

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the **Word**, that ye may grow thereby.”—1 PETER ii. 2.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the **Word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. **Therefore** many of them believed.”—Acts xvii. 11, 12.

“The **Word** of the Lord endureth for ever.”—1 PETER i. 25.

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



REST FOR THE WEARY.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.—MATT. xi. 28-30.

AMONG the many gracious words that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus none are more familiar to most than those quoted at the head of this paper.

Although spoken more than eighteen hundred years ago, they are as true to-day as then. From heaven, from the very glory of God, Jesus sends the same invitation, to the same class, with the same promise attached thereto. Have you, my reader, responded to that loving call? And do you enjoy that Rest which He alone can give?

Rest, perfect and eternal, is great gain in a weary world like ours. Things around are as the troubled sea which cannot rest, and multitudes of men are journeying apace to regions where rest is never known. Alas! all that is before them is an eternity of unrest, of ceaseless tossing to and fro, with an aching heart that shall find no

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pillow where it may lay itself down to sleep and to forget.

Are you weary? Have you discovered, with vexation and surprise, that all the world's cisterns are but broken ones that can hold no water? Sick at heart, and with withered hopes, you know not where to turn. Ah, there is One in heaven whose eye of love has followed you, and who even now is saying, "Come unto me . . . I will give you Rest."

"Oh, sinner, 'tis the voice
Of One who long has loved and pitied thee!
He would thy heart rejoice,
And set thee from all sin and suffering free."

Come, then, to Him, nor let an upbraiding conscience keep you from His feet. Who needs the physician but they that are sick? Who needs the Saviour but they that are lost? Who needs mercy but they that have sinned? Or who needs the cleansing stream but they that are vile? If you were not all this the Saviour in glory would be no Saviour for you.

Nor is this Rest received in any mysterious manner which no one can exactly describe. It is the fruit of faith, and faith is a very simple thing. The want of understanding this has kept many in an anxious, unsettled state for years; and when light upon this very point begins to dawn upon them, they are almost afraid to receive it because of its simplicity. To many eyes faith is like a high mountain, whose rugged steeps are hard to climb;

or an obscure problem, which only the few may hope to solve. In fact it resembles neither; for what is faith but the reception of a testimony, the setting to one's seal that God is true? (John iii. 33.)

And if God has spoken, as indeed He has, in language too of great clearness and blessed brevity, ought not His words to be received? Surely they ought, will be the answer of every heart. Rest apart from this is impossible, and vain the attempt to seek it in any other way. Let the anxious reader, who possesses not the Rest of salvation, attentively consider what is said in Acts x. 43; xiii. 38, 39; John v. 24. Perhaps you have not your Bible within reach, and cannot remember what those verses are, we will therefore quote them in full that you may have them under your eye as you read this page:

“To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him *shall* receive remission of sins.” (Acts x. 43.)

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe *are* justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John v. 24.)

Is there nothing for your soul in these divine statements?—nothing in the “*SHALL*,” “*ARE*,”

“HATH,” and “SHALL NOT” of these passages for you, a poor sinner, to rest upon? What firmer foundation can you have than the unchanging Word of the unchanging God? How unlike your changing feelings and your changing self! Now *lean* upon those words, and you will have rest.

In the days when Hezekiah sat upon the throne of Judah, Sennacherib of Assyria, flushed with conquest, came up with a great host to fight against Jerusalem. In such an hour, with the enemy at his gates, who in haughty terms summoned him to surrender, Hezekiah gathered the people together and spake to their heart, saying, “Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles.” And it is written that “the people *rested themselves* upon the words of Hezekiah.” (2 Chron. xxxii. 8.) Bold words they were, born of that heroic faith that had found a home in the bosom of Judah’s king. Well might the people rest themselves upon them. And shall we, who have the words of Hezekiah’s God to rest upon, do less than they? Shall the men of that generation rise up and condemn us for our unbelief—our lack of faith in the faithful words of an ever-faithful God? Reader, it must not be.

REST FOR THE WEARY.

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The Rest which the Son of God gives is not only relief of conscience from the pressure of sin and guilt. It is that and more; for the soul's deep craving can alone be fully met by the knowledge of God Himself, the Father, revealed in and by the Son. And it may have been noticed that in the words which immediately precede those on which we are commenting, the Saviour speaks of this: "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Do I know the Father, and the unutterable rest that flows from having Him revealed to me? is a question that each may ponder with profit. And when He is known, then it will be seen that the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, is no mere Averter of God's wrath; though on the cross He did bear the wrath due to our sins; but in Him all the love of God is manifested; yea, the Father's love, for "we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv. 14.) He whose love was discredited in Eden, and Satan's lie believed, now shows the depth and reality of that love in sending His only begotten into the world that we might be saved—saved not only from all the bitter fruit of Adam's sin, and our own, but also that we might know that love in an infinitely deeper way than it could have been known by our first parents in innocence in Paradise. What an awful sin ever to have

suspected that love at all ! But God is God, and the right is His to have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and to have compassion on whom He will have compassion. Therefore, high above the wickedness of men, their manifold sins, their blood-guiltiness, their fierce and cruel passions, rose the love of God in its majesty and might. That love the Saviour reveals, and in it He causes the weary to find everlasting rest.

And if He reveals the Father, it is not as His Father alone. High in the eternal counsels stood this blessed purpose of God, that we should not only be before Him in love, holy and blameless in His sight, but that a child's place should be ours—Himself our Father, and the Spirit's cry of "Abba" awakened in our hearts. (Eph. i. 5; Rom. viii. 15.) This is rest indeed—the rest of conscious, known relationship. (Oh, how near !) Thus God Himself is our Rest, and in Him we joy through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a further Rest named in Matthew xi. besides that which Jesus *gives*. It is Rest which the believer finds in taking the Saviour's yoke, and learning of Him—the meek and lowly One. These two Rests should reach us in their divine order; the one is for the sinner, the other for the saint. For when the question of our sins is settled, and we have perfect rest as to it, there are many things of frequent occurrence that might disturb our hearts and make them

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anxious. But if we walk with Christ, and learn of Him, we shall find constant rest—the Rest that He knew in His blessed pathway here below. We shall be weaned from the pursuit of great things, such as men of the world seek after, and find our meat and drink in doing the will of another. He will teach us too to see a Father's hand in everything, some blessed, loving purpose of God in all that is allowed to happen. Much that takes place may not be according to His mind, and be none of His ordering, as was the case when Shimei cursed David in the day of his calamity. But David suffered not the sword of his servant to take off the head of "this dead dog." "Let him alone, and let him curse," said David; "for the Lord hath bidden him." The curses of Shimei fell harmless on the head of the fugitive king, though avenged on him who uttered them when Solomon was on the throne. But David saw the hand of the Lord in Shimei's shameless railings, as in the loyal deeds of Barzillai the Gileadite and his companions. (2 Samuel xvi. xvii.) Perfectly did this grace shine in our Lord Jesus, and the scripture under consideration (Matt. xi.) supplies a lovely illustration of it. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for it seemed good in thy sight." Such were His words in the hour

of His rejection, felt so keenly by Him in proportion to His love. And in a later moment, when impetuous Peter would defend his master from the multitude who came out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Him, His only answer was, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is of such a One that we have to learn, and it is His yoke we have to take. Easy it is, and light His burden, though too hard and heavy for mere flesh and blood. The joy of the Lord shall be our strength; and as we drink into His meek and lowly spirit, and walk in His holy footsteps, we shall find Rest to our souls, even as He has said.

"Oh, patient, spotless One !
Our hearts in meekness train
To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may Rest obtain.

Oh, fix our earnest gaze
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,
That, with Thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see."

A Cure for Depression.—"When we are depressed by bodily disease, we should endeavour to occupy our thoughts with the most joy-inspiring portions of Scripture, and not suffer them for a moment to brood over the gloomy feelings that prevail within. If ever we should look away from ourselves, it is when we are cast down and disquieted; for in ourselves there is nothing but what will, if looked at, serve to deepen our distress, and to make us sink from disquietude into despondency."

THE FATHER REVEALED, AND LIFE IN THE SON.

“I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.”

JOHN xvii. 26.

IN the above words the blessed Lord states the new revelation of which He is the medium, and that in a twofold way. Looking back on His life and ministry from their close, He says, “I have declared unto them” (the disciples) “thy name”—His Father’s name; then, looking on to His present place in ascension, and to what would occupy Him there, He adds, “And will declare it.” It is of this twofold declaration of the Father’s name that I desire to say a few words, and of its blessed consequences for us.

It was a radically new revelation. “Eternal power and Godhead” had been declared by creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” As the “Almighty God” He was revealed to the patriarchs of old (Exod. vi. 3), who in the power of that revelation trod the pilgrim path of faith on the earth—“almighty” power their resource in the face of every difficulty and every foe. But it was in connection with earthly things that the “Almighty” was revealed. As “Jehovah” too had God placed Himself in relation with man on

earth; that is to say, with Israel by covenant. (Exod. vi. 2-4.) But it was still only an earthly and temporal dispensation.

Again, looking on in figure to the millennium, He was spoken of as the "most high God," "possessor of heaven and earth." (Gen. xiv. 17-24.)

But whatever witness might thus be rendered concerning God by creation or by covenant, either to the natural mind or to faith; whatever attitude He might be pleased to assume relative to men and things on the earth; He who assumed it remained unknown—unknown in His essential character, and unknown in His eternal and heavenly relationships. He "dwelt in thick darkness." But the darkness must pass, the true light shine; the revelation must be made, God must be made known, His name of Father be declared.

There appears on the scene One who stands alone. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten *Son*, which is in the bosom of the *Father*, He hath declared Him." I do not dwell now on the practical exhibition of the divine nature in Him in His blessed pathway here below, nor on the full manifestation and vindication of the character of God by His work at the cross, declaring Him as Light, and declaring Him as Love.

But there stood *the Son*—on earth, yet still ever in the bosom of the Father. What a stupendous revelation of the one eternal God! not now an attitude, or temporary relation, assumed by

Him towards individuals or a nation down here, but essential and eternal relationship—*the Father*; as such, revealed in *the Son*; as such, but in humanity, as the vessel for His display down here upon earth. Such was He who is called “that eternal life, which was with the Father.” Who but *the Son* could declare “*the Father*”? And how could He, save as the begotten One in humanity, declare Him to man? But He has declared Him; and it is ours not to pry into His glory with unholy and irreverent speculation; not to seek to gauge it by our petty intellect, or discuss it as some point of rational controversy; but to bow and worship as the Father reveals Himself to us in the Person and by the words and the works of the Son here below.

Life indeed it is to the soul to receive by the divine operation of His Spirit whatever testimony God may in varying dispensations give of Himself; but eternal life is to know Him in His nature as God, and in this eternal relationship as the Father. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” But a life-giving revelation of God puts him who receives it into the very relationship with God in which God is pleased to reveal Himself. Thus the revelation of the Father in the Son puts those who receive it as associated with the Son in relationship with His Father as *their* Father. Such is *life in the*

Son. But in order that we who were guilty and lost might have life in the Son, it was needed that He as man should accomplish the mighty work for which He came, should glorify God thus about sin, and should atone for our sins; and passing by death out of the state in which, Himself sinless, He was made sin for us, having exhausted the judgment of God, and died to sin, should come forth in resurrection in the power of an endless life beyond judgment and death as the second Man and last Adam, a life-giving Spirit, and there communicate to us that resurrection life—a life whose character is the revelation to us of His Father as now ours, His God as now ours, in virtue of His work and according to the power, the righteousness, the infinite complacency, and the glory which were concerned in raising Him from the dead and setting Him in the heavenlies. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” “Go to *my brethren*” (these are the fruit), “and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” Such is the character of the second declaration of the Father’s name; not now in an abstract way as *the* Father, nor only as *His* Father *that* He had declared in His ministry here below. But now the corn of wheat has died, and is no longer alone. His disciples now have “*life in the Son.*” “He hath

given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." The Father—His Father—becomes theirs in eternal and heavenly relationship. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*." "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and *we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ*. This is the true God, and *eternal life*."

In Genesis ii. 7 we read: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." And this is referred to in 1 Corinthians xv. 45—"The first man Adam was made a living soul." So also in John xx. we read: "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit."* And again in the same passage of Corinthians—"The last Adam, a quickening" (or life-giving) "Spirit."

The first Adam *received* from God his natural, human life; the last Adam *imparts* to His disciples His own spiritual and risen life. As the Son of God indeed, He, and He alone, could ever impart life; but having now taken up in resurrection the position of "last Adam" as well as Son, the life He imparts to others brings them into association with Himself as risen and ascended. It is not only life bestowed by Him, but life *in Him*—a life whose character in us is

* Spirit and breath are the same word in the original.

the knowledge of His Father as ours, His God as ours—the knowledge of God as being towards us all that He is to Christ, and that as displayed in raising Him from the dead and setting Him in the heavenlies. Four things were spoken of as being concerned in raising Him—God's power, His righteousness, His infinite complacency, His glory. The first is brought out in Ephesians i. ii., where the apostle prays that we may know “what is the exceeding greatness of His power to *us-ward who believe*, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. . . . And you who were dead in trespasses and sins. . . . Even when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and seated us together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” The power which wrought in Christ is the very power that is “to *us-ward who believe*.”

As regards the righteousness of God, I learn from John xiii. 31, 32, that for the entire vindication of His glory morally God became indebted to the work of Christ, and that it was the only possible display of God's righteousness that He should glorify in Himself the One who had thus glorified Him, and this He did straightway. But it was as made sin *for us* that He had glorified God, and therefore God's righteousness gives *us*

that wonderful place of identification with Christ in glory before Himself—"the righteousness of God in Him." To set *us* there before Himself in Christ is the fruit, not only of infinite grace and love, but of *God's righteousness*—His God is our God. His complacency too in His Son was concerned in it, as He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." It was the perfect burnt-offering, from which the fiery test only brought forth a savour of infinite sweetness to His Father. But is He alone there? Blessed be His name, He is not. We are accepted in the Beloved, as was said of the burnt-offering—it was on the offerer's behalf for his acceptance before the Lord. (Lev. i. 3, Revised Version.) If He thus afforded a motive for His Father's love (and who but He could?), it was by a work, in the sweet savour of which we too become, in Him, the object of His Father's infinite complacency and favour and delight—loved as He is loved.

And, lastly, it was by the Father's glory that He was raised from the dead. The glory of the Father claimed the Son from the dust of death, and bestowed on Him that glory into which the "many sons" too will presently be introduced. It is the proper condition of the Son, and ours in Him.

Beloved reader, these are but few and feeble expressions of what connects itself with this wonderful portion of eternal life in the Son of

God. But may He who, because we are sons, has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, lead us into a deepening enjoyment of such a portion—"that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them," was the result the Lord Himself looked for for us—and may He enable us, if we are in the Son, to walk also in some little measure as He walked, and to taste more the reality of "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son," that our joy may be full.

W. H. K.

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

REV. xxii. 20.

Surely I come ; My yearning heart
Is longing for My Bride—
The pearl of greatest price to Me,
For whom I bled and died.

I, Jesus, testify these things ;
Behold, I quickly come
To call My blood-bought saints away
To dwell with Me at home.

Come, even so, come, Jesus Lord,
Thy face we long to see ;
Nought else can satisfy our hearts
But being, Lord, with Thee !

Quickly, that cheering word of Thine
Has touched a hidden chord ;
Our longing hearts responsive cry,
E'en so, come, Jesus Lord !

L. W.

PERFECT PROTECTION OR PERFECT EXPOSURE.

EXODUS xii.

FROM this chapter much important teaching has been and may be gained. I desire now to draw attention to two points only. The blood being shed, it was necessary for the householder to make a personal application of it by dipping the bunch of hyssop in it, and sprinkling therewith the lintel and two side posts of the door. (v. 22.)

Now notice, please, *Where was the blood put?*

On the OUTSIDE of the door.

Could the Israelite see it there?

He could not.

Then why was it put there?

That GOD might see it.

Was this enough to make him safe?

Quite enough; for God had told him to put it there, and said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" (v. 13.)

Would he not have been safer if he had seen the blood himself?

For the Israelite to see the blood he must have been outside the place of safety, and the instructions were: "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." (v. 22.)

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Thus you see that his safety depended on his being *behind* the blood ; that is, under cover of it. And is not this the way now ? The reason why any one is preserved from God's judgment is that he is sheltered by the precious blood of Christ, the true Lamb of God's own providing. And we have this protection by faith ; that is, by the reception into our hearts of what *God says* about the blood of the Lamb, how He sees it, understands and appreciates its value. What does He say ? "I WILL pass over you." Is that enough for you, dear reader ? Can you say you are clear from judgment ? "Oh, that would be presumptuous on my part !" you reply. Very presumptuous indeed if you are not under the shelter of the blood, and moreover quite untrue ; but if you have received God's testimony about the work of Christ, and His acceptance of it, and perfect satisfaction and delight therein, is it presumption to say that it is sufficient to meet your case perfectly ? If you are thoroughly sure of being in yourself a sinner deserving judgment, you will be thoroughly sure of being completely cleared from the judgment you deserve, by the perfect work of God's blessed Son. (1 John i. 7.)

It is very sad to see so many who really do accept God's word, and believe it in their hearts, allowing themselves to be deprived of that happiness and confidence which the blessed God would have them enjoy, by a pretended but thoroughly

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false modesty. "It is becoming in us not to speak with certainty," they say, "when we think of what we are." It is really the very opposite; for what are all such doing? Nothing less than refusing to own that God is as good as His word! If our safety depends on what we are to the extent of a hair's breadth, we shall be lost for ever. Either Christ does everything for us or He does nothing. Notice the second thing in this chapter.

The Israelite was either perfectly protected or he was perfectly exposed. Read verses 22 and 23. What afforded the protection? The blood on the outside. Had the state of the man's feelings anything to do with it? Nothing whatever. What was the measure of protection he enjoyed? Perfect protection. In truth, dear reader, there can be no other measure. To speak of being partly protected from God's judgment is mere nonsense; for when we come to the fact of which the lamb in Exodus xii. is a figure, we see that the judgment has been already executed; the blessed Victim *has been* under the fire of God's judgment, and your sins are either all borne already or they never will be borne, for no one could bear them but Jesus, the blessed Lamb of God, and He cannot die again. Thus you see there is no room for a partial salvation, and there is no such thing with God. Be aroused then, I beseech you, to a sense of the perfectness of the work of Christ as well as to a sense of the perfect need there is

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for it. Need, observe, not only on your part, but also on the part of God. Those who content themselves with such feeble thoughts of Christ's blessed work never think that His work was needed to meet the glory of God apart from the matter of man's salvation, and it *has done so*. Christ as man at the right hand of God is the constant proof that God is both satisfied and glorified by the work He has accomplished. (See John xiii. 31, 32; Romans vi. 4; 1 Peter i. 21; Hebrews i. 3, &c.)

Reject then I pray you every notion that in any way lessens the value of this blessed work, for by receiving such you not only hinder your own peace and happiness, but also interfere (as far as you can) with the glory of God; for in respect of sin it is only in this work that His glory is made good.

What can be more blessed, and what can give a greater sense of perfect security, than the wondrous fact that the work on which I rest for salvation is the very same by which God has been glorified? But it could not really be otherwise, for as the One who did the work is perfect—the blessed, eternal Son of God, remember—so whatever He does must be perfect also.

May you, dear reader, be led to know and enjoy more fully and deeply “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

B. W. K.

EPISTLES OF CHRIST.

IN chapter iii. of his second Epistle to the Corinthian believers, the apostle designates them "our epistle;" *i.e.*, of Paul and his companions in the work of the gospel, and also "the epistle of Christ;" but these are quite distinct in their signification. I would now consider the meaning of the latter term as applying to all believers, and not to the Corinthians alone. First, however, let me briefly refer to the expression, "Ye are our epistle," so that its application, as distinct from the other, may be clearly seen.

The careful reader of this epistle will notice that from the end of verse 13 of chapter ii. to verse 5 of chapter vii. is a kind of parenthesis, in which the apostle dwells on the character, objects, and effects of his ministry. It was through his ministry of the gospel that many of the Corinthians had been saved (1 Cor. xv.), and were gathered out as the assembly of God in their corrupt and idolatrous city. Thus they were a proof of the reality and power of that ministry. Therefore in going amongst them again Paul would not require a letter commending him to them; indeed, wherever he went he could point to them as a witness of the genuineness of his ministry — "Ye are our epistle." But Paul's

object in going amongst them had not been to commend or magnify himself—"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (chap. iv.); and the result of his preaching Christ was that these Corinthians were now "the epistle of Christ." But this, I would again remark, is true of every believer in Christ, and most important it is that each should apprehend this wondrous fact. It is not a matter of attainment, or something that is true only of those who may be devoted and earnest beyond others, or engaged in a more active way in proclaiming the gospel; indeed, it is not connected with service of any kind, but is the result of Christ Jesus the Lord being revealed to the heart by the Holy Ghost through the gospel as a living Saviour and glorified Man at God's right hand. True, before this revelation can be made—that is, before Christ in the glory, as the One in whose face all the glory of God's grace shines, can be known—the conscience must needs be awakened to a sense of guilt and unfitness for the glory of God. This is always among the first discoveries that the Spirit of God makes to the soul by the light of God's truth entering the heart *through the conscience*. Not only so, but there is also the discovery of helplessness or inability to meet the holy claims of God. This was made manifest by the law, which is therefore called in this chapter "the ministration of death" and "the

ministration of condemnation.” It claimed *from* man a righteousness for God; but this man had not, though in ignorance of his true state he had solemnly undertaken to keep all God’s holy requirements. (See Exodus xix. xxiv.) Moses was the minister or administrator of this law, and when he came down from the mount, where the glory of God was displayed in connection with the revelation of His righteous claims, the skin of his face shone (Exod. xxxiv.), reflecting thus the glory of God. This glory man could not bear, nor yet the reflection of it, in the face of Moses. There was nothing in man to answer to it, no ability to stand in the presence or bear the light of *that* glory, however feebly seen, because of his condition as having a guilty conscience, which could only make him fear and tremble in the presence of glory revealed in connection with law. Hence Moses had to put a veil on his face, showing (as the apostle here speaks) that there was a veil on their minds. They saw nothing beyond the law—nothing of the grace of God, or of His purposes of blessing for man on another ground altogether from that of law. “For until this day” (adds the Holy Ghost) “remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament.” And why? If we turn to John v., from verse 36 to the end we shall find the answer. The veil is done away in Christ; but they refused Him

who came in lowly grace that He might draw and attract them to Himself, who was there, not as a lawgiver, but as the revealer of the Father. He now reveals a glory of another kind, and through His death and resurrection introduces a ministry altogether distinct from that of the law, called in our chapter "the ministration of the Spirit, and the ministration of righteousness;" for this ministry brings righteousness *to* man, and that too when the solemn truth has been brought out that man has none for God, and when the verdict has been declared that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

To those who have bowed in truth and reality to this humbling fact the Holy Ghost (who has come down to bear witness to the work and worth and glory of Christ) testifies, by the word of God, of the glory of that one blessed Man who could and did say, "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;*" and then ascended into that glory *as the One* who had glorified God about sin by His death, and who had revealed all the wondrous grace and love of God here on earth. Hence to the poor sinner who has discovered that he has no righteousness for God, no fitness for His glory, there is presented in the gospel a living Saviour in the glory as the object of his confidence and hope. There is glory there—yea, all the glory of

God—but it is “in the face of Jesus Christ,” and brings no dread or terror to the heart.

Christ is the “image of the invisible God;” but He is in the glory as a Man—the same Man who trod this earth in lowly grace, who wept on His way to the grave of Lazarus, who talked to the poor Samaritan woman at Sychar’s well, who touched and healed the trembling and doubting leper, and took the blind beggar by the hand; the same One who was crowned with thorns, reviled, scorned, and crucified, but who bore all in perfect grace; being reviled, He reviled not again; suffering, He threatened not. But besides and beyond all this the Holy Ghost reveals Him there in that glory as the Man who bore the judgment of God against sin, who was made sin for us on the cross that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Do I want to know whether that offering is accepted? whether the question of sin has been perfectly met, and God glorified about it all? I get the answer in seeing Him who was the sacrifice and victim enthroned in glory as a Man, and now presented as a Saviour to all who will accept Him.

True it is, alas! there are many who apprehend nothing of the glory of this grace, though, it may be, professing His name, and passing as Christians. They see no glory, no attraction, no brightness; and why? Certainly it is not because the light

is not shining, nor because the glory is veiled, nor yet, the apostle could add, because of any clouding or darkening of that glory and light on his part. (Chap. iii. 12, 13; iv. 2.) The reason is a solemn one—"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, *lest* the light of the glorious gospel" (gospel of the glory) "of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Many ways has Satan (the god of this world) of blinding the mind—pleasures, riches, pride, religiousness, &c. Very often the fairest and most commendable things in themselves are used by him to hinder this glorious light from shining in. But when the heart is opened to receive the light, the effect is that Christ as a living Saviour in glory is made known, and as when the bright beams of the summer sun are let into a dark room light and warmth are shed abroad, so "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The believer has now peace with God, knowing that all the judgment due to him has been borne by that glorified Man, who is now in the glory for him as the proof of his acceptance. Hence, as the apostle here so graphically expresses it, he is an epistle of Christ written with the Spirit of the living God (by the ministry of the gospel) on fleshy tables of the heart. He can now look forward

with joy to being in that glory with the blessed Saviour who died for him; he rejoices in hope of the glory of God. The glory connected with the law, and also all worldly glory, has now paled before this surpassing glory; and with the deep consciousness that all here must soon fade away, there is the joy of contemplating and being connected with a glory that abides for ever. It requires or demands no veil. We can behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, the effect being that we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is the blessed portion of the believer in Christ who has apprehended the gospel of His glory ministered to the heart by the Holy Ghost; and the responsibility following this is surely that the light should shine forth, that we should be mirrors reflecting it in this dark world, or, as the apostle expresses it, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

S. M. A.

One Lesson.—"I have learned one lesson," said the dying Hewitson, "by reading the Word in my illness. I see that even when I preached with what I felt to be some measure of tenderness, I scarcely knew what Christ's tenderness was. The Bible," he added, "gives not only the mind of God, but His heart. It is the latter, exhibited to men, which draws and wins. Mere hard demonstrations do not win—they only steel the heart. If I could preach now, I think I should be far more tender."

“IT IS MINE.”

SITTING in her little room, busily employed in writing, was an aged lady of fourscore years or more. Before her lay an open Bible, sundry verses of which had been underlined, and to copy these into a small book was the task in which she was then engaged.

God had been dealing with her soul, awakening there a sense of need and a desire to know Christ as her Saviour, but she had but little if any assurance of her security.

Her task ended, she rose up, and, as she thought, closed the Bible, and laid it and her little book aside. On returning to the table, she found to her surprise the Bible still there, and an underlined verse on the open page seemed to look at her reproachfully, and to say, What have I done that I should be left out of your book? She looked at it, and found it was the forty-seventh verse of John vi.: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

Powerfully did those words go home to her heart. “Blessed Lord,” she said, “I do believe in Thee. Then I have eternal life; it is mine; thou sayest it.” Brightly shone the light into her heart as she received, in childlike simplicity, those precious words. Thenceforward she knew she had everlasting life; not because she felt it, but because He had said it.

Reader, cast your eye on that lovely verse. Art thou a believer in Christ? If so, what does He say is thine? EVERLASTING LIFE. Wilt thou not believe Him?

