace ?
(ver. 20).

A. Through the blood of the cross. All the divine fullness manifested here in Him personally did not suffice to do this, such the heart of man ; but only drew out the irreconcilable enmity of the flesh against God. It needed that His blood should be shed as the righteous basis of any true reconciliation of the creature. But thus peace has been made by the full settlement of every question of sin for the glory of God in His blood-shedding. And it only remained that by Him all things should be reconciled to the Godhead fullness ; for the reconciliation will extend out to all things in earth or heaven. The object of the Spirit will be seen (when once the unwarrantable insertion of "the Father" in the text by the A.V. is removed) to be to bring out in the fullest way the glory of the Person of the Son, as though by concentrating the mind upon it, the Colossian saints might be delivered once for all from the beguiling systems of the flesh's reasoning and religion that tended to obscure the brightness of it. Thus the work of the cross is His in whom the fullness dwells, and the effects when produced are to reconcile all things to itself as part of the divine good pleasure.

It is strong evidence of this design that the Spirit is only once mentioned in this Epistle, though brought in at every aspect of the truth in Ephesians. Here He keeps Himself in the background to absorb all hearts with the glory of Christ.

Q. What is the difference between making peace and reconciling ?

A. That the peace-making lies in the work that has been done : it is "having made peace through the blood of the cross." The reconciliation is the effect, not yet applied to the sphere of verse 16, but that has begun with the most opposed of all His creatures (ver. 21), man alienated from Him, as he alone, in heart, mind, and will.

Q. (1) In what way are "things" going to be reconciled ?

(2) Some have taken this to mean all persons : is there any warrant in Scripture for such a thought ?

A. (1) By the created scene being brought into harmony with the mind of its Creator. Many passages in the Old Testament present this : 2 Samuel xxiii. 3, 4 ; Isaiah xxxii. 15-20 ; Psalms cxlvii.-cl. may be referred to.

(2) " Things upon earth and things in the heavens " are not persons : they are distinguished in verse 20, where the reconciliation has yet to take place, and verse 21, where it has been accomplished in those to whom it has been and is being applied. Verse 20 can speak of " all things," but there is no trace of such language as to persons.

Q. Are only believers reconciled ? If so is it by some change in them, or was it effected for them in the " body of His flesh through death " (ver. 22) ?

A. Only believers are reconciled. No effect is produced by the word of the gospel when it is not mixed with faith in them that hear it. Reconciliation surely supposes an effect produced in the believer, a total change from the dark distance and enmity and alienation of the past to the terms of confidence and peace and joy in which the reconciled one is with God, the sweetest fruit of the gospel ; but the producing power of that change is a work wrought outside the believer in the cross, where every question of sin was gone into as it affected the glory of God, and where to faith there is an end " in the body of His flesh through death " of all that state of mine which nothing but the judgment of God could meet ; with the result that as we have been delivered from the realm of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, we are only waiting to be presented " holy and unblameable and irreproachable in His sight."

Q. Will all Christians be presented unblamable ? (ver. 22).

A. Assuredly : as it depends upon the work of Christ. Only that as the Christian though risen with Christ is contemplated as walking upon earth, the " if " of verse 23 comes in, warning of the need of continuance in the faith and the danger of being moved away from the power of heavenly hope.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

The Feast of Trumpets.

No. I.

"In the *seventh* month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation."
—LEV. XXIII. 24.

THIS feast was celebrated in the *seventh* month, and presents a picture of God's ways in connection with Israel. In order to get a correct understanding of its bearing it is needful to distinguish between the position of Israel and that of the church.

Christian blessings have their sphere in the heavenlies in a risen Christ; Israel's portion is in the land of Canaan; Israel will be blessed nationally *under* Christ as King, we are blessed *with* Christ as sons in the Father's house; their inheritance is of the earth and will fade away; ours is in heaven, fadeless and eternal; they have their names written in Mount Zion, ours are inscribed in the heavenly Jerusalem; we worship, as priests at home in the Sanctuary, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, whereas Israel will never thus approach.

Nothing can be more distinct than the character of blessing bestowed upon a faithful Jew, and that of a devoted Christian; one finds his all in a resurrection world, the other in a renewed earth; one measures God's favour to him by his "basket and his store," the other by spiritual riches.

We cannot too strongly assert the fact that Christian blessings are not in a world stained by sin, burdened with sorrow, decimated by death, nor is earthly prosperity a mark of God's favour now. Witness Paul in a Roman dungeon deprived of every creature-comfort, yet who among Israel's worthies can compare with him for answering perfectly to the conditions of blessing laid down in Deuteronomy xxviii. 3-6?

A Christian richly blessed spiritually may be poor temporally—whilst "possessing all things" may literally have nothing—be possessor of untold wealth as an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ, yet may be as destitute as the veriest pauper.

The day rapidly approaches when Israel, installed in their own land once more, will possess those national blessings

unconditionally promised to Abraham. Each one, sitting under his own vine and fig tree, will enjoy a thousand years of blessedness, during which time every Old Testament promise will be literally fulfilled under the beneficent rule of Christ. The scattered nation will be gathered, Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the world, their once rejected Messiah shall wield universal rule, be acclaimed as David's Lord.

The feast of Trumpets is an intimation of God's purpose as to this. It is a "Memorial"—a calling to mind—that by a trumpet's blast God gathered His people of old. "Make thee two Trumpets of Silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the *calling* of the *Assembly*, and for the *journeying* of the *Camps*" (Num. x. 2). Israel encamped in the Wilderness, when their ears caught the sound of a Trumpet, bestirred themselves, for it was a summons to march to their promised inheritance. God has assured them that He will "set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people" (Isa. xi. 11). Exiled Israel shall be restored, they will return to their country and their patrimony; and that by the call of God.

The feast of Trumpets was celebrated on the *seventh* new moon of the religious year, and the first of the civil year. It had its sacrifices—ten in number—and the continual burnt offering in addition to the eleven new moon monthly offerings. Over these sacrifices the Silver Trumpets sounded, reminding all who had ears to hear that they were a redeemed people, called to travel to the rest before them, in virtue of the sacrificial work of Another.

It was the custom to post watchmen on the heights round Jerusalem to catch the first glimmering of the new moon, and from the Mount of Olives the news of its rising was transmitted to every part of the land by beacon fires on the tops of the hills. The Temple was opened for worship, and the people resorted to the prophets for instruction (2 Kings iv. 23).

The Trumpets sounded during the whole day. An old Jewish writer considers it meant a loud call to awake Israel from their spiritual slumber, after the long interval since

the last feast, and also to "prepare them for the solemn humiliation of the day of Atonement which followed it within ten days." Joel II. 15 would certainly confirm this. "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly."

The proof that this feast points to the gracious purpose of God to gather Israel once more in their land is found in the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels. "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day" (Ps. LXXXI. 3). "It shall come to pass in that day that the *great trumpet* shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy Mount at Jerusalem." "All the tribes of the earth—or the land—shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great *sound of a trumpet*, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31).

Scattered Israel is to be gathered, Jerusalem shall yet be the metropolis of the whole earth. From obscurity and dispersion she shall arise and sit as Queen of the Nations, the Gentiles shall come to her light, Kings to the brightness of her rising. All God's Word has been fulfilled as to their dispersion, though buried among the Gentiles they are preserved a separate people; their religion, their facial marks, differ from others, scattered and peeled, down-trodden and persecuted, hated and despised, yet they preserve their national identity.

Nothing is more significant as a sign of the times than the way national aspirations and hopes are springing up in their minds, and finding expression in their actions. The Zionist movement is a national one, their cry is, "The land for the people and the people for the land." What they cannot do with the sword they hope to do with the mint. Gold shall conquer where martial force is lacking, and the wailing men beside that wall in Jerusalem who now repeat those Psalms expressive of Israel's desire to dwell there shall be answered in due time.

H. NUNNERLEY.

The Feast of Trumpets.

No. II.

BUT before Israel's cry will be answered another trumpet must sound ; the dead in Christ must be raised, the living in Christ changed, and caught up, and the harvest garnered in the Father's house. This event having been accomplished, God will set to His hand a second time to deliver Abraham's seed from their oppressors, and the trumpets shall sound, summoning the people from the dust, where they lie hidden and buried among strange people and far-off nations. With longing eyes their faces shall be turned Zionward, and they will seek the face of Jehovah, whose gifts and callings are without repentance, and find God true to every promise He made to their fathers. Israel, gathered once more in their own land, shall be a further witness to the infallible truth of God's Word.

We must not conclude the present movement among the Jews indicates God's call by the Trumpets. We learn from the prophets they will return in unbelief and settle in their own land and worship the Antichrist. Then God will work, and a " third part " shall be separated and owned as the Nation (see Zech. XIII. 8).

Ten days divide the feast of trumpets from the day of Atonement, and those " ten days," representing the interval between their awaking and Messiah's coming, will be the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation which will try every earth-dweller and bring unparalleled sorrow to every godly Jew. This will end by the silvery strains announcing the year of Jubilee, proclaiming the day of bondage at an end, the year of release at hand, when every man shall return to his possession and his family (Lev. xxv. 8-13).

Here we get the significant fact that the feast of trumpets was at the *beginning* of the month, and is connected with the *new moon*.

The dim outline of the queen of night, as, crescent-like, she turns to the sun, pictures Israel's face turning once more to the Sun of Righteousness. Nigh two thousand years ago the Dayspring from on high visited His people, but they hid their faces from Him. A veil is now on their heart, but it

shall be taken away, for when Israel turns to the Lord the veil will be removed (see 2 Cor. iii. 16). Gradually but surely she shall once more be brought under divine influence—though through deep and bitter sorrows—and her moon shall shine in full-orbed splendour during the Millennial reign of Christ.

Has this feast no voice to us Christians? Surely it has. If a silver trumpet shall summon Israel to awake from her long slumber, and then another ten days later announce her day of exile over, we also are reminded that it is by trumpet's voice we are called to our glorious inheritance, and at the "*last trump*" we shall rise to meet our Lord (1 Cor. xv. 52).

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

The Silver trumpets which sounded on the first day of the month were intended to awaken Israel to repentance and remind them of what was connected with the trumpets sounded on the tenth day of the month, to arouse them to the fact that their long exile would soon be over, their "*own sweet realm*" once more theirs.

Something analogous to this will be found in the parable of the ten virgins. They all went to sleep, but at midnight the cry arose, "*Behold the bridegroom!*" Then those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. It is not difficult to see that this answers to the trumpets on the first of the month, and that something like it occurred nearly a century since, when God graciously awaked His people to the long-lost hope of the Lord's second coming for the church—His bride. This call was intended to arouse her from worldliness and sleepy indifference. One here, and another there, began fervently to cry, "*Come, Lord Jesus,*" and became truly like men who wait for their Lord. They did not look for Israel to be gathered to their own land *first*, nor for the fulfilment of the voice of the "*trumpets*" spoken of in the book of Revelation. They saw much to happen before

Israel were gathered, but nothing before the church was "caught up."

The trumpets were made of *Silver* and that of a "*whole piece*." Silver is the well-known figure of Atonement. The one and only work which saves, the only "whole piece," is that redemption wrought on Calvary's cross. It is the redeemed who are to be *gathered*. The whole church of God will go. This is to take place at the *last trump*. This does not refer to the last day, nor yet the last call from God, but the final call to the heavenly saints. The term "last" refers to the well-known usage of the Romans when their army was encamped. The first trumpet sounded; its voice was "wake up," the second "fall in," the "last" "march." How gladly they responded if it was on the homeward march to their Fatherland!

We verily believe the first trump has sounded, and the second is now sounding. The first, with its clarion notes, cries "Awake!" The second says "Fall in," let him that heareth say "Come." Take your place among the watchers.

What wait we for? Only that final summons, that "last trump," when we shall

"Run up with joy the Shining Way
To meet and see our Lord,"

and this may sound at any moment.

The sound of the first Trumpets on the day which commenced the Jewish civil year will be heard as soon as the "last" trump is sounded which summons Christians to be with Christ—but not before—for God will gather the church before He blesses Israel. A Jew, saved now, is not viewed as a Jew. In God's account he is merged in the "one new man" of Ephesians II. and forms part of the church.

When God begins to work with Israel again He will first wake them up to repentance individually, and then during the typical ten days they will learn their sinfulness, see how they have broken every one of the ten commandments, as well as rejected their true Messiah, and bewail their awful state. Their misery growing deeper and deeper until learning the true meaning of the "day of Atonement," the jubilee trumpets shall declare their days of sorrow over for ever, and the morning of joy begun.

H. NUNNERLEY.

Glory.