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

A VALUED friend lately brought under our notice an article in a Cornish parochial magazine, giving an account of a recent confirmation service held in Penzance by the Bishop of Truro.

Here is an extract from the article in question :

“The Bishop sat down in the chair which had been placed for him at the chancel steps, and one by one the (eighty-eight) candidates came up the steps, and knelt before him ; and after the manner of the holy apostles S. Peter, S. John, and S. Paul, of whom we read in Acts viii. and xix., he laid his hands upon the head of each one, and the faithful God, who is the same for ever and ever, gave to each one the Holy Ghost.”

In the preceding number of the same magazine the Vicar writes to his parishioners to inform them of the real object of the Bishop's visit :

“He is coming not only, nor especially, to preach to us or to examine the confirmees, but he is coming to pray that the Holy Ghost may be poured out upon many of God's children in this parish, and to lay his hands upon them, in order that they may receive the Holy Ghost.”

And finally he expresses the hope that those who are not yet confirmed may decide to be prepared to

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receive the Spiritual Gift, in God's own appointed way, when the Bishop next visits the town.

The reading of those lines has led to our searching the book of the Acts afresh, to see what is said there about the giving of the Holy Ghost, and we desire to lay before our readers, in a few plain words, what is to be found in that portion of the word of God concerning this subject.

In no spirit of controversy do we write; our object is to help those who may not be clear in their minds as to how and to whom the Holy Ghost is given. Let the reader remember that the Holy Scriptures are our only sure guide. Other books, however excellent, have no authority over the conscience; God's word has. Nor are we dependent on others for the meaning of what is written there. God, by His Spirit, will teach us if we are willing to learn; and we know that the Saviour Himself has said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.)

One thing may be noticed in passing, that those who teach that the laying on of a bishop's hands is "God's own appointed way" of conferring the Holy Ghost, never refer us to Acts x. 44, 48. This strikes us as being strange, to say the least of it; for none can deny that we have in those verses one of the most remarkable records of the giving of the Holy Ghost that can be found anywhere.

Fifty days after the Lord was risen from the

dead, and ten days after His ascension into heaven, the Holy Ghost was first given. It was on this wise: "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii.) Everyone must acknowledge that on this occasion the giving of the Holy Ghost was quite apart from human intervention, for who was there to lay hands on the twelve and those that were with them?

The same chapter informs us of Peter preaching in the power of the Spirit to the astonished multitudes at Jerusalem. Earnestly did he assure them that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ. God's thoughts of Jesus, and their estimate of Him, were thus set in solemn contrast—*theirs* finding expression in the cross, *His* in the glory; *theirs* in the lowest possible place on earth, *His* in the highest possible place in heaven. In three thousand cases conviction of heart followed this (to them) terrible testimony. "Men, brethren, what shall we do?" was their agonizing cry. Peter urged them to repent and be baptized, every one of them, in the name of Jesus Christ,

for the remission of sins ; and he adds, " Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." This they did. Under the shelter of that blessed name they placed themselves, "and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Was Peter's word to them fulfilled ? Did they receive the Holy Ghost, even as he had said ? Who would doubt it ? Yet no mention is made of the imposition of hands, nor is there the slightest reason to suppose that anything of the sort took place.

But in chapter viii. it is otherwise. For the first time we have the Holy Ghost given in connection with the laying on of hands ; and as this passage is quoted in support of the practice, we shall do well to consider it attentively. " At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem ; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles." Philip's work in that city was therefore at an end, and he went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them. His labours there were greatly blessed, and many were converted to God. But though baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Ghost had fallen on none of them ; and this fact is especially noticed as if it were an unusual event, as indeed it was, for no such thing, as far as we know, had ever occurred before. Nor did they receive the Holy Ghost till Peter and John,

who had been sent down from Jerusalem, had prayed and laid their hands on them. How was this? Why did not these Samaritans receive the Holy Ghost after they were baptized, even as the three thousand at Jerusalem? Why was not the heavenly gift conferred on them apart from the interposition of the two from the great Jewish centre? Was it, as the vicar of St. John's would have us believe, because Philip was not an apostle? That could not be, for in chap. ix. 17 we find a simple disciple named Ananias, as humble an individual, we suppose, as any that could be found in the county of Cornwall, and holding no official place whatsoever, laying hands on a called Apostle such as Saul of Tarsus! What reason then is to be assigned? A very obvious one. Samaria had for centuries put forth religious pretensions which never had received divine recognition, but in which they nevertheless continued to make their boast. The Temple at Jerusalem, with its ordered service, had no value in their eyes. Mount Gerizim was everything to them. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," said the Samaritan woman to the Lord in John iv., "but *ye* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." So the controversy raged as to the claims of "this mountain" or "the place" in Jerusalem, until the Jews isolated themselves from the Samaritans, and refused all further dealings with them. This wall of partition God in

His goodness would break down. But in doing this the haughty assumptions of Samaria should receive no seeming sanction from on high. Had the Holy Ghost fallen upon them as on those of Jerusalem at the beginning, the ancient feud might have burned more fiercely than ever, and Samaria have lifted up her head and proudly asked what Jerusalem had that she had not. Therefore the Spirit is withheld till Peter and John should be sent, and even then should not be given till they had prayed for them, and on them laid their hands. How wise, how good of God to order it so! Who would have ever dreamt that the very wisdom and goodness of God as thus displayed would be used to support the unscriptural conclusions that men seek to draw from them!

The next notable instance of the giving of the Holy Ghost is found in Acts x. We are here introduced, not to a company of Jews, as in chap. ii., nor of Samaritans, as in chap. viii., but to a company of Gentiles. And that fact in itself clothes the scene with peculiar interest; for *we* are neither Jews nor Samaritans, but Gentiles, like Cornelius and those gathered under his roof. Now, in the wisdom of God, it pleased Him to make choice of Peter, that by his mouth the Gentiles should hear the gospel and believe. (Acts xv. 7.) Accordingly we find Peter preaching unto them, and his preaching was not in vain. The Word was mixed with faith in them that heard it,

and they too received the Holy Ghost. But how was the Holy Ghost given to this Gentile company? Was there prayer for them first, and then the laying on of hands? Not at all. Peter was on the spot, the very apostle who, with John, had been sent to Samaria; so that if the imposition of apostolic hands were needed, there he was to lay them on. But there was nothing of the sort. The faithful God, who is the same for ever and ever, gave unto them the Holy Ghost as He did at the beginning. There was no human intervention whatsoever; for while Peter yet spake "the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word," and that too even before they were baptized. What would the vicar of St. John's say to that?

Of the five principal examples of the giving of the Holy Ghost narrated in the Acts, there remains one yet to be examined, the account of which is given in Acts xix. Here we shall find the laying on of hands; not, however, of Peter or John, but of *Paul*. Let that fact be noticed; for it bears upon our present point. Peter's apostleship had never been questioned, nor had John's; but in every place there were not wanting those who questioned Paul's. Even among Paul's own converts there were some who lent a listening ear to his traducers. At Corinth this was notably so. "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Cor. ix. 2), was his sorrowful

and indignant answer to his Corinthian examiners. But God, who cared for His servant, left not Paul's apostolate without other and sufficient credentials. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds," he wrote later on. (2 Cor. xii. 12.) Had the Holy Ghost been given in the laying on of hands of Peter and John in Samaria? It should not be less so with Paul, and that too not in connexion with any converted under his own preaching, but with those who had been baptized with the baptism of John the Baptist. Thus he could say, "In *nothing* am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." (2 Cor. xii. 11.) How perfect are the ways of God!

The result of our examination then is this: So far from its being "God's own appointed way" to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, there are but two instances of it recorded in the Scriptures, and in both cases for reasons sufficiently plain, as we have sought to show. At Pentecost there was no such thing, nor with the three thousand, nor with Cornelius and his company. The latter is deeply instructive to us, they being Gentiles like ourselves. In *hearing and believing the Word* they received the Holy Ghost, and so was it in Galatia. The saints there were giving heed to law-teachers, who sought to bring them again into bondage, and to lead them to observe days and months and times and

years. Paul wrote to warn them and to expostulate with them on their folly. "This only would I learn of you," said he, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or *by the hearing of faith?*" (Gal. iii. 2.) Such a question suggested the true answer—it was by the hearing of faith. That was "God's own appointed way" for the Gentiles; and as it was then so is it now. Were there apostles upon earth we should not need the laying on of their hands in order to the reception of the Holy Ghost, much less do we need that of their would-be successors.

Other Scriptures besides those we have dwelt upon declare to whom the Spirit is given. It is to them that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.) If, reader, you have learnt your need of the Saviour and have come to Him, if you have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, then you may be sure that the Holy Ghost already dwells within you, the earnest of future glory. No laying on of hands can add aught to what you have already received "by the hearing of faith." But if you have never fled for refuge to Christ as a guilty, lost sinner, you are still in your sins and under condemnation; and were the hands of every bishop that ever lived laid upon your head, you would still be as destitute of the Holy Ghost as the stones of the street.

SANCTIFICATION.

AS a good deal of confusion exists in the minds of many of the Lord's people as to the meaning of sanctification, it is proposed in this little paper to look into the teaching of Scripture on this most important subject.

A Christian said to the writer, not so very long ago, "It is three years since I was justified, but only about four months since I was sanctified." The reply given her was, "According to the teaching of Scripture you were sanctified *before* you were justified." But this is not what many think. They look upon sanctification as a growing in holiness, and thus a growing in meetness for heaven. The more holy or sanctified they are, the more fit they suppose themselves to be for the presence of the Lord. Thus the true basis of peace for the soul is lost sight of; so that instead of depending alone upon the finished work of Christ on the cross *for* the sinner, the work of the Holy Spirit *in* the soul is looked to as that which is to give perfect fitness for glory.

This, however, is not only far from the teaching of the Word, but is in direct antagonism to it. In Col. i. 12 we find these words: "Giving thanks unto the Father, *which hath made us meet* to be

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partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" and this is founded upon the fact of Christ's "*having made peace* through the blood of His cross." (v. 20.)

The work of redemption is accomplished; nothing can be added to it, nor can anything be taken from it. The measure of the believer's acceptance before God is Christ risen from the dead. This is very simple and most blessed. Pardon, peace, acceptance in present favour, all depend upon what Christ has accomplished for us. This has to be carefully and jealously guarded; for if anything is allowed to intermix with this, we not only suffer great loss in our own souls, but the Lord is dishonoured, inasmuch as the integrity and everlasting worth of His all-sufficient work are called in question. Again, let it be said, nothing must be allowed to touch or add to our perfect justification through Him who was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (See Rom. iv. 24, 25; and chap. v. 1.)

Now first of all let us ask, What is sanctification? The answer is, It is *a setting apart* or *separating*. In proof of this see John x. 36, where the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as having been sanctified, and sent into the world by the Father. Again, in chap. xvii. 19 He speaks of sanctifying Himself for the sake of "His own" who were in the world. These

passages plainly show that it is not of the blessed Lord's being made more holy that they speak. To affirm that such was the case would be blasphemy; for He was ever the Holy One of God. It is, however, easy to understand that He was set apart by the Father for all that was before Him, and sent into the world. There is no difficulty either in seeing that He set Himself apart; *i.e.*, went on high for the sake of His people. We therefore find Him spoken of in Hebrews vii. 26, as He now is, "holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate*" (really separated) "from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Again, we learn from 1 Tim. iv. 5 that the very food Christians eat is sanctified (or set apart for their use) by the word of God and prayer. In Isaiah lxvi. 17 there were those who "sanctified" (or separated) "themselves" to do evil, and their end was to be consumed.

We shall now turn to some passages of Scripture in order that we may see the truth as to the subject we are considering. In 1 Cor. vi. 11 the answer given to the Christian already referred to is confirmed; *viz.*, that she was sanctified before she was justified. The verse reads, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." They had been washed. This was the moral purifying effect of the word of God. "Now ye are clean

through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) That which was involved and included in their being thus cleansed was that they were sanctified and justified. It is important to notice that *sanctification* comes first; that is to say, God sets the soul apart for blessing. In 1 Peter i. 2 we find the same order adhered to. The saints* there are addressed as being "elect . . . *through sanctification of the Spirit*, unto . . . the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." They are set apart *unto* the sprinkling of blood. Sanctification is *first*, then the blood in all its value is apprehended. So in 2 Thess. ii. 13, "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." *Before salvation* there had been the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. This is to be much observed.

From these passages, as well as from others that might be adduced, we learn that sanctification is an *absolute* thing. It is an accomplished fact already, and true of every believer.

There is, however, another way in which sanctification is spoken of; namely, as a progressive (growing), *practical* thing. The measure of our

* We are "saints" by calling ("called saints," see Rom. i. 7). But the meaning of "saint" is simply a separated person.

actual, absolute sanctification—our separation *from* the world, our separation *to* God—is Christ where He is. As we read in 1 Cor. i. 30, “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*, and redemption.” Christ *now* is our sanctification, and therefore the measure of our being set apart. Twice over He says, in John xvii. (vv. 14, 16), of His people, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” We are separated ones—no more of the world than Christ was of it.

Now it is one thing to *know* this blessed truth as a matter of fact and doctrine, and quite another thing to *carry it into effect* by putting it into practice day by day. We shall now look at some of the passages in which it is thus brought before us. In turning to 2 Cor. vi. 14 to end, we find *practical* separation called for, and then the blessed promises to those who responded to such a call. The Lord Almighty would be a Father to them; that is, He would act the part of Father to them, and they would be to Him for sons and daughters. There would be the *enjoyment* of the relationship. Stimulated by such promises, they were to cleanse themselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit (without and within), perfecting holiness (or sanctification) in the fear of God. God had said He would dwell in them and walk in them; they were *absolutely* separated to Him. But now they

were to put this into practice in their daily life. Their practical separation was to correspond with what was already true of them. Moses in his day (Exodus xxxiii. 16) knew something of this truth when he said, "Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated*, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

In Hebrews xii., where we find the educational process going on—God dealing with us as with sons—the object in view is, that we may be partakers of His holiness (v. 10); that is, that there may be more distinct, practical separation to Himself. In addition to this, the peaceable fruit of righteousness is yielded to him who is *exercised* as to the dealings of the Father with him. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thess. iv. 3.)

There is one verse that often causes difficulty to honest and earnest souls. It seems to them that the verse warrants their looking for a better state of things in themselves. It is 1 Thess. v. 23, and it reads thus: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now there is really no difficulty in this passage.

It does not teach that sanctification—a process of becoming more holy—goes on until *perfection in the flesh* is attained. Such a thought is contrary to the whole teaching and tenor of the word of God.

When God made man in innocency, His component parts were spirit, soul, and body. They are such still; but through man's departure from God, he has got what Scripture calls *the flesh* in him as well. This evil thing called the flesh is unimprovably bad. It remains flesh to the end of the chapter. No amount of care, culture, education, or anything else will ever make it other than it is. It is flesh. It may be refined flesh, educated flesh, or it may be openly bad and evil flesh. It matters not how it may be treated. It is never changed by any process it may be put through. "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63) are the emphatic words of the Lord Jesus Himself. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, as we read in Romans viii. 7. It is not, nor can it be, subject to the law of God. This "flesh," then, never becomes holy or separated to God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," (John iii. 6.) It remains as it ever was—a corrupt and thoroughly bad thing.

But there is no difficulty in seeing that it is the will of God, and what the apostle earnestly desired, that the saints should be wholly separated to God, and that not in an outward way only, but

in *spirit*, and in soul, and in body,* and in view of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is just one passage more that may be referred to now which causes trouble of soul to not a few. It is Hebrews x. 29. There we find that one may be sanctified by blood, and yet be lost. This is solemn, and often startles souls not fully established in the grace of God. It will be well therefore to look a little carefully at this verse and its context. It is evident that in the epistle to the Hebrews *professors* are addressed, of whom many were real, as chap. vi. 9 and x. 39 tell us, while with others (who were not real) there was the danger of their falling away (which is not the same thing as a Christian backsliding), and going back to Judaism, thus giving up Christianity as a system owned, and the only thing on earth owned, of God. To do this was to put themselves outside the pale of salvation. God let such people alone. They were never renewed to repentance, nor could they be. They had been in the place of *privilege* on earth, where they had had the *external* advantages of Christianity. To give up all this after they had received (*not the truth*, but) the *knowledge* of the truth, was to "sin wilfully." For wilful or presumptuous sin in the Old Testament there was no provision made, nor

* The body of the believer is the Lord's. It is spoken of in 1 Cor. vi. as a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Ghost. It is not the evil principle within us—the flesh.

is there here. There is nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. ALL who were brought into the Christian system on earth were sanctified by the blood of the covenant. They were *set apart by blood*, as IT was the basis upon which the whole fabric rested with which the true ones were *vitally*, and the false ones only *externally*, connected. "Sanctification by blood" must not be confounded with "redemption by blood." The former is true of real and unreal ones alike who are brought into the place of Christian privilege. The latter is the portion of those only who have a vital interest in Christ.

Now this is what we have found in looking into the word of God. First, that sanctification means setting apart; secondly, that all believers are sanctified or set apart *absolutely* by the Spirit unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; that is, before they are justified; thirdly, inasmuch as Christians are *actually* a separated people, they are to be so *practically* and growingly, as they know more of Him to whom they are set apart; fourthly and finally, sanctification by blood is an *external* privilege in which mere professors share, as well as those who are really redeemed to God by the blood of Christ.

The Lord grant blessing through what we have found in His own blessed word on this subject.

F. C.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN; ITS DURATION AND SEVERITY.

TWO Christians were conversing with an intelligent but unconverted man upon the all-important question of the salvation of the soul, when one of them remarked to him that if a sinner passed from time into eternity with one sin unpardoned, it would suffice to exclude him from the presence of God, who is Light—*the Holy One*—and plunge him in the blackness of darkness for ever.

“Then according to that,” he replied, “those who live justly, do what is right, and follow their religious duties, will have the same punishment as those that go on in open sin all their life.”

“Stop! That requires a little explanation. It is quite true that *all* who die unsaved will be eventually in hell for ever (John iii. 36; Rev. xxi. 8); but it is also plainly taught in Scripture that each will be judged according to his works. (Rev. xx. 12, 13.) That is to say, *the duration* of the punishment is eternal, but its *severity* depends upon men’s conduct and works here.”

Several passages confirm this statement, to some of which we will presently turn, trusting they may be helpful to any who may not be clear upon this solemn subject.

Let us bear in mind, first of all, that God is holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. His very nature and character demand the eternal exclusion from His presence of every sinner who comes before Him in his sins. Many quote "God is love," and, shutting their eyes to the solemn declarations of His word, delude themselves and others with the thought that punishment will be only temporary. God says it is "*eternal*;" and in love has given His only-begotten Son to die, that we might be delivered from it. Believing on Him, there is nought to fear; but if we neglect or despise Him, we shall surely reap in hell the eternal consequences of our folly. The following passages are most plain as to the awful and eternal character of the judgment of the impenitent, and to these we would urge our readers to refer for themselves: Matt. xxiii. 33; Jude 7; Mark ix. 43-48; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxv. 46; 2 Thess. i. 9; Mark xvi. 16; Jude 13; 2 Peter iii. 7; 2 Peter ii. 2; 2 Peter ii. 12; Mark iii. 29; Luke xvi. 26; 2 Peter ii. 17.

Sin is a foul blot upon God's fair creation, infinitely more heinous in His sight than men naturally think. We are so accustomed to it all around us and in us that we think but lightly of it. Men mostly form their estimate of sin by its effects upon themselves or their fellows, and not by the way it touches the glory of God. It is only as we estimate aright the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ that we can apprehend *God's thoughts* about sin. So hateful is it in His sight, that nothing but the death of His own Son could meet the claims of His holiness in regard to it. And upon the ground of Christ's finished work alone can God righteously deliver the sinner from its eternal consequences in the future, and from its dominion now. Beloved reader, have you believed on the blessed One who wrought that work? If so, eternal punishment you will never see, but you *shall* share eternal glory with Him instead. (1 Peter v. 10.) But if not, and you should receive the wages of sin this moment, which is *death* (Rom. vi. 23), you will most assuredly come into judgment after (Heb. ix. 27), and all who are judged are cast into the lake of fire for ever. (Rev. xx. 15.)

But whilst solemnly pressing upon all the plain testimony of the word of God, that the *duration* of the punishment of the wicked will be *eternal*, we would call their attention to passages of Scripture which teach distinctly that the *severity* of the punishment will vary according to the responsibility and guilt incurred, all known to perfection in each case by the Lord the Judge.

In Luke xii. 47, 48 Jesus said, "And that servant, which knew His Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of

stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." This scripture makes a very plain distinction as to the severity of the punishment inflicted. On the one hand, that servant which knew his lord's will, but disregarded it, shall be beaten with *many* stripes ; but on the other, he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few*.

The first, who knew his Lord's will, would represent Christendom. Professing Christians have the word of God with His will plainly expressed therein, and yet how many heed it not ! On every hand the true Christian sees those who, with the Scripture in their houses or in their hands, have never prepared to meet God by bowing to His beloved Son, and who follow the bent of their own will instead of learning what His will is and doing it.

And remark further that the class here represented by "that servant" is not charged like the other with committing things worthy of stripes. This does not come in. Then how will it fare with you, poor Christless professor ? You may pride yourself that you have abstained from gross forms of wickedness, that you have not committed things worthy of stripes, and rest satisfied with your own moral conduct as a man amongst men ;

but are you prepared to meet God? Have you *a title* to stand before Him in Christ and His precious blood? And are you seeking as one that has believed on Him to do according to His will? If not, there looms in your future not only *everlasting* woe, but *many stripes* awarded by Him who shall judge in righteousness. You dwell in a sphere of privilege and responsibility, where the light of Christianity shines, yet hitherto you have lived to yourself and without God. You have boasted, it may be, of being born in a Christian country, as distinct from a heathen land, but have utterly failed either to enjoy your privileges or to fulfil your responsibilities, and hence the severity of your judgment at that day.

The second, who *knew not*, and did things worthy of stripes, but who shall be beaten with few, would represent heathendom. It is to be remarked that the words "that servant" are omitted here. It is simply "*he* that knew not." Such words indicate those who have never occupied the position of "that servant," and who have never had the word of God, and hence know not the Lord's will. They are fallen and under the judgment of God, which is indeed the condition of the whole world (Romans iii. 19; 1 John v. 19), and are *without excuse*, for Scripture says, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,

even His eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are *without excuse*," &c. (Rom. i. 20.) But they are without His word, which is the revelation of His will ; and hence the just Judge will visit them on account of their evil deeds with punishment less severe than those who knew and did it not—*few stripes*.

In concluding this part of His discourse, our Lord added, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Luke xii. 48.) He thus brought before His hearers the principle of responsibility according to our privileges, and that God would deal with men on a ground the justice of which they admit, in that they deal with each other similarly.

Another scripture confirms the above truth, where our Lord in the audience of all the people said to the disciples, "Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts ; which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers : *the same shall receive greater damnation*." (Luke xx. 46, 47.) The scribes, whose province it was to copy the Scriptures and to instruct the people as to their meaning, were in a position of grave responsibility. They had far greater privileges than others, in that they

had every opportunity of being fully acquainted with the mind of God, and yet their self-exaltation and hypocrisy were proverbial. "The same," said the Lord, "shall receive *greater damnation*." This is a most solemn passage for the consideration of all mere professors, who take the place of teachers, but who are living for selfish objects without a real interest in Christ.

In Matthew xi. 21-24 we also find our Lord upbraiding the cities where most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not, saying, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, *shalt be brought down to hell*: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be *more tolerable* for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

In Mark xi. 11 He uses similar language, when He sent forth the twelve apostles to preach that men should repent; and again in Luke x. 10-16, when He commissioned the seventy disciples to go forth and preach the kingdom of God.

Taking all these Scriptures together, nothing can be clearer than that our Lord has distinctly taught us, that whilst the punishment of all the impenitent will be *eternal*, yet at the same time the *severity* of the punishment will be determined by the just Judge *according to the privileges enjoyed and the guilt incurred*.

This is further confirmed by the character of the judgment of the wicked dead at the great white throne: "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." But in verse 12 it also says, "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works*." And in verse 13, "And they were judged *every man according to their works*." These words would entirely lose their significance but for the truth of what we have advanced above.

It will be well too to add that in scriptures which treat of the judgment of men on the earth, preparatory to the establishment of the kingdom, the same principle is maintained. Whilst tribulation will be *universal* (Rev. iii. 10 ; vii. 14), yet the *severest* judgments will fall upon the Jews and the people of the Roman empire, who were the chief and responsible agents in the betrayal and murder of the Son of God.

How deeply solemn are the imperishable statements of God, especially so for those favoured peoples among whom His word and light and

truth have been sown broadcast ! Not only will the Christian professor reap *eternal woe*, but *many stripes* will be his awful portion, as one who knew his Lord's will, but neither prepared himself, nor did according to it. In view of these eternal realities, we warn our readers to give diligence to make their calling and election sure. (2 Peter i. 10.) Every believer in Jesus is delivered now and for ever from wrath and judgment, and will "have boldness in the day of judgment : because as He [Christ] is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) May God grant in His infinite grace that each reader of these lines may know what it is to be delivered from the coming wrath, and to have a living, personal interest in the living Saviour, Jesus, the Son of God. (Rev. i. 18.)

E. H. C.

 WATCH.

W ATCH for your Lord's return, the star is in the sky ;
 A rise, lift up your drooping heads, redemption draweth nigh.
 T is but a little while ere we shall with Him be,
 C hanged in a moment, like Him made, His glory then to see.
 H ow great shall be the saints' reward, who, watching, wait
 their coming Lord !

L. W.

" *Blessed* are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find *watching* : verily I say unto you, that He *shall gird Himself*, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and *serve them*." (Luke xii. 37.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A CONSTANT READER.—The *baptism* of the Holy Ghost refers to the formation of the Church at Pentecost, when by One Spirit we (believers) were all baptized into One Body. We are also *sealed* individually by God with His Holy Spirit—the earnest of what we shall inherit. (2 Cor. v. 5 ; Eph. i. 13, 14.) That same Spirit is also “*an unction* from the Holy One” — “*the Anointing* which ye have received.” But when spoken of as such it is in reference to spiritual understanding ; the intelligence by which we discern between good and evil, between what is of God and what is not, and with which even the babes in the family of God are endowed. 1 John ii. 20-27 is proof of this.

To your second question we cannot say yea or nay, as we do not know all the surroundings of the case. “I suffer not a woman to teach” must be interpreted with due regard to its immediate connections, and also to other portions of the Word, ever remembering that “the letter killeth.” In the Assembly her place is to learn in silence and subjection. Nor is she to have authority over the man ; it is an usurpation which the Spirit of God ever resents. But there are spheres in which she might justly teach, such as in the family, among the young, in household visitation, in hospital and infirmary work, and in various scriptural ways that are open to Christians of the gentler sex to serve Christ. The approval of all their fellow-Christians is more than any should look for or even seek. To his own Master every Christian worker stands or falls ; and if he heeds every breath of criticism he will probably sit at home and do nothing. We would give you 1 Cor. xv. 58.

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—We see no objection to gathering the children together for the object of which you speak ; but whether the evening should be spent in the way you describe must be left to the judgment of those concerned. “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.” For ourselves we consider such an occasion very suitable for speaking to the children of Christ and His salvation.

CHRIST IN US.

COL. iii. 9-25 ; iv. 1.

THIS portion of the word of God brings out in a very simple and practical way the life that we have in Christ, and the manifestation of it in us down here in this world—Christ in us.

In Colossians i. 26, 27 (which I do not dwell on now), the apostle speaks of “the mystery,” and presents to us there this aspect of it, “*Christ in you.*” This characterizes every Christian. This agrees with the words of the Lord in John xiv. 20 : “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and *I in you.*” Also in Col. iii. 11 we read : “Christ is *in* all ;” that is, Christ is in every individual who belongs to the new creation. In verses 9–12 we have, first, what we are cleared from, and afterwards what we are brought into as having “put on the new man.” Then follow the practical exhortations, and these are really the expression of what Christ was upon earth, so that what we are exhorted to be is exactly what Christ was down here. Some might think this high truth, and could not be carried out in the every-day relationships of life ; but it is interesting to notice that, in the latter part of this chapter, these very relationships are spoken of—wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, masters.

IV.

Now let us look at verse 9. There it is very clearly shown, that though a person may be truly saved, yet there is still the old sinful nature in him which never improves, and which he will never lose till he is with the Lord. Many Christians have been surprised that such an exhortation as this—"Lie not one to another"—should have been written to those who were addressed as "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." (Chap. i. 2.) What! a saint of God having to be told that he must not lie! Yes, but we must remember that these Colossian believers had all been heathen, and had not the knowledge that we have. Still the exhortation "Lie not one to another" is in force now. "Why," it may be asked, "is a Christian not to tell a lie?" Not for fear of being lost, or of coming into judgment; but, "Lie not one to another, *seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds*; and have put on the new man."

It is an important thing to see that in Scripture we are never exhorted to walk like Christians in order to become Christians; but, on the contrary, we are brought into full and perfect blessing through God's sovereign grace, and *then* comes the exhortation to walk worthy of the place of blessing we are brought into.

Suppose you were to be asked, Have you put off the old man? What would you answer? Some might say, I don't quite understand what

the old man is. Well, I suppose "old man" means ourselves as children of Adam, born in sin, with a sinful nature—a nature which hates God and loves sin, and which is utterly dark and ignorant of God. Have you put that off? A person may answer, without thinking, No, indeed, I have not, for I often find workings of that "old man" in me; and in fact I am not at all what I should wish myself to be. To such an one we would say, If you will look at those verses in Colossians iii. you will see that we are not exhorted to "put off the old man," but are told "that YE HAVE put off the old man with his deeds."

It is true of the weakest believer that he has "put off the old man with his deeds." There are two things—"The old man" and "the deeds" of "the old man." There is a parallel verse in Eph. iv. 21, 22—"As the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man." This passage, as we have it in our Bibles, might lead us to suppose that we have yet to put off the old man. It should, however, read thus: "Your having put off the old man;" and in verse 24: "Your having put on the new man."

In passing I would call your attention to that expression—"As the truth is in Jesus." Mark, it does not say "Lord Jesus." Jesus is His personal name, the name of His humiliation down here on earth; and here on earth was perfectly

expressed in Him that life which we possess as Christians. Have you ever, in reading the gospels, seen all the path of the Lord Jesus—seen all His goodness and perfection, and said to yourself, That is my life, that is the life I have now, and which was thus perfectly expressed in a Man on earth? Therefore it is important to see that in Ephesians iv. it says, “As the truth is in *Jesus*”—the name of His humiliation here; and now that He has died and risen again, we share His life and have part in the risen Man (Christ).

Now let us return to Colossians. In verse 9 we read: “Ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” Oh, what a mercy to know this! It is not every Christian that knows it. In other words God says to you and to me, I do not see you now as a child of Adam at all; but all that you have done (your sins), and all that you were as a sinful child of Adam, is gone for ever from before me. That is the only annihilation Scripture speaks of. “The old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” (Rom. vi. 6.)

I wonder if you have got hold of that blessed truth. Are you ever troubled about sin that is in you? I don't mean troubled at its presence there; but does it hinder your peace at all? Did you think, after you believed, that you would have nothing but peace and joy? Well, you found very soon it was not so; something of the world that you had been fond of presented itself,

and you felt the old desire that you used to have for it before you were converted. Then perhaps the devil came and suggested that after all you had only heard the word with joy, and perhaps you were but a stony-ground hearer, and there had never been a real work of God in your soul. Many have no doubt thought if not said it. Perhaps you have.

Well, just a word as to this. I think the first thing to see is that the Lord Jesus was on the cross not only on account of what we have done, but also because of what we are. Perhaps you and I are learning by degrees how bad we are by nature. Many are thinking that for the first time God is finding out how bad they are, just in the same proportion as they are discovering it themselves. Oh, if God had only known how badly I should have turned out, He never would have taken me up at all! This is quite a mistake. God knew all about you long ago. Is it not blessed to know this? The Lord Jesus knew exactly what we were, and what we should do; and when He knew it all, knew the worst about us, He gave Himself for us in the love of His own heart, to bear our sins and be made sin for us. What a wonderful thing to see that the blessed Lord was not only on the cross for our sins, but that He was made sin for us; and there is nothing left but the sweet savour of His sacrifice to God in which we are accepted! God condemned sin

in the flesh. What is that? Why, the sinful nature that we have got. Is it not a blessed thing to see that all the depth of the evil of our nature came out before God at the cross more than 1800 years ago, and that there the blessed Lord bore the judgment due to us, there the fire of God's judgment consumed all the sin? When the Lord Jesus laid down His life, it was the life of One who had already borne upon the cross the judgment of God against sin. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We know this much, that there He bare in His own soul the whole weight of God's judgment against sin without mercy, and then He died; and Scripture says that we died with Him. *With Him!* We need not go further than this chapter of Colossians to see that. We read in verse 3, "Ye have died." This is the correct way of reading it. There would be no sense in saying to a dead man, You are dead. He would not be alive to hear it. If you had been at the supper-table where Lazarus was, who had been raised from the dead, you would not have said to him, You are dead; but, You have died, and now you are alive. Therefore, when the Spirit of God says to us, "You have died," it supposes that we are alive to God in Christ, or, as we read in the remainder of this verse, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Now, it is wonderful how this verse is misapplied. Most people think it means that our life is so safe

that no one can take it away, which, thank God, is blessedly true. The context shows what the meaning is. "Your life is hid" means that it is not yet outwardly manifested what it will be in glory. At this present time Christ is hidden, and so consequently is our life. When Christ shall appear in glory, then it will be no longer hidden; but the life will be manifested because He is manifested. (Compare 1 John iii. 2.)

And now we have seen that when Jesus died we died, and that there on the cross the whole question of sin was gone into, and we can each say, by God's grace, There was an end of me, as a sinful child of Adam, before God. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him." Now God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts," and the thought of a great many Christians is, that because we have this old sinful nature in us we cannot be children of God, and that God is always angry with us. It is not so; for He sees us as having only one life, and that the life of Christ, the life of a risen Christ; a life that is beyond death, beyond judgment, beyond Satan's power; a life that sin has nothing to do with. That is the life of Christ risen from the dead; that is the life we have as believers. It is a life out of reach of judgment, a life hid with Christ in God.

Then there is the positive side—what we have "*put on.*" We have "put on the new man;"

that is, Christ now glorified. Think of Him there as a Man before God! What delight must God now find in Him! What a place of favour and acceptance is He in who so glorified the Father on earth! Twice was the Father's voice heard from heaven, saying of Him while here, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," or "in whom I have found all my delight." How much more now must God the Father find delight in Him, who has not only glorified Him in life, but also in death, where He went for us! He brought infinite glory to God, and His obedience unto death was a fresh motive (so to speak) for the love of the Father to be drawn out towards Him—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." And to think that He is our life! and that "as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) And because He is our life, the very expressions the Holy Ghost can use of us are those applied to Christ Himself, "Put on therefore, as *the elect of God, holy and beloved.*" Think of these words—"the elect of God, holy and beloved." What expressions for the Holy Ghost to use of such poor things as we are! and they are the same as those used of Christ Himself, because we are in Christ before God. 1st. The elect of God—"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; *mine elect*, in whom my soul delighteth." (Isa. xlii. 1.) 2nd. "Thou wilt not suffer thy *Holy*

One to see corruption.” (Ps. xvi. 10.) 3rd. “Be-loved.” “This is my *beloved* Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. iii. 17.)

We shall see in the following verses of our chapter, verses 12, &c., that what we are exhorted to be is just what Christ was in all His perfection when He was on earth; for here it was that “the life was manifested.” “Put on *therefore*” (now comes the practical part. We have put off the old man, and have put on the new; that is, our place before God as Christians, and because that is true of us we are practically to put on) “bowels of mercies, kindness.” How this was seen in the Lord Jesus here! How His heart went out in compassion to the poor leper! For we read that “Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him”! How kind He was! always at the beck and call of every sinner that needed Him, always ready to serve others. Are we like Him in this?

“Humbleness of mind.” We know how He humbled Himself. As another has said, “Humble; He would teach us to take the lowest place, but that He has taken it Himself, the privilege of His perfect grace. Blessed Master, may we at least be near to and hidden in thee.”

“Meekness.” He was meek and lowly in heart. A person may be outwardly meek, yet very proud at heart; but He was meek and lowly in heart. Are we ever like Him in this?

“Longsuffering; forbearing one another . . . if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” We are to act towards others as *Christ* has to us. “Above all these things put on charity” (love), “which is the bond of perfectness.” Oh, may the life of Jesus be more manifested in our mortal flesh! “Let the peace of Christ” (it should read) “rule in your hearts;” that is, the peace which the Lord Jesus had here, as a Man, in communion with the Father, is to preside in our hearts. And, in verse 16, “the word of Christ” is to dwell in us richly; for in the new creation, in which we are, “Christ is all and in all.” It is all Christ there. In verse 17: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” And then, in the verses that follow, the life of Jesus is to be manifested in all the relationships of life—wives to submit themselves to their own husbands, husbands to love their wives, children to obey their parents, fathers not to provoke their children to anger, servants to obey in all things their masters, and masters to give them that which is just and equal. May the Lord grant we may know more what it is practically in every-day life to be “always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the *life* also of *Jesus* might be made manifest in our body,” for His name’s sake.

R. F. K.

SOBRIETY.

THIS little paper does not profess to do more than bring under the notice of our readers a few texts out of God's word bearing upon the above subject.

The time has come, to a very large extent indeed, which is spoken of in 2 Timothy iv. 3, 4, which says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." If we look at much of the so-called ministry of our day, how strikingly true this all is. The tendency nowadays is to gloss over the truth of God with man's philosophy, and to bring in a large spice of humour, to be what is called a *popular* preacher. A man who preaches God's truth in a plain, unvarnished way, and who tells man the whole truth about himself, as seen in the word of God, has often to be content with a very small audience.

But we can thank God that we have very plain instructions in His own word, which the psalmist declares "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm cxix. 105.) Whatever the consequences of following the Word are to

sight, we know by *faith* that we have God's own approval, which is much to be preferred to man's. 1 Samuel xv. 22 says, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." I am afraid that a large number of Christians *practically* by their lives quote this text the other way about. You may say that I am taking up this subject in regard to public ministry principally. I believe in these perilous times we may be tempted to follow the ways of those whom we spoke of, on the principle that the end justifies the means—a principle entirely contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Thus the hearers are leavened by the conduct of those who profess to be leaders. A little of ourselves introduced into the things of God is graphically described in Ecclesiastes x. 1: "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour." •

Titus ii. presents to us, in a very full and remarkable way, the mind of the Spirit on the point of sobriety. You will find, on reading it, that *all* classes of Christians are here plainly exhorted to soberness. Verse 2 exhorts that "the *aged men* be *sober*, grave," &c.; verse 3, that "the *aged women* likewise." Then, in verse 4, the aged women are exhorted to teach the *young women* to be *sober*. In verse 6, Titus is told to exhort the *young men* to be *sober-minded*; and in verse 7

the apostle Paul exhorts Titus himself to gravity. Finally, in verse 12, it speaks about the grace of God "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live *soberly*, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

If we look at the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, we shall find that bishops and deacons, with their wives, are exhorted to gravity. This subject is not confined to speaking publicly, but applies also to speaking privately, to the way we adorn our houses and persons, and to all our actions down here; for 1 Timothy ii. 9, in proof of this, speaks about dressing with sobriety. 1 Peter iv. 7 gives us one reason why we should be sober: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore *sober*, and watch unto prayer." As the end of all things draws near, and all, both in the world and the Church, is undergoing a disintegrating process, it behoves us to be sober and watchful, that we have the mind of the Lord as we go on.

1 Peter v. 8 gives us a second reason: "Be *sober*, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." We find the same principle at work in worldly matters. The soldiers who guard a camp, hourly expecting an attack, do not sit down, laughing, joking, and amusing themselves. We find every sense on the alert, and complete sobriety, in order to detect the least movement on the part of the enemy. So we, as

Christians, should be in a similar condition in a spiritual sense. Our enemy is more subtle than a natural one, and we are more ignorant of his devices than of those of an enemy of flesh and blood. Christians may say they don't want to become misanthropes. I would say to such, The word of God should be our standard in these matters, and should judge and correct our ways. The sobriety of Scripture does not allow us to conduct ourselves in a light, frivolous way, but it admits of true joy and rejoicing, as Philippians iv. 4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice."

I have heard Christians ridiculing the idea of a sober joy as a paradox, but I think the Scriptures bear us out on the point. Again, many dear Christians excuse themselves and others on the plea of nature. They say it is natural, and they cannot help it. Sin is natural to the old man, and yet that never excuses or palliates it. Let us allow the word of God a true place in our hearts, and let it govern our ways, whether it is against nature or not. In fact, the teaching of the word of God is entirely opposed to the natural man, as 1 Cor. ii. 14 says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

This has been written in no spirit of fault-finding or spiritual pride, for the writer knows that it applies more to himself than to most of his readers. May God bless it for His own name's sake is our earnest prayer.

A. J. P.

THE LITTLE REMNANT

OF LUKE I. AND II.

IT seems impossible for a spiritual mind to read and ponder the first and second chapters of Luke's gospel without being struck with the peculiar line of truth they communicate. Except the allusion to the birth of Jesus in Matthew, there is nothing like it within the whole compass of divine revelation. That there would be a remnant of God-fearing people in the midst of the long-favoured nation, when it had almost wholly departed from Jehovah and His truth, the last of the post-captivity prophets led us to expect. The blessed place too that they would hold in the heart and confidence of Jehovah is also declared; but, so far as we remember the New Testament Scriptures, Luke is the only inspired writer that gives details as to the characteristics and testimony of such. And let us not fail to notice, though sects abounded in Israel in their day, they were not a sect, but took a remnant place, or a part of the original. They took no name as did Pharisees and Sadducees, their interests were not less than those of all God's people, and His word was their sole authority. They were few in number, with but little strength, owning their obligation to keep the word of God, as well as stand for His claims of

holiness and truth in a time of general declension and failure. They were reckoning on the goodness and faithfulness of God, and waiting for the "consolation of Israel" according to the word of the Lord by His prophets. And be it also observed, that the inspired writer introduces his gospel by assuring us that these facts had been delivered to him and others by those "who from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the Word;" so that he writes as one who had from the first an accurate acquaintance with all things, and adds that they were *most surely believed* among them, and that his object in writing was that we might *know the certainty* of them. (Luke i. 1-4.)

The more we meditate on the moral qualities of the remnant to which the last of Israel's prophets alludes, the more we shall be struck with the similarity of some of the features of this faithful little group which Luke describes, who were the harbingers of Messiah's first coming to His own nation which received Him not, and were honoured as the porter to open the door to the Good Shepherd, whose voice they knew; but they would not have done so to the self-appointed officials, who, like thieves and robbers, climbed up some other way to get into the sheepfold. (John x. 1-3.)

Whoever else might have been among this God-fearing remnant of Jews at Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit only brings before us Zacharias, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna; but the inference

is strong that others were associated with them, for Anna is said to have spoken “to *all* them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” (Luke ii. 38.) But be that as it may, we cannot fail to observe that these pious Jews were, in their measure, what the faithful in our day should preeminently be—a people separated unto the Lord, led of the Spirit, who walk in the pathway of faith, and love, and hope, and therefore detached from everything unsuited to Him who is the Holy and the True.

This little group in Luke were noted as a praying people, who kept the word of God, who were closely associated with “the temple,” which was *then* God’s house and centre for His people, and were led, taught, and filled with the Holy Spirit; though, as was said of Simeon, “the Holy Spirit was *upon* him,” and not *in* him to abide for ever, as He does in us now who are members of the body of Christ. While keeping before us their actual state as devout Israelites, who were faithful to Jehovah, and kept His word in a time of ruin and a day of evil, we may learn some precious lessons in meditating on the inspired record of this little company of honoured and devoted saints. It may be through their prayers that Messiah came into the world, as, through our prayers, in loving response to the presentation of Himself as “the Bright and Morning Star,” He will descend from heaven with a shout, and we

shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. After this, it may be that the earnest cries and supplications of a future remnant of faithful Jews may bring Him to them as "the Sun of Righteousness" with healing and blessing to them, and terrible judgment on their enemies, when the wicked shall be as ashes under the soles of their feet. We cannot forbear making one quotation from the prophets of the earnest cries of this future remnant of Jews for Messiah to come down from heaven as their promised Deliverer. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. . . . We have sinned. . . . We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. . . . Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. . . . Be not wroth very sore, O Lord. neither remember iniquity for ever. . . . Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us for ever?" (Isa. lxiv.; see also Ps. lxxx. 8-19.)

Whatever similarity there may be between the

God-fearing remnant in the days of the man of sin, and the little group in the gospel by Luke, it seems impossible that these and other inspired utterances of these faithful ones can have their full accomplishment until after the Church is gone, and the people of Israel, especially Judah and Benjamin, who actually rejected and put their Messiah to death, pass through the time of Jacob's trouble, which prophets and our Lord have declared must be their unhappy portion, ere they take their true place, so that He can reign before His ancients gloriously. In answer to the earnest supplications of the faithful in the great tribulation, the Lord will come out of heaven in manifested glory, and take His rightful place among His loved earthly people; for "the Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Rom. xi. 26, 27.)

Whether the prophet Malachi, in referring to those who "feared the Lord, and spake often one to another," pointed to the future remnant who will have to go through the great tribulation, or to the little company in Luke, we are not told. His prophecy might possibly have been given for the encouragement of both, and we know both are spoken of as looking for Messiah's coming. How very dear they are to God we may learn by the prophet's touching words: "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. 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. 16, 17.)

It need scarcely be added, that these words convey great principles as to the goodness and mercy of God to the God-fearing in all ages. Still while the fact of their being *spared* in a day when judgment will overtake many; and called Jehovah's "jewels," and spoken of by Jehovah as "mine," clearly shows they are a people very dear to Him; yet they are not in the place of "the Church of God," which is so united to Christ by one Spirit that He speaks of us not as "mine," but as "me." "Why persecutest thou *me*?" was His word to Saul of Tarsus, and elsewhere we are spoken of by the Spirit as "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Blessed union with Christ, which could not have been till the Son of Man was exalted to the throne of God, and the Holy Spirit had come down to indwell us, and produce this mystical union, and make it known to our hearts; hence we are told, "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."

Of this pious little company in Luke, we may observe, first, that they evidently had a deep

consciousness of the declension and ruin into which God's loved people had fallen. Secondly, they were in heart separated unto God, and therefore detached from what they knew dishonoured Him, and they cast themselves on God in simple faith to carry out what they could of His truth; hence they were dependent and prayerful. Thirdly, they turned to God, waited on God, and honoured His word. Fourthly, they were a praising people, and so abounded in hope that they "looked for redemption in Jerusalem;" for, according to the word of the prophet, "Zion shall be redeemed by judgment." Fifthly, the Holy Spirit was remarkably with them in guidance, power, and blessing. Sixthly, as before noticed, their hearts were set on the blessing of all Messiah's people, and on His coming and glory, so that at a time when Jehovah's holy name was used in Jerusalem to accredit sectarianism, carnality, and all sorts of error, this little company and their associates kept to God's centre, "the temple," and waited for blessing, while their interests, affections, and prayers were bound up with all God's people, and in spirit went out to the time when blessing would be extended to the Gentiles. It is clear that, in a time of departure from God, they took the faithful place of standing apart from surrounding evil, and associated themselves with "all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

And it may be well to ask, Could any other ground truly become such as would be faithful to the Lord in a day of evil? Has God changed, or has His word changed? Certainly not. Is He not as faithful to His own word as ever? Are His principles of holiness and truth lowered because of man's failure? Impossible! Does not faith in all ages cleave to God and His word? And are not the faithful to-day, in a time of declension and ruin, commended, not to this man nor to that man, not to this sect nor to that sect, but "to God, and to the word of His grace," that word of "present truth" which is especially given to the Church on earth? (Acts xx. 32.) And is it any marvel that with such as are *really thus before God*, the power of the Holy Spirit is so manifest, and the hope of our Lord's coming so precious? We say really on this ground and in this posture of soul before God, because we know how easy it is for others to mingle with such, and go on outwardly together, without the heart and conscience having been so exercised as to detach them from the traditions and influences of men and all else unsuited to the Lord, and to lead them to own Him as still in the midst of those gathered to His name, the Holy Spirit in us and with us for ever, and God and the written word our unfailing resource, while waiting for His Son from heaven.

H. H. S.

PATIENCE.

JAMES i. 4.

IMPATIENCE results in imperfection ; whereas patience seldom fails of success and a perfectly accomplished work. Patient waiting for God meets with God's perfect handiwork as its reward. An impatient, spoilt, and petted child may run to its mother and tease for some of the half-cooked cake in the oven, because it smells so nice ; but were that most foolish request granted, the little one would get—not the nice cake he thought to have—but a sticky, indigestible morsel he would be better far without.

And thus it often is with ourselves. We want something very much indeed, ask our Father for it, and then, instead of waiting patiently for Him, we fret and weary because we do not *see* immediate response. We ask a thing that, whether we know it or not, involves a multiplicity of persons, and their various surroundings. How then can we wonder that we do not always see the exact result we asked for by the end of a week, a month, or even a year ? God's gifts are good and *perfect*, which they often would not be were they given in our way and in our time. *Our* way and *our* time, if allowed and acted upon, would be enough, probably, to bring disorder and confusion into the universe. Still, while we have to wait, our loving God and Father would have us quite happy and at rest *in Himself*.

“*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.*”
 “*Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*” (Ps. xxxvii.)
 But we may have to wait for them. A. B.

“COME, LORD JESUS.”

REV. xxii. 20.

Come, Lord Jesus ! Hearts are waking,
 Won, attracted unto Thee ;
 We have seen where now Thou dwellest,
 And we long to be with Thee.
 True and faithful to Thy word,
 Quickly Thou wilt come, blest Lord.

Lord, we own Thy blood has washed us
 From our sins of scarlet dye ;
 Brought us to Thy God and Father,
 In Thyself for ever nigh—
 Soon *with* Thee to have our part
 In that glory where Thou art.

Jesus, Saviour, we adore Thee
 For Thy wondrous, matchless grace ;
 Sweeter songs of praise we'll give Thee
 When we gaze upon Thy face.
 Surely Thy return draws nigh :
 “Come, Lord Jesus, come,” we cry. L. W.

A FRAGMENT.

Deliverance from Judgment.—I look as a believer to Calvary, and there I see the Son of God *bearing the judgment of God for me*. I look back to the first moment that I believed on Him, and am met with

His own precious words, "He that believeth on Him is *not condemned*." (John iii. 18.) I think of my present position before God, and my soul is filled with joy, as I am reminded of the blessed truth, "There is therefore *now no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.) I think of the judgment shortly to be executed upon the ungodly, and am filled with peace, knowing that He has said that the believer "*shall not come into condemnation*" (or *judgment*). (John v. 24.) And though every hour brings the day of judgment nearer, and the hearts of thousands fail them for fear, I lift up my head with confidence, resting on the everlasting word, "Herein has love been perfected with us [New Translation] that we may have *boldness in the day of judgment*: because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.)

And now I wait the promised return of my Lord, to receive me to Himself before the poor world's hour of trial shall begin, rejoicing in His own message, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee *from [out of] the hour of temptation*, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, *I come quickly*," &c. (Rev. iii. 10, 11.) And as I look on by faith to the fulfilment of Revelation iv., I see the redeemed of God, viewed as four and twenty elders, crowned, robed, and enthroned as a kingly priesthood, at perfect rest and peace in the presence of the One who sits upon the heavenly throne, not only before the Lamb breaks the seals of the judgment-roll, but before the throne of God is presented as a throne of judgment at all. The heavenly saints are glorified there, before the lightnings,

thunderings, and voices, the symbols of judgment, proceed from the throne. The judgment-seat (or the bar) of Christ, where believers will be manifested in His blessed presence, and rewarded according to their works, is another line of things.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. *Who is he that condemneth?*” (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) E. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

1 COR. x. 16.—We most assuredly believe that “the body of Christ” in this verse refers to the holy humanity of our blessed Lord, in which He bare our sins upon the cross, and of which the bread on the table was a symbol. The one loaf was also a figure of the “one body” (v. 16), the mystical body of Christ, which comprises every true Christian saint, But the point in the whole passage, down to verse 22, is one of communion and identification. If I partake of the Lord’s table I become identified with it, and have communion therewith. It was even so under the law, for those who ate of the sacrifices had communion with the altar, and were associated with it. This important principle being established, these Corinthian believers were exhorted to flee from idolatry, out of which they had been called by the gospel. Not that an idol was any thing in itself, but behind the idols were demons, as Deut. xxxii. 16, 17 informs us. How then should they have communion with demons? Would they partake of the Lord’s table and the table

of demons? “Ye cannot” is Paul’s emphatic word. Such an act is a moral impossibility.

1 COR. xi. 29.—“The Lord’s body” here also has reference to His humanity, though it is no question between the Lord’s table and the table of demons, as in chap. x. If any partook of the Lord’s supper, let him not eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily; let him discern the Lord’s body in those simple memorials of it. Not to do so is to regard it as a common feast, and into this snare the Corinthian assembly had already fallen, for they were carousing even when gathered together to eat the Lord’s supper. The individuals who thus ate and drank unworthily dishonoured the body and blood of the Lord, and invited upon themselves the chastening of His hand. Indeed, for this cause many at Corinth were weak and sickly, and many had fallen asleep.

FAITH-HEALING.—The context of James v. 14 seems to indicate that the sick person was one with whom God had been dealing on account of sins—a Christian, but one whose ways had provoked the governmental interference of God. This has always in view the ultimate blessing of the one so dealt with. If the man be broken down in his soul, and repentant (for this is assumed), he is directed to call for the elders of the assembly; these were to pray over him, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. The issue should not be doubtful. In answer to the prayer of faith the sick should be healed, the Lord would raise him up, and if he had committed sins they should be forgiven him. Remark that the for-

givenness here spoken of is not to be confounded with eternal forgiveness, which is the blessed portion of all who believe the gospel. Observe, further, that there is a sin unto death, for which there is no direction to pray. (1 John v. 16.) Moreover, many cases of sickness will be seen by-and-by to have been preventive mercies. Paul's thorn in the flesh was of this kind; and though he prayed thrice for its removal the Lord loved him too well to take it away. Nor did Paul afterwards desire to be freed from it. On the contrary, it was a thing in which he could glory, inasmuch as it made room for the power of Christ to rest more manifestly upon him. (2 Cor. xii.) Paul speaks of Timothy's "frequent illnesses" (1 Tim. v. 23), and tells us that he left Trophimus at Miletum sick. In neither case do we find such counsel given as in James v. 14, and one feels instinctively how out of place it would have been. Epaphroditus, too, had been "sick nigh unto death," but God had mercy on him; but there is no mention of special prayer that he should be healed. In saying this, however, we do not undervalue prayer for the sick. Elders we have not now, for no scripture that we know of speaks of our having authority or power to appoint them; but in the assembly will be found grave, godly men with those qualifications that an elder was required to have. Is any sick? let him, after much self-judgment, if so led, and he has faith in God about it, call for such, and let such act according to their faith. Fervent prayer still prevails; but in every case there should be unfeigned submission to the will of God, and unshaken confidence in His wisdom, love, and power.

“LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO.”

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

“He [Jesus] cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO.”—JOHN xi. 43, 44.

AT the command of the Son of God death was obliged to open its gates and relinquish its prey. But did Lazarus awake at once to the enjoyment of the life which he received? By no means.

He was bound hand and foot; and it is easy to see that, although possessing LIFE, it was necessary for his happiness that he should also be set at LIBERTY.

Lazarus, thus alive from the dead, but bound hand and foot with graveclothes, gives us a true picture of the melancholy state of hundreds of quickened souls. The voice of the Son of God has reached them. At His command they have come forth from the sleep of death; but the truth has not yet set them free.

The graveclothes are upon them; they are bound hand and foot.

As to the friends around the grave of Lazarus, so now to His servants the Lord's command goes forth, “LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO.”

IV.

In pursuance of this command, we would affectionately ask any reader who, as a lost sinner, has turned to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and yet is tormented with doubts and fears as to his acceptance, What is it that binds you hand and foot?

Perhaps you reply—for it is the trouble of many souls—“I am not certain that I possess everlasting life. I know that I am lost by nature, and guilty before God; and that if ever I reach heaven it will be through Christ’s precious blood alone. Christ is my hope, and my only hope, yet I have not assurance.”

Ah, then, it is UNCERTAINTY that binds you hand and foot. The voice of the Son of God says, “Loose him, and let him go.” May you indeed have this gravecloth removed, and that too before you have finished reading this paper. God has said in His word, “He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life,” and His word shall stand for ever true. Why then are you not sure that you possess this life?

“What troubles me is this,” may be your answer, “Although the blood of Christ is my only hope, I am not sure that I believe in Christ according to what God means by believing.”

My friend, your faith doubtlessly falls very short of what it should be. It is perhaps only like a grain of mustard-seed; but the weakest faith in Christ saves as surely as the strongest

faith. Now let us see what God means—for this is of vital importance—by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John vi. 35 Christ speaks of persons COMING to Him, and of BELIEVING on Him; and uses the two words as interchangeable terms.

He says, “He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” COMING to Christ and BELIEVING on Christ are the same thing. The faith that does not lead to Christ is a dead faith, and avails nothing. But the man who has really learnt his lost condition will consider it no small matter that God has given Christ, that he through Him might be saved.

Such an one will be no more indifferent than was blind Bartimeus, when he knew that the Son of David was passing by. (Luke xviii. 35–43.)

Now God gives us in His word many instances of persons coming to Christ. Perhaps the coming of the poor leper to the Lord Jesus Christ will just picture your case. Suffering from a disease for which human skill could discover no remedy, and certain of falling into the arms of death unless Christ would entertain his case, he came to the Lord Jesus.

But he came with words that plainly showed his doubts and fears. He said, “Lord, *if thou wilt*, thou canst make me clean.”

Did the Lord reply, “Leper, have not I shown

grace upon grace in instances beyond number, and yet dost thou doubt my kindness? Depart from me." Oh, no! Christ's heart was moved with compassion. He saw the leper's doubts; He knew his fears; and replied in those gracious words, "I will; be thou clean." Reader, hast thou, as a poor sinner, suffering indeed from a disease infinitely worse than leprosy, turned to the Lord Jesus for cleansing in His precious blood? He does not despise thee, nor reject thy petition; but replies in His word, "I WILL; BE THOU CLEAN." "Him that cometh to me," says Christ, "I will in no wise cast out."

But I would like to turn you to another example of a sinner coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a case with which you are well acquainted.

The Lord Jesus was hanging upon the cross, the sacrifice for sin. It was man's hour, and the power of darkness.

Many were reviling the blessed Lord, and among them a poor thief for whom the grave had already opened its mouth. But suddenly the man's countenance changes.

God's Spirit awakens the thief to the fact that there on the cross is the Christ of God. Oh, what an awakening! There was ONE whom his eyes could gaze upon, that had the power to give him a place in His kingdom. The lips that before had moved to cast reviling words at the blessed Lord, now move to vindicate him;

“LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO.” 89

and then he turns to the Lord, and says, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

Was there anything meritorious in this prayer? *Nothing.* NOTHING.

What was the Lord’s reply? “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The Lord Jesus never turned any one away. He had said, “Him that cometh to me I will in *no wise* cast out;” and in the hour of death He fulfilled that promise to the guilty thief. That day the thief’s soul departed from this world; and when he reached the gates of paradise, he was admitted through the BLOOD OF THE LAMB; and from then till now has been in the company of the redeemed there.

Dear reader, Jesus is no longer upon the cross. The One “who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. ii. 6) “hath God EXALTED with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.”

Have you turned to the Lord Jesus just as simply as did the dying thief? Before he turned to the Lord Jesus he had no assurance.

But the dying Saviour saw faith in the thief’s heart, going out towards Himself, and shewn in the cry, “Lord, remember me.” “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. x. 13.) The thief’s faith was seen in his cry; for it is written in the word of God, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?”

Do you say, “If I believed in the Lord Jesus should I not have assurance?”

Well, dear reader, the dying thief had assurance simply by believing what Jesus said to him; and you will have assurance too if you believe God’s word to you; for “this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life.” “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.” (1 John v. 9–13.)

Many anxious souls are doing this, although unintentionally.

It may help my reader if I state that there are two steps of faith needed—the first for safety, and the second for peace. The first step the sinner must take is that of coming to the Lord Jesus, or believing in Him. This is imperative for SAFETY. The second step is that of believing what God says to those who come to Christ. This is necessary for PEACE.

Suppose that an Israelite had unwittingly slain his neighbour.

Deeply moved at the deed, and alarmed lest the avenger of blood should suddenly fall upon him, he flies with all speed to the city of refuge which God had provided.

Breathless, and almost dead with fright, he reaches the city. The elders of the city hear his case, receive him, and tell him that he is now safe. To the astonishment of all the man remains in the utmost terror.

“Oh, how can I be sure I am safe?” says he,

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“How can I be certain that the avenger of blood will not slay me?” The elders then read to him from God’s law, that any man who, having unwittingly slain his neighbour, has fled to the city of refuge, shall not be handed over to the avenger of blood, but shall dwell there in safety. The man is somewhat relieved by this, and hopes he is safe; but at times sinks into the deepest despondency.

The man is *safe* because he has fled to the city of refuge; but he is *unhappy* because he does not rest upon God’s word.

Ah! dear anxious soul, this is just a picture of your case. CHRIST JESUS IS THE ONLY CITY OF REFUGE that God has provided for guilty sinners. You as a sinner, with the avenger upon your track, have fled to the Lord Jesus. You are safe, because Christ has said, “*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,*” because “*This Man receiveth sinners.*”

But you are unhappy; you have no assurance. Why is this? Because you do not rest upon God’s word to you concerning all that fly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will never have assurance until you know you are saved; and you can know you are saved *only upon the authority of God’s word*. Do not look to the feeling of assurance for peace, but look simply to the word of God.

For those who have fled to Christ to be always

in doubt about their souls' salvation is very dishonouring to Him, and to His work; yet we not unfrequently meet with persons that consider a state of uncertainty consistent with the Christian's position.

I would ask such what they would think of Christ's bringing Lazarus to life, and then leaving him evermore bound hand and foot with grave-clothes?

Would such an action be in keeping with the Saviour's heart? Yet the man that has not the assurance of his salvation is thus bound.

Have you ever thought, dear reader, that by simply believing God's word you would give pleasure to God Himself? Thousands of anxious souls have had every doubt removed by simply BELIEVING GOD'S STATEMENTS TO BE FAITHFUL AND TRUE.

Why should it not be so with you?

Dear, anxious, quickened soul, I beseech you, live no longer with the graveclothes of unbelief binding you. Receive the truth of God, and the truth shall make you free.

Thus disenthralled, you shall walk in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. The hands unmanacled shall be lifted up to God, and the feet unfettered shall tread the highway of holiness; while from the mouth shall proceed, instead of sighs and groans, the voice of praise and thanksgiving to God and to the Lamb.

C. H.

TWO GREAT STORMS AT SEA.

LET me tell you something about two kinds of storms mentioned in the Scriptures. The child of God, while passing through this wilderness scene, is always more or less exposed to one of these storms, and suffers proportionately. If we go on with the Lord in obedience to His word, we may suffer at the hands of Satan, as hated by him; but if we are found in the path of disobedience, we shall be chastened of the Lord, in His love to us, to restore us to the joys of communion with Himself, so that Christians *must* have *suffering* from one side or the other in this world. There are, of course, sufferings arising from other causes, not here dwelt upon.

We will, then, to illustrate what is meant, refer to two great storms that are spoken of in Scripture. The account of one is found in Mark iv. 35-39—"Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

Mark, the disciples were in the path of obedience to the Lord's word, and in company with Himself, and therefore had nothing to fear. It is ours to obey and leave all consequences with Himself. The Lord never invites His people to a path in which He does not supply all that is necessary to sustain them in that path.

Whenever Satan sees blessing in prospect, does he not always use his power to hinder it? But God always thwarts Satan for His own glory and the blessing of His people. As is often said, "There is always a calm after a storm," and, in this instance, blessing too. And note what blessing there was in the country of the Gadarenes when this storm was over, not only to the poor Gadarene, but afterwards to the people in the whole country, through this *one man*, who received and acted upon the Lord's word, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark v. 19), so that when Jesus paid His next visit to that place, these very people were as glad to see Him and touch, if it were possible, even the hem of His garment, as they were to get rid of Him on His previous visit. Oh for more knowledge of God's word, and heart to obey it! Beloved child of God, be encouraged, and "think it not strange concerning the fiery

trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. . . . Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Peter iv. 12-19.)

Very soon we shall be out of the reach of every storm and all suffering—at home on the peaceful, happy shore of eternal glory :

“Oh, what pleasures there await us !
 There the tempests cease to roar ;
 There it is that those who hate us
 Can molest our peace no more :
 Trouble ceases
 On that tranquil, happy shore.”

We find particulars of the other storm given in the book of Jonah. (Read chapter i.) The Lord requested Jonah to go to Nineveh, that great city of three days' journey, to preach unto it the preaching that He bade him. God did not require much of His servant the prophet—only to preach a short sermon of eight words : “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

But no ; Jonah thought differently. He wanted his own way, and got it too for a time. He went *down* to Joppa, paid his fare to Tarshish, and went fast asleep *down* in the sides of the ship. What

a condition for a saint to be in! What a downward course the saint of God often pursues! But God in His love to Jonah stopped him by sending a storm. "The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. . . . So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging."

Of course, God was good and merciful to Jonah in getting him to shore, and so forth; and His goodness and mercy, no doubt, are often felt by souls in a wrong path; but there is no communion. Note, Jonah was pursuing a course of disobedience away from the presence of the Lord. When the mariners and Jonah were alarmed, they appealed to the Lord, who, when Jonah was cast overboard, sent a calm. Jonah had a bad conscience, as saints have who are away from the Lord. But observe, when Jonah was restored he had to begin exactly where he left off, and to carry out the very word that came to him at the first. And see what blessing followed *that* calm. The whole city of Nineveh was preserved from destruction, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

God can get our *work* done by others; but when He speaks to us, He cannot, as it were, do without our *obedience*; and hence so much suffering when a course of self-will and independence is persisted in.

Satan never would have raised that storm. If he had been allowed his way, he would have kept

that sea as smooth as glass all the way to Tarshish. Why? Just to allow Jonah to get as far away from God and into disobedience as he possibly could. But, blessed be God, He is for us. Divine power is stronger than Satanic power; and when God, in His love to His own, chooses to use even the wind to carry out His purposes nothing can hinder Him.

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

The foregoing applies only to believers; but what about unbelievers?

Storms are rising, friend! Storms of judgment are nearing for you!

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness and I will bring distress upon men because they have sinned against the LORD. . . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath.” (Zeph. i. 14, 15, 17, 18.) Let me ask you, dear soul, Do *you* purpose spending your eternity in that awful storm—the lake of fire? or in that eternal calm—the rest that remaineth to the people of God? If the former,

you have only to go on as you are in a false peace; for Satan can keep souls very quiet and comfortable at times, to lure them on to hell.

He cries, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Awake, "O sleeper" (Jonah i. 6), and see your danger! What meant the storm that fell upon the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross? Never storm like that storm! A storm from man's wicked heart, and a storm of Satan's hatred. A storm of God's holy judgment upon that pure and spotless One for every poor storm-deserving sinner who puts his trust in Him. A shelter from the storms of judgment Christ now is for every one who takes refuge under His precious blood. He made peace by the blood of His cross, and it is preached unto you—an eternal peace that nothing can molest. A peace which the world cannot give or take away. A blessed calm which neither Satan nor man can ever disturb.

Have you got it, my friend?

If so, you can say—

"The tempest's awful voice was heard,
O Lord, it broke on Thee;
Thy open bosom was my ward;
It bore the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me."

If this is not the language of your heart to-day, may God grant that it may be so before it is for ever too late!

J. N.

REST.

The following lines were written when the author, after much exercise of heart, was led to take her place at the Lord's table with those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and as members of "One Body." (Matt. xviii. 20 ; Eph. iv. 4.)

LOW at Thy feet, Lord Jesus,
This is the place for me ;
Here have I learned deep lessons,
Truth that has set me free—

Free from myself, Lord Jesus ;
Free from the ways of men ;
Chains of thought that bound me,
Never shall bind again.

Rest I have found, Lord Jesus ;
Stranger to rest so long ;
Conflict and sadness ended,
Naught in my heart but song.

None but Thyself, Lord Jesus,
Conquered this wayward will ;
But for Thy love constraining
I had been wayward still.

Sweet was Thy voice, Lord Jesus,
Calling me out to Thee ;
Step by step Thou hast guided
Into Thy path for me.

When Thou shalt come, Lord Jesus,
When we shall see Thy face,
Then shall Thine own acknowledge
This was the children's place.

G. S. P.

ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH.

THESE two devoted saints belonged to that pious little company of which we read in Luke ii., who evidently had to do with God, His temple, His word, His Spirit, and His people; and who in faith and hope looked for Israel's future blessing. This necessarily detached them from the unfaithful, and from the corrupt ways of the nation. Such is always the case; for devotedness to God and obedience to His truth must practically separate from what is contrary to Him. It is surely as true to-day as ever, that those who name the name of the Lord should depart from iniquity, if they would be vessels unto honour, and meet for the Master's use.

Zacharias and Elizabeth were of this order. The temple, though in many things very contrary to His mind, as to the use made of it, was nevertheless God's house; for, long after this, our Lord said, "Make not *my Father's house* a house of merchandise." The nation had not as yet been given over to judicial blindness and desolation, and the temple was still God's house on earth, and therefore His centre. Afterward, we know it was given up by the Son of God to desolation, and to remain desolate till Messiah comes

back, and the people say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Since the desolation of the temple, the Church on earth has been God's house—"the temple of the living God;" and the Father's house on high has been made known as the future abode of all who now truly own and love our Lord Jesus Christ. But while the professing church is God's habitation through the Spirit, we are told that God so holds each one composing it accountable to Him as to faithfulness to His truth, that "judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 Peter iv. 17; John xiv. 2.)

We are told that Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." This was a very high testimony as to their sterling piety and devotedness. Zacharias evidently revered his priestly office, and diligently attended to the service of the temple according to divine command. He seems to have severed himself from the nearest natural ties for a time, in order to be wholly given up to the service of the temple; for we read, "As soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house."

Though the offering up of sacrifices may in many instances have quite dropped out, and much besides, there was one thing which remained. God had commanded, by Moses, that the high

priest should burn incense upon the golden altar morning and evening (Exodus xxx.); and this Zacharias faithfully held to and practically carried out. It was this fragrant cloud that went up by his hands from the golden altar of sweet incense, which so blessedly set forth in type the infinite fragrance of Him who was then coming, and who has since glorified God on the earth, and finished the work that He gave Him to do. Zacharias may have known and practised little more than this of his priestly functions; but wherein he was true to God he was honoured of God. As the cloud of incense showed in type the way of access to God, and God's way of coming in blessing to us, it was a point of immense significance and importance. It shadowed forth the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is not only our way to God, but God's way of meeting us with richest and most abundant blessings. Be it observed, then, that we are not only told that Zacharias burnt incense, but that "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense," while the people outside were praying "at the time of incense." Thus prayer and answers to prayer were typically connected with the burning of incense. This has now been entirely set aside by the eternal value of the one offering of Christ, and His infinite merit and excellency. Hence, to return to incense *now* would be to deny the continual

fragrance to God of His glorious person and work for us. Burning incense then has no place in Christianity ; hence it has no place in the epistles. To go back to incense-burning is to abandon Christian ground, and so far to accept Judaism.

The sudden appearance of Gabriel, the bright messenger of God, to His praying servant, was a peculiarly solemn moment. Zacharias was perturbed and afraid ; though the angel saluted him with " Fear not," for his prayer had been heard, and told him much truth as to the forerunner of Messiah to whom Elizabeth would give birth. It was a moment of marvellous blessing, and would have been full of brightness had the pious old man received the angel's testimony in simple faith and thanksgiving. But it was not so. We are compassed with weakness ; but worse than weakness is the reasoning of unbelief. It was this which spoiled this happy scene, and bore its sad fruit in Jehovah's servant. Fearing the heaven-sent intelligence was too good to be true, and staggering at the angel's message, he fell into the reasonings of unbelief, and actually said to Gabriel, " Whereby shall I know this ? " This was a most serious error, and much to be wondered at, if we did not know something of our own hearts, after the angel's assurance that these things " shall " take place. The seeds of such trouble and fear soon germinate and develop into rank unbelief, if nurtured in our bosom ; but they wither and

decay before the clear light and power of God's infallible word. With this little remnant, as with the faithful in our own day, all power and blessing were connected with their firm reliance on the word of God. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" ever has been and must be the language of faith. If God speaks, faith hears. His word is enough. Nothing more than God's own statement is required, and nothing less will suffice. Faith may have sometimes to wait for the word, like Samuel, who said, "*Speak*; for Thy servant *heareth*;" and like the centurion, who said to Jesus, "*Say in a word*, and my servant *shall be healed*." But when God has spoken, how dishonouring to Him, and how unbecoming of His servants, to say, "Whereby shall I know this?" And the more those professing the Lord's name around us have departed from God, the more important it becomes us to stand for the authority of His word, and for His faithfulness to all that He has said. In these days of manifest declension and unbelief among professing Christians, how important it is that we should severely judge all carnal reasoning and unbelief in ourselves, that God may be honoured and not dishonoured. What other authority could we desire than the word of God? But our hearts naturally want something else, because they are ever ready to distrust God; and this brings the rod of correction upon

us, until we loathe ourselves, and lean only on His word.

This unbelief of Zacharias brought chastisement upon him. "The angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou *believest not my words*, which shall be fulfilled in their season." (Luke i. 19, 20.) No doubt this chastisement was well ordered by divine wisdom, and the best ministration that love could send for the priest's profit; but it entailed months of sorrow and depression, which would have been bright and joyous had he mixed faith with the heaven-sent promises, and received them as certain of being accomplished, because they were from God. We may be assured that we have not made much progress in self-judgment, unless we have learned to hate unbelieving thoughts.

Unbelief, though it cannot make the word of God of no effect, effectually cuts off our enjoyment of the truth. In Zacharias's case time rolled on. The promise was accomplished, and Elizabeth brought forth a son. *Then* Zacharias was most eager that God's word should be scrupulously attended to; so that when the child was to be named, we are told that the Lord's dumb servant asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, "His name is

John." He is now in the walk of faith, so that the bonds of affliction are removed, "his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." (Luke i. 62-64.) Zacharias is now fully restored, and receives such blessing by the profitable correction, that he is filled with the Holy Ghost, and blesses the Lord God of Israel for having visited and redeemed His people, speaks of the inspired testimony of holy prophets, looks on to their fulfilment through God's faithfulness and mercy, and rejoices in the precious fact that his son John will be called "the prophet of the Highest," to go before His face and prepare His ways for Israel's future blessing, according to God's word. Instead of Zacharias indulging in unbelieving reasonings, he is strong in faith, giving glory to God; and so, rests in what is written as to speak of the nation's future blessing as a coming reality, "as He [Jehovah] spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began."

Of all the snares we have to be watchful against, none calls for greater vigilance than that of unbelieving thoughts, words, and ways. Among multitudes in Christendom, unbelief is respected when it should be utterly abhorred, and the life of faith is supposed to belong only to a few whose path may be one of peculiar affliction and trial. But unbelief, though common

enough in religious communities, and perhaps not always interfered with by divine discipline because all is so rapidly going on to judgment, should not be tolerated for a moment. Especially should this be so with those who, like this little remnant at the close of a former dispensation, faithfully own the authority of the word of God, with unfeigned reliance on His faithfulness, and acknowledge the Spirit of God as the only power in the things of God, seeking to keep His word and not deny His name, while waiting for God's Son from heaven. The way of truth in evil times has a definite place in Holy Scripture, and a remnant is recognized as having purged themselves from vessels to dishonour, and as calling on God out of a pure heart. But this position can only be sustained by the continual exercise of faith in the all-sufficiency of God and the word of His grace; in the presence and authority of the Lord with even two or three gathered to His name; and in the abiding presence and power of the other Comforter, till the Lord come. Those who cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart will hold and value everything that is of Him which remains, and refuse everything which is not according to His truth, however much it may be esteemed and accredited by others. The pious remnant at Jerusalem in olden days were much of this mind, and these principles will surely govern those who now faithfully seek to "occupy" till He come.

H. H. S.

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

AN EXTRACT.

“**R**ATIONALISM and Ritualism are the two great enemies of the cross. The first epistle to the Corinthians touches on the one; the epistle to the Galatians deals with the other. A gospel which pays court either to man’s reason or man’s religion will never fail to be popular. Well versed, no doubt, in Greek philosophy, and no careless student of human nature, Paul might have drawn all Corinth after him had he gone there ‘with excellency of speech or of wisdom’ in announcing the testimony of God. But just because the Greeks were wisdom-worshippers, he turned from everything that would pander to their favourite passion, and became a fool among them, a man of one idea, who knew nothing ‘save Jesus Christ, *and Him crucified.*’ The enthronement of Christ on high, and the glories of His return, are inseparable from the Christian’s faith; but in Corinth it was *the cross* the apostle preached, the cross in all its marvellous attractiveness for hearts enlightened from on high, in all its intolerable repulsiveness for unregenerate men. (1 Cor. i. 17, 18, 23; ii. 1–6.)

“With the Galatians it was against the *religion* of the flesh he had to contend. He testified to them that if they were circumcised Christ should profit them nothing. (Gal. v. 2.) How was this?

Had grace found its limits here, so that if any transgressed in this respect they committed a sin beyond the power of Christ to cleanse? Far from it. Grace has no limits; but there are limits to the sphere in which alone grace can act. Circumcision in itself was nothing; but it was the mark of and key to a position of privilege under covenant utterly inconsistent with grace. 'The offence of the cross' was, that it set aside every position of the kind; not that it brought redemption through the death upon the tree, but that because it so brought redemption all were shut up to grace. If Paul had so preached Christ as to pay homage to human nature, and respect and accredit the vantage-ground it claimed by virtue of its religion, persecution would have ceased, for the cross would have lost its offence. (Gal. v. 11; vi. 12.)

"Oh for power to preach the cross of Christ! so to preach that cross that it shall become a reality to all, whether they accept it or despise it; that men who never were conscious of a doubt, because they never really *believed*, shall see what priests and soldiers saw, and the rabble crowd that mocked His agonies, and seeing shall exclaim, 'It is impossible that this can be the Son of God!' that some again shall see what John and Mary witnessed, and gazing, shall cry out, with broken hearts, in mingled love and grief, 'My God, was this for me?' and turn to live devoted lives for Him who died and rose again."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EPHESIANS ii. 5.—The word “grace” in this passage means *free favour*—the free, undeserved favour of God by which we are saved. (Compare Romans xi. 6 with Ephesians ii. 8, 9.)

ISAIAH xlv. 7.—This verse has reference to the government of God among the nations of the earth. The “darkness” and “evil” mentioned in it are not to be understood as sin and wickedness, for God is not the Author of that. Those terms refer rather to calamities brought upon nations by the hand of God because of their misdeeds: (See Amos iii. 6 with Jeremiah xlv. 11, 27, 29.)

R. A.—The two points about which you enquire are found together in Acts ii. 23. The counsel and foreknowledge of God on the one hand, and the wickedness and guilt of man on the other. The former does not excuse or lessen the latter in any measure whatsoever. Nor did Peter’s hearers suppose for an instant that it did, for in their distress they cried, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (v. 37.) In crucifying the Lord of glory, they did but carry out their own wicked will, and the counsel and foreknowledge of God had nothing to do with that. In the history of Joseph we find a similar thing. The brethren of the lad sold him to the Midianites because they hated him for his dreams. If God made their malice serve to the fulfilling of His counsel, did that fact relieve them of their guilt and responsibility?

Certainly not. And in after years, when they stood before Joseph their brother, then second only to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, did they seek to shelter themselves behind the plea that God had sent Joseph into Egypt to preserve life? Not at all. The counsel and foreknowledge of God then in no way clash with the responsibility of man, nor do they reduce the enormity of his crime in the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ground of condemnation is stated clearly enough in John iii. 18, 19. Light is come into the world, whether men will receive it or not. And though a man might say that he had nothing to do with crucifying the Lord, and we must admit that actively he had not, seeing that he was not born, yet if he has heard of the Saviour, and has not received Him to the salvation of the soul, he is a despiser and rejecter of that blessed One, and by his indifference takes sides with those who nailed Him to the cross.

JOHN xvii. 21-23.—The unity of verse 21 was to be a manifested thing here on earth—a something which the world could see, and by which the world might *believe* that the Father sent the Son. For a brief moment this was seen, as the opening of Acts relates; but how far believers have departed from it since need not be said. The unity of verses 22, 23 is in glory, and when this is displayed, as it assuredly will be, then the world will *know* (not merely believe) “that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.”

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 10-12.—We understand this passage to mean that Paul was so intent on the life of

Jesus being manifest in his body, that he constantly bore about with him the sense of all that the putting to death of Jesus involved, so that everything should be kept down that would hinder that life flowing forth in the power of the Spirit of God. And God helped this on in suffering His servant to pass through scenes, for Jesus' sake, in which he despaired even of life, and thus in his mortal flesh the life of Jesus the more richly shone. The result of this was, that while death wrought in the apostle, it issued forth in streams of life and blessing towards the Corinthians through his ministry. A moment's glance at chapter i. 3-6 will show this very clearly indeed.