GLORY has been described as the sum of the qualities that there are in God, as He has been revealed in Christ. Scripture also presents glory in other ways. For instance, if you speak about the glory of Sinai—that was the glory of God in Sinai. Granted it was a glory which was very great, it was yet a glory that had no glory by reason of the glory that excelled, but still it was glory. It was the way in which God presented Himself suitably as connected with the law at Sinai. That was His legal glory, as presented to Moses. There was a wonderful glory in that, so much so that the people in their state then were not fit to receive it. Then there is the glory of God in creation. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Then, again, when He destroyed Pharaoh in the Red Sea, there was a display of His saving glory, the power whereby He destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts, and delivered His people from Egypt ; but if you speak of the glory of God absolutely, it means the sum total of all His attributes revealed, in all that of which He consists, as set forth before us now in Christ.

When Christ came, the Apostle John says, “we beheld His glory, the glory, as of an only begotten of the Father.” That is His Glory. You could not conceive anything higher than that for Christ. You see Him down here as a Man called Jesus, and He goes up and down the country. What is the highest thing you could say about Him? He cured sickness? Yes. He gave sight to the blind? Yes. He forgave people their sins? Yes. Anything still higher than that? Yes, the only begotten of the Father, full of *grace and truth*. That is His glory. That is the climax of it. That is what He is. That is the One who has come down to give us life. The sum of the Christian’s glory is the power by the Spirit of God to be associated with and assimilated to Christ, to have Christ as His life. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, when

He comes out in manifestation, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Every one that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

In the Gospel of Luke it is what He is relatively to God ; but in the Gospel of John it is His own proper glory, what He is absolutely. He is what He is, not only the bread of life, the true vine, but the " I AM," not " I am something," but " I am," the eternal One. That is what He is in Himself essentially. That is the title by which God sent Moses to deliver the people ; nothing delivers souls like having to do with One who is outside of all circumstances. When Moses asked, " When they ask Your name, who shall I say has sent me ? " He says, "*I am that I am.*" That is His name throughout all generations, and His memorial for ever. Christ says, " I am " that before Abraham was.

It is what Christ is relatively to God that we find in Luke. " Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, " Glory to God in the highest ; on earth, peace and good pleasure in men." It is not the glory of God. In the Gospel of Luke Christ is seen essentially as man, not but that He is also a divine Person ; but although He is a divine Person, He was born of the virgin, in a miraculous way—" That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God "—so that He was a man as truly as man could be, but not a man of the same order in which Adam was. He was not a man in the state in which man was, because that man was fallen from the state in which he was placed. Christ was perfect. He was the holy One. While, as I say, the Gospel of Luke sets Him forth in His truly divine character as well, still what characterizes it is His humanity, while in the Gospel of John what characterizes it is His deity ; and yet they both, Luke and John, give us generally the fact, that He is not only Man, but truly a divine Person. The manifestation of God is in a Man, and all His plans were in a Man, who is here relative to God, and the moment you see Him coming into this world, He is so announced with " Glory to God in the highest." He throws back into the presence of God everything that in the mind of God would come out of Him. The moment you have such a

Person as this, you are at once in the company of One who stands alone. "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God." There is the mirror on which the light of what is divine and of heaven has shone, and it reflects it and throws it back again. "Glory to God in the highest." Creation can tell us creatorial glory. Pharaoh and his hosts can tell of the power and might whereby He destroys His enemies, and so there are various other ways and things and circumstances in which the glory of God is set forth, some of them higher than others, some of them lower. But here, when you come to the introduction of the Gospel of Luke, when the multitude of the heavenly host announce to us the character, the nature of the One who comes before us here, they announce it in this way, "Glory to God in the very highest possible way," and on earth, peace, good pleasure in men.

Now as the word glory runs through the whole of the Gospel, you have it seven times repeated. If you turn to chapter v. verse 25, you will see that He did bring glory to God. "Immediately he rose up before them . . . and they were all amazed and glorified God." They treated it pretty much in the same way as they treated the law of Moses at Sinai, when they quaked and feared and trembled ; but in the presence of this gracious power which takes up the poor paralytic man, and restores him to health and strength, they are filled with fear. They are not at home in the presence of it. Still, the effect of Christ being here was that He caused them to glorify God. They saw in Christ, and in what He did in respect of this poor paralytic man, that which made their hearts look right up to God, and they glorified God.

Now turn to chapter VII. verse 14 : "Weep not. And He came and touched the bier . . . and there came a fear on all." There is the most gracious act of power that you could wish, and what effect does it produce upon them ? A fear came upon them all, but nevertheless they glorified God. That was the mighty effect. Here is the power of death gone. Here is the greatest power that operates in this world, the fear of death, annulled by the power of Christ. Resurrection is the power of God. They were in the presence of that

beneficent power, come down to take up a poor widow in her helplessness and distress, and they were filled with fear. Yet at the same time they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up amongst us, and God has visited His people." That is what God wanted to produce in their minds. He was setting Himself forth in that way. He was clothing Himself in their presence with the exhibition of this mighty power. He was seen in the grace that caused Him thus to act on their behalf.

Now turn to chap. XIII. ver. 11. We find this poor woman was bound with a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and could in no wise lift herself up. When Jesus saw her, He called to her, and said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity," and He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. She threw back into the presence of God the very thing that God wanted her to understand, the thing with which He clothed Himself in her presence in the person of Christ. Christ produced that effect on her mind that made her responsive to the glory of God.

Again, in chapter XVII., you have the interesting episode of the ten lepers. One of them, with a loud voice, threw back into the presence of God, reflected back the light of the way in which He was presenting Himself in Christ. Jesus said, "There were none found to return and give glory to God, save this stranger." There was no reflection from the hearts of these men for the grace bestowed upon them by Christ, but He said to the other one, "Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." That is how God acts in the soul. It is not a question that you are forgiven, nor that you are saved, and that you are going to heaven when you die. Jesus says, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" The nine were like mirrors with a black covering put over them that reflected nothing. Their hearts did not throw back to God that which God had sent down to them in Christ. There were none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

In chapter XVIII., the poor blind man heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." He says, "What wilt thou

that I should do unto thee ? ” “ Lord, that I might receive my sight.” Did you ever cry to God that He would give you sight ? I will tell you one who prayed it for you on bended knees—the Apostle Paul. How he desired that you might have spiritual eyesight to apprehend the glory of God in Christ. It is more than probable that you have never prayed to God for sight in this way, and said, “ Lord, give me sight, I want to see.” What answer did the Lord give ? “ Receive thy sight : thy faith hath saved thee ” ; and immediately he received sight, glorifying God. He threw back into the presence of God that which God sent down to Him in the person of His Son, and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Now look at chap. XXIII. ver. 44 : “ It was about the sixth hour . . . Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” With reverence think of a Man on the cross, despised, refused, disowned, after crying, “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” coming out of all that darkness into the communion of His right relationship with God, saying, “ Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit,” and when He said this He gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion, who is a representative of the Gentile world, saw that, he glorified God. There are great things presented before us, if our hearts were tuned to the music that the Spirit of God sets before us. There was a Man here who could look up into heaven, and say, “ Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.”

Turn to 2 Corinthians IV.verse 6. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness—that is a very marvellous expression—has shined in our hearts to reflect, throw back, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Is there anything analogous to that in nature ? Does nature provide an illustration ? The only thing that illustrates it in nature is the diamond. As the light falls on the diamond, the peculiarity of the diamond is that the light does not pass through it, but it goes from one plane to another plane, and back again, and the light is reflected back. So it is in this scripture. Let us see to it that we are in the truest sense diamonds.

EDWARD CROSS.

A Timely Word.

THE Holy Ghost does not gather saints around mere views, however true they may be, upon that which the church is, upon that which it has been, or that which it may be, on the earth, but He always gathers them around that blessed Person, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. XVIII. 20).

We need to be watchful against boasting, as people do in these days ; need to be still in the presence of God. There is much independence and self-will almost everywhere.

If any one speaks of separation from evil, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply only that which at all times has constituted sects, and produced doctrinal heresy. Nearness to Christ would keep us from sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart. Sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves.

Now I know, at the present time, of no service which is worthy of Him, if it is not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the church of God, so dear to Christ, is dishonoured in this world ; if it is scattered, ignorant, afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. True service of love will seek to give according to the need, and because of their need, he will never think of slighting the objects of the Master's love.

There is great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel, recounted in the book of Ezra.

Heir of the place which Solomon had occupied in days of prosperity and glory, he spoke not of his birth, nor of his rights. However, he is faithful in all the path of separation, of sorrow, and of conflict he is obliged to pass through.

If we speak of our testimony upon the earth, it will soon be evident that all is but weakness, and, like the seed lost upon the wayside, the testimony will likewise end to our shame.

Neither the anger, nor the prudence, nor the pretensions of man can do anything, in the state of confusion in which the church is now. I freely own that I have no hope in the efforts many make to assure themselves an ecclesiastical

position. When the house is ruined in its foundations by an earthquake, it matters little how one tries to make it an agreeable dwelling-place. We shall do better to remain where the first discovery of the ruin of things by man's deed has placed us—with our faces in the dust. Such is the place which belongs to us by right, and, after all, it is the place of blessing.

I have read of a time when several were gathered together in such sorrow of heart, that for a long time they could not utter a single word ; but the floor of the meeting-room was wet with their tears. If the Lord would grant us such meetings again, it would be our wisdom to frequent these houses of tears. " They that sow in tears shall reap in joy " (Ps. cxxvi. 5). It is not only for the earthly remnant that this is true, it is also written for us. I would willingly take a long journey to join these afflicted ones ; but I would not go a step with the object of receiving from the hands of most excellent men power to overturn all to-day and reconstruct to-morrow.

We need to watch over ourselves, lest, after having been preserved from the corruption of the age by the very precious truths revealed to us in our weakness, we should be taken in the net of presumption, or thrown into insubordination. These are things which God can never recognize or tolerate, since we are called to " keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

J. N. DARBY.

THROUGHOUT eternity we shall find nothing so to rejoice in as God's thought of sending this Son of His love to give life to dead sinners. Christ given to us as eternal life, in all the death in which He found us. I should have been dead for eternity, if God had not interfered to give me life in His Son, and a nature capable of enjoying all in the glory.

OUGHT I to mind being left down here in the wilderness, in the midst of all that tries me in every way, when I can taste His love here equally in it all ? It would certainly be a much happier thing to be present with Him and absent from this poor body ; but if it is the will of Him who loves me with a love that wills I should stay down here, the sweetness of doing His will is enough.

Colossians.

CHAPTER I.

Q. Are professors contemplated in verse 23 ?

A. If you mean mere professors, it is not so. The warnings of Scripture would have no effect upon them ; the true believer it is who is kept by them. They mark the sunken rocks on the chart to be avoided. I say to my child, " If you fall over that precipice you will be dashed to pieces " : it is not that I mean to let him fall over. But the moral effect upon the child is important, it makes him cling close to me.

Q. Paul did not actually preach to " every creature under heaven," nor as far as we know any one else. Are we then to take it as meaning the scope of the gospel as all-embracing ? (ver. 23).

A. Pretty much as you say : it is the world-wide aspect of the gospel. The Apostle has brought out the double headship or pre-eminence of Christ ; as to all creation in verses 15-17, then as the Head of the body, the new beginning of everything in resurrection. To these have answered the reconciliation of all things in earth and heaven (ver. 20), and of those who form His body the Assembly (vers. 21,22). And now we have the double aspect of the Apostle's ministry, that of the gospel to every creature (ver. 23), and of the Assembly from verse 24, correlative with the Headships, and reconciliations present and future.

Q. In what way did Paul's ministry fulfil or complete the Word of God ? (ver. 25).

A. Verse 24 is of deep interest in introducing his ministry of the Assembly, as expressing in a wonderful way how his heart was bound up with the interests of Christ in it. He looks at the Assembly's sufferings as those of its Head, as he had learned they were in the first words of Christ that reached him, " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ? " Then he regards its afflictions as a whole, taking in all that is appointed to it to go through till its suffering time is over. And in the largeness of his heart he would fill up that which yet remained or lacked of the afflictions of the Assembly, that is of Christ as we have seen, in his own personal experience—" in my flesh for His body's sake,

which is the Assembly"—leaving so much the less of what lacked of the whole sufferings for those who came after him. The sufferings or afflictions of Christ he speaks of are in no way those of His atoning death, but what His love to the Assembly involved Him in, as when of Israel it could be said "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." Then, in answer to your question, it was given to Paul to fill up full, or complete the Word of God by putting in the last great subject of revelation, the mystery. It was not that John had not got to write his epistles and the Apocalypse, but these were but the full development of lines of truth with which Scripture had already made us familiar. But the mystery had been hid from ages and from generations, as verse 26 tells us—"hid in God from eternity" (Eph. III. 9)—and is now made manifest to His saints through the ministry of the Apostle.

Q. What is the special aspect of the mystery in this Epistle?

A. Christ among and in Gentiles, the hope of glory. Christ among Jews, as it has been observed, would be the glory come, but God would make known the riches of the glory of the mystery in that Christ was now to be known among Gentiles, and this in the fullest way as become in them their life. It is the complement of the mystery as presented in Ephesians: Jew and Gentile quickened, raised up and seated in Christ in the heavenlies. But if we are in Him before God, He is in us as life down here in the world, carrying with it the hope of glory.

Q. What does Paul mean by presenting every man "perfect in Christ Jesus?" (ver. 28).

A. It was the object of his ministry, as more fully opened out in Ephesians IV. 12-15. He had not other standard before him for the saints but "a perfect man" which he explains there to be "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Though this perfecting of the saints will only be accomplished when we see Him as He is, yet having nothing short of it as the object for them will be formative both of the character of the ministry and the subject of it.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

Our Calling.

THERE is no journey so blessed and happy as that of the Christian who refers to God always and in everything. Living in God's presence he finds guidance for his path on earth. There may be trouble on every side, adverse circumstances, sorrow, and suffering, but when faith looks *only* to God, trusts *only* in Him, the heart is kept calm and peaceful in the midst of every disturbing element. In everything we are to make our requests known to God. He has not promised to remove the trouble, but to fill our hearts with His peace, so that we can rest peacefully knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God, them which are called according to His purpose.

THE prayer that has gone up to God in faith is ever before His eye, it is not overlooked, even if it is yet unanswered, in the way, manner, and time we expected. How many parents have prayed in faith for the salvation of their children, and have passed off the scene with their prayer unanswered, but God forgets not the heart that has trusted in Him; and, in due time, the answer will come, filling with glad surprise, in a coming day, as they find their loved one among the saved, and their fervent cries thus answered.

THE deepest well of human bliss may soon run dry, but the living "fountain" in the heart of God never fails.

THE great lesson to be learnt in the wilderness is entire dependence on the Lord. To learn this is worth all the disappointments of the desert, for in the Lord there is no disappointment. Blessed is the man who puts his trust in *Him!*

WE must never separate our interests from Christ. He who serves his Lord out of love now, will discover in a coming day that in serving his Master he has been enriching himself.

BE not weary in well doing, your labour is not in vain in the Lord. The most earnest servant, the most devoted labourer may find himself the greatest loser *here*, but the greatest winner when the account is made up *there*.

The Ark and the Vail.

MYSTICALLY and typically both the Ark and the Vail foreshadow the mystery of Christ's person. The ark was fashioned of wood and gold. These were its integral parts, and having been once blended together, any right conception of the ark, must embrace both the gold and the wood. One apart from the other would not be the ark.

Gold foreshadows the divine nature and being of the Son of God, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"—the One whom the Lord of hosts speaks of as "My fellow" (Zech. XIII. 7). Whilst the wood points to Jesus, the Son of Man, born into this world.

The vail which concealed the ark pictures in its varied parts "His flesh" (Heb. x. 20). Its materials were blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen interwoven with cherubim of cunning work. These symbolize the "body prepared" for the eternal Son of God who became the Son of Man when born of the Virgin. God in very deed had come to dwell with man on the earth; and as we approach Bethlehem's manger, we would bow with holy reverence, for in it lay Emmanuel—"God with us"—in the "form of a servant" (Phil. II. 7).

The fine twined linen witnesses to the purity of His Person, the purple and scarlet to the earthly glories and royal dignities of the Son of Man. We have an intimation of these glories in the wise men from the east, who, guided by a star to Bethlehem, opened their costly treasures, as they bowed in homage before Him and presented them as His rightful due.

The blue tells us that He was ever and always the heavenly stranger, whilst the cherubim of cunning work, wrought in the Vail, remind us that all judgment is committed to One whose glory it is to maintain the rights of God in a lawless world, as well as to satisfy His holy claims on the cross. The cherubim and the Ark were combined.

The pure and holy humanity of the blessed Lord was thus

shadowed. Though truly human, His nature is not that of fallen man. Made in the "likeness of sinful flesh," He was absolutely incapable of committing sin, yet was so truly and really a man, that He could be tempted in all points like as we are—sin apart (Heb. iv. 15).

When the Ark journeyed the priests first spread over it the Vail, and then a covering of badger-skins. The fine linen in the Vail signifies inward purity, the rough badger-skin over it, the moral resistance of all evil, as displayed in the holy spotless walk of the Man Christ Jesus.

He passed through a sinful scene in sinless perfection. He came in contact with defilement, but was not defiled thereby. His holy nature repelled the suggestions of the evil one. Satan found no vulnerable point in Him. Tested in the wilderness, He maintained His place of dependence as a man. Tried in every shape and form by the contradiction of sinners during His ministry on earth, He could say in the Garden of Gethsemane "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing *in Me*" (John xiv. 30).

Over the badgers'-skins was spread a cloth wholly of blue—a colour which denotes that which is heavenly. This outside covering was before the eyes of men. They might be morally blind and not discern God manifest in flesh, but He was there to be seen in that lowly Nazarene. The light shone in darkness, but the world saw no beauty in Jesus, nevertheless the light—that heavenly light which ever radiated from the Word made flesh—shone along His whole pathway. Peter, John, and others beheld His glory—"the glory as of an only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," but their eyes had been opened by divine grace, and they hung upon those lips from which flowed the words of eternal life, and were sure He was the Christ, the Son of the living God (John vi. 68, 69).

The covering of blue was thus, in measure, discerned by those to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and of whom the Lord said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. xiii. 16). It is true they were slow learners, and had to be reminded of their non-apprehension of the blessed fact that in Him the Father was fully revealed (John xiv. 9).

When the coverings enveloped the ark the staves were placed in the rings and the work of the Levites began. What was their work? Was it not to bear upon their shoulders the ark with its sacred mysteries and significant coverings, typifying the person of Christ? The only thing visible was the covering of blue.

Our business as *servants* of Christ is to bring before others a Man of a new order, a Man in whom God found His constant delight, a Man who in every thought, word, and way displayed His heavenly origin (1 Cor. xv. 47). A Man who traversed this world, which was to Him a wilderness, combating evil, meeting hatred and misunderstanding in patient grace, yet ever seeking to reconcile man to God. Oft engaged in the most trying services, when ministering to the need and alleviating the misery of guilty, sinful man, yet He never left the bosom of the Father, but ever abode in unclouded and uninterrupted communion. Such was "Jesus," perfect in dependence as a man, yet never ceasing to be "Emmanuel," God with us.

Let us note well what was permissible for a priest was forbidden to a Levite. There were two things the Levites were *not* allowed to do. They were forbidden either to *touch* the ark (Num. iv. 15, 20), or *look* into its sacred mysteries. Woe betide the hasty hand that, Uzzah-like, touched the ark (2 Sam. vi. 7), or the unholy gaze which looked within, as did the men of Bethshemesh (1 Sam. vi. 19).

Is there not a lesson here for us? As holy priests we may linger adoringly over the varied perfections of Jesus, but as servants we must not separate the component parts of Christ's person. We may delight in His dependence, so graphically foretold in Psalm xvi. We may admire His beautiful life as the meek and lowly One, rejoice in His perfect humanity, in all things, made "like unto His brethren," tried and tempted as we are—"sin apart" (see Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15). We may magnify the grace displayed in the "Word become flesh"; but we must ever remember that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. He is the self-existent, eternal God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, having essential Deity, who could raise the dead, still the storm,

forgive sins, and proclaim Himself the great "I am" (John VIII. 58). In Him we see One infinitely more than man, more than angel, more than any created being. If the rays of Godhead glory were not always proclaiming themselves, nevertheless the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him as fully when He lay in the manger at Bethlehem as when stilling the storm, and raising the dead, or as now in heaven.

But it is one and the same Person who is displayed in these varied ways. Jesus is the God-man. The knowledge of the wonderful mystery of His Person the Father has reserved for Himself. No one knoweth the Son but the Father (Matt. XI. 27).

Having become man, He will never cease to be such. The gold and wood combined formed the ark; gold without wood, or wood without gold, would not be the ark. The Son of Man and Son of God are One. Henceforth Deity and humanity are inseparable in the person of Jesus.

Let us then tread softly, with holy reverence, and remember that it is only in priestly nearness we are permitted to linger adoringly over the varied perfections of Jesus. We may delight in His perfect humanity, magnify the grace in the Word become flesh, contemplate His essential Deity, behold in Him God over all blessed for ever, but all this is to be done in a holy, reverent spirit of worship. We may acknowledge Him to be very Man born of a woman, and yet we are to know that the same Person is the true God and eternal life.

Beyond this we may not go. We must not dissect His Person, we must not separate the wood from the gold, Deity from Humanity. The mystery is too great for us to solve. Our business is to uphold—in our servant character as Levites—the wonderful Person in whom the divine and human are now so blended that henceforth they are inseparably, indissolubly, one. No one can have any right conception of Christ's person unless they hold to the grand fact that He is both God and Man. One indivisible Person, the One true Ark.

H. NUNNERLEY.

“The Blood of His Cross.”

“*THE blood of His cross.*” Five words of immense significance ! Let me note the passage in which they occur. “It was pleasing that in Him should all the fulness dwell ; and, having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to itself, by Him whether things on earth or things in heaven ” (Col. 1. 20). You will notice that God’s “ dear Son ” is spoken of as the vessel (if indeed such a word may be reverently used of Him by whom and for whom all things were created) of all the fullness. Deity in its absoluteness dwelt in Him. “ Found in fashion as a man,” the Son who had ever dwelt in the bosom of the Father, had, in boundless grace, become incarnate, in order that through death, and under the judgment our sins deserved, He might not only become our Redeemer, but that, by “ the blood of His cross,” He might effect, in due time, the reconciliation of all things on earth and in heaven. (Let us note well this is only said of “ things,” not persons). Believers are now reconciled. Unbelievers never will be reconciled should they die in their sins. It is the material universe which is here in view. The “ blood of His cross ” will bring all *things* in perfect accord with the mind of God throughout the wide universe. What an immense result ! How fully the whole and awful question of sin raised and settled on Calvary shall then be visibly demonstrated ! How the new heavens, the new earth, and the new creation, in their beauty and glory, shall demonstrate the eternal effects flowing from the “ blood of His cross.” Meantime, we who are reconciled to God are privileged to enjoy peace with God. “ Having made peace ” (ponder the word) “ by “ the blood of His cross.”

The peace that was marred and banished in Eden, when the serpent allured and man fell ; the peace which fled and gave place to centuries of discord, rancour, and bloodshed ; the peace for which the poor agonized heart of man craves, but which cannot be made by human efforts, nor bought with gold, or riches, that peace was made by “ the blood of His cross.” The full result is still in abeyance, but the glorious foundation is laid, and faith appropriates it as a

present blessing (Rom. v. 1). Well might the Baptist exclaim, as he saw Jesus : " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world " (John 1. 29). The two scriptures are remarkably analogous, they both speak of a work which will affect the utmost bounds of the globe. " The blood of His cross "—so wickedly, wantonly shed by man—is the only basis on which peace can now be known and the harmonizing of the universe effected. His cross so despised, yet its effects so transcendant ! How great the contrast !

Well may we sing :

" Whene'er we muse upon the cross
On which the Lord of glory died,
Our richest gain we count but loss,
And pour contempt on all our pride."

For in point of fact, could anything be more truly marvellous than the crucifixion of the Lord of glory ? Do we, beloved, meditate sufficiently on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Do we allow the deep lessons of that most awful event to affect us as we should ? Do we truly live in the power of that cross, concerning which an apostle could say : " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world " ?

By " the blood of His cross " our many sins have been washed away ; by " the blood of His cross " the new creation shall be established in everlasting harmony ; by " the blood of His cross " God has been glorified in respect of all the triumph of evil, and the enemy silenced for evermore.

May the Spirit of God grant a growing appreciation of " the blood of His cross " to all His blood-bought people.

J. WILSON SMITH.

It is not my being able to understand what Christ is to God ; I have known Him these forty-five years—and what can I say ? Ah, Lord, Thy Father knows all about Thee !

Washing Each Other's Feet.

"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."—JOHN XIII. 14.