1 SAMUEL iii. 7.—We have always thought that Samuel's not knowing the Lord had reference to the fact that this was the first time the Lord had spoken to him in this way, and therefore Samuel did not yet recognize the divine voice. This seems to us what the words indicate, rather than that there was no work of grace in the child's soul. But even if the latter were the case, we see no difficulty in the statement of chap. i. 28 and chap. ii. 11. Anyone engaged in the service of the tabernacle might be spoken of as *ministering* unto the Lord; and those on whose behalf the sacrifices were offered were called *worshippers*. (See Heb. x. 2-11.) Under Christianity things are different; it knows no ritual, and has no outward ordered service such as existed in Judaism, unless what is found in 1 Cor. xii. xiv. can be called so. To *serve* God acceptably now one must first be born again; and surely in order to *worship* God the blessings of redemption must be known.

HAVE I REPENTED?

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

THE above enquiry is the burden of many anxious souls.

Worlds, if possessed, would be gladly given for satisfactory evidence of genuine repentance. The writer will never forget the time when the words, "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,*" haunted him day and night. To him repentance seemed the hard condition imposed upon the sinner before salvation would be bestowed.

It is the belief that many souls are similarly situated which induces him to write this paper, in the hope that, with the blessing of God, it may be used for their deliverance.

The law given by Moses, though it expressed God's holiness, was no revelation of His heart. It confronted men with demands. "This do, and thou shalt live," was its most encouraging voice; and upon the slightest deviation from its precepts, curses were thundered forth upon the delinquent. Ah! let a man but measure himself by that perfect standard, and his heartfelt conviction will be, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. iii. 20.)

Doubtless many of our readers have come to this conclusion. Attempting to keep the law, its

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purity has shown them their utter incompetency, while its curses have filled their hearts with terror and dismay. Such naturally enquire, How shall we escape the wrath to come? "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," is the gospel preached unto them. Strange to say, this reply, instead of filling them with joy at God's goodness, plunges them into the deepest distress. Repentance seems to them only another law—a law the conditions of which they are totally incapable of fulfilling. "To believe in the Lord Jesus," says one, "is very simple and blessed; but oh! this repentance toward God is what perplexes me."

Dear reader, you entirely misunderstand three things—the love of God, God's way of salvation, and your own condition.

GOD'S LOVE you do not know, or you would see that hard conditions are altogether contrary to it.

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION you do not understand, for His salvation is suited to man's need.

YOUR OWN CONDITION you have imperfect views of, or you would at once perceive that if God were to make any kind of demand, you would never obtain salvation; for you are absolutely *without strength*. (Rom. v. 6.)

God's love is shown "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Suppose that a man had given his only son, whom he tenderly loved, to die a death of no ordinary suffering in

order that your life might be saved. Would you have any suspicions of that man's love? Would you expect him to make hard terms when dealing with you? Surely not!

Hard terms would be entirely inconsistent with such a display of love. Yet this picture very poorly depicts the love of God.

"He that *spared not His own Son*, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also *freely give* us all things?"

God's way of salvation we have in John iii. 14, 15: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Your condition is most graphically described in Luke x. 30: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

Oh, what misery! what complete helplessness! If any demands had been advanced by the Samaritan, would the unfortunate traveller have stood the slightest chance? Not the slightest. He was penniless, naked, and half dead. It would have been better for the Samaritan to have walked on, like the priest and the Levite, than for him to have wearied the man by proposing terms which he was totally incapable of meeting.

Dear friend, this narrative gives a true picture of your condition in the sight of God. You can do nothing to help yourself; but, like that robbed, wounded, and dying man, you need the Good Samaritan to take your case entirely upon Himself. Perhaps you are ready to reply, "All that you have said may be quite true, but you have not yet removed my difficulty. The scripture still remains, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'"

I have not forgotten your difficulty, but have first spoken of God's love, God's way of salvation, and your condition before Him; thinking that, if you were clear on these points, you would more easily see what repentance really is. And before going farther I would press upon you the fact, that God has written His Word that you may *know* the way of salvation.

It is not His desire that you should find the way perplexing. Far from it. Hear His own word, "Cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people."

There are stumbling-blocks, it is true, but God is not the author of them. They are created by the reasonings of our own minds, by the teachings of men, and by the suggestions of Satan. But now we will consider your difficulty.

For a definition of repentance we will not apply to dictionaries, for they will give us only human thoughts; but we will turn to God's word, and

see in what sense the word repentance is used there.

Let me try to illustrate this. Before the light shines into the conscience of a man he is satisfied that although not altogether what he should be, yet he is not far wrong. God's word comes home in power to his soul. Oh, what a change of thought and action takes place ! He endorses entirely the description of man given by God in Romans iii., not necessarily because he feels himself to be so vile, but because God's word thus describes him. What is the result ? He takes his place in the dust before God, and centres all his hope for salvation, not in his own works, but in the precious blood of Christ. *This is repentance.*

Another man thinks himself able to appear before God on the ground of his own merits, and looks upon ordinary folk with contempt. He prides himself upon his righteous dealings with his neighbour, and his sedulous attention to religious duties. But he reads in God's word, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Like a two-edged sword God's word pierces the man's heart, and slays his vain pretensions. What is the result ? Instead of saying, like the Pharisee, "Lord, I thank Thee I am not as other men," his innermost feelings find expression in the words of the despised publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." *This is repentance.*

Now, if you will turn to the fifteenth chapter of Luke's gospel, you will find the simplest explanation of repentance that it is possible for us to have. I am referring, as perhaps you already judge, to the parable of the prodigal son ; and as we ponder it, I want you to remember that it was the Lord Jesus Himself who drew this picture. Here we get not only the father's heart and the father's provision, but we also have *the son's repentance*.

Now please take particular notice, for I believe this will be helpful to you. The son left his father's house, and in the far country wasted his substance with riotous living. That clearly was not repentance, but the very opposite. When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. But that was not repentance. He joined himself to a citizen, and would fain have satisfied his hunger with the swines' food. But that was not repentance.

Now, however, a change takes place. He comes to himself, and thinks of the father's house and its provisions. He contrasts his state of misery, degradation, and hunger, with the happy condition of even the hired servants in his father's house, and resolves to return to his father in full confession of his guilt. But he did not merely resolve ; he arose and came to his father, confessing his sin, and acknowledging his unworthiness. *Ah ! this was repentance.*

And, dear reader, I tell you, upon the authority of God's word, that God is willing to receive you just as you are. He bids you return to Him as a poor, lost, guilty sinner. Take the place of the destitute, go to God in the name of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will find that He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Do not, I pray you, approach God as Naaman the leper went to the prophet of Israel. He took what he considered sufficient to purchase the blessing; but he found that God bestows His inestimable blessings *without money and without price*.

"But," says some one, "is it not stated in the Bible that 'godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of'? It is this scripture that troubles me; for although I am truly sorry for my position, yet I cannot, much as I have tried, feel what I suppose to be a godly sorrow concerning my sins."

Dear friend, if you would properly understand God's word, you must carefully avoid the unhappy habit of interpreting passages of scripture apart from their context.

I would ask you to observe that the scripture that troubles you was written to the Corinthian saints, who already possessed the salvation of their souls.

If you read the first epistle to the Corinthians, you will see that they had been sanctioning evil,

in that they had allowed a person living in gross sin to sit with them at the Lord's table.

Paul, hearing of this grave state of affairs, wrote them a letter of rebuke. What was the effect of that letter ? It wrought repentance.

When Paul had learnt the effect of his letter, he wrote to them again as follows : " Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance : for ye were made sorry after a godly manner. . . . For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of."

The result of their godly sorrow was that they cleansed themselves from the evil. But again I repeat, *this was written to persons whose souls were already saved by faith in Christ*, but who needed to repent of evil allowed in their midst, in order that they might be in a condition suited to their relationship with God.

And now we trust that the difficulties that have been in your mind in connection with this passage of scripture are removed. God never intended that verse to perplex souls desiring salvation ; although, no doubt, it has been an obstacle in your path by your not observing the connection in which it stands.

Perhaps some one is mentally saying, " Ah ! you have not mentioned my difficulty." My dear friend, I am truly desirous to take up the stumbling-block out of your way. What is your trouble ? " Well," you reply, " I know that what

God has written of me is perfectly true ; but I do not *feel* myself so vile. I never could say that I *felt* myself deserving the flames of hell. I do indeed trust in Christ's precious blood, and in that alone, for safety ; but is it not essential to repentance that I *feel* myself exceedingly vile, and worthy of hell ? ”

Your trouble is not an uncommon one ; but the root from which it springs is the deeply-seated and widely-spread error, that God demands something from the sinner before bestowing salvation.

Listen a moment. A man is on trial for a crime that he has committed. He is convicted, and the judge sentences the criminal to a term of imprisonment. Although well knowing himself guilty, the man may have but little perception of the heinousness of the crime, and altogether fail to estimate aright the punishment that the crime deserves.

Thus is it with us. We have been brought before the tribunal of God.

OUR CHARACTER has been thus described : “There is none righteous, no, not one : there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips : whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :

their feet are swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways : and the way of peace have they not known : there is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. iii.)

THE VERDICT has been given. We have been brought in *guilty before God*.

THE SENTENCE has been passed : "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm ix. 17.)

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?"
 "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

We will not trust our feelings, they are changeable. We will not take it upon ourselves to say what we deserve ; we are not the judge, but the culprits. But we will simply set to our seal that *God is true*, whether it be as to our nature, our deeds, or the punishment we deserve.

One word more. I said above, that there are some who consider that faith is simple, but repentance very difficult.

I would tell such, that repentance and faith go together. Wherever there is true faith, there is also true repentance. Nor can any man place his confidence in Christ's precious blood without abandoning self-confidence, and taking the low place before God ; and this is repentance. The way of salvation is very simple ; God meant it to be so.

Oh, dear reader, beware of the reasonings of thy own heart ; beware of the suggestions of

Satan ! “Whosoever will,” says God, “let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. xxii. 17.)

If thou hast but returned, through Christ, to God, as did the prodigal to his father, that best robe is placed upon thee. Receive God’s word in simplicity, or thou wilt not feel the comfort of the robe, nor enjoy its beauty. The table is spread by the Father’s own hand, and the Father’s voice bids thee be seated. (Luke xv.)

Oh, why should a single anxious thought remain in thy breast ? “Thy sins be forgiven thee” are the words that fell from the lips of the Saviour Himself. Why not receive them, and be glad, as was the prodigal when the father fell upon his neck, and kissed him ?

Throw thy doubts, poor trembling one, to the winds ; for it is God Himself that speaks. Receive His word, and thou shalt indeed rejoice. Adorned in the best robe, the ring upon thy hand, and the shoes upon thy feet, thou shalt know what it is to sit at the Father’s table, and feed upon its choicest provision. There shall be given unto thee “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

Oh, blessed exchange ! The language of thy heart shall be, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me ?” “Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing : thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.” Amen ! and yet again, Amen ! C. H.

THE WORK FOR US AND THE WORK IN US.

IT is of the deepest importance that we should distinguish between the work done *for us* by the Lord Jesus on the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit *in us*. We cannot note too carefully the difference, while thankfully owning that both are for our eternal blessing.

It is clearly stated in Scripture that no man, be he ever so good (as men speak), can work his way into salvation, or into justification; in fact, it is quite the opposite. And it is not until he gives up all idea of working for his justification that he can be justified. "To him *that worketh not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith* is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 5-8.) I need not multiply passages, but only state, in the language of Scripture, that salvation is "*not of works, lest any man should boast.*" (Ephes. ii.)

Yet a work had to be done, which would, on the one hand, glorify God about our sins, and,

on the other, meet our deep need. Who would undertake it for us? Who could accomplish it? We were sinners—ungodly, guilty, condemned already, helpless, and under God's wrath. Blessed be God, our misery drew out His compassion, and our helplessness moved that heart of love to send "His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 John iv. 9.) That Son as freely came, impelled by love divine. And as He came, He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. x.)

What did "Thy will, O God," involve for Him who came to do it? *The cross, and all that was connected with it.* For in that cross we see not only man's hatred and Satan's power, but God's wrath and judgment against sin, the hiding of His face, and the being brought down to the dust of death.

It had been said, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. xvii. 11.) "And without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." (Zech. xiii. 7.)

A work, then, had to be accomplished which was infinitely beyond our ability to perform; and

unless undertaken and carried through we were left under condemnation, because guilty, and therefore lost for ever.

It was on the cross that this mighty work was done, that atonement was made, and eternal redemption obtained. (Heb. ix. 12.) There He made peace (Col. i. 20); there God was glorified about our sins (John xiii. 31, 32); there Satan was vanquished (Heb. ii. 14); there our deep need was met (1 Cor. xv. 3), and the ransom paid for our deliverance. (Job xxxiii. 24.) On that cross—at the close, after all had been passed through, the awful cup drained—the Saviour said, “It is finished,” and then gave up the ghost. (John xix. 30.) Anticipating the work of the cross, and Himself in spirit beyond it, He had said to the Father, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” (John xvii.)

Thus we see that the ground upon which a holy God is just in justifying is laid in the death of God’s Son, and that work is a *finished work*. He “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Rom. iv. 25.) “Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.” (Rom. vi. 4.) The glory of God claimed Christ from the dead, because He had in death glorified God about sin. His being raised and

glorified is the proof that the work is done, the payment made, divine justice satisfied, God glorified, Satan vanquished, and that the believer's sins are no more. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. . . . Not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 1-11.)

Now, then, as to the work *in us*—the blessed work of the Spirit of God. The work done *for* us was absolutely necessary. The work done *in* us is equally so, and is founded on the other. The former constitutes God just in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus; the latter gives a sense of sin and need, and an appreciation of what has been done to save us, and enables us to lay hold by faith of what has been done for our salvation.

The Spirit of God by the Word demonstrates to us our sin, and by Him is produced in the soul a sense of sin, a coming to oneself, and a turning to God. It is the beginning of the work in us; and "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.)

The prodigal (Luke xv.) was awakened; began to be in want; came to himself; compared his

own condition of starvation with the plenty of the servants in his father's house; resolved to return, and did return, thoroughly repentant. Thus we see in this young man and his exercises, though the Spirit is not mentioned, the effect of the Spirit's work *in the sinner*, before ever he knows the full value of the work done *for him* by Christ on the cross. There may, of course, be the intellectual acquaintance with the death of Christ without even the Spirit's conviction; but there not being the sense of need in the soul, that work is not known as that which meets our deepest need, nor is the blessed One who accomplished that work known as Saviour.

How blessedly are the person and work of Christ presented in Romans iii. 25: "Whom God hath set forth . . . a propitiation [a mercy-seat] through faith in His blood." The moment you think of the blessed Son of God as Saviour, you think of Him in connection with His death.

When the prodigal returns to the father he gets the kiss of peace, the best robe, the ring and shoes, and a place at the father's table.

The Spirit of God having wrought conviction in the sinner, he is then led to see by the Spirit from the Word the work done for him, and outside of himself altogether. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) A crucified, risen, and glorified Christ is presented to him; and the moment there

is "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," there is the happy possession of all the benefits of that death. Faith knows God, and God knows faith.

We must not confine the blessings of the believing soul to forgiveness, justification, peace, standing in favour, and rejoicing in hope of God's glory ; for in the second part of Romans we have other blessings which the Spirit of God would have us enjoy by faith : such as "our old man is crucified with Christ ;" "He that is dead is freed [or justified] from sin ;" "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 6-11.) Not only what we *had done* has God dealt with, but He has also "condemned sin in the flesh." We are "dead with Christ." God's judgment fell upon us, in the person of our Representative and Substitute, when He died for us. We died with Him ; but, thank God, we are alive *in Him* also.

Death too is the only way out from under the curse of God's law. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. . . . But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Rom. vii. 4-6.)

In Rom. viii. we are "*in Christ*," where there is no condemnation; in possession of the blessed Spirit of God; and have the persuasion "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

The work of the Holy Spirit, from the moment the conscience is awakened and the soul quickened, is carried on, not only in leading us to trust Christ and His atoning blood, but also in enlightening us in the ways of God, giving us to know God more fully, leading us into all truth, and by that truth practically sanctifying us, and becoming in us the power to overcome Satan and the world (1 John iv. 4), and to serve and worship our God acceptably.

The work begun *in us* is carried on "unto the day of Jesus Christ." The work done *for us*, and by which we are saved, was "FINISHED" on the cross. The work done *in us* will not be finished until our Lord comes, and we are changed and made like Himself. It is carried on day after day in the correction of our ways, in the deepening of our apprehension of Christ and our portion in Him; of God and His untold love to us, and of our place as children before Him; of His ways of grace and government, laid before us in His

Word; and of our priestly privilege to offer the sacrifice of praise to Him continually; and in enabling us to spread abroad in the world the gospel of His salvation.

Are there obstacles and difficulties lying in the Christian's path? He is to surmount the one and overcome the other. He is to "work out [not for] his own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12.)

The Spirit of God abides in us and with us for ever. (John xvi. 16, 17.) And we are told not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephes. iv. 30.)

The blessed Spirit of God, given when redemption was accomplished, and the Accomplisher glorified at the right hand of God, takes up His abode in us as soon as the Person and work of our blessed Lord are the object of our faith; and henceforth is the witness to our hearts of all that Christ is, and of all that He has done (Heb. x. 15; John xvi. 14), and is our power in worship (John iv. 23), service (John vii. 37-39), and conflict. (Gal. v. 17; 1 John iv. 4.) He also is the Unfolder of the word of God to our souls (1 Cor. i. 10-13), our abiding Comforter (John xiv. 16); the seal (Ephes. i. 13), the anointing (2 Cor. i. 21), and also the earnest of our glorious inheritance above. (2 Cor. i. 22; Ephes. i. 14.)

With the knowledge of the cross, and the work

accomplished there; of the present indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and of being "called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," "being predestinated to be conformed to the image of" God's dear Son, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" Oh that we might not only know truth, but live in its power day by day!

In the light of our future "may we abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rev. xv. 13.)

E. A.

THOUGHTS ON EPHESIANS i. 3-7.

IN the opening of the epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle is used of God to bring out His eternal purposes in Christ, in relation to the saints of this wondrous day of grace. Having addressed the epistle and saluted the saints, before unfolding God's counsel, his heart goes out to Him who is the source and author of the whole blessing, in a burst of worship and praise, saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Chapter i. 3.)

Israel, the beloved earthly people, were blessed with temporal blessings in Canaan; but the Christian blessings are infinitely higher, and are spiritual. Every spiritual blessing is ours now. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

hath blessed us with them. And where? Not in Canaan; not on earth; but in heaven—in the heavenly places in Christ. We have nothing apart from Him; He is all, or the whole. (Col. iii. 11.) All the blessing is in Him. “*In Christ*” is one chief key to the understanding of this marvellous scripture. Lose sight of Christ, and the soul may well be staggered at such wondrous thoughts of grace. But God is here dispensing grace *according to His thoughts of Christ, and the love of His own heart*. This is strikingly illustrated in 1 Chron. xvii. 16–19, where “David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in Thine eyes, O God; for Thou hast also spoken of Thy servant’s house for a great while to come, and *hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree*, O Lord God. What can David speak more to Thee for the honour of Thy servant? for Thou knowest Thy servant. O Lord, *for Thy servant’s sake, and according to Thine own heart*, hast Thou done all this greatness, in making known all these great things.”

And mark again as to where the spiritual blessings are that are ours—“*in heavenly places*.” Christ is in heaven, and the sphere where He is, is where God hath blessed us. *In Him*, outside and irrespective of time. He has passed out of this world, and we are in Him. In this epistle we are a new

creation in Him, where all is of God. (Eph. ii. 10; iv. 24; 2 Cor. v. 17, 18.) "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And the blessings are eternal in their character. We get an unfolding of them in the following verses.

And, moreover, He hath blessed us, "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. i. 4.) This verse carries us back into the counsels of God. Before the ages and dispensations, before the creation of men, before the foundation of the world, "*He hath chosen us in Him.*" Well may the apostle burst forth in blessing God before unfolding this wondrous statement! Surely every Christian heart must bow in adoration as it considers such unfathomable love! And mark again, it is "*in Him.*" And what has He chosen us for? "That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Such is God's counsel. Time has nothing to say to this. The future in contrast to the present, or the present in contrast to the future, has nothing to do with it. God has placed us *in Christ* before Himself, and that *in love*. And this is all according to His counsel in Him before the world began.

The following verse brings out a further purpose of God: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

(Eph. i. 5.) Predestinated means “marked out beforehand.” He hath marked us out beforehand for *adoption*, and this we have already received. It is “through Jesus Christ.” No blessing flows through any other channel. And “to Himself.” We are adopted to Himself. He would have *sons*. Angels are passed by, and we have been marked out to a higher position and nearer place than they. And all this is “according to the good pleasure of His will.” Satan has sought to frustrate it in a thousand ways, but all to no purpose. It was God’s good pleasure to have us in this wondrous place of privilege and blessing; the good pleasure of the will of Him who alone has a right to exercise His own will.

Moreover, this position in which the saints are now set is “to the praise of the glory of His grace.” (Eph. i. 6.) It is the fruit of His eternal counsels, excelling all His other ways in grace. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who planned it, is “the God of all grace.” (1 Peter v. 10.) Gracious as are His ways in ten thousand different forms, in bringing saints into this wondrous position according to the good pleasure of His will, His grace is glorified. It eclipses every other, and praise redounds to it.

The remainder of the sixth verse adds the precious statement, “Wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved;” or, as it has been beautifully rendered by another, “Wherein He

has taken us into favour in the Beloved." Marvellous portion ! Set now in the full favour of God, by God Himself, according to His own thoughts about, and His own heart's delight in, "the Beloved;" not simply "in Christ," but "in the Beloved." It is Christ, of course; but here only in all the Scriptures is He called by this blessed name. Elsewhere He is owned of God the Father as "my beloved Son;" but when He brings out the wondrous position of favour into which He has taken His saints, a new and most endearing and blessed title is brought out for the first time to convey it to our hearts and minds. Who can grasp such rich, such wondrous, blessing ? And yet it is true, for it is the word of God. "He hath taken us into favour *in the Beloved*."

And in Him we have redemption, as the next verse adds. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.) It is important to notice the full force of *in whom* in this passage. It agrees with "*in the Beloved*." In Romans, redemption is spoken of as "*in Christ Jesus*." (Rom. iii. 24.) In Colossians, we have it in "God's dear Son," or "*the Son of His love*." (Col. i. 13, 14.) But here the scripture says, "*In the Beloved. In whom* we have redemption," etc. We have redemption then, as here presented, "in the Beloved." But it is "*through His blood*." No blessing is ours apart from His bloodshedding. We have it *in* His person, but

through His work. "The forgiveness of sins," which is next connected, alone could reach us on this ground; for "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) And remark, further, that in Ephesians the blessing is presented in the richest manner. The most expressive language is employed by the Holy Ghost to convey its fulness and extent. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, *according to the riches of His grace.*" Can you form an estimate of the riches of the grace of God? Can you reckon their amount? Can you conceive their fulness? Then, and not till then, beloved Christian reader, can you grasp the extent of your blessing. It is immeasurable, untraceable, infinite.

Other precious truths are unfolded in the remainder of this wonderful chapter, which begins so blessedly; but we must close. We would, however, briefly call the attention of our readers to the different ways in which the truth is presented in Romans and Ephesians. In the former, it commences with man's condition; brings out the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and, in chapters viii. ix., brings the believer up to the purposes of God. But the latter begins with the counsels and purposes in the heart and mind of God, and gradually comes down to the ground on which we enter into the blessings of *His grace* in the seventh verse, at which we have been looking, but more fully, in chapter ii.

E. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. M. M.—1 Cor. xiii. 13. Faith and hope find their *chief* sphere in the order of things in which the Christian is to-day. We walk by faith, not by sight; for those things which are still future are only reported unto us by them that have preached the gospel unto us with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. In the faith of those things we walk, and in hope we patiently wait for their accomplishment. But when the things hoped for shall have come, and the things concerning which we have faith shall be manifest to sight, then *so far* faith and hope shall cease, though confidence in God will eternally characterize all the redeemed.

But faith and hope are creature qualities, though, when exercised in the things of God, are divinely given; whereas love is the divine nature, is what God is, and in that nature he who is born of God shares. This seems to us the great reason why love is said to be the greater. God is love. Could this be said of either faith or hope?

J. E. T.—Gal. ii. 17, 18. Attention must be paid to the whole argument, from verse 11 onwards. The point is this: Were Peter and Paul and the other Jewish Christians doing wrong and committing sin in seeking to be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by works of law? If they were, then the blame must be laid at Christ's door, for His doctrine made them do so, and He is thus the minister of sin. From such

a thought the apostle recoils. "But," he argues, "if I return to law, from which I had turned away, then I do but build again the things I had thrown down, and constitute myself a transgressor; for if I was right in throwing them down, I am wrong in building them again; and if I am right in building them again, I was wrong in throwing them down." Now Peter was to be blamed, Paul tells us, because when certain came from James he separated himself from the Gentile Christians, fearing them of the circumcision, and his act lent importance to works of law which in reality had no such importance in the sight of God. Thus he built again the things which he destroyed, little thinking that if he was right in this course he was making Christ a minister of sin. Paul saw what Peter's act involved, and therefore withstood him to the face, so that the truth of the gospel might continue with us.

Gal. vi. 6. This passage will be understood by comparing it with Phil. iv. 15, third epistle of John 7, 8, Heb. xiii. 16, and 1 Cor. ix. 11-14. It shows us the responsibility of the saints towards those who labour in word and doctrine. Remark, "in all good things" is connected with the word "communicate," not with "teacheth."

1 Peter iv. 8. It is evident that the word "saved" in this passage does not refer to redemption, or justification, or the communication of life, inasmuch as those to whom Peter wrote were in the possession of those priceless blessings already. But judgment begins with the house of God—that which bears His name. If evil is tolerated there God will in one way or another, sooner or later, suffer judgment to come upon

it. See Ezekiel ix. 6, to which the apostle clearly alludes. He may use Satan as His instrument, persecution may arise, difficulties, dangers, temptations of one kind and another from the enemy's hand, out of which, from a human point of view, it seems almost impossible for the Christian to escape, though the power of God is assuredly on the believer's side, and all the resources of Satan shall be found insufficient to cause the feeblest lamb of God's flock to perish. But if with difficulty the righteous be saved out of all these things, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?

E. L. C.—“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” We understand by this that “the testimony of Jesus” is not confined to that vast range of truth that is distinctly Christian and heavenly, but that it is also the burden of the prophetic utterances of the Spirit of God, whether in Old Testament times or in days that are still future, and with which the book of the Revelation mainly deals. With reference to your other question we trust the following may afford you help: “Salt is not the gentleness that pleases (which grace produces without doubt), but that energy of the Spirit of God within us which connects everything in us with God, and dedicates the heart to Him in the sense of obligation and of desire, rejecting all in oneself that is contrary to Him. . . . Thus, practically, it was distinctive grace, the energy of holiness, which separates from all evil; but by setting apart for God.”—J. N. D.

AM I ONE OF THE ELECT?

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was born into the world, the event was announced by the angel of the Lord, who thus spoke: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, *which shall be to all people.* For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The news brought by the celestial messenger that a Saviour was come was indeed well calculated to diffuse joy in this scene of woe; yet, blessed as it was, we have in these days tidings proclaimed that go beyond it in importance and gladness. Consequent upon the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God announces to the whole world that the work of redemption is accomplished, and that salvation is free to all. The message thus runs: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." (John iii. 16, 17.) "*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" (Rev. xxii. 17.)

VI.

We should naturally expect that this second message would everywhere be hailed with eagerness and delight, that it would be passed from shore to shore, lighting each careworn countenance and cheering each desolate heart.