It is true that our Lord teaches us a lesson of humility by this lowly act, but it is also true that He gives it a spiritual significance. We are to wash one another's feet, it is our duty, our obligation. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." How can I do it? I can only do it as I walk in love; I can only do it as I keep clean myself; I can only do it as my affections are in activity; I must love in order to serve my brethren. Hence at the close of chapter XIII. you get "This is My commandment, that ye love one another." It cannot be done any other way; it cannot be done from a sense of duty—it is our duty, but it cannot be done from a sense of duty. I do not mean that we should do it merely from affection, because if we did it merely from affection, we might forget that it is the will of God for us. No, we are to do it in obedience, in the power of affection for one another produced by the Spirit of God.

In practice we can only do it by presenting Christ to each other. These are very difficult days, iniquity abounds, love waxes cold; we have not the affection for one another that we should have. How ready we are to bite and devour one another, instead of really loving each other, just because our affections are not in the power that the Lord would have them in our souls, so feet-washing is largely neglected.

One way in which we can wash one another's feet is by presenting Christ, speaking of Him when we meet. That is the best way to do it, because we cannot tell when we meet others whether they need feet-washing or not, but we are sure to help each other if we keep Christ before the hearts and minds of His people as we come in contact with each other, and that can only be done in the power of the Spirit of God, through the Word, and in the affections the Spirit produces in our hearts.

JAMES BOYD.

Some Glories of Christ.

GLORY has been defined as the outward and visible display of inward excellence. Nowhere does this shine out as in the close of His ministry. Satan having entered into Judas, searing his conscience and hardening his heart, drives him out in the night to consummate the betrayal of his Lord and Master. When he was gone out, Jesus said, "*Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*" The glory declared here is peculiarly His own. The future glory of the Son of Man, of which He had spoken before, He will share with His loved co-heirs. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them" (John xvii. 22). But the glory of which He now speaks is not only His alone, but it transcends every other. All that God *is* as light and love found expression at the cross, it is the centre of God's universe, the centre of an eternity of bliss. God was glorified in all His attributes by the Son of Man. What rest it is to us to know that God has been thus glorified on earth about sin. The perfect obedience, love, and holiness manifested by Jesus on the cross infinitely exceeds in God's sight all the sin that man has been, or could be, guilty of.

If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.

God raised Him from the dead, set Him at His own right hand, and crowned Him with glory and honour, in token of His approval.

" This is the Man, th' exalted Man,
Unseen, whom we adore ;
But when our eyes behold His face,
Our hearts will love Him more."

And now God is righteous in justifying the ungodly, in saving helpless sinners, who, self-judged, take their true place before Him, confessing their sins and trusting the precious blood of Jesus.

Furthermore, Jesus said to His disciples, " Little children, yet a little while am I with you. Ye shall seek Me ; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you " (see John vii. 33, 34). What precious

words of comfort for His loved ones! The words were the same to each, but quite opposite in their application. He had told the Jews that He was going to Him that sent Him, into the *glory* He had with the Father; and He added to the Jews, Where I am, thither *ye* cannot come. But when speaking to His disciples, He was about to go into death and *condemnation*, so He told them that *they* could not come *there*. He also said to Peter, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now* (into condemnation and death); *but thou shalt follow Me afterwards* (through death into glory).

JOHN GASKIN.

The Heavenly Stranger.

JESUS of Nazareth was gracious, patient, self-sacrificing, accessible. He used words that were familiar and simple, and spoke of things men saw about them, but His words always took men beyond the thought of house and field, bread and home, neighbour and kinsman. Men felt that He saw something they did not see, and that His deepest care for them often began where their care for themselves ended. He spoke their language and seemed to tread their path; but they saw that no man ever spake as He spake, and some among them knew that He came from God and went to God.

Over the lives of all who love and seek to serve Him He has written these words: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Let us remember this, that to be in touch with human needs we must be filled with heavenly satisfaction.

P. C. AINSWORTH.

Colossians.

CHAPTER II.

Q. PAUL agonizes for those who had never seen him and desires their hearts' comfort and their being united together in love (ver. 2). Is this the spiritual and moral preparation for entering into the riches of the full assurance of understanding (ver. 2)?

A: It is the moral atmosphere, so to speak, in which only the truth of the mystery can flourish—the state of soul needed for the full intelligence of it (*c.p.* chap. 1. 9).

Q. Should “in whom” read “in which” in verse 3? If so it would refer to the “mystery of God,” and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are said to be hidden therein. Ought this not to stir up the people of God to inquire into this wonderful subject?

A. In the great variety of readings, the translation you give is that which has most weight. It may be observed that the same loss of the truth of the mystery that doubtless led to the confusion of the copyists affects many of their modern critics. Yet the solution was not far to seek; for the Apostle speaks of this great truth in the immediate connection of the close of chapter 1., as also in Ephesians III. 3, 4, 9. It is the mystery of God as having its source in His eternal counsels—of Christ, as the object of it. I do not know any other part of the revelation of God so calculated to act upon the hearts of saints, when we think of the grace that has made manifest to us what had been hid from all other ages, never breathed of in Scripture even before, but hid from eternity in God. Surely it is meant mightily to affect the practical walk of the Christian. What else would account for the deep exercise the Apostle speaks of in verse 1 as to places where he had not been able orally to testify of it, though he rejoiced in their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ? As to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being found in the mystery (ver. 3), compare Ephesians III. 10, where, in connection with the administration of it, all the varied resources of God’s wisdom are known by the Assembly to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies.

Q. In what way could they be said to have received Christ Jesus the Lord? (ver. 6).

A. They had indeed received Jesus as Lord, but were not safe from the beguiling influences that were at work (ver. 4), without the intelligent recognition of their union with Him in glory. The point, however, here is, that it was in Him all resources for Christian walk and condition were to be found; having been “rooted, and being built up in

Him and established in the faith," as they had been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. In verse 8 the warning is forcibly given as to the sources of their danger. There was philosophy, the reasoning of the human mind, which he characterizes as "vain deceit," and the religion of the flesh here, as in verse 20, represented as the "rudiments" or "elementary principles of the world," because by it as once instituted of God in Judaism He had proved man in his position in the world.

Then, in the wonderful statement of vers. 9, 10 he sums up the whole truth of Christ and the position of the believer in Him.

Q. Do we gather from verse 9 that all the fullness of the Godhead still dwells in Christ bodily, in heaven as on earth in chapter 1. 19?

A. The truth of verse 9 does not differ from that of chapter 1. 19, though expressed more fully. That the fullness of God dwells in Christ as man is as true of Him in resurrection and ascension as on earth, "bodily" emphasizing His veritable humanity against the myths of the Gnostics. We must not miss the intimate connection of the verses by the change in English from "fullness" to "complete," the words having the same root. If God in His perfect fullness is in Christ and thus revealed in man, we are in Him before God, filled-full, complete, and this in One in whom all the fullness dwells by the very truth of His Person, and who is, as to the position He has taken as man, Head of all principality and power. If this is the Christian's place what insensate folly to propose to add anything to it: the glory of the Person in whom we are, so fully brought out from chapter 1. 15 to these verses, precludes the possibility of it. The Apostle now turns to the work of Christ, and that in its whole range, to bring out the complete removal, in the judgment of the cross, of the man to whom alone philosophy and religion could apply, and thus of everything that would have enfeebled or hindered our enjoyment of the glorious position.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

The Endings of the Old and the New Testaments.

16. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

17. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

MAL. III.

2. "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

3. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

MAL. IV.

16. I Jesus have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.

20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

REV. XXII.

THE Old Testament ends with a company drawn together in the fear of the Lord, who spake often to each other. Oppressed by the sorrowful condition of their nation, doubtless they looked onward to the advent of their promised Deliverer. Malachi cheers them by announcing that the Lord whom they sought would suddenly come to His temple.

In the opening of Luke's Gospel we find a faithful few hanging upon this promise. Nor did they wait in vain, hope changed to sight, sorrow to delight. Simeon rejoiced when holding Jesus, "Emmanuel," in his arms. He beheld in the Holy Babe the consolation of Israel. Anna spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Israel's Messiah had come! In the city of David a Saviour was born. Heavenly hosts celebrated His birth with "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." Through the tender mercy of God the dayspring from on high had visited them; light shone for those who sat in darkness, a guide for their feet in the way of peace.

But the light shone in vain, the darkness was not dispelled; Judah knew not the day of her visitation. Her King rode into Jerusalem—as Zechariah predicted He

would—palm branches waved, garments were strewn, hosannas rent the air, but Calvary announced that in her blindness Israel had refused the true light, and ever since gross darkness has settled on the minds of the people and will do so until the dayspring from on high again visits them. Meantime the counsels of God, as to the church, are revealed to Paul, and the Holy Ghost is gathering a heavenly company for God's Son from heaven.

The New Testament closes with a bridal company—amid the blackness and darkness of the long night of Christ's absence—with eyes fixed heavenwards, looking for the bright and morning star. Their hopes are not connected with things here; they look not for things to be set right in Palestine, or on the earth; their desire is to be taken out of it, caught up to that heavenly sphere where the day star shines in all its brilliancy. Their affections are drawn thitherward, their hopes lie outside this world, the language of their hearts is—

“Lord Jesus, come.”

There cannot be a greater contrast than the hopes which animated the company found in the end of Malachi and those to whom John speaks in the end of Revelation. One looks for the sun to chase away the darkness, the other for the star to attract them to itself like a needle to a magnet, whilst the darkness remains. One looks for the wicked to be removed in judgment, the other for the righteous to be taken in grace. One anticipates earthly blessing, the other heavenly joys. One waits for supremacy over every enemy, the other for association with the Conqueror of those enemies. One expects a King, the other a Bridegroom. One anticipates the Father's house with its affections, the other a righteous rule, emanating from Jerusalem, the city of the Great King. One the marriage of the Lamb, the other the year of jubilee; one the Paradise of God, the tree of life and the hidden manna, the other the feast of Tabernacles, and the Temple with its river of earthly blessing. We cannot be too clear in our minds that the company in Malachi and that in Revelation xxii. differ. Jewish hopes and Christian hopes are not the same. The Jew looks for

the Son of Man to be revealed in power and might (as symbolized by the sun of righteousness) gloriously arrayed, attended by myriad hosts. The Christian for a Saviour, unseen by the world, whose assembling shout shall summon all His redeemed without any outward and visible sign, to share His varied glories and behold the glory given to Him of the Father. They will remain with Him above during the breaking of the seven-sealed book, whilst meantime Israel, in a furnace of affliction, shall pass through the fiery ordeal of the great Tribulation, God's just governmental retribution for the nation's treatment of His Son. The sons of Levi shall be purified and minister once more in the Temple, whilst Judah, joined to the tribes, shall keep the feast of Tabernacles during the millennial day.

The church, as the holy city, will ever occupy her distinctive place in the heavens ; she will reign *over* the earth, the Jew *on* the earth. Israel waits for the sun of righteousness, the church for the morning star.

H. NUNNERLEY.

Two Mysteries.

UNWILLING to retain God in their knowledge, men have become vain in their imaginations, their foolish hearts have been darkened insomuch that they have changed the truth of God into a lie and worship the creature instead of the Creator (Rom. i. 19-32). Pagan history agrees with the Bible in tracing the origin of this folly to Babylon, Nimrod, the founder of its kingdom, being regarded as the prototype of the " gods many " and " lords many " of heathen worship. " Babylon hath been a golden cup : the nations have drunken of her wine ; therefore the nations are mad " (Jer. LI. 7). What is thus affirmed of ancient Babylon is also true of its modern antitype (Rev. xviii. 3). " The mystery of iniquity " is working in Christendom to-day ; its full-blown results will be seen when the nations of the earth receive antichrist and do homage to a man who exalts himself claiming to be God. " Ye shall be as gods " was the

temptation held out to our first parents—a bait which now fascinates their children, despite the evidence of history, which shows that men have always degraded themselves in their efforts to achieve this object. Thus it has come to pass that the natural man, created in the image of God, has lost spiritual intelligence, and is now like the beasts that perish ; “ There is no fear of God before his eyes.” Engrossed with material things, brute force, unlawful desire, and pride of possession, are the principles of his fallen nature ; these beget corruption and strife which fill the earth with confusion. Such is man after the flesh !

At the beginning of the Christian era there came into this world a Man of a new type, who perfectly fulfilled the conditions of man’s relationship with God. Unlike Adam, He humbled Himself, and although it had ever been His right to command, He became obedient. Laying aside the form of Deity, He said, “ Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God ”; the doing of which involved His sacrifice at Calvary. Owning the rights of God in every detail of His life, He met the claims of Divine Majesty in regard to man’s sin by His death. Raised out of death He is now seated in the highest place of dignity and favour at the Father’s right hand.