But is it so? Alas! no. Men and women hear the glad tidings, but, from the effect produced, an onlooker might well suppose the gospel message to be extremely gloomy. It is, of course, perfectly natural that the faithful exposure of man's depravity and ruin should produce the deepest distress; but when this is followed by the preaching of God's gracious message, which He Himself terms "good tidings of great joy," one would look for a result similar to that produced in Samaria by the preaching of Philip—"There was great joy in that city." (Acts viii. 8.)

And how is it that persons do not receive the gospel in its simplicity, and possess joy and peace? How is it that so often there is in the soul merely a very feeble spark of hope, the light of which is almost extinguished by the floods of doubt, perplexity, and bewilderment that deluge the whole being? I will tell you. Satan, who is the prince of this world, seeks to keep all his subjects under the power of darkness. We read, "The god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.) But, despite Satan's

efforts, the light of the gospel reaches his domain, and blinded eyes receive sight. Now, when Satan cannot prevent the light from illuminating men and women, he endeavours to dim the light, so that the opened eyes shall see nothing clearly. Thus the spiritual vision of many quickened souls is darkened. Like the man we read of in Mark viii., their apprehension of the scene upon which their eyes have opened is indistinct, and it may be said they see as it were, "men as trees, walking." Those in this condition need the full, clear, blaze of the gospel light; for it is this which, by the blessing of God, removes obscurity, dispels gloom, enlightens the understanding, and rejoices the heart.

When talking with anxious souls about God's good tidings, one discovers that various difficulties exist in their minds, which prevent them from receiving the word with gladness. One person cannot understand what God means by believing; a second doubts whether he has repented; and a third fears that he is not one of the elect.

Now, as the first two difficulties have been dealt with in former papers, we shall here consider only the latter.

"Oh," says an anxious soul, "I shall be glad to know what you have to say on election; for it is on this point I have been so long perplexed. If I knew that I was one of the elect, nothing would trouble me !

“‘I’d bid farewell to all my fears,
And wipe my weeping eyes.’”

Well, my friend, why do you so earnestly wish to know that you are one of the elect ?

“Oh,” you reply, “if I were certain on this point, I should know myself safe !”

But do you not see that, without mentioning election, God tells you in His word how you may know that you possess the salvation of your soul ? He says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Now, please take notice that God does not say, “*He that believeth himself to be one of the elect hath everlasting life,*” nor does He speak of election to the seeking soul. If, therefore, you endeavour to obtain the knowledge of salvation by trying to ascertain that you are one of the elect, you are choosing a method of your own, and I can well understand that you find yourself in a state of miserable uncertainty, and perplexity, and confusion.

All who, turning from God’s way, choose this method to obtain peace, watchfully note the various emotions of their hearts, and carefully examine their thoughts and feelings. Their emotions vary perpetually ; their feelings change like the ever-moving waves of the ocean ; and at the moment when above all others such persons need solid peace, they find that, instead of standing upon a rock, their feet are in the miry clay.

Oh, who could find peace by looking into one’s

own heart, and analyzing its varied experiences ? God's judgment of the human heart is that it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; and it is our wisdom to accept God's estimate, and ceasing from ourselves altogether, *allow His Word to settle every thing for us.*

Perhaps you reply, " But how can I know that there is a real work being carried on in my heart, unless I look within ? "

Dear friend, God speaks to you and to every person desiring the knowledge of salvation, not of a work *within*, from which an inference may be drawn of your election, but of a work *without*, even the work of His own Son upon the cross. On the ground of this finished work salvation is preached "*to every creature which is under heaven.*" Directly you, in your heart, believe God's good tidings, you are saved, and may, of course, rightly conclude that you are one of the elect.

Do you, my reader, believe in Christ ? Why not then believe what God so plainly states ; viz., " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life " ? (John iii. 36.)

Methinks I hear some one say, " I am waiting for God's time. " Then let me tell you that you need wait no longer ; for "*now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation. " "*To-day* if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. " " But, " you reply, " did not Jesus Himself say, ' No man can come to Me, except the

Father which hath sent Me draw him'? Now I am waiting, and earnestly praying for God to draw me to His Son; yet often I am almost in despair, for I more frequently experience the working of sin than the drawing of the Father."

Ah! dear friend, Satan has been busily employed in presenting to you a distorted view of the Saviour's word, and thus has raised difficulties where there exists nothing but encouragement. If you read the sixth chapter of John's gospel, you will see that Jesus was thus speaking, not to anxious souls, but to cavillers and murmurers. *Do you think the Lord Jesus would place an obstacle in the pathway of an anxious enquirer?*

Never would He do such a thing. He came to remove every obstacle, and for this purpose even gave up His life. Hard-hearted man, however, does not scruple to raise barriers to prevent anxious souls from having access to the source of all blessing, even as the disciples sought to hinder the Jewish women from bringing their children to Jesus. But He knew what those mothers desired, and His loving heart would not allow them to go away disappointed. He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." And before Jesus said to those that murmured against Him, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"—I say, before He had thus spoken, He plainly and unmistakably announced to all (but for the

especial comfort and assurance of those who desired salvation) the blessed fact, "*Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*"

Besides this, the words that perplex you ought rather to encourage; for, if you desire to come to Christ, this desire is given, not by Satan, but by God the Father. It is He that is drawing you to His Son. Greater encouragement you could not have. Christ invites, the Father draws, and the Son promises to receive. Oh, resist not, I pray you, God's gracious influence by listening to Satan, who says you must wait until a more convenient season.

When blind Bartimæus, desiring eyesight, cried, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," the Lord commanded him to be called. How his whole being must have thrilled with joy when the bystanders said to him, "Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee." Did Bartimæus wait for more than the invitation? Of course he did not. He raised no questions, the emergency of the case allowed of no delay; but, hastily casting away his garment, he arose and came to Jesus. He had but to state his desire, and the Lord replied, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight." (Mark x. 47-52.)

Dear anxious reader, I would say to you, as did the bystanders to Bartimæus, "*Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee.*" Like that blind man, throw

away all that would hinder, and at once come to Christ. Will He, after having invited you, refuse your application? Who would entertain such a thought! "Him that cometh to Me," says He, "I will in no wise cast out."

One of my readers is, perhaps, saying to himself, "I fear that my difficulty will never be removed. I often read books treating of the way of salvation, but the question that is on my mind is rarely touched upon, and never fully answered."

Well, my friend, be good enough to state what it is that so perplexes you.

"Ah," you reply, "my difficulty is this: I know that Christ bore the sins of all believers, but what about others? I understand that Scripture does not teach that Christ bore the sins of the whole world; and, if this be the case, how can I know and believe that Christ bore my sins? and without this faith how can I be saved?"

My dear friend, I can quite understand your position; and having myself been much perplexed by the same difficulty, I trust that I shall be able to help you.

What you need is greater simplicity. God, who indited the Scriptures, knowing us perfectly, was well acquainted with the many questions that would arise in our hearts, and in great grace He has presented His salvation to us in a variety of ways. Types, figures, and parables have been used to set it forth; and, besides this, the gospel

messages themselves have been couched in different forms, so that if, through our darkness, a difficulty should appear in one passage, another may meet our case and remove all obscurity.

We read, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." And if you, in simplicity, ponder the following passages of Scripture, remembering it is God that speaks, I believe light will dawn upon you :

"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." (John iii. 17.)

"Christ Jesus . . . gave Himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii.)

On the ground of this work God is able to save all who believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; and He therefore sends forth the following messages to every poor sinner who thirsts for salvation :

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.)

"These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John xx. 31.)

Now, anxious soul, be as simple as the Scrip-

tures, and I cannot but think your perplexities will vanish away.

Have you as a lost sinner turned to the Lord Jesus for the salvation He delights to bestow? "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. x. 13.)

Do you, in your heart, believe that Christ died on the cross—the sacrifice for sin; and that God, whose inflexible justice was fully satisfied, has raised Him from the dead, and has exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour? And do you, my friend, own Christ as Lord? "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" Directly you believe God's word you will know that Christ was *your Substitute*, and that He bore *your sins* in His own body on the tree. You will be able to exclaim, with thankfulness and joy, "I have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

I would here utter a word of warning. There are many who believe the Bible is God's word, and, therefore, true; yet never have its teachings led them to the Lord Jesus for salvation. Let not such persons suppose themselves safe. As they have neglected God's great salvation, it will be far more tolerable in the day of judgment for the heathen than for them.

"But what if I am predestinated to be lost?" says a reader.

Ah! how busy is Satan in trying to disparage the character of God. He commenced to do so in the garden of Eden, and has followed the same course to this day. He says, "God has predestinated some to be lost." This is one of Satan's most blasphemous lies.

Do you remember the parable in the fourteenth chapter of Luke's gospel? "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready."

How was this invitation treated? "They all with one consent began to make excuse."

Did not the man desire these people to come to the supper he had provided? Of course he did, or he would not have sent them an invitation. And let me say that God desires all men to be saved, or He would not say to His servants, "Go ye into all the world, and PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE."

Man, however, prefers his own feasts to the great supper that God has prepared, and accordingly makes various excuses.

We read in the parable that the master of the house was angry when the servants returned with the excuses of the bidden ones, and he said, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

And what about those who, having heard the good tidings of great joy, refuse to come to Christ?

To them God says, "Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." (Proverbs i. 24-28.)

But the great supper that God has prepared is not to be without guests. Christ has not died in vain. No, God will have His house filled ; there will not be one vacant seat. In His marvellous kindness, God makes persons sensible of their poverty and need ; and thus, having created a desire for the feast, He draws them by cords of love ; yea, He compels poor sinners, who otherwise would stop away, to come into His house and sit down at His table.

The banqueting-house is fast filling. God's servants are everywhere publishing the good tidings, and thousands believe the message, and gladly accept the invitation. When the last seat is filled, the Master of the house will rise up and shut to the door. Never will the rejecters of the gospel receive another invitation ; and, as they become conscious of the fact that the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and they are not saved, there

will fall upon them the sense of unutterable, dark, blank despair.

But, thank God, the door of mercy is yet wide open, and the glad tidings still run throughout the world : "WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY."

C. H.

THE VALUE OF THE BLOOD.

LEVITICUS xvii. 10, 11.

I WISH to say something to you about the place BLOOD has in the gospel, what God says about it, and what it does. These verses in Leviticus are very important ; for they tell us how particular God was that the Israelites should not eat blood, that it was "the life of the flesh," and that it was the blood that made atonement for the soul. But as far back as Genesis ix. 4 we find that blood was not to be eaten, and here we are told the reason—the blood was for atonement. There is something to be learnt in connection with this. It is necessary to have blood shed for you before you can appear before God, and yet people would rather have any thing than the precious blood of Christ. Do you remember what is said in Jude 11 : "Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain." Many are going in it now. And what is this "way of Cain" ? Cain was a sinner, and yet he went to God with

what could not make an atonement for him—with a bloodless sacrifice, one that involved no life having been taken. He brought the fruit of the ground that God had cursed, and of course God could not accept it. Let me tell you it is just as foolish to think that you can put away sin by bringing to God your own good works as it was for Cain to bring Him the fruit of the ground. No; the voice of Scripture is very distinct: "It is the BLOOD that maketh an atonement."

Look at Exodus xxx. 11-16. The Israelites had to be numbered, and every one must have something to bring to God. The Israelites, in their being numbered, were thus brought individually before God to have to do with Him; and this was impossible without wrath falling on them unless there was atonement. When David numbered the people long after this he had made no atonement, and God's wrath fell on them; He sent a plague. Now, when God says each must give a ransom, He does not leave it to them to choose what should be given; God is the only One who could fix the ransom. Half a shekel was fixed as the ransom; and that the rich should not give more, and the poor should not give less. All through Scripture silver represents redemption, and this half shekel of silver, though of little value in itself, was a figure to point to the precious blood. Look at 1 Peter i. 18-21, and you will see that there is no real

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value in the half shekel: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ." It is important to see how particular God was to specify that the rich were not to give more, nor the poor less. God could take nothing less than the precious blood of Christ, and it would be impossible to give more.

I might quote many passages in the Old Testament to illustrate the value God puts upon the blood, but one will suffice. In Exodus xii. we have an account of the first passover. The destroying angel was abroad in the land of Egypt, smiting the firstborn in every house; but how was it that God passed over the houses of the Israelites? They were sinners as much as the Egyptians; but we read that they killed a lamb, put its blood in a bason, and then went outside the door, took a bunch of hyssop in their hands, dipped it in the blood, and so sprinkled it on the lintels and side-posts of their doors; and God had told them that by doing so they would be safe from judgment. "When I see the blood I will pass over you." That blood on the door-posts told that death had been there already, that life had been taken—the life of a spotless victim—as a substitute, and God's righteous judgment was satisfied. Just as now, it is not what you and I think of the blood of Christ, but what God thinks; and He has told us that it makes atonement.

Look now again at 1 Peter i. He was writing to the descendants of the people who were with Moses in the wilderness, and who had paid the redemption money; but they were very slow to take in the truths of Christianity. They lost sight of much in keeping up their old customs, and attaching value to them, so that, through their "vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers," they may have actually thought there was some value in this half shekel of redemption money. Now, lest we should think so, we are distinctly told here that there was not, and that we are not redeemed with silver and gold, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." So you see it is neither silver, nor gold, nor good works, that redeemed us. And how blessed it is to see the truth that comes out, how God had it all in His mind before the world began. He knew the ruin that would come in, and that the Lord Jesus Christ would meet it, and for whom His blood would be shed. How many people say, "If I only knew that He had shed it for me, and borne my sins." Well, it is "for you who by Him do believe in God." Are you one of them? You see this is just the

“whosoever” in John iii. 16 over again. And let me ask once more, Are you one of those “who by Him do believe in God”? Have you learnt of God like this? Do you believe that the God you have sinned against has raised the Lord Jesus Christ for your justification? Look at Romans x. 9: “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved.*” I have only to look at the scripture, and see that, instead of judgment falling on me, it fell on Him. And if I die to-night, what can I meet God with? The precious blood of Christ. Is that enough? Oh, yes! but nothing less could meet my need, nor is more required.

Now let us see what else the precious blood of Christ does, and I will ask you to turn to Colossians i. 20. “And having MADE PEACE through the blood of His cross.” Could you have done this? Impossible. No; the only thing that could was the blood of Christ.

We will get another thing about it in 1 John i. 7: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” You are cleansed for ever if you are washed in that precious blood. It is eternal in its efficacy, and no one who is ever washed in that blood can be lost; it is impossible.

In connection with all this, let us turn to Hebrews ix. and x. We learn from the opening

of chapter ix. (*vv.* 6-8) that in the days of the tabernacle the high priest entered once a year into the holy place, "not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people." From this we learn two things; namely, the high priest's going in every year with blood, testified that the way was not opened into the presence of God; and, secondly, that the high priest and the people were sinners. This takes us back to Genesis iii., where we read of Adam and Eve being driven out from the garden of Eden, and the cherubim placed there to keep them out, so that they could not get back. So Aaron could not enter the holiest, or approach the mercy-seat, guarded as it was by the cherubim of gold, figure of God's judgment, save with blood, which he brought in with him to sprinkle before and on the mercy-seat. But in Hebrews we find that blood has opened the way in, and made sinners fit to be there, eternally fit for God's presence; and the way of approach Hebrews x. 19, 20 describes: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter in to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Of old the way into the presence of God was opened by blood, and through what represented the flesh of Christ; viz., the beautiful veil that divided the two parts of the tabernacle. That veil was made of blue and purple

and scarlet and fine linen, all representing the varied glories that met in Christ, and there was no way inside but through it. Well, we read in Matthew xxvii. 50, 51, "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." You will observe that it was not taken away, but only "rent in twain." What does that mean? We are plainly told that it meant the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, wounded and bruised for us; and so our approach to God can only be through His death; there is no other way. Now, what has His blood done for you and me? If we believe on Him, it has made us fit to go in. Perhaps you say, "Oh, He has made this way in for every one!" Quite true, the way is opened for every one; but until you believe on Him, you cannot say, and have no right to say, that He bore your sins; but as soon as you have taken your true place as a sinner before God, and believed in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you can say it. It is not enough to know that He died for sinners. The great thing is, Have you believed on Him for yourself? and can you say, "He bore all my sins on the cross"?

Now, what about a bad conscience? Hebrews ix. 14 tells us of what we get instead; namely, a purged conscience. It is His blood that has given me a purged conscience, and title and

right to stand before God. Now look at Revelation i. 5, and see the language of the apostle, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own BLOOD," etc., and chap. vii. 13, 14, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the BLOOD of the Lamb." What else can make your robes white?

Can you sing this beautiful song, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood," etc.? Or are you in the way of Cain, and bringing only dead works? If so, you cannot say you are saved; but if you see yourself a lost sinner, and that Christ has done every thing, and shed His precious blood for you, you can sing this song. Salvation is perfectly free, and it is offered to you now.

In the end of the book of Revelation we get the same thought as in the beautiful song of praise in the first chapter, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life," &c. (xxii. 14.) If you look at the revised version of the Bible, you will see that this really should read, "Blessed are they that have washed their robes."

Well, I close now; but have you redemption through *His blood*? or are you in the way of Cain?

M.

THE CHURCH OF GOD :

OF WHOM IS IT COMPOSED ?

IT is highly important that Christians should be clear as to the distinctive calling and character of *the Church of God*. It has been a widely-spread thought that the Church is formed of all saints, from Adam's day to the end of all things. But what saith the scripture? In this day of evil and difficulty, when all kinds of bad doctrines and misrepresentations of truth are abroad, it is well to turn to the Word to learn what God has said; bearing in mind the admonition, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. v. 21.) Hence we would invite our readers, who may not be clear upon the subject of this paper, to carefully compare its statements with the written Word. We think we shall be able to show conclusively both that there were in the past, and that there will be in the future, saints not forming part of the Church of God at all.

In the Old Testament we get individuals who had faith, from Adam's day till the time of Abraham. From the latter sprang the chosen earthly people Israel, who are spoken of in Acts vii. 38 as "the church in the wilderness." Now the word "church" simply means "assembly ;"

and it does not follow that it is the same as that spoken of in the New Testament. The nation of Israel could neither be the same, nor form part of it; for the Church of God is composed of true saints only, whereas the church in the wilderness was composed of the twelve tribes, the mass of whom were but a disobedient and gainsaying people. They were simply an assembly set apart by God for special objects on the earth, and in the midst of whom He dwelt.

But there were many *individual saints amongst them*, as Moses, Joshua, &c.; as also there were saints outside of Israel; but not one of them has part in the Church of God, or knew any thing whatever about it, for the very sufficient reason that it was neither formed nor revealed till New Testament times. Old Testament saints had heavenly hopes, it is true; they desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. xi. 16.) Their spirits are in heaven now, and hereafter in resurrection they will share wondrous blessings and heavenly glories with Christ; but for all this they form no part of the Church, the temple of God, and the body and bride of Christ.

The first mention of the Church in Scripture came from the lips of Christ Himself. Who could ever have known a syllable about it till then? Peter having confessed Him as "the

Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock *I will build My Church*," &c. (Matt. xvi. 18.) It is of the utmost importance to observe that He spoke of it as a future thing. He did not say, "I am building," or, "I will continue to build;" but, "*Upon this rock I will build.*" *He Himself is the rock-foundation*; and, until He had died, the Church could not be built. And He is also the Builder.

In 1 Peter ii. 4 we get, "To Whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, *ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up* a spiritual house," &c.

And in Ephesians ii. 20 the apostle says, "Ye *are built* upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom *all the building* fitly framed together groweth unto *an holy temple in the Lord*: in Whom *ye also are builded together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit."*

Christ has been adding living stones to this spiritual temple throughout this day of grace; and as soon as the last elect saint in God's eternal purposes is brought in, the temple being complete, all who compose it will be translated to glory.

* In 1 Corinthians iii. the Church is also viewed as the building of God, and in the Epistles of Timothy as the house of God; and it is in these aspects that man's responsibility comes in, in the one as a builder, in the other as a vessel in the house, but we cannot dwell upon them here.

But the Church is also viewed as *the body of Christ*. In Ephesians i. 19 we read of “the exceeding greatness of His (God’s) power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places . . . and gave Him to be *the Head* over all things to the Church, which is *His body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Now, nothing can be clearer than this, that there was no body until Christ had been exalted as the Head—a body without a head would be an absurdity. God gave His Son, the Man who glorified Him in His finished work, to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. Hence Christ and the Church are one. The Church is the fulness or complement of Him that filleth all in all. This marvellous union was first effected, as shown elsewhere (Acts ii.), by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Christians, justified by faith, are united to Christ and to one another by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. vi. 19 ; xii. 12, 13.) We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and members one of another. (Eph. iv. 25 ; v. 30.)

This is further confirmed in Col. i. 18, where the apostle is writing to saints who were in danger of not holding the Head. (Col. ii. 19.) He presses the truth upon them, saying, “And *He is the Head of the body*, the Church : Who is

... *the Firstborn from the dead*; that in all things He might have the preeminence" (or the first place).

And to turn again to Ephesians. In chap. iii. we learn distinctly that "*the mystery (or secret) of (the) Christ* in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." (vv. 4-6.) And this is also confirmed in Eph. iii. 9-11, Col. i. 24-26; in the former of which passages we also learn that this mystery was *hid in God*. Now, since it was hid in Him, and not made known in the past ages, how could the saints of old have known any thing whatever about it? But some may argue that it speaks of the apostles *and prophets*, both in chap. iii. 5 and in chap. ii. 20. True; but our readers must bear in mind that there are New Testament prophets as well as old. (Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xiv. 29.) And Eph. iv. 8-11 shows that the prophets here spoken of are the gifts of Christ *consequent upon ascension*.

In Eph. v. 22-33, where we get exhortations addressed to wives and husbands, Christ's headship of the Church and our membership of His body are again referred to, and the marriage tie is employed as a figure to bring out the intimate union into which the Church is brought with

Christ. In verse 31 the apostle says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is *a [the] great mystery*: but I speak concerning *Christ and the Church*."

In the Revelation John brings out the blessed position and glorious future of the Church as *the bride of the Lamb*.

Now, in turning to the description of the marriage of the Lamb in the nineteenth chapter of that book, we get a clear distinction made between *His wife* (v. 7) and *they which are called* to the marriage supper. (v. 9.) If all saints, from Adam's day to the coming of Christ in the air (1 Thess. iv. 15-18), form part of the Church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, who can these others be? Does not the Spirit of God designedly point out two companies? And who are the latter if not the Old Testament saints? What others will be in heavenly glory up to that moment?

In Heb. xii. 23 too, amongst the varied circles there described, "the Church of the firstborn" (ones) is distinguished from "the spirits of just men made perfect."

There is another point that all should remark who desire to rightly divide the word of truth as to the calling and character of the Church of God during this present day of grace, from Pentecost to the translation of the saints. (1 Thess. iv.) It is not until *after the marriage* that heaven is

opened, and Christ comes forth as King of kings upon the white horse, to judge His foes, and take the kingdom, which will last for a thousand years. (Rev. xix. 11–21.) And both introductory to this marvellous epoch, the times of the restitution of all things (Acts iii. 21), and also during the period itself, God will work by His Spirit in the conversion of many.* (Rev. vii.)

Now, if the Old Testament saints form part of the body of Christ, then, to be consistent (and it is held by many), these millennial saints must form part of the same. But the Church, Christ's body, is complete at the rapture (1 Thess. iv.), and shortly after presented to Himself in glory (Eph. v. 27); whereas the millennial saints are *not saved until afterwards*. The twenty-four elders, who represent the heavenly saints glorified, are around the throne of God in Rev. iv. v.; whereas the twelve thousand of all Israel and the great multitude of Gentiles of Rev. vii. *are saved after*, and preserved for millennial blessing on the earth. They form no part of the body or bride of Christ, but will walk in the light, as also the kings and nations generally, of the holy city—the Church. (Rev. xxi. 24.)

We gather, then, that whilst it is perfectly true

* There are also two classes of saints who lose their lives for their testimony on earth after the rapture, and previous to the establishment of Christ's kingdom. (Rev. vi. 9, 10; xx. 4.) They are raised to share the reign of Christ, but are not saved until after the Church, His body, is complete.

that Old Testament saints will share heavenly blessings with Christ, and millennial saints have a blessed portion on earth, it is also true (and of immense importance for Christians to apprehend if they are to know and enjoy and answer to their true calling) that the Church of God, which is His spiritual temple, and also the body and Bride of Christ, is composed only of those saints who are saved and sealed by the Holy Ghost, from the day of Pentecost to the coming of Christ for His people in the air.

John again sees the Church as the tabernacle of God in the eternal state, and distinguished from men on the eternal earth. (Rev. xxi. 2, 3.)

E. H. C.

Settled Peace.—It is impossible that judgment can be the portion of those whose sins Christ has wholly borne away, as impossible as it is that Christ's work should be inadequate, or that God should punish the same sin twice over. If any one had to be shut out of heaven, so to speak, it must have been Christ, because He had taken the sins; but He was accepted, received up into glory, therefore the matter must be settled for me, if I believe. (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) He did not hold back; our sins in all their horribleness were laid upon Him, and judgment fully passed upon Him, and so the whole question has been settled, between the All-seeing God and His spotless Son. There we have, not a hope merely, but solid, abiding peace.

“WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS
OVER YOU.”

MORE than three thousand years ago a strange sight might have been witnessed in the land of Egypt.

The sun had sunk below the hills, the silence of night prevailed, and the Egyptians had retired for the repose needed to fit them for the succeeding day's employment.

But in the land of Goshen, where dwelt the Israelites—a people whom the Egyptians kept in cruel bondage—not even a child had gone to rest.

Outside of each house might have been seen an Israelite, holding in one hand a basin, and in the other a bunch of hyssop, with which he sprinkled the contents of the basin upon the two side-posts and the upper door-post of his house.

What was it that was thus carefully sprinkled upon their houses? It was blood—the blood of a lamb.

This done, the Israelite, with an expression of peace upon his countenance, entered his house; and, if we could have looked through the closed door, we should have seen the whole family feeding upon the roast flesh of the lamb whose blood had been sprinkled upon the door-posts.

VI.

But why had the blood been sprinkled upon the door-posts?

I will tell you.

God had declared that on the fourteenth day of the month He would pass through the land of Egypt in judgment.

He had thus spoken: “About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.” (Ex. xi. 5.)

Now the Israelites were exposed to this visitation of judgment, for they had sinned as well as the Egyptians. God is righteous, and would by no means clear the guilty.

How were they to escape? Well, God Himself told them a way of escape.

Each householder was ordered to take, on the tenth day of the month, a lamb that was without blemish—a male of the first year. The lamb was to be kept until the fourteenth day, in the evening of which it was to be slain, and its blood sprinkled upon the lintel and the side-posts of the house.

Obedience to this command secured perfect safety; for God had said, “The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you,

and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Ex. xii. 13.)

At midnight, while the Israelites were with gladness feasting upon the roast lamb, and the Egyptians were sleeping upon their beds, the destroying angel commenced his work of judgment. He entered the palace of Pharaoh, the mansions of the rich, and the hovels of the poor, and executed God's judgment by slaying the firstborn. "*There was not a house where there was not one dead.*"

The destroying angel went noiselessly on till he reached the land of Goshen. From house to house, with the sword of judgment in his hand, did the angel pass, but not a house did he enter.