When judgment overtakes the ungodly they will be like chaff before the wind, but the Man whom God hath chosen is like a tree which has survived the storm. Planted by the river of life, its fruitfulness remains, “ and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations ” (Rev. xxii. 2). The Christ of the Gospels abides ; He is now “ the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him ” (Heb. v. 9).

But there is more ; Christ has manifested God to men. The incarnation led to the unveiling of God—in Him we see the “ *mystery of godliness.*” Taking part in His own creation, Christ came into this world in the form of a servant. He wrought miracles, but they were the fruit of His dependence on the Father. “ The Son can do nothing of Himself ” are words which speak of the place of subjection into which He came. He suffered hunger and thirst, groaned in spirit, and was troubled ; felt the weight of human sorrow, proclaiming thus the reality of His manhood. His pathway shed a moral lustre which greatly outshines any

display of authority or physical force. As we trace the footsteps of Jesus we see that the path of humiliation is the way of true greatness : but He was more than man. Veiled in flesh the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him. " He is the image of the invisible God " (Col. 1. 15). Men in their unbelief saw no beauty in Him, but those whose eyes were anointed beheld His glory shining through the veil. Then came the great unveiling when He laid down His life, for nothing short of death could fully express the truth that " God is love." The question, raised by man's partaking of the tree of knowledge in defiance of God, must needs be solved ; hence the flaming sword, which barred man's way to the tree of life because of sin, was sheathed in the heart of Jesus. And as the sword of Justice fell on Calvary's victim the veil was rent, and God, in His holy attributes and nature, shone forth. No longer can it be said that " clouds and darkness are His covering," for God has come to light in the only begotten Son, who bore the judgment of sin and effected Redemption for man. Now we are privileged to behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, resplendent are its beams, yet hidden from them whose hearts are veiled and whose minds are blinded by the god of this world.

The Living and True God has been fully expressed in Christ, reconciliation effected by His death, and every moral question solved in Him who reveals things *as they are*. As Christ " the true Light " shines into the hearts of men, the spell of Babylon is broken ; they are renewed in the spirit of their minds and learn the secret of piety.

W. TAYLOR.

Saul's Signs.

THE elders of Israel, abandoning their distinctive place as God's people, sought a king like the godless nations around (1 Sam. VIII. 5). Hitherto an outward allegiance, if not an inward submission, to Jehovah as their King had marked them. Now they propose to give up this semblance of subjection to God. " They have rejected Me that I should

not reign over them " is God's reply when Samuel prayed to the Lord about the matter. Could mistrust of God go further, or self-sufficiency be more grossly assertive ?

Nevertheless the pitying heart of their rejected Ruler was towards them, and with matchless grace guided them in the choice of a king, announcing the service he should perform both for the people and for Himself (1 Sam. ix. 16).

" A king to judge the people " was their thought (1 Sam. viii. 6) ; one to *save them* out of the hands of the Philistines, to deliver them from their enemies, was that of God (1 Sam. ix. 16). What charming tenderness !

The choice fell on Saul the son of Kish. He was prepared in private for his new office, for failing to find his father's lost asses, he went to inquire of Samuel the seer.

On going to the high place, he was given the chief seat at the prophet's table, had the reserved portion, enjoyed communion with the chosen guests, and was finally anointed captain (not of Israel, but) of God's inheritance. As such he was to be their deliverer, he was then sent home to await his public call to the kingdom.

In order to encourage him and strengthen his faith God gave him several tokens. The first sign was connected with his father's anxiety as to himself. The messengers of Kish met him at the tomb of his ancestress Rachel, the mother of Joseph, the despised one, who became lord of all Egypt, before whom all had to bow, and of Benjamin, the son of his father's right hand, the joy of his father's heart, especially during the absence of Joseph. Their history illustrates how God can overrule adverse circumstances and bring about His own ends in spite of man's sin.

The second sign occurred on the plain of Tabor. A small company of men, notwithstanding the general departure from Jehovah, still valued God's house ; God's ordinances were the joy of their hearts. They were going to Bethel to offer sacrifices of praise to God. God must put His new leader into touch with these faithful ones. He is told to accept bread at their hands. And, as if to add additional confirmation to Saul's appointment, a second company met him, this time coming *from* God's house, prophesying with glad hearts, and playing upon psaltery and harp.

Saul has thus a triple proof that God's hand was over him. The descent of the Spirit of God upon him caused him to join in with the prophesying company. He became the vessel of the Spirit, and if he had walked in obedience and dependence would thus have been raised superior to any and every difficulty which lay before him. His instructions were, "Thou shalt do as occasion serve thee, for God is with thee."

How long will he have to wait, and what will be the occasion on which his newly acquired powers shall be put into operation? The place is before him, and the time is the present. Thou shalt come to the hill of God where is the garrison of the Philistines (ver. 5). That spot chosen by Jehovah for His rest (Ps. cxxxii.) was the stronghold of the enemy. Should not the simple fact of the uncircumcised occupying the hill of God have been sufficient to suggest to Saul that Jehovah was being dishonoured by their presence? Did not occasion serve to put forth the power promised in this opportunity presented? What a combination of favourable circumstances to enable him to act for God! Nothing shall be denied him! He has but to act and no foe will be too numerous for him to disperse, or too strong for him to overthrow! Single handed he may "put to flight the armies of the alien." Will he slay his ten thousands, or allow that honour to pass into the hands of one who will more fully avail himself of the resources of God's armoury?

Is not the position of the believer to-day similar to that of Saul? He is associated with the true Joseph, our Lord Jesus Christ, the dispenser of blessing, and the true Benjamin, the man of His Father's right hand; he knows the blessedness of approach to God with his offering of praise, the joys that are to be found in His presence and the support and strength of the Holy Ghost. He is thus fully provided with ample equipment and support to enable him to act for God, and according to His will. Opposition may be strong, "but greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." There is no need to be dismayed nor discouraged at the power of the enemy, neither should that power be ignored.

Saul missed this wonderful opportunity and remained inactive whilst the enemy held undisputed possession of the hill of God. It required the energy of faith shown by Jonathan to ascend and dislodge them, but Saul had lost this great opportunity and henceforth all was failure.

What a warning for us ! We are left here to war a good warfare, to rise in the energy of faith and the power of the Holy Ghost, having put on the whole armour of God, ever seeking to displace the enemy. We are to seek Christ's interests, do God's will, not live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again.

Warned by Saul's failure let us use the power that has been so graciously placed at our disposal to enable us to resist the devil, dislodge the enemy, ascend the hill of God, and take possession of those heavenly places where all our blessings are found.

S. SCOTT.

Deliverance.

ROMANS VII.

PAUL says in Galatians, "I through the law am dead to the law." Dead to law ! Why ? That he might live to God. Could not Paul live to God under law ? No, there was no possibility of living to God under law. Whilst a man is on that footing he serves sin and is worse off under law than if no law had been given, because the commandment that tells him not to do certain things draws his attention to them, and provokes the desire to do them.

That is brought out in the latter part of Romans VII. The Apostle speaks of a man who has good desires, a work of grace in his soul, and wishes to keep the law in order for blessing ; but he finds he is not able to keep it. He finds a law in his members that wars against the law of his mind. The law of his mind is the effect of the work of grace in him ; but what he would like to do he does not do, and what he does not like to do he does, and he finds himself continually being carried in a

direction that he would rather not go in. Sin is too strong for him. He is as weak as an infant in the grasp of a giant.

What he needs is deliverance. How does he find it? In two ways. He finds it on one hand in the death of Christ—that is the basis of everything—and he finds it in the Spirit of God practically, but the death of Christ is what primarily delivers him from law. It delivers him from sin in the 6th chapter, and in the 7th chapter severs him from law. The bond is broken. He is free to live to God in Christ. He comes under another authority, and that other authority is Christ. You get a very good illustration of it in the 5th chapter of John. There was a man who had been thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda—thirty-eight years under law—and the little bit of mercy ministered by angelic means amongst Israel did not meet his case. Why? Because it needed strength on his part. The Lord comes along, and says to him, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” He gave him power to walk and carry his bed, and in that way He broke the letter of the law as to the Sabbath. The Jews met the man carrying his bed. They say, “It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.” What is his answer? Practically he says, “I am not under law any more.” Where are you? “Well, I am under grace.” How is that? “I have come under a new authority; He that made me whole, the same said unto me, ‘Take up thy bed and walk.’”

If Christ gave him power to carry his bed, Moses must not come in and prohibit him, for the One who gave him power to carry his bed is surely the proper Person to tell him when he is to carry it.

I refer to the 5th of John to illustrate the passage of a soul from law to grace, or from the authority of law to the authority of Christ. Then Christ and the law are contrary? Not so, for one who truly follows Christ will surely keep the law in its true meaning, for he will love God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself, but he serves and obeys because he has life and blessing. The lawgiver can only minister death and condemnation and curse the disobedient man.

In Christianity it is not a question of what you are

at all. It is a question of what Christ is. What is He? Is He righteous? Yes. Well, you are righteous. Is He Holy? Well, you are holy. "As He is, so are we in this world." Whether it be a question of sin or of law, the death of Christ is that which severs the link. We are dead with Christ—dead to sin, and we have the privilege in the 6th chapter of reckoning ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ. In the 7th chapter we have the privilege of reckoning ourselves dead to law, and being subject to Christ, under His authority.

The man spoken of here in chapter 7 has two natures: one nature will always serve God, and never will do anything else; and the other will always serve sin, and never do anything else; but the one that will never do anything else but serve God is as weak as possible, too weak for the other, and hence he wants power. This is what you get in the 8th chapter. You get power. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The Spirit comes in as power.

Of course, the experience described in Romans VII. may be modified very much according to the ministry under which the individual has been sitting. He may know the forgiveness of his sins, and have no doubt as to his eternal security, and yet at the same time he may be passing in a modified form through the experience described in Romans VII., learning that in him there is no good, and that he is absolutely without strength to reach the good that he earnestly desires to reach.

There are two things necessary for deliverance: one is knowledge of the doctrine, and the other power in the Holy Spirit. There must be both. If you have the Spirit, the power is there, but you need the doctrine, or you will be constantly putting yourself under law.

Of course, it is important to see that all the desires of the individual in Romans VII. are on the side of the good. He wishes to shun the evil. He wishes to attain unto the good; but how to bring that end about, he does not know until he sees not only his sins gone, but that he is gone. He is no longer a man in the flesh, but he is in the Spirit; he is in Christ.

JAMES BOYD.

Notes of Address.

Colossians.

Q. What is the force of "body of the sins of the flesh" ? (ver. 11).

A. "Of the sins" has no place in the text, and only obscures the truth. "We have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ." It is the true force of the typical act of circumcision, referring to the cross of Christ, as we possess it in Him. It is no question of our sins, and even goes beyond our old man having been crucified with Christ, or our reckoning ourselves dead to sin as Christ has died to it, in Romans VI. It is the same truth of death with Christ, but not here as to any former state; but the *man himself* is gone in the judgment of God. There has been the putting off of the body of the flesh, in submitting ourselves to the full force of that of which circumcision was a figure; namely, the end of the man himself in the judgment of God which took place for faith in the death of Christ. So that it only remained that we should accept the fact in baptism, "buried with Him" in it.

Q. Is baptism a figure of this? It appears usually to be connected with death and burial, but here resurrection is added.

A. It is our profession of the truth, that henceforth we take the place of having been buried with Christ. The "wherein" or "in which" that follows and seems to connect resurrection with baptism, may be as correctly translated "in whom." If it is read "in which" it carries on the thought of the place we take to being risen with Christ. But as faith in the operation of God who raised Him from the dead follows, I prefer to read "in whom," and thus to connect the resurrection side of things with a work of divine power in Christ, not merely our profession of it in baptism.

Q. "Quickened together with Him" (ver. 13). Does that view the redeemed as quickened with Christ? Does "with" refer to time or association—which? Was Christ's resurrection the potential resurrection of all saints, or does it mean we are quickened experimentally with Him when we have faith in Christ?

A. The Apostle now brings us to another aspect of the work. Death with Christ was needed to close the life we lived in sin (chap. III. 17). But when the full truth of our condition came out, by the last test God had to apply to it, we were found all alike to be dead in sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh : into that scene of death God came and quickened us together with Christ, having forgiven us all that belonged to that state of death. If the first aspect of the work was found in Romans, this last is developed in Ephesians. "Quickened together" is the actual work of God in bringing us out of death into the life with which Christ rose from the dead, the "together" involving union with Him by the Holy Ghost. It does not refer to the time at which we were quickened together, so much as to the wonderful character, as in the association and relationship, of the life with which we were quickened. It does not speak of the resurrection of the saints, for this would involve their bodies. Nor is quickened together experimental, but a mighty act of divine power, as fully opened out in Ephesians I. 19 to II. 6, though being the subjects of it we cannot but experience it.

Q. What is the meaning of "hand-writing of [or rather "in "] ordinances" ?

A. It is the next aspect of the work : the hand-writing refers to the legal bond which those under the law had entered into, and that was outstanding against them. He changes from "you" to "us," only in this case as I suppose making the distinction between Jew and Gentile which we have so constantly in Ephesians I., II., for Scripture never puts the Gentile under law though we may put ourselves ; in which case it applies to us as to them, that Christ has blotted out or effaced and cancelled the bond which was contrary to us. He has taken it also out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. And last of all He has triumphed over the whole power of the enemy : the cross where His heel was bruised by the serpent was the scene of that public triumph wherein He bruised the serpent's head, and all his power ("principalities and powers") was laid low.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

Our Calling in Peter's Epistles.

SEVEN times Peter reminds the Christians of the dispersion of the nature of their calling. He tells them that they are not only redeemed and delivered, but, like Israel, are travelling to their inheritance. Kept by God's power, with girded loins, they are to go on in faith, looking onward to a heavenly portion reserved for them, as they are reserved for it. They are exhorted to hope to the end for the "grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ." He reminds them that theirs is a *holy calling*; and their ways are to accord therewith. "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter i. 15).

They are also told that theirs is a calling *into light*. God is no longer hidden in thick darkness, as in the old dispensation, but has been fully revealed in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. They had been in gross darkness, but God had called them "into His marvellous light." It was theirs, as ours, to enjoy the light of the gospel of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, without a veil; and to know that we are in the light as God is in the light. But although they and we have joy unspeakable, an inheritance incorruptible, and light ineffable, as our portion, yet on our journey we are to show forth the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light: we are a company of holy and royal priests.

At the same time He reminds us sorrow lies in our pathway; we are also *called to suffer* (1 Peter ii. 21). We are called to follow the steps of our blessed Master. When reviled we are not to retaliate, when suffering we are not to threaten, but place ourselves in God's hands and leave our cause to Him to settle. What rest of heart this would give were we to roll all our oppressions upon God; and leave the matter in His hands, especially in days when self-assertion is so rife and Christians are apt to be swept into the current of "man's rights," and vindicate themselves instead of submitting to everything for the Lord's sake.

We are also *called to blessing*. "Knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (chap. iii. ver. 9). Having been blessed, we are to bless, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. Abraham was not only blessed of God, but was to be a blessing to others. God has blessed us, we are to do good to all. Like our Father in heaven, who sends His rain on the just and the unjust, we are to say all the good we can of each other, and refrain from saying a bad word about anybody. To keep our tongue from evil, and do good, is the secret of a happy Christian life. We should see more "good days" were we careful as to this, besides the great privilege of knowing that this condition of soul enables us to count upon the eyes and ears of the Lord, for His ears are open, and His eyes upon those who order their conversation aright. When we cannot command the "ear" of God we may well inquire if we are permitting evil in our ways, for the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Again, we are said to be called to "*God's eternal glory*" (chap. v. ver. 10). Grace and glory are bound up together. As sure as the gracious call of God has reached us we shall eventually find ourselves in glory. Calling, justification, and glory all go together. Grace begun will end in glory. Not only the glory of the millennial reign of Christ when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, but throughout the ages of ages, for we are called to "eternal glory"! In this first epistle holiness, light, suffering, blessing, and glory are bound up with our calling.

Now turn to Peter's second epistle. There we are said to be "called by glory and virtue" (chap. i. ver. 3). Through a pathway of virtue we are called by the glory of God. On our way there we are to find in our faith, virtue—the courage of our convictions—and in this courage knowledge and temperance are to mark us as well as patient endurance, a godly walk and brotherly love. In all these the divine nature is to evidence itself, for "love" is the topstone. Neglecting these things we are prone to forget the grace that has reached us, and be blind as to the glory which lies before us.

Lest we should do so we are exhorted to make *our calling*

sure (chap. 1. ver. 10). That is, sure in our own consciousness, having the conviction in our souls that our daily path is a true answer to the nature of our calling. We are apt to forget that whilst sovereign grace will sail our ship into port, yet it is our responsibility to see that we go in with flying colours.

Peter's last letter was written for a dark and difficult day, when we are in danger of falling from our own steadfastness (III. 17). The antidote is to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, Godward and manward, to gird up our loins, press on as though everything depended on us. We are always to be looking to the end. Meantime our daily walk is to be marked by diligence. In our faith we are to have virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience. Godliness, brotherly kindness, and divine love are to be added. Thus our calling and election will be made sure, and our ways and walk declare that our hopes are on the eternal glory to which we are called.

R. K. WILSON.

“Things which Remain.”

2 TIM. I. AND II.

IN this epistle the Apostle writes of what was in the mind of God for His own in perilous times, so that we may be forewarned and forearmed in view of days of difficulty, declension, and distress.

Let me pass on to you a message given to me by a Christian in a time of great sorrow. It was this : “ If the outlook be dark, try the uplook.” To merely look around at circumstances is to be overwhelmed, and one degree worse than the outlook is the inlook. Now remember, God never intends us to find satisfaction either within or around. There is One in whom He has found fullest satisfaction. God looks at us in Christ, and He wants us to find our satisfaction and rest in Him. The uplook encourages us to go forward.

We are apt to flag and be discouraged. If we look at the church in its responsibility we find failure and break-

down on every hand ; but let us remember that God has permitted it to teach us necessary lessons. We may take encouragement, for God will carry out His own purposes, in spite of all. The first chapter—and indeed the whole epistle—presents things which remain—the will of God, life in Christ Jesus, grace, mercy, peace, faith, the gift of God,—all these abide.

Look at the first verse of the chapter : “ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.” Is that promise not to be made good ? Assuredly it is. Again in the ninth verse : “ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” The Apostle goes back to the purpose of God before the ages of time. We make a promise and through weakness or forgetfulness we may fail to fulfil it ; but if God makes a promise it will certainly be fulfilled. We are the outcome of God’s purpose in Christ before the world began. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Go back before all things were created ; God had a purpose, and that purpose was to set us in the enjoyment of life which is in Christ Jesus. Then we are also the outcome of His blessed atoning work, and also of the operation of the Holy Spirit who now dwells in us.

Amid all the disruption which has come in God is carrying out His purpose. “ There are many devices in a man’s heart ; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand ” (Prov. XIX. 21). Job learned this amid all his deep sufferings, and was brought to say, “ I know that Thou canst do everything, and no thought of Thine can be hindered ” (Job XLII. 2, margin). God’s counsel shall stand, and no power can prevent His thoughts being fulfilled. Do you say, “ This or that one has turned aside and we are in a broken-down condition ” ? Let me ask, Are the purposes of God in a broken-down condition ? Man may set himself against them ; the devil may exert all his forces to prevent their accomplishment, but nevertheless they stand. It is this to which the Apostle first calls Timothy’s attention—the purpose of God and the way He is carrying it out.

Then he speaks to him of the power of God. Look at verse 7. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Are you afraid of the future and of what it may bring? Are you saying, What shall we do if this or that happens? When a young Christian spoke in this way to an aged servant of God, "There is no future," he answered, "but glory for the Christian." Glory with Christ is the only future we can be sure of. He is coming. He is near.

Look up, the glory is near, and there is the power of God to maintain you until you reach that glory. So again we read, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to *the power of God*." Yes! that abides unchanged. Everything appeared to be going to the bad—but God and the power of God remained. In verse 14 he refers to the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells in us. He is here to hold the ground for Christ, so do not fear. Would you walk in power here? Take care then what you put *into* your body. Take care what you put *upon* your body, and take care where your body goes. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Timothy was exhorted to stir up the gift which was in him, to keep the deposit entrusted to him of God. And surely we may say God has put a deposit in every one of us. You have not Timothy's gift, but *you* have a deposit. Something has been placed in your stewardship. There is a pathway for you to tread, and of this chapter II. speaks: *a pathway of service* for the glory of Christ and the good of men. Do not hang down your head and say everything is gone. You are left here for Christ. Ask your Master what you are to do.

The Lord said to Abraham, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." You have been blessed. Seek now that you may be made a blessing to others. You are left here for this. Christians are Christ's ones for His service, and the Holy Spirit of God is within you as your power and to enable you to keep near enough to Christ to know what He wants you to do.

There is the *purpose* of God for us and the *power* of God

in us. There is also a *pathway* according to God marked out for us to tread in—the pathway of separation to Christ. The Apostle in his pathway did not want anything that was not of Christ, and in our pathway here let us see to it that we follow the same course. There is a danger of our being satisfied with mere outward separation. May the Lord separate us to Himself and make us more and more suitable for His use where and when He will.

INGLIS FLEMING.

Notes of Address.

IN I John iv. 7 we get the character of God. God is love ; and this is the family feature of the children of God, “ Every one that loveth is born of God.” The righteousness and holiness of God have reference to the sphere of things created, but here we are shown the character of God in His own sphere. How sweet the thought, as the contrast with all that man is, that *God is love* : no selfishness there—no having to turn away from Him because one cannot get anything out. As rain on the thirsty ground, the soul draws in that thought, “ God is love.” There you have a balm to soothe your soul under all circumstances ; and not only that, but the mind is thrown into certain scenes where it finds that that love has been displayed. God, in His own glory, thought of poor sinners. *His* was the thought to send His Son to die that we might live through Him.

LITTLE as I am, I have a place in the heart of the Lord ; and His mind is, that I should walk in circumstances here as one who has a place in His heart.

“ Not to shield my path from sorrow,
Is His care or thought ;
Not to make the dark world brighter
Where Himself is not.
But to have me there beside Him,
In the love and light,
There to tell my heart how precious
Am I in His sight.”

God's Purpose.

"Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."—ROM. VIII. 30.

BEFORE this world was, God had a very distinct purpose before Him concerning us. He marked us out beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son. Does that strike your heart as something marvellously wonderful? You and I sing that hymn together sometimes:

"And is it so, I shall be like Thy Son?
Is this the grace that He for me has won?
Father of glory, thought beyond all thought!
In glory to His own blest likeness brought."

Is that thought beyond all thought to your heart and mine? I feel that we sing these wonderful hymns, these marvellous sentences in which the thought and purpose of God are conveyed to us, and we go about our daily life as if the things had never been written. We admit the truth of them, but we fail to walk in the power of them. Why is it that we are not absolutely enraptured with this thought, in the contemplation of which angels stand astonished, that God in His wondrous grace, in order that He might be known as the God of all grace, has picked up a people out of the wreck and ruin of this world, without one single bit of merit on their part, and has marked them out to be conformed to the image of His Son? I do feel that we need to get our hearts more and more filled with the perfections and beauty of Him to whose image we are predestinated to be conformed. If that were before us, how it would change everything! It would take the most commonplace life and light it up with divine glory.

On our way to the fulfilment of this purpose, "all things work together for good to them that love God." Perhaps you say, "I cannot rest in that, my love is so poor and feeble; I truly love Him, but I would not like to rest anything on my love." Be it so, but you can rest in this: "To them who are the called according to *His purpose*." That is worth resting on. If it rested on our poor love, we might well hang down our heads and say, "It is too feeble." But His divine purpose—think of that! Say it

over and over to yourself, as you walk along the street, and in your quiet moments, "Called according to His purpose." You will find the world will grow very dim beside that. You will find the things that men pursue here look very small as the greatness of that purpose grows upon your soul.

Then, in order that we might be built up in the unchangeableness of that purpose, look how the Spirit of God has gone on in that chapter. It says, "For whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified." Two links in that marvellous chain have already been forged in our experience. We have already been called—blessed be His name! We can all say, as we look up into His face, "He has called us." We have heard His voice, heard the voice of the Good Shepherd. Yes, that call has taken effect in each one of our lives. He has justified us. Oh, there is no question about that. His precious blood bears witness to the extent of that justification, in which He sets us down in the presence of God without a charge. Yes, He has called us, and He has justified us, and we are in the experience of that; but, look, there is a thing that we are not in the experience of yet, but it is as surely done in God's account as the other two. "Them He also glorified." Before Him to whom there is no yesterday, no to-morrow, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom time is one eternal now, purpose, call, justification, glorification, are viewed as a complete whole.