How was this? Was it that the Israelites were better than the Egyptians? No; but the blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the doorposts, and God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

This narrative, dear reader, has a voice for you and me. God, who executed judgment in the land of Egypt, has "appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts xvii. 31.) You and I are sinners, for it is written in God's word, "*There is none righteous, no, not one.*" (Romans iii. 10.)

As the Israelites were told that they could escape from judgment only by the sprinkled blood of a slain lamb, so we are informed that

“the blood of Jesus Christ His [God’s] Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.) “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.)

Has the reader availed himself of God’s way of salvation? If, after the lamb had been slain, an Israelite had neglected to sprinkle its blood upon the door-posts the destroying angel would have entered his house, and slain his firstborn child; so, dear reader, although the precious blood of Christ has been shed, if you do not put your trust in it you will most certainly perish.

Perhaps a reader is saying to himself, “I know I am not what I should be; I will reform my ways; in short, I will turn over a new leaf.” But, dear friend, that will not save you.

Suppose that one of the Israelites, instead of sprinkling his door-posts with the blood, had brought buckets of clean water, and had so thoroughly washed his door-posts that his house looked the cleanest and most respectable in the land of Goshen. The angel would have passed by the blood-sprinkled houses; but when he had reached this carefully-washed, respectable house, he would have stopped, and entering in would have slain the eldest child.

You may say, “No sane person would have acted so absurdly.” Granted, dear reader; yet is it not equally foolish for any person to suppose

that reformation will enable him to escape God's righteous judgment, seeing that He has so plainly declared, "WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION." (Heb. ix. 22.)

"But," says another, "I have always discharged my duties to the best of my ability, and I am sure I shall not be far wrong; for what can a man do more than his best? Surely God will be merciful to a man that has done his best."

If an Israelite had thought like this, and hearing that on the fourteenth day of the month God was going to execute judgment, had gone to Moses and Aaron, and said, "I do not intend to sprinkle my house with the blood; for I am certain that God will be merciful to me, because I have always done my best," they would have replied, "But God does not say, 'When I see you have done your best, I will pass over you.' He says, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you'; and, if you do not sprinkle the blood upon the lintel and the two side-posts, the destroying angel will most certainly slay your firstborn."

Dear reader, we would in all affection and earnestness say, *Your best will not do for God.* You have sinned, and come short of His glory, and nothing will save you from everlasting destruction but the precious blood of Christ.

There is another class of persons who, though they would on no account give up the blood of Christ, yet think it necessary to add (as though

Christ's atoning work alone were not sufficient) their prayers, feelings, and good works. They little think what an enormity this is.

What would have been thought of an Israelite if, after having sprinkled the blood, he had written upon a piece of parchment a long list of his virtues, and had nailed it to the door-post as an additional security against the sword of judgment? Would not this have been an insult to the value of the blood? and would it not have shown want of confidence in God, who had said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you”?

Dear reader, we would beseech you not to act like this. IT IS THE BLOOD ALONE THAT SAVES. All the good works of the saints of every age could not add to the efficacy of the blood of Christ. If that does not save you nothing will; but it does save every sinner who, casting away his own righteousness as filthy rags, places his confidence in *the blood alone*.

It is very important to notice that there was but one way of escape. The elders of Israel and the most obscure members of the congregation had the same shelter from judgment. They were all alike in two things—they all needed the shelter of the blood, and they all found the blood was sufficient to shield them from the avenging sword of God's judgment. It is the same to-day. Whether prince or peasant, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, moral or profane, we all need the precious blood

of Christ. "For there is no difference: for all have sinned."

It is no less important to observe that the Egyptians who did not sprinkle their houses all alike suffered at the hand of the destroying angel. The first-born son of Pharaoh, who sat upon his throne in royal dignity, and the eldest child of the menial that worked behind the mill, met with the same fate.

The wise men whom Pharaoh consulted upon the affairs of state were no more able to escape than the most unlettered man in the kingdom.

The wealthy citizen and the philanthropist were visited with judgment, just the same as the beggar and the miser. Without distinction, wherever there was not a blood-stained portal, the angel of the Lord entered and slew the firstborn.

Thus will it be by-and-by with all that have *rejected* or *neglected* the precious blood of Christ. God's awful judgments will descend upon everyone who received not the truth in the love of it. Wealth will procure no exemption; wisdom will devise no means of escape; amiability and morality will not shield from the wrath of God.

When the righteous indignation of God is being poured out, the value of the blood of Christ will be very distinctly seen. But it will be seen when it is too late; for then each Christ-rejecter will have staring him in the face nothing but a lost eternity.

Some reader may say, “Oh, I do not trouble myself much about this matter!”

This is quite possible. No doubt it was so with the Egyptians.

They may have heard that the Israelites were going to sprinkle their houses with blood, and laughed at their timidity. It is evident that if the Egyptians had been greatly alarmed, they would not have quietly retired to rest on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month.

But did their carelessness make the danger any less real? Alas! no. The sword of judgment descended; all the firstborn were slain; and then through the dark night there arose a bitter cry, the like of which had never before been heard in the land of Egypt.

Dear friend, we pray thee beware. Over this poor world hang the dreadful judgments of God, which in a little while will descend upon those who live at ease, and have not troubled themselves much about such matters. There will be no careless ones then. The faces of all will grow pale with fear, the knees smite together with terror, and the heart of the most courageous will melt like wax.

We would then, dear reader, entreat you to see that the blood is sprinkled upon the portal of your house. Repose your confidence in nothing but the atoning work of Christ; for “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Lev. xvii. 11.)

C. H.

WHERE WERE YOU BORN ?

WHEN at a railway station last week, waiting for a train, I observed, a short distance off, a porter let twelve pigeons out of a hamper. The birds flew into the air, and, after flying round and round once or twice, made straight off in a westerly direction. The porter told me they were for Lancaster—a distance of about fifty miles.

I asked a person who had stood near, and had seen the birds go, “Do you know where pigeons fly to when let loose in a strange place?”

“I suppose,” he replied, “to the place they come from.”

“Yes,” I said, “if that place be their *birth-place*, but not otherwise. Pigeons let off in that way fly only to where they were born; so that if those birds were born at Lancaster, they will instinctively go to Lancaster *only*.”

“Really, how very strange,” said he. “I never knew that before !”

I further asked him, “Where would *your soul* go were it let loose from your body this moment?”

He replied, “It would go to heaven.”

“Then,” I added, “you have been born again,

or *born from above*, and you would, if let out, go straight home to your birthplace only."

"Yes," he said, "for I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and am saved; so that were I to be liberated from this tabernacle now, I should go to the blessed One who died for me and rose again, and who has gone to prepare a place for me."

"Yes," I continued, "*absent from the body, and to be PRESENT WITH THE LORD.*' (2 Cor. v. 8.) 'To *depart*, and to be WITH CHRIST; which is far better.' (Phil. i. 23.) Furthermore the Lord said, '*I will* come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also;' therefore whether we go to Him or He comes for us, and changes our bodies, we shall, soul and body, *soon be at home for ever with HIMSELF.*"

"Called from above, and heavenly men by birth
(Who once were but the citizens of earth),
As pilgrims here, we seek a heavenly home,
Our portion in the ages yet to come.

"Where all the saints of every clime shall meet,
And each with all shall all the ransomed greet;
But oh! the height of bliss, my Lord, shall be,
To owe it all, and share it all, with Thee.

"We are but strangers here, we do not crave
A home on earth, which gave Thee but a grave:
Thy cross has severed ties which bound us here,
Thyself our treasure in a brighter sphere."

A few days later I saw, at the same spot, three

pigeons liberated from a basket, and they followed the example of the twelve. A young gentleman was with me at the time, with whom I raised questions similar to those put to the first-named person. But how very different was his answer to the enquiry, "What home would your soul proceed to were God to require it of you just now?"

"Oh, I think it would be presumption for any one to speak with certainty about such matters in the face of so much sin and of coming short of the glory of God."

"Granted as to the sin and the coming short; but as regards the *certainty*, just let me read you what Paul the apostle said: 'WE KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, WE HAVE a building of God, an house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens.*'" (2 Cor. v. 1.)

"Quite right; but, after all, I do not think it is so well to be over positive about it in such an uncertain world as this."

"Let us read a verse of God's word: 'These things have I written unto you, THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, *who believe on the name of the Son of God.*'" (1 John v. 13, New Translation.)

"Well, of course that is all quite true; but I cannot say I have faith enough for it myself."

"Now look here, just let me illustrate what is

really meant. Suppose your chief (Mr. S——) were to come and tell you just now that he had appointed you his principal assistant at a good salary, would you believe him ?”

“Yes, I *would*.”

“But would it not be a little modest of you, and pleasing to him, to tell him you could scarcely credit his word, and that you considered it somewhat presumptuous to believe him ?”

“No ; I should *believe* him !”

“Yes ; I am sure you would, and thank him too, and let me tell you why. It would be simply because *you considered him a person whose word could be relied on*. But if one of Mr. S——’s junior clerks came to you in a light and smirking way announcing the same thing, would you believe *him* ?”

“No ; I should *not*.”

“No ; and I will tell you *why*. Because *you would not consider him a person whose word could be relied on*. You would not have to heap up faith to believe the one, nor to muster unbelief to disbelieve the other. The whole secret is WHETHER THE PERSON WHO SPEAKS IS ONE WHOSE WORD CAN BE RELIED ON. Therefore you see the presumption is to *doubt*, and especially so when GOD speaks, whose word liveth and abideth for ever, and who cannot lie.”

“Yes ; I *see* it. I *do* see it *now* as I never saw it before !”

“Thank God. Always accept what God says, for *blessing* is always the result, while unbelief always gets turned away empty.”

Friend and reader, what eternal home have *you* for *your* immortal soul ? Is your prospect GLORY, or is it the LAKE OF FIRE ? Perhaps you are inclined to reason about it as Nicodemus did, whose ability to do so would doubtless be considerable. The Lord's message to that excellent man was “Ye MUST *be born again*,” or from above. That good living man, who was probably much better than most of his neighbours, and very well up in his religion, had no idea whatever that it was absolutely necessary for him to be born anew. But Jesus said to him, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Ye MUST be born again*.” Mark, not by his high profession, nor by his works of righteousness, nor even his exalted religious position, but by believing what God said, and by the power of the Holy Ghost. By water and by the Spirit alone could he be born again ; and this is equally true of *all* to-day.

The *Son of man* MUST *be lifted up* to meet God's holy claims and the sinner's need, whether he be a religious sinner, a wicked sinner, or a helpless sinner ; so that “*whosoever* believeth in Him should *not perish*, but have *eternal life*.”

Then, dear soul, have you got this new birth, the second life ? If so, you are delivered from the second death, which is the lake of fire ; and

were you to be called hence, or were the Lord to come now, you would go to your blessed home in glory, your birthplace ; you would find your level ! Oh ! do not rest satisfied with merely *thinking over* this all-important question, as so many do, but, I do beseech you, have it settled and know it *now*, in God's day of grace and long-suffering mercy !

“He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.” (John v. 24.)

We cannot give you the new birth, but you have God's word as your authority, and surely *He is One whose word can be relied on* ; and the Spirit of God is still on earth, and ready to apply it to every lost sinner who knows and feels his need of a Saviour.

Then take timely warning. Just think of the awful contrast between the eternal homes of that rich man and of Lazarus after they had quitted their bodies on earth, where the one was clothed with purple and fine linen, and the other covered with sores. “The rich man died, and was buried ; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in *torments*” (Luke xvi. 22, 23), while Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom comforted. In this world the one fared sumptuously every day, while the other desired crumbs from the other's table. One had his soul blessed, but the other had not. Therefore

in *eternity* one was tormented, but the other comforted, a great gulf being between them. One hopelessly craving relief, but the other supremely satisfied. What a terrible reality! Bow, dear unblest, unsatisfied soul, whoever you are; receive Christ, who was lifted up for faith to accept, and, before laying down this paper, may you know the birthplace of your soul to be the *glory* where your Saviour is; then, whether you go or He comes, you will go straight home to your birthplace only, like those fifteen pigeons. May God bless you, and enable you to say—

“We have a home above,
From all defilement free;
A mansion which eternal love,
Prepared our rest to be.

“The Father’s gracious hand
Has built that blest abode;
From everlasting it was planned,
The dwelling-place of God.

“The Saviour’s precious blood
Has made our title sure;
He passed through death’s dark raging flood,
To make our rest secure.

“The Comforter is come,
The earnest has been given;
He leads us onward to the home
Reserved for us in heaven.”

J. N.

THE HOPE AND COMFORT OF THE BELIEVER.

JOHN xiv.

THERE are two things in this scripture calculated to minister the greatest joy and comfort to believers. One is, that the Lord, who has left the world and gone to the Father, will return and receive His own to Himself; the other, that while He leaves them here, the Holy Spirit, that other Comforter, has been sent to abide with them, to testify of Him, and to guide and instruct them as to all the details and difficulties of their earthly path.

With regard to the first, it is interesting to notice the moment when these precious words were spoken by the Lord. The end of His course was fully in view, and He was about to depart. Around Him were gathered the disciples, whose hearts He had attracted and won. They had been with Him, had witnessed the display of His power in blessing to needy souls. His presence had shielded and comforted them; and when He speaks of going away, they were overwhelmed with sorrow. It is to comfort and cheer them, when the prospect of His departure filled them with dismay, that He says, "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.*" Thus He leads them on to a future moment when He would return, and they would then know in a deeper sense the blessedness of His presence where there is fulness of joy.

All this has its own instruction and comfort for the saints now. Passing through the world, which has rejected our blessed Lord, ourselves no longer of it, we are left to bear witness of Him, and to await His return, now so near. And as we pursue our course in dependence and obedience, keeping His commandments, we abide in His love, and know the quiet restfulness of soul which nearness to Himself imparts. "*I sat down* under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." What an attitude for the soul to be in! Such is our privilege, through grace, even to *sit down* in His presence and rejoice in His love, so sweetly manifested toward us in the laying down of His life for us—that love which is still active on our behalf, cleansing us from the defilement which we contract in passing through this world, and which will not be fully satisfied until its objects are with and like Himself. And may we not say that the more we apprehend the greatness of His love, and the peculiar charm of His presence here, the more our hearts will long for His return, when we shall

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see Him face to face, and when He Himself will introduce us into the Father's house ?

That blessed event, with all the joys that attend it, is very near ; " for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." So runs the inspired record. Moreover, the Lord Himself said to His disciples, " A little while, and ye shall not see Me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me." (John xvi. 16.) The " little while " of His absence would cause them sorrow, but their hearts should rejoice when they saw Him again. All that is in the world fails to satisfy the heart attached to Christ ; the world is a blank where He is not. We find a beautiful example of this in Mary, in chap. xx. of this gospel. She could not find the body of her Lord, and nothing could compensate for the loss she had sustained. The disciples could go to their home, but Mary stood without, at the sepulchre, weeping, and lingering about the spot where she had last known her Lord to be. The Person of the Lord alone could satisfy her ; and we know how fully He revealed Himself to her, and met every desire of her heart.

Then, as to the second thing, it was when He ascended that He sent down the Holy Spirit, that other Comforter, to abide with us, and to comfort and sustain our hearts until His return.

" When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall testify

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of *Me.*" This is the special work of the Holy Spirit now. He has come down to bear record that the One who was rejected and cast out of this world is now crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is here with and in the believer, occupying him with Christ; and, though the world seeth Him not, the Spirit directs our eyes upward, and "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

The Holy Spirit is here to teach us all things, to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. He it was who first wrought *in us* as sinners, producing the sense of sin and of guilt before God, and then led us to the Saviour, to receive Him, and rest in His work done, once for all, *for* us on the cross. And He it is who gives us to know and enjoy the relationship we are brought into with God as His children; for we are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Then, when every question is settled, and we are at rest in the presence of our God and Father, He directs our hearts to the varied perfections, excellencies, and beauties of Christ. We learn better the greatness of His love in coming into the world to bear our sins and endure the judgment of God due to them; so that God might righteously come out in blessing to man, and

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bring the sinner, who believes in Jesus, near to Himself in love.

The Spirit also instructs us how that **H**e rose again from among the dead the third day, and afterwards ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. He opens out to us "all things" concerning the Son, and thus attaches our hearts to the Lord, and directs us in the pathway of obedience to **H**is word, while watching and waiting for our Lord's return.

May every believer who reads these lines know the comfort of the Holy Spirit's presence during the Lord's absence, and may the language of each heart increasingly be, "Come, Lord Jesus."

"O Lord, our longing hearts still yearn
To see Thee face to face;
And wait with joy Thy sure return,
To crown Thy wondrous grace.

"Behold, I come!" we hear Thee say,
Content we wait for Thee;
In patience now we tread our way,
Till called with Thee to be."

W. S.

JOHN, THE SON OF ZACHARIAS.

IN the inspired record of John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, we have the pathway of one who was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. We are told that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till

the day of his shewing unto Israel." As years increased, he had a deepened sense of how greatly God's favoured nation had revolted from Him; so that when the time came for his mission he earnestly called upon them to "repent." The place of separation in the desert from an unfaithful people became him; for he was Jehovah's servant, the prophet of the Highest, at a time when there was very great departure from the truth. His place, therefore, was one of individual exercise and waiting on God—dependence on Him, subjection to Him, to learn of Him in secret before coming forth openly. How could he have fellowship with the professed people of God who had so departed from His ways? John was a Nazarite indeed; the Holy Spirit so directed him. He refused that which the natural man gloried in; not only bad things, but even good things, as men speak of them, if they were not according to God's mind. His being full of the Holy Spirit was the power of this separation unto God, and therefore was he taken up with the things of God. While it is clear the condition of the Jewish nation was the constant object of his concern and interest, because of God's interest in them, yet "the wilderness" was his place. But he was not without failure, as Matthew xi. 3 plainly shows; still, speaking generally, there was such consistency in every aspect of his pathway, that we are reminded of that ancient scripture, "In

all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

In due time the path for public testimony was opened to him. "*The word of God* came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." (Luke iii. 2-6.) He was thus called to the work, and to urge the sinful nation to "repent," because Messiah was at hand, and able to set up the kingdom of which prophets had foretold; only such could not be in their unrepentant state.

This man too, who was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth, had the Messiah, the Christ, before him as the object of his heart. In secret exercise of soul he had learned from God something of His personal glory and characteristics. "I knew Him not: but *He that sent me to baptize with water*, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." Such was his lowly confession. John was also a humble-minded man.

Speaking of Jesus, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, and the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, he was wont to say, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." (John i. 26-34.)

Again, when his ministry was with such power that it seemed for a time to rouse almost the whole nation, he spoke of himself as being merely a voice—"the voice of one crying in the wilderness." When asked by priests and Levites who he was, he replied, "I am not the Christ." "Art thou Elias?" And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet?" referring to the prophet which Moses had declared should arise. "He answered, No." And when further pressed with, "What sayest thou of thyself?" his reply at once made reference to Christ and His word, as we believe will always be the case with those who are filled with the Holy Spirit; for such make nothing of themselves, because they find all they can desire in Him. John said, "I am the *voice* of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." (John i. 23.) On another occasion, while taking the lowly place of the friend of the Bridegroom (not the bride), and rejoicing greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice, we hear him saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease." And yet he so sympathized with the Messiah in His rejection that he added,

“He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.” (John iii. 29-33.)

And we may yet further notice, in considering how the Baptist's heart was taken up with the Lord Himself, that, though He had been revealed to him as the Son of God, he also knew Him as the Lamb of God. That he was conversant with the fortieth chapter of Isaiah is clear enough; but whether he had been taught by the same prophet's writings of His being a sacrifice for sin as God's Lamb we are not told. It is very touching to find him, when looking on Jesus as He passed by, saying, as if to himself, but loud enough for his companions to hear, “Behold the Lamb of God.” Yes, John indeed knew Him as the Object of his heart; and no greater proof of it can be given than on that very occasion, for when two of the Baptist's disciples were by this exclamation so attracted to the Lamb of God as to leave John and follow Him, he was well pleased to find that Jesus had His rightful place in their hearts. Being full of the Holy Spirit, whom we know to be the Glorifier of the Son of God, John well knew that his place was not to draw disciples after himself, but to turn “the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared *for the Lord*.” (Luke i. 16, 17.)

Perhaps there is no surer mark of a Spirit-led

man than his having the Lord day by day so truly his Object that his one desire is that Christ shall be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death. Let no one imagine he is being led and taught of the Spirit because he has acquired much Biblical knowledge, and is successful in drawing crowds after him; rather let him see that in heart and soul he is consciously separated to God, because he is **His** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Let him see that his aim is to be true for **His** glory, that he walks obediently to **His** Word, as delivered from this present evil age and translated into the kingdom of the Son of **His** love; for in **Him** are all our springs; He is our salvation, and should be all our desire; **Him** we serve, and for **Him** we wait. When this is so, we may be assured we shall not speak perverted things to draw away disciples after us, but shall find our joy and blessing in association with that which honours Christ, rejoices **His** heart, brings glory to God. May we know better what it is to "walk in the Spirit" as those who "live in the Spirit." One of the most marvellous blessings in the way of recovered truth which God has given in these last days is that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us, and will abide with us for ever; and one of our chief dangers at this moment is to settle down, like the rest of Christendom, with orthodox doctrine, instead of experimentally proving and enjoying

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the Holy Spirit's never-failing guidance, power, and faithful ministry of the truth. The first great sin in the Church on earth was lying to the Holy Spirit; the closing days of the Church on earth are marked by the denial of His power—"having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." As to this, we are admonished from such to "turn away." (Acts v. 3; 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.) Let no one suppose, then, that he is being guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit when there is the absence of meekness and lowliness, and he is not aiming to exalt and honour our Lord Jesus Christ in the pathway of obedience, righteousness, and love. H. H. S.

 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MATT. xxvi. 29.—The "fruit of the vine" is a well-known symbol of earthly joy. But earthly joy, such as the Lord Himself will give, and in gracious condescension share with those whose portion it will be, tarries till the Father's kingdom come. That kingdom has its earthly and heavenly side, and joy will characterize both. (See Isaiah xxxv. 10; Matthew vi. 9, 10; xiii. 43.) "The good wine" is reserved for the last, when in brighter days and in a new way the Lord will drink it with His people in His Father's kingdom. (John ii. 10.)

EPHESIANS iv. 3.—"One Body," to which each truly-saved person belongs, and is a part of, is the

expression of the *unity of the Spirit* here spoken of. There are not many bodies, but *one*, and Christ in heaven is the Head of it. This unity which ever subsists before God is not of man ; it is no creation of his ; it is the unity of *the Spirit*, and therefore cannot be broken. It is to our reproach that the manifestation of it is no longer seen in its entirety here below, but this does not absolve us from the solemn responsibility of endeavouring to keep it in lowliness and meekness and peace. This, of course, entails our standing aloof from all that which would be a practical denial of it. The Lord grant that both reader and writer may faithfully seek to do so.

2 CHRON. xxx. 17.—The sanctification referred to in this passage we take to be that of which mention is made in Hebrews ix. 13. An outward ceremonial thing connected with “the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer.” (See Numbers ix. xix.)

ACTS i. 23–26.—We could not take it upon ourselves to say that the act described in these verses was a wrong one, though were any to take it as a precedent given for present guidance, we are persuaded it would be a mistake. Casting lots was an ancient custom ; and it must be borne in mind that at the time they followed it the disciples were simply a little remnant of Jews attached to the Saviour, and not yet on Church ground. The Church was not formed till the descent of the Holy Ghost, narrated in chap. ii. ; and the doctrine of it was not revealed till Paul’s apostolate. We have no divine record of any casting of lots after the Church era began.

ACTS vi. 1-6.—The “seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,” were appointed to their office by the apostles, but not chosen by them. The choice lay with others, but the power to appoint was reserved in the apostles’ own hands. We know of no reason to suppose they were not led of God in the matter, but rather the contrary. Gift for ministry and office in the assembly must be carefully distinguished. They are not the same thing. The former came immediately from the exalted Christ without any human intervention whatsoever (Timothy excepted, who had been pointed out by prophecy as a chosen vessel of service); while the latter rested with the apostles or their delegates, such as Timothy and Titus. No means were laid down for the continuance of this; and in the broken, divided state in which the Church now is, to pretend to have any such authority is pretence indeed, and nothing more. As to discipline, every assembly is responsible to maintain it in the fear of God. And the ruin of the Church does not relieve us of this abiding and serious obligation; “for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” The act of such an assembly, either in putting away from among themselves the wicked person, or in receiving him again on his repentance, is endorsed in heaven. In the one case the sin of the individual is bound upon him, in the other it is loosed. But this has nothing to do with eternal forgiveness. It is God alone who binds and looses in that sense. (See 1 Cor. v. and 2 Cor. ii. 4-11.)

PRAYING FOR FORGIVENESS.

A CERTAIN evangelist, having had occasion to pray at a public meeting in the presence of several preachers, one of them remarked afterwards that he approved of the prayer with the exception that he had omitted to pray for the forgiveness of sins, to which the reply was made, "He believes that his sins *are* forgiven."

As there is much misconception in many quarters upon this subject, it may be well to offer a few remarks to our readers upon it. It is such a very common thing for persons to pray for forgiveness, that many reject at once the idea of not doing so; and are full of hard thoughts against those who do not, without weighing their reasons.

Nothing can be clearer from the Word of God than that our sins must be forgiven before we can enter glory, and that now, whilst upon earth, is the time to receive that forgiveness. After death it will be too late, for all who stand unpardoned at the great white throne will be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 15.)

Now forgiveness is announced on the ground of the finished work of Christ, and in His name.

IV.

His precious blood was shed for many for the *remission of sins*. (Matt. xxvi. 28.) "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive *remission of sins*." (Acts x. 43.) "Be it known unto you . . . that through this Man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

We learn from these scriptures that forgiveness of sins is received on the principle of faith. The apostle John says to all who believe, "Little children, . . . your sins *are forgiven* you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) Paul, in Rom. iv. 7, 8, "Blessed are they whose iniquities *are forgiven* and whose sins *are covered*. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *will not impute sin*." Again in Ephes. i. 7, "*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of His grace." And again, "Their sins and iniquities will *I remember no more*." (Heb. x. 17.) And we might cite other passages. Language could not be plainer as to the fact that the sins of believers *are forgiven*.

"Well," some of our readers may say, "ought not a poor sinner to pray then to God to forgive him?" We would reply, Where does Scripture direct him to do so? Forgiveness is preached to him; offered him for his acceptance. No doubt if a soul is anxious, *he will pray*. "Behold, he prayeth," was

a sign of the work of God in the soul of Saul of Tarsus. (Acts ix. 11.) Far be it from our thought to hinder a soul turning to God, and having to do with Him about his state. This is exactly what we above all things desire for poor sinners. But what we would have souls understand is, that we are not forgiven and saved by our much praying, but by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thousands pray from year's end to year's end for forgiveness, and yet seem to be as far off from it as ever; whereas did they but take their place before God as lost and guilty sinners, and *believe* on the name of His Son, their sins would be all forgiven, and God would remember them no more.

When the Philippian jailer cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostle did not say "Pray earnestly to God," but, "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," &c. (Acts xvi. 30, 31.)

The writer recollects reading of an anxious youth who asked a Christian how his many sins were to be forgiven him? and he replied, "Go home and pray." "But supposing I were to die before I reach home?" he rejoined. Yes, dear reader, you too might die at any moment, and unless your sins are forgiven, you would be eternally lost. *Now* is the time to receive the blessing, and the only way is *by faith*. Satan often uses the best of things as well as the worst to hinder souls, and to keep them away from Christ. To

pray to God is a blessed exercise indeed, but the scripture does not say, *Whosoever prayeth* shall receive remission of sins; but, “*Whosoever believeth* in Him.”