John's first epistle (chap. III.) tells us of the wonderful place of relationship into which He has called us, as children. If God has purposed to conform us to the image of His Son, it involves relationship, and that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Sonship is our portion, and this according to the good pleasure of His grace, and for the delight of His own heart. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" Let these words of the Holy Spirit go right down to our hearts. We are in danger of giving our acquiescence to these things, of owning that they are right, and yet not being in the power of them; I do press upon myself and upon you that these things may be the commanding thing in

our daily life. Here is the blessed end which shall be accomplished. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him. When He shall come forth to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe, then the full purpose of God shall be accomplished, and we shall be like Him ; but before the day of manifested glory dawns another blessed hope is before our hearts ; we look to see Him as He is, to be with Him in the glory where He now is, to see Him as He is in answer to His prayer, " That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me : for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." How transcendently wonderful this is ! Get hold of the fact that we shall see Him as He is, no longer the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, nor yet in the majestic state which will mark His advent in millennial glory, but as He is now in the Father's presence, a Man, a Son at home with the Father, where every perfection is appreciated by the Father's heart.

JAMES GREEN.

Notes of Address.

Colossians.

CHAPTER II. (*continued*).

Q. Verse 17. Does " a shadow of things to come " point to a fulfilment yet future ? What is meant by " the body is of Christ " ?

A. I believe that the things of which the Apostle makes their feasts, new moons, and sabbaths but a shadow, were yet to come ; but the reality that produced the shadow was of Christ. In having Him, therefore, we have the substance, which is clearly the force of " body " here. To say it is " of Christ " is a familiar construction as characterizing what is spoken of by its origin (see ver. 11).

Q. Please explain the various references to the " body " and their different meanings in the following passages :—

(1) Chapter I. 22, " body of His flesh " ; (2) verse 24, " His body's sake " ; (3) chapter II. 11, " the body of the flesh " (" sins of " has no authority) ; (4) verse 23, " neglecting of the body " ; (5) chapter III. 15, " called in one body."

A. (1) Chapter I. 22 recalls "A body hast Thou prepared Me." Only that as His presence here in the flesh effected nothing as to reconciliation, but drew out all the enmity of the mind of the flesh against Him, it is added "through death," where the flesh in us met its end under the judgment of God.

(2) "His body's sake" (ver. 24) is defined by the following words to be the Assembly.

(3) "The body of the flesh" (II. 11). What has been said above on the verse may make this plain: "body" being here the whole force and system of the flesh looked at in its totality.

(4) The idea in "neglecting of the body" (ver. 23) is illustrated in the following words, "not in any honour." It refers to the (more positive than "neglecting") harsh treatment of asceticism or monkery which fails to give the body—this natural body of ours—the due place of honour it has, when the will is broken out of it, as a vessel for the manifestation of the treasure God has put in it (see 2 Cor. IV. 6-11).

(5) "Called in one body," is of course the body of Christ, the Assembly.

Q. To what does verse 18 allude?

A. The Apostle speaks strongly of the influences that were at work among them, all tending to depreciate Christ and set up the first man again: in verse 4 there was the seduction of persuasive speech, in verse 8 the making a prey of them, and here "Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize" (N.Tr.). If the almost inconceivable vagaries of the human mind, mixed up with Jewish tradition and the distorted place of angels, characteristic of Satan's first assault on Christianity in Gnosticism, were known, the warning would be better understood. It was the mind of the flesh that while pretending to humility occupied itself with angels as a higher order of beings, and was puffed up, prying into what was not revealed. But we are to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." The sufficient answer to the whole system is that it did not hold fast the Head.

Q. What does "holding the Head" mean?

A. It is individual faith finding its deliverance from all this wandering of the mind of the flesh in lower spheres even where there was any truth in it, in holding fast Him who is the exalted Head of all principality and power (ver. 10), and to whom we are united as His body the Assembly, and from whom it derives continually all its supplies to make increase according to God.

Q. In what way is nourishment ministered? What are the joints and bands?

A. Reading with N.Tr., "From whom all the body ministered to and united together by the joints and bands," we see that in the body every member, according to the grace given it, has its place in contributing to the practical unity of the whole, and through whom the unfailing ministry of the Head may be realized.

Q. What is the meaning of "if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world"?

A. We now come to the practical application of the great truths of Christ's death and resurrection to a walk that flows from them. We have been identified with Christ in death and have thus lost our whole living status as men alive in this world and subject to ordinances.

Q. What is the force of the prohibition "Touch not, taste not, handle not"?

A. As illustrative of the ordinances he refers to verse 20, "after the commandments and doctrines of men"; they presume the man to be alive after the flesh, and to need to be kept in order by such measures, who to faith has died with Christ. They had an appearance of wisdom, and even of the recognition of God, and humility; but it was all of man's will, and in the face of God's judgment, while it refused the body the place God gave it as that in which the life of Christ was to be manifested—the whole system being "to the satisfying of the flesh."

CHAPTER III.

Q. Verse 1. "If ye then be risen with Christ." Does the "if" imply doubt?

A. It is strange that such a familiar construction in English, as well as Greek, seems constantly to raise the same

question. The "if" implies no doubt of the fact supposed, but lays it down as the ground of the inference that follows; so that instead of weakening, it really strengthens the probability of the truth of the supposition, as in Matthew XII. 27, 28 and other scriptures.

Q. Will you name some of the "things which are above" that we are told to seek?

A. We do not find Paul attempts to enumerate them. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Our association with Him in all He has entered into before God and in sonship with the Father, and that in all the favour that rests on Him, is no mean part of them. How vast the sphere of them we learn from John XVI. 14, 15; all things that the Father hath are the Son's, and these the Spirit takes and shows unto us. They involve the whole truth of eternal life revealed in the Son's relationship with the Father and now made ours by the Father's gift in Him; also the very place He had in His Father's love, made known to us by the revelation of the Father's name, as our place in that love. This too gives us our home in the Father's house (John XIV. 17).

Again, in Hebrews XII. 22-24, the wonderful circle of things we are connected with by Christ, in contrast to Sinai, shows how "things above" enlarge out beyond our own blessing into the wide scope of His interests. Then there is an eternal inheritance that is now reserved in heaven for us as pilgrims here below, as in 1 Peter I., and the illimitable one of all things in heaven and on earth, to be headed up in Him who is already Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, in whom as such we enter into all that inheritance of glory. Then there is the bridal relationship too in which we stand to Him, known by the Spirit already before the bright day of our espousals in heavenly glory. And what shall be said of the tree of life, the crown of life, the hidden manna and the white stone presented to the overcomers in Revelation II.? But, returning to Colossians, they may be summed up as the things "*where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God.*" By attraction to Him there, we may best grow in the knowledge of them.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.

God's Resource.

DEUT. X. 1-5, 8, 9; HEBREWS I. 10-12.

WE often say to one another that we live in a very dark day, when everything is failing. It is a very great comfort to know One who never fails, and never changes, One who is the resource of the blessed God, and of His people, at all times. In reading the book of Deuteronomy we see in chapter 1. that the prophet fails; Moses breaks down. He says, "I am not able to bear you myself alone." Thank God, the blessed Lord never said that, for He bears us all up by Himself. By His own mighty power He carries every one of His people on His shoulders. Moses said, "My shoulders are not great enough to bear them." Where Moses failed Christ never fails, for He will carry them right through their wilderness journey.

Then we find in chapter ix. that the priest breaks down—Aaron fails, and it was all over so far as he was concerned. He cannot go into the land. He has to die. The prophet has failed, and the priest has failed, but we have a Priest who will never fail, One who continues ever, and One who not only bears our names on His shoulders, but He also carries them on His breast, and ever presents us individually before God in all the excellency of His own person, and all the love of His heart. When He puts us on His heart, He does not put us all together like the names on the shoulder-pieces. Each one has a separate and a special stone, and all the stones are bound together with gold, and so we find the whole company of the redeemed represented by our Priest, who abides for ever.

But not only have Moses and Aaron failed, the whole nation has failed also. God called Moses up to the mount, and gave him the law, and when he came down what did he find? They had turned back to idolatry, so that it was all over so far as they were concerned; but that brings out the reserve of God in a typical way. The Lord calls Moses again into the mount and again presents to him two tables of stone with the ten words. Where is he told to put them? It says, "Thou shalt put them in the ark," and that ark, I

need not say, is a lovely type of Christ. It is God saying, "There is only one Man whom I can trust to carry out My will, and He will never fail." So Moses says, "I . . . put the tables in the ark which I had made ; and there they be." In that type our eyes are turned to One that is able fully to carry out the whole will of God, and who did carry it out in every shape and form. That is why, when the end of the church's history of failure comes, He is brought into prominence again as the faithful and the true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. That is said to Laodicea, when everything has gone wrong, when the brightest thing that God ever had in this world—His church—is all outwardly ruined. We are carried back to God's beginning. Look at that lovely passage in the first of Hebrews. It speaks of a poor failing world, and we have not got to live very long in it to find out that everything is changing and perishing here. Look how our friendships fail. Look how our Christian communion fails. Look how everything fails around, and we fail ourselves. Look up ! Let us get our eyes fixed on Christ. He shall never fail, and there is no change in Him. We may change a thousand times, our love may alter every day, but "Thou art the same." What a comfort, what a relief, to be able to look to One that is ever the same. He is our unfailing resource.

Well, the people had failed, the priest had failed, and the prophet had failed, so what does God next do ? "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi" (ver. 8). He says, as it were, "You are a complete failure. I cannot have the firstborn of your families as My servants, but I will select a tribe, and I will take them for Myself, and they shall be Mine peculiarly." Now this tribe of Levites that God took to be His servants also failed later on. We find, however, that God has taken up the church to-day and given to it the very title that belonged to these Levites. He says, "You are My first-born ones." We belong to the "church of the firstborn ones." It means that God has taken Christians up, and He has put us in the place of the Levites, just as He took the Levites up, and put them in the place of the firstborn in every family. God has called us from the world and separ-

ated us to this Levitical service. Now what was the service to which God called these Levites? It was "to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name."

The first thing the separated company were called to was to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord as it travelled through the wilderness. It means for us that our great business is to present Christ to the world as God's resource and God's testimony. If you go forth in the pathway of testimony, you may well ask, "What is going to uphold me if I witness of Christ in a world like this?" Well, you will find an answer in noticing the resources presented to the disciples at the close of the different gospels. In Matthew the Lord does not go to heaven, but He says, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore"—that is, in the strength and consciousness that we have got a Master who controls everything in heaven and on earth. Let us get hold of that. We have a mighty, powerful Saviour, who lives with all power put into His hands. *There is something to fall back upon!*

Then in Mark, though He went up and sat down on the throne, He went everywhere "working" with them. We see the Lord at their back in Matthew, but He is at their side in Mark. We are not left to our own resources. The Lord delights to come and work with us. Then in Luke; how do we find Him? There He is, with His hands stretched out in priestly blessing. He is not like the dumb priest, with which the Gospel of Luke opens. It closes with a Priest whose mouth is opened, and His hands extended in blessing upon His people. That is just the attitude He has towards us, all blessing flowing from Him there. Then what does John say? John still leaves Him here, but uttering these words, "Follow thou Me." We have got Him before our face in John. He was at our back in Matthew, at our side in Mark, over our head in Luke, and before our face in John, and He says, "Go ye therefore." That is what we can count upon when we are bearing the ark of the Lord.

Now there is a second thing, "to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him." That is not service outside, but *inside*. That is the happy priestly service we are called to

in the presence of our Father and our God. Do not let us imagine our service is only to bear the ark, we have the sacrifice of praise to offer to God continually. We are going to minister to Him. We are going to afford joy to His heart. What will delight his heart? Just to speak to Him about Christ, "the fruit of our lips, confessing His name." I wish we did it better and more constantly, talking less about ourselves and more about Christ. Do you ever do it as you go along day by day? Do you ever tell God the Father what you have found in Christ? If you only know Him as Saviour, tell Him that, and say, "I am thankful He is my Saviour." If you know a bit more, tell Him that, and you will find the more you tell God about Christ, the more you will minister joy to His heart.

Now what is the third thing? "And to bless in His name." God has left us here to be a blessing. Christ has been turned out, and we have been left here to carry the name of the One who came out from the heart of God in blessing to saint and sinner. Now is not that a privilege? That is what we are called to—true Levitical service. We may well be exercised that we are so little use to our fellow-Christians, and to the perishing world. The rivers of blessing *are* flowing out, and we know so little about blessing in His name. May God graciously stir us all up, that, keeping right with the Lord ourselves, finding our resource in Christ, we may be very truly channels of blessing to others.

H. NUNNERLEY.

Notes of Address.

COLOSSIANS III. 16 is wrongly punctuated—there were no stops in the early manuscripts. Read: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly: in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The effect of the word dwelling richly in us would come out in this double way, and in every activity of word and action we are to do all *in the name of* the Lord Jesus; that is as representing Him.

A Paraphrase of the Sons of Leah.

I DESIRE to add a few words to the paper on the "Sons of Leah" in the May number of *Our Calling*, especially calling attention to Issachar and Zebulon.

The order of Leah's six sons *fits in beautifully*, as *representing* the present day of the Rejection of Israel and the calling of the church which is *not* of the *world*.

1. Reuben—Behold a son.
2. Simeon—Hearing.
3. Levi—Joined.
4. Judah—Praise.
5. Issachar—Reward.
6. Zebulon—Dwelling.

Zebulon (Gen. XLIX. 13) shall *dwell* (true to his name) at the *Haven* of the Sea, no more *tossing* on the *waves*, but safe inside the *Haven* whatever the voyage may have been, all shall be brought to land. "Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them to their desired *Haven*."

They shall offer *sacrifices* of *Righteousness*; such the abundance of the seas, nations, peoples, tongues—and the hidden treasures of the "Sand."

The men of Issachar resorted to *David* at *Ziklag*, of whom it was said they "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel *ought to do*" (1 Chron. XII. 32). They were intelligent servants, and all their brethren were in full accord with them.

The men of *Zebulon* could "keep rank," there were no divisions among them, their feet walked together, because they were all set upon following *David*, they were not of a "double heart." Oh! for such men to-day! Men who seek to make everything of Christ.

Though Zebulon is mentioned first both by Jacob and Moses, Issachar really came *first*. This suggests that "Reward" precedes the "Rest"—the first connected with the kingdom, the second with the eternal state.

T. R. WESTON.

The Glory of the Son.

JOHN XVII.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." We often think of the glories of the Son of Man on the cross, but here we read of the glory of the Son of the Father. This unique chapter is, in spirit, beyond the cross. The Lord says, "I have finished the work," "Now I am no more in the world"; and, "Now come I to Thee." Having glorified His Father on the earth, He desires that He may still glorify Him, where He now is, by communicating eternal life to those whom the Father had given Him. And He declares that *"this is the eternal life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent"* (New Trans.). In the fifth verse, speaking of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, He does not say, And now I will glorify Myself with the glory which I had with Thee, but, *"And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."* Having taken a dependent place, He will never give it up, nor take anything to Himself, but receive everything from His Father. And He will share with His beloved ones the glory of which we read lower down in the chapter, saying to His Father, *"The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them."*

And thus, when Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested in the millennial day, we shall also be manifested with Him in the glory (see Col. III. 4), and then the world will know that we have been the objects of the Father's love, as Christ Himself was when here on earth. Furthermore, the glory of which He had spoken in the fifth verse, which He cannot share with us, He will give us to behold, having us in the same place with Himself; concerning which He says to His Father, *"Father, 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: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."*

JOHN GASKIN.

“They shall see His Face.”

ONE would have thought that when the Lord had appended His “Amen” to His closing words in the book of the Revelation no more could be added; when He had said, “Surely I come quickly. Amen,” that silence would have followed, in expectancy that He would carry out His promise quickly, as He said. But no! Just as the Spirit and the Bride had, in blessed unison of heart and mind, said “Come,” when He spoke of Himself as “the bright and morning star,” so now, when He ends the Revelation by the assurance of His speedy return, He receives the word of welcome: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

With that most suitable prayer, that sweet breathing of a heart that craves nought so much, and nought beside, He hears the expression of His people’s deepest desire. They say: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” There is a melody in that closing prayer, a tenderness in that last petition. It is the response of affection, the quiet, unforced utterance of love and confidence and friendship. And is not such a desire grateful to Him? Surely it is!

In the promise itself He presents neither relief nor reward. He mentions neither a Heaven nor a Home. All that is perfectly secured for His people; but He presents that which He knows is more to them than all besides. He presents Himself: “Surely I come quickly.” He knows how much that “I” means for them. He had spoken of a city, and a river, and a tree—all excellent, but He had added: “They shall see His face.”

Sight all transcending! Vision sublime! All other sights, however entrancing, are eclipsed by this—that of His face! He had prayed in John xvii. that they might see His glory, now they shall also, and better, see His face.

It is ever Himself first, foremost, and most dear, all through Scripture and in our richest experience. For “Christ is everything.” He is the Father’s delight, the Man of God’s counsel, our blessed Redeemer, our all! To see Himself is our highest ambition, our brightest object!

No wonder, then, that when He crowns all He has to

say by : " Surely I come quickly. Amen," we should, and do, from our hearts, reply : " Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is the spontaneous answer of our inmost soul.

*" He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share,
Mine to be for ever with Him,
His that I am there."*

J. WILSON SMITH.

Law and Grace.

WHEN any one feels responsible to fulfil the law of Moses in order for God to bless him—that person is under law. It is a very peculiar thing that we are in the dispensation of grace, and yet Christians know a great deal more about law than they know about grace. As to the state of their souls, they are far more in the past dispensation than in the present. Almost any child can repeat the Ten Commandments, and tell you man's duty to God, but very few people know the grace of the gospel ; many who are really converted to God know very little of the true grace of God, the liberty that the Spirit of God brings. Grace expresses the delight of God to bless. A man who understands what grace is, never raises a question as to what he is as a ground of acceptance. He rests entirely in what God and Christ are. Christ is wisdom—the wisdom of God. He is righteousness—the righteousness of God, and we have it in having Christ. We have holiness, for Christ is our holiness ; and as to redemption, Christ is our redemption. Christ is, in short, everything to the man under grace.

If the Jews had known the true nature of law, they would have known that every person who was under the law was under a curse, under death and condemnation. It could not minister anything else, because man is a sinner. Paul says, " As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse," whatever and whoever they are. Whoever is fulfilling his obligations in order to gain blessing, is under the curse. Why should it be so ? Because, Scripture says, " Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," and nobody does continue.

JAMES BOYD.

Colossians.

CHAPTER III (*continued*).

Q. Verse 2. "Set your affections." Is that an advance upon seeking things which are above?

A. I do not know about advance, but the thoughts are distinct. Only we must translate—"Mind the things which are above." The Spirit of God assumes the affections will be there, for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." But the mind is a different matter. A man's affections may be in his family, and yet his mind be occupied with his business all the day long. Our minds should be absorbed with things above and not with things on the earth. We do well to allow our hearts to be challenged as to what we have been seeking through the day, for it is vain to deny that we have been seeking something; the heart is not a vacuum. Have heavenly objects had power over me, or the poor things of earth? But your question serves to bring out just where the truth of the Epistle places us, as *risen men on earth*, with heart and mind directed to heaven, where Christ is, so that heavenly objects become the formative power of the Christian's life on earth; the effect will be seen later on in the chapter. The Epistle to the Ephesians does not deal with this, since identification with Christ is carried out to the full height of Jew and Gentile believers being alike *seated in Him in the heavenlies*.

Q. Verse 3. "For ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." In what way is our life hid?

A. It flows out of the wonderful identification of the Christian with Christ who is our life, that if He is hid from the eyes of men our life is hid with Him, and that when He is manifested we also shall be manifested with Him in glory. "Hid" is not so much the security of the life, but in contrast to manifestation.

Q. Verse 5. What is the force of "mortify"?

A. It is "put to death," a very different thought from that of a lengthened passive process of dying to sin, which, as has been shown, would suppose evil in that which dies—save in the case of Him who knew no sin, but who died to it

for us. Here it is the active putting to death of our members which are upon earth in the power of the good into which we have been brought in Christ ; or with the more decisive force of the Greek tense, " be as those who have put to death." Our members on the earth are then found to be the two forms of human evil, corruption and violence, in which once we walked when we lived in them, to which is added the Satanic one of lying. It is not here exactly as in Romans vi., that the members of our bodies that were the instruments of the will of the flesh are now to be yielded to God to be the instruments of His will ; but the man himself, being looked at as dead, and having lost his whole place as a man alive in this world to have it in a new way with Christ as risen, regards these forms of evil as his members on earth, only to be put to death ; but this depends on " having put off the old man with his deeds "—that is what he was as characterized by them—and having put on the new.

Q. Are the things mentioned in verses 3, 4, 9, and 12 true of all Christians ?

A. They are revealed for faith to enter into by the power of the Holy Ghost that they may be true of all.

Q. Verse 10. What is " the new man " ?

A. What the Christian is as characterized by Christ. In order to this, he is renewed unto full knowledge according to Christ, who (as we have seen in chap. 1. 15) is the image of God, who has created the new man. It is as fully the fruit of a new creation as is the " new man " in Ephesians iv. 24, but there it is according to God, in righteousness and holiness—the likeness of God in that which is true of His nature. Here the new man is according to the image of God, that is Christ. Thus God has made good in a new creation the image and likeness of God in which man was created at the first. No thought of God falls to the ground or fails of its accomplishment, though it is only in Christ and in a new creation that it is realized. In order to the representation—for that is the thought of " image "—of Christ in us, there is, then, the renewal—a present thing—unto full knowledge of Him who is the perfect representation of God in man, that He may be ever before our souls to form us like Him.

Q. Verse 11. Natural, religious, and social distinctions are said to be non-existent. Does this refer to the new creation?

A. Assuredly so. All these distinctions belonged to man after the flesh. They are absolutely lost in a new creation in Christ, where Christ has become all things as object to those in whom He has become life (ver. 3). For this is the way, as I understand, He is "all and in all."

Q. Verse 12. The seven graces which shone pre-eminently in Christ, we have to put on. Does that mean that each individual saint is to be Christ-like and reproduce them in his walk and ways?

A. Verses 12-17 are just the rescript of Christ, whom we have been left here to represent as He was the perfect representation of God. These things are what the Christian is to put on practically. He has Christ as his life, and the object of that life, which is the power to enable him to do so—the formative power of "Christ in you" (chap. 1. 27) which, as we have seen, is the aspect of the mystery in Colossians. The putting on must be individual, but it is not that one trait of Christ is to be found in one, and another in another; all are needed, under the uniting bond of love, to form the Christian character in each one of us according to Christ, the image of God.

Q. Is the "word of Christ" different from the "words" He spoke?

A. Not different, because His words were ever the expression of Himself. But it is "the word" here—His whole mind, not so much the detailed words. The word that was the perfect expression of the life in Him (see John VIII. 25, more truly read, "essentially I am what I speak unto you") is given to form and direct that same life in us.

Q. Verses 17-22. Wives and husbands, children and fathers, servants and masters, are all addressed and exhorted to carry out their varied responsibilities "to the Lord." Does this mean that the will of the Lord comes first?

A. It is so surely; but it is of great interest to see that here, as in Ephesians, these responsibilities depend upon and are formed by the truth of each epistle. The natural relationships in which we have been placed with one another,

and that of slavery which came in by sin, are not in Romans. They need the full light of divine and heavenly relationships to be brought to bear upon them, that we may walk in them according to the nature of God, as in Ephesians, or that Christ may be lived out in them according to Colossians. The subject side comes first in every case, and the bond-servant is encouraged, as he would specially need it, in performing his often cheerless service to men in the fear of the Lord and heartily, by the thought of the Lord accepting it as service to Him and the reward of the inheritance.

Q. How can a Christian receive for the wrong which he hath done, verse 25 ?

A. It is hardly thus that Scripture speaks. The passage says : “ But he that doeth wrong shall receive [not ‘ for the wrong ’ exactly, but] the wrong that he hath done.” It is too sadly possible that the Christian may so act, and in that case the principle applies to him. Nothing of what we do passes away with time, and the Lord will make this felt, in the case of a Christian’s wrongdoing, in the loss of reward in the kingdom. It is a general principle of God’s righteous government, and applies to all.

Q. Chapter iv. 3. “ The mystery of Christ.” Is that the church or the gospel ?

A. It is the great subject of the gospel as committed to Paul, the taking out of the Jew and Gentile—the last especially, for which Paul was in bonds—a people for His name, to be united to Christ, their Head, in glory as His body, the Assembly. And in the general need of continuance in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving, the Apostle seeks that a door of utterance for him to speak of it and make it manifest, may be a subject of the prayer of the saints.

Q. Verse 5. Grace and salt in speech. What would you give as a scriptural illustration of this ?

A. It is found in the gracious words that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus, which never lacked the salt of holy separation to God. Only under such a Master shall we learn how we ought to answer every man.

Answers by

J. A. TRENCH.