Take again 2 Cor. v. 19, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Here we find the very opposite of that which fills so many minds. Thousands are crying to God to forgive them and to be reconciled to them, as though He were very unwilling, and needed many prayers before He would become willing, whereas we learn here that God was in Christ reconciling, and not imputing trespasses, and is now in the attitude of beseeching sinners through His servants. “As though *God did beseech* you [not, you beseech God], *we pray* you in Christ’s stead [not, you pray Christ].” It is the sinner who has gone away from God, who is naturally unwilling to return and be reconciled; and not God who has turned away from the sinner. It is the beguiling of Satan and the perverseness and wickedness of the flesh that lead men to treat God as though He needed to be

reconciled to them. But there is no such thought in the gospel.

It was a different thing before redemption was obtained by the death of Christ. In the Old Testament it was quite in keeping with the position of a Jew, who believed the promises of God, to pray for the forgiveness of his own sins or those of his people. Under the Mosaic economy there was a constant remembrance of sins, and sacrifices continually offered which could never take them away, and whose blood could never perfect the conscience. (Heb. x. 1-4.) But Christ having offered Himself once for all, the believer now is *perfected for ever* (or in perpetuity), and his conscience is purged (Heb. x. 14; ix. 14); so that to pray now for forgiveness is to go back to Jewish ground, and to lose sight of the infinite worth of the sacrifice of Christ.*

Another difficulty arises in the minds of many, and that is, how any can say they are forgiven when they keep sinning every day. This is a very natural enquiry, and also very simply ex-

* The case of Simon Magus is the only one where prayer for forgiveness is enjoined after the death of Christ. His sin in thinking that the gift of God, the Holy Ghost, could be purchased for money was so grievous that it appears to have been a question whether so great wickedness in connection with the Holy Ghost would be forgiven. Hence the apostle says to him, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." It is important to remark that he was called upon to repent first. And he asked Peter to pray for him, &c.

plained. When a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ he receives the forgiveness of sins, he is declared to be justified from all things, he receives eternal life too, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and is henceforth *a child of God*. The criminal question is settled for ever. The question of his sins as a sinner in the sight of God will never be raised again. He has a sure title to glory in the precious blood of Christ, and nothing short of having him there will satisfy His heart of love.

But meanwhile many are left for a time in this world, and are called to walk to the glory of God as His children. He is holy, and expects them to walk in holiness. They ought not to sin again, but the flesh being still in His children (though they are not in it, Rom. viii. 9) through lack of prayer, watchfulness, and communion with Him, only too often in thought, word, or deed we do offend and sin. But now it is no longer as sinners and enemies exposed to wrath and judgment, but as children loved with a Father's love. Here His blessed provision comes in, so often explained or referred to in this periodical—"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) Not *we lose our Saviour*, as Satan suggests, and as (having a bad conscience when we sin as God's children) many are apt to think; but our loving Saviour is our Advocate.

And His advocacy, by the working of the Holy Ghost in our hearts and consciences, leads to self-judgment and *the confession of sins*. “*If we confess our sins*, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John i. 9.)

It is all-important to distinguish between *the confession of sins* and *praying for forgiveness*. The former involves true self-judgment before God; the latter is the result of believers not knowing and enjoying their proper relationship as children, undervaluing the infinite worth of the one offering of Christ, and losing sight of His effectual intercession. And only too often it betrays the desire to escape the consequences of the sin committed, and reveals a lack of true self-judgment about it. God meant what He said when He led the apostle to write, “*If we confess.*”

We would remark too that many sins should be confessed to God in secret, whereas there are others of such a character as would need a public confession before Him in the assembly of His people.

We gather then that the Scripture teaching is, that when the sinner truly believes on the Son of God his sins are all forgiven, and he is a child of God for ever. Now he ought not to sin; but if he does, it is as a child, and the advocacy of Christ and the confession of sins come in. God’s dealings with us in government, if we fail to

judge ourselves, and confess before Him, have been gone into in other papers.

In reading these lines the thoughts of some may revert to the petition in the Lord's Prayer (as it is usually termed)—“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matt. vi. 12.)

Now we can well understand how souls tenaciously cling to this as a right way of addressing God our Father, having been accustomed to use it as a formula from their earliest years. But His thoughts are not as ours, and it is most profitable to gather His mind upon all points from Scripture. We need not go into the details of this beautiful prayer, so perfect in all its parts, which the Lord taught His Jewish disciples to use when instructing them in reference to the kingdom. He did not give it to the world generally, but said to *His disciples* (Matthew v. 1, 2), “After this manner therefore *pray ye*.” (Matthew vi. 9.) The whole prayer is in beautiful keeping with the position which they then occupied, as those who had forsaken all to follow Him as the Messiah, and were expecting Him to set up the kingdom on earth in manifest power and glory. But though an advance upon Judaism, the position, relationships, and privileges of Christianity in the full sense were not brought out until after Christ had died and risen again.

There is no warrant here for *the world* to be found addressing God as their Father, and praying

for forgiveness. And for *Christians* only to enjoy forgiveness of their trespasses, as they forgive others, would be a poor thing indeed, compared with the plenteous forgiveness of the gospel of the grace of God. And in the course of the unfolding of these glad tidings, the apostle exhorts the saints upon the very opposite ground; viz., “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake [or in Christ] *hath forgiven you.*” (Ephesians iv. 32.)*

* Some might be led to ask the question, How about the case of Cornelius in Acts x. ? If you read the chapter carefully, you will see that he is called a devout man, and *one that feared God*, and of good report *among all the Jews* (Acts x. 2, 22); and *as such* his prayers and alms-deeds came up as a memorial before God. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs ix. 10), and this he had. Unquestionably a work had already begun in his soul; but he had not yet heard the full testimony preached by the apostles consequent upon accomplished redemption. Peter was sent to tell of remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost fell upon him and all them which heard the word. (Acts x. 42-44.)

E. H. C.

FRAGMENT.

“WHEN I felt that I was a sinner, I looked at Scripture and saw that I was descended from sinful parents . . . so I began to do something to better myself; and what was the sense of that? It came to just this, Satan had overcome my parents in the garden, and I thought I had more power as fallen than Adam had as unfallen. You see how senseless conscience was in me.”

G. V. W.

BALM FOR TROUBLED HEARTS.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—JOHN xiv. 1–3.

WHAT child of God is there that has not received spiritual help and blessing from this touching portion of divine truth? How often have dying saints asked that it might be read to them, their hearts finding solace and support in its familiar words, as living and powerful as when they first fell from the lips of their beloved Lord!

Spoken as these words were to that little company whom He called “His own,” gathered around Him for the last time before His death, yet in their application they reach out even unto us. For us they have a voice full of unspeakable blessedness, if indeed we have an ear to hear.

Sorrowful beyond measure the disciples were when the Lord announced to them His going away. They were, as they thought, on the eve of a great calamity, whose frowning shadow darkened their brightest hopes, and filled their hearts with

unutterable sadness. Their Master gone, what had they left? None could fill His place, and no earthly good compensate for the loss of One to whom they were so tenderly attached. All that they felt the Lord knew, though with inimitable grace and gentleness He chided them for thinking only of themselves. "If ye loved *me*, ye would *rejoice*, because I said, I go unto the Father." (John xiv. 28.)

But let us look a little at these verses, particularly in reference to ourselves. First of all He claims our personal faith—"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Were Jesus now on earth, if we could see Him with our eyes and handle Him with our hands, if we could carry our sorrows to Him, and in our difficulties ask His counsel, there would be less need for faith; but it is not ours to know Him thus. Invisible to mortal eyes even as God is, it is as *unseen* that He asks our faith. Brethren, our Saviour lives, though now we see Him not, gracious, compassionate, and sympathizing as when on earth—a Man who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; yet truly God, and therefore near to each of us, and He knows all the circumstances through which each is passing on the homeward way. But do we in very deed believe this? Are we quite sure that every secret detail of our path is known to Him, every source of anxiety, every hope, every fear? Is it

so? Do you doubt it? Let your doubts be silenced by the gentle rebuke of Jehovah to His ancient people—"Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" Had Jacob any reason for saying so? Nay, for "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. xl. 27-31.)

And it is He who says, "Let not your heart be troubled." Your heart, dear believer, even *yours*. What need of such a word as this if there were nothing to cause trouble, and no circumstance likely to produce alarm? To your eye your way seems hedged in on every side, and you can see no outlet. You are less able to battle with the storm than in past days. Your years are more and strength less, and the road that lies before you looks so dark and lonesome. Ah! it is to you this word is sent—"Let not your heart be troubled." Above the mocking winds and surging

waves rises the voice of the Beloved—"Be of good cheer . . . be not afraid."

Oh, to trust Him more fully, and not to shrink back affrighted when He leads us out of the shallows where we love to linger into deeper waters! Be assured we shall but prove the reality of His love in a richer, fuller way than ever. He will be near to us, indeed He will, and there is naught to fear.

"Rendered safe by His protection,
We shall pass the watery waste ;
Trusting to His wise direction,
We shall gain the port at last ;
And with wonder
Think on toils and dangers past."

Let not then your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Think, dear child of God, of those inspiring words. There is a place for you in that house and home, and divine love will surely bring you there. And it is *there* that God intends to fully bless you. Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, ere long thy feet shall stand within the precincts of thy Father's home! Every care shall be banished, every tear wiped away; and thy poor weary heart, laden with many a grief, and bruised and buffeted, shall know eternal rest. Thou shalt lay thy head

upon His bosom, and under His shadow shalt thou rejoice. Moreover, Jesus is coming Himself to take us to that blest abode. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." You shall be with Him. He who is now so fully able to sympathize with His suffering saints in that He Himself has suffered, who in the days of His flesh offered up His prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and who through the thorny cross and silent grave reached at length the blissful goal, He is coming to close your night of weeping, and to take you to be with Him in the rest which He has won.

"There in love for ever dwelling,
 Jesus all thy joy shall be;
 And thy song shall still be telling
 All His mercy did for thee—
 Even thee."

Once more then, dear believer, listen to the Saviour's gracious words, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John xiv. 27.)

Christ's Sufficiency.—"All we want in Christ we shall find in Christ. If we want little, we shall find little; if we want much, we shall find much; and if in utter helplessness we cast our all on Christ, He will be to us the whole treasury of God."

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed."—2 COR. iv. 8, 9.

OUTSIDE, a sea of trouble, with unceasing roll,
 Lashes incessant billows o'er my waveworn soul.
 Troubled on every side, each wave but sweeps along,
 To leave its place for one more dark, more deep, more strong.
Inside, I breathe the atmosphere of rest,
 And whisper to my Lord, "Yet not distressed."

Outside, I tread a thicket, whose bewildering maze
 Baffles on every hand the keenness of my gaze.
 Sight fails me here and sense ; I know not what comes next ;
 And in the 'wilderer gloom I trembling cry, "Perplexed !"
Inside, I claim my Saviour's priestly care ;
 Faith holds the clue, and boasts "Not in despair."

Outside, like hunted hart, weary and hard-bested,
 I know not where to hide my shame-encircled head.
 The hunters follow hard, the mountain brooks are dry ;
 In vain for covert shade I search with eager eye.
Inside, to cooling streams my steps are taken,
 In pastures green I couch me—"Not forsaken."

Outside, a fallen warrior in a desperate fight,
 I stand a beaten racer in his saddest plight.
 A cloud of witnesses behold me lose my crown ;
 And bleeding, panting, shame-oppressed, I cry, "Cast down."
Inside, He smiles "Well done !" and, overjoyed,
 Faith grasps the laid-up crown with "Not destroyed."

J. J. J.

HONOURED VESSELS.

LUKE ii.

IN the history of the Jewish people, however much they had failed as to their obligations to Jehovah, it is encouraging to find, when any turned to God owning their sin and counting on His goodness and mercy according to His word, that He was not only found of them, but His blessing to them went always far beyond anything they could have anticipated. Elijah, Elisha, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others were examples of this; and it was also abundantly manifest in the pious little remnant with which this chapter deals. They had to do with Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel; and however fallen and divided the people were, they honoured His written word, obeyed His voice, embraced in their loving interest the twelve tribes, and hoped in His faithfulness and mercy to bring in the time of blessing of which His holy prophets had spoken. Their trust was in God, and they were marvellously helped.

Nor should it be overlooked that, when faithful ones turned to God in a time of declension and ruin, they made no attempt to set up anything else in the place of what they had lost by past

unfaithfulness, neither did they take sectarian ground; for whether it be Elijah alone, or Ezra and Nehemiah with a remnant of the two tribes who returned from captivity with them, they connected "the altar" of approach to God with "the twelve tribes of Israel," according as it is written; for such they were *before God*, and they knew that His purpose was to bless "all Israel." Thus comprehending in their interests the whole nation, and being subject to God's word, there was no attempt at reconstruction, no pretence of going back, as it were, to Solomon's day and beginning afresh; but humbly owning the nation's guilt, and thankfully turning to God, they congregated around His centre (which many looked at only as a house of merchandize), and valued the way, still typically open from them to God and from God to them, by the sweet incense from the golden altar. They looked for the precious promises of the prophets to be made good to Israel; they hoped for the coming of Messiah, to establish His kingdom on the earth; and tasted and enjoyed blessing and encouragement which has scarcely ever been surpassed, if equalled, in Israel's brightest days.

We generally find in Scripture that when the Holy Spirit is working in souls He opens up the word of God, and directs such according to it, and gives them thus to have to do with Christ; for He guides into all the truth, and is the

Testifier and Glorifier of the Son. It was so here. Who can consider the divinely-given testimony of Zacharias when filled with the Holy Spirit, without seeing that, by *the word* of the prophets, he looked on to the day of the Lord? When Elizabeth also spake as filled with the Spirit, was not her heart joyful in knowing Mary to be the mother of her Lord, and in assuring her there should be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord? Was not Mary full of triumph at the prospect of giving birth to Messiah when she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," and looked on to the fulfilment of *the word* as "He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever"? Did not John also, who was filled with the Spirit, know that he was the forerunner of Messiah, and preparer of His ways, according to *the word* of Isaiah the prophet? Further on we find Mary bringing "the Son of God" into the temple to be circumcised on the eighth day, according to the custom of *the law*; and in due course also, when the days of her purification were accomplished, "according to the law of Moses," she offered a sacrifice, as it "is said in *the law of the Lord*," being poor—"a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons"—which again shows that such as are led and taught of the Spirit of God honour and obey His word, and have to do actually or typically with the Lord.

At this time there was another man in Jerusalem who was waiting on God and expecting His blessing in "the consolation of Israel," and it was "revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (Luke ii. 26.) The consolation then that he looked for was nothing less than the coming of the Messiah Himself, and this surely was the true hope of a faithful Jew. But what a marvellous blessing, in such a time of general ruin and hastening apostasy, for any one to be near enough to Jehovah as to have this most blessed communication made to him! How it should encourage our hearts even now to expect blessing from God.

But not only did Simeon know the *revealing power of the Spirit*, but he was also "*led of the Spirit* into the temple" at the very time they "brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law." Thus we see that the Spirit led this man of faith straight into Messiah's presence, and with deepest delight he at once took Him up in his arms, and was so filled with praise and thanksgiving, and with joy unspeakable, that he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He looked onward too not only to the fulfilment through Him of the promises to Abraham, and the royalties through David, but to the blessing extending even to the

Gentiles—"a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Yet, as we have before observed, he had an intelligent view of the nation's present ruin, and saw that there would be a further "fall" before the "rising again of many in Israel."

Others besides Simeon looked for redemption in Jerusalem. It was not reformation, or a mere improvement in the existing state of things, which they hoped and prayed for, but "redemption;" and this, in their minds, was associated with what was very solemn, for one of their prophets had said that "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment." (Isaiah i. 27.) Yes, they so looked for *redemption* in Jerusalem, that their energies and time were not expended, like many of the sects around them, in organizing this and that, in bringing about supposed improvement here and there, and in devising this scheme and that, but in having to do with God, and testing everything by His holy and infallible word. None other surely can be the way of faith, and love, and hope.

In this seasonable service, an aged widow was another honoured vessel. Anna's heart was right with Jehovah, for she had to do with *Him*. She loved His word, and clave to His centre—the temple. Although of a great age, she "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." What greater proof

could we have of a Spirit-led soul among God's ancient people? Though her measure of intelligence was small, she sought God earnestly and perseveringly for the redemption of Israel. We are not surprised, therefore, at finding, at the time when Simeon was in the temple with the infant Jesus in his arms, that she was also led there. "She coming in that instant into the temple gave thanks likewise unto the Lord." What a moment of joy and blessing that must have been! But who in the land of Israel besides this little company of men and women of faith and hope tasted and entered into this joy? Who else cared for it? we may ask. Her testimony too was concerning the Lord. She "spake of *Him* to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Her heart was full. She had more than she expected. She had prayed night and day for Israel's *redemption*, but now she saw the *Redeemer*. The child which was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel" was now before her eyes. It was enough. Messiah Himself filled her vision. Her heart was so gladdened that her testimony was concerning Him. She "spake of Him;" not of Israel's politics, or of Judah's misdoings, but of Him. Yes, she spake of Him; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Such was the weighty service of this aged widow. Such the divinely-given estimate of its worth, at a time when the commandments of men had in many instances made

the word of God of none effect. After this, when the time came for Messiah to present Himself to the nation, and show by His words and ways that He was the One of whom Moses and the prophets did write, it is, alas ! recorded that "He came unto His own and His own received Him not ;" but were earnest in their evil desire when they cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

The last glimpse that Scripture gives us of this pious remnant in Israel is their being in the temple in the presence of their infant Messiah full of consolation ; and though they looked for redemption in Jerusalem, they never saw it, for to this day it awaits the return of the rejected Messiah, when they will be in a repentant mind, and say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." As Jehovah's people, with earthly hopes and destinies, Jesus will then reign before His ancients gloriously.

Meanwhile, another totally distinct work of the Holy Spirit is going on in forming the Bride of the Lamb, the body of Christ—"the Church (or Assembly), which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Ephes. i. 23.) Divine grace through righteousness is now calling such by the gospel with a high, holy, and heavenly calling. Divine power too is working effectually in those who believe, and their destinies are heavenly, their relationships that of children of God, members of the body of Christ, heirs of God

and joint-heirs with Christ, now to suffer *with* and *for* Him, and soon to be glorified together.

The mystery of the assembly, or Church of God, was not revealed in the Old Testament, nor even by the ministry of the Lord Himself, though He alluded to it in saying, "Upon this rock I *will* build my Church." We are told it was "kept secret since the world began," "hid in God;" "which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." So this marvellous grace, which the heart of man could not conceive, God hath now revealed unto us by His Spirit, "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (Ephes. iii. 5, 9; 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

It was by the coming of the Holy Spirit that the Assembly was formed on earth, and made known. All believers were then at Pentecost united to Christ the Head in heaven, and thus became members of His body, forming "one new man;" a totally new thing, for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." All believing Jews and believing Gentiles, now one body in Christ, are called with a heavenly calling, and have a heavenly birth, with an eternal destiny to heavenly glory. Such are to manifest heavenly-mindedness, as not of the world even as Christ was not of the world, and, with all lowliness and meekness, they are to diligently seek to keep the Spirit's unity in the bond of peace, while waiting for

God's Son from heaven to take them there, and to be with Him and like Him for ever.

Such was the assembly practically, when formed and energized by one Spirit at Pentecost and after. The unity was manifested. Nothing like it was ever seen on earth before. There was unselfish disregard of things here ; great care and sympathy toward the members of the one body, so that no one lacked. Great grace was upon them all. They were praising God, and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ; and were so consciously separated with one heart and soul from what was unsuited to Christ, that they even rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer for His sake.

Such was the state of the Assembly or Church at first ; but where can it be seen now ? This fine and heavenly workmanship of the Spirit of God was soon tarnished by man's rude ways ; so that, alas ! the very opposite prevails now, so much so that a newborn child of God finds himself in a labyrinth of difficulties, a scene of evil and confusion, when he surveys Christendom ; yet he instinctively recoils from much because he knows it to be contrary to the Lord's mind. As a matter of fact, the more he is subject to the truth of God, the more he finds himself like the little remnant of Jews at the close of the last dispensation.

As to the path of the faithful till the Lord come, we are not left to conjecture, or to grope in uncertainty. When the apostle Paul with prophetic discernment was anticipating the ruin of the Church, he said, "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts xx. 32.) Let no one therefore suppose he will ever learn aright the path he is now to take, without waiting on God in holy heartfelt exercise before Him, and pondering "the word of His grace," specially written for our guidance.

We are taught of God to love all saints, to pray for all saints, and therefore to weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice. Yet all who name the name of the Lord are commanded to depart from iniquity, and purge themselves from vessels to dishonour; in a word, because we are His who is "holy" and "true," we are, as regards doctrine, morals, and associations, to separate ourselves from all that dishonour Him, and be with those who "call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Being "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus" leads to it. (See 2 Tim. ii.) This is not sectarianism; but, while "holding the Head," to be manifesting affection and care for all saints, keeping separate from everything unsuited to Him, as led by His word and Spirit, and, as far as we can, keeping the Holy Spirit's

unity in the bond of peace while looking for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As has often been said, this gives us a narrow path for our feet, and a large place for our hearts. So it does; for those who are not *in heart* going after all saints, praying for all saints, and seeking the welfare of the whole Church of God, cannot be "holding the Head," and are more or less sectarian. Yet such as do honour the word of His grace will find themselves in a kind of remnant position, because instead of reforming and reconstructing, they return to what is written, to that which was from the beginning.

This pious remnant of Jews in their day found untold blessing in keeping to Jehovah's centre, and His word and Spirit, and seeking the welfare of all Israel. They lived to see the Messiah, and were apparently the only people who really cared for Him. And who knows but that some of us who have long sighed over the ruin of the Church, sought the blessing of all saints, and in conscious weakness have come out to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of those so gathered to serve Him and wait for Him, may be alive when He comes with the assembling shout, and actually see Him and be with Him for ever! H. H. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HEBREWS x. 10, 14.—It is important to remember that *setting apart* is always the great idea in sanctification. A person or object that is sanctified is a person or object set apart. We believers are thus said to be sanctified or set apart by the will of God. The gracious will of God is the spring of our sanctification. It was His will that we should be set apart, and it has been effected through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Sanctification in this sense is an accomplished fact. “We are [or have been] sanctified.” It is a thing done, and it is true equally of every believer. Verse 14 teaches that the sanctified (and all believers are so) have been perfected for ever by the one offering of Christ. They have acquired through that glorious work a position before God that alters not; it is as abiding and unchanging as the value of that sacrifice on which it rests.

HEBREWS ix. 16, 17 is a parenthesis, and merely refers by way of illustration to a well-known fact. If a man makes a will or testament, it does not come into effect till he who made it dies. While alive the testament remains without effect. Death gives it power, and makes it binding. So with the first covenant the sprinkled blood of the dead victims offered in sacrifice bound the precepts of that covenant upon the people in the most solemn way; for they

had said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." (Exodus xxiv.) But that covenant, we know, gendered to bondage. All the blessings of the *new* covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, are made eternally sure, by His death, to those "which are called." In virtue of that death God can, does, and will bless; and He does this in righteousness, and not alone in grace. By that death too our sins have been put away. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," but through the blood of Christ we have remission; and the Holy Ghost witnesses that our sins and iniquities God will remember *no more*.

JUDGES i. 19.—This verse is not to be read as if the "he" referred to Jehovah. It refers to Judah, not to the Lord. It was Judah who failed to drive out the inhabitants of the valley. To the natural eye the chariots of iron were the reason, but we know that a lack of faith and energy was the real cause. (See Joshua xvii. 16–18; and compare Joshua xviii. 3 with Judges xviii. 1.)

LUKE xviii. 1–5.—The point in the parable is this: If an unjust judge hear and act for the defenceless, be his motive what it may, will not God hear and act when His own elect cry unto Him? If a man who regardeth not his fellows, nor feareth God, can at length be induced to take up the cause of a stranger, how much more shall God remember the cause of those who are the objects of His delight? The heart is to be stayed on God, though He may not answer our prayers as quickly as we might wish.

THE EARTHY AND THE HEAVENLY.

“As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.”

1 COR. xv. 48.

HAVE you ever, kind reader, had your conscience troubled about your sins? In asking this question we have no wish to insinuate that you have sinned more than others. Far from that. What each one's life has been is known to God, and known in a way that it could not possibly be to any human being under heaven. We may be assured that from His eyes nothing is hid. The thoughts and intents of the heart He discerns, and our actions are weighed in His balances, and valued at their true worth. And when we further remember that it is with Him we have to do, and that He judges everything according to the standard of His own inflexible holiness and righteousness, the conscience of the best might well be distressed, and all that it should feel find expression in the cry of the ancient prophet, “Woe is me! for I am undone.” Do you know aught of this?

God's answer to every such cry of mental anguish is found in the third verse of our chapter — “Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.” This is the provision that divine grace

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has made, and it is full and all-sufficient. God has found a ransom, and devised means that His banished be not expelled from Him. Christ is that ransom. The mighty work has been wrought by which our sins have been put away. In that fact we rest. Every charge that could be justly laid against us, every blameworthy act, every sin of omission and commission, Christ has died for. If not, how else could they be blotted out? And if He has died for them, then they are gone from God's sight, and faith knows them to be gone indeed.

Nor is this a mere matter of feeling, a persuasion of the mind that receives no support outside the individual himself. It is founded on the word of the ever-faithful God. For if Christ died for our sins it is "*according to the scriptures.*" Here is a broad basis for our faith, a divine warrant on which we may firmly take our stand. Is my reader clear upon this point? As far as feelings go they are subject to repeated change, and the man who follows them finds himself blown hither and thither, like the soap-bubbles of our childhood, by every shifting wind. One day he thinks himself safe, because he feels so; another he seriously doubts it. Thus he is tossed about like a cork upon the waters, now on the crest of the wave, now in the trough of the sea. And this state of uncertainty must continue as long as feelings are his guide; but it ends when he rests on God's word, which is always and evermore the

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same, even as the mountain peaks that stand unmoved by the raging storm and the thunder's crash.

But when the question of our sins is settled, so that it troubles us no more—when, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, it is well that we should go on to learn our place in Christ risen. To this end let us turn our attention to the latter part of this chapter, from verse 45 to the close.

We read there of the first man Adam, who was made a living soul; and of the last Adam, a quickening spirit. There too we read of the first man, of the earth, earthy; and of the second man, the Lord from heaven.

Contrasted these two stand—the first Adam and the last, the first man and the second. The first Adam head of one race, the last Adam head of another; the one and his race styled "*earthy*," the other and His race styled "*heavenly*."

It is needless to say that to the first we all belonged. We were of Adam, of that race which has for its head the man who sinned in Eden, and was driven out by the Lord God to till the ground from whence he was taken. But Adam's sin, to say nothing of our own, constituted us sinners, and with the life that we inherited from him came the condemnation under which we lay. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy." The race and its head are involved in one common ruin, their state answering to his, so that what is

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said of him is said of them. So also is it with the last Adam. By His perfect obedience even unto death, by the glorious work which He alone accomplished upon the cross, and by His resurrection, those connected with Him are not only cleared from their sins, but stand in righteousness and life—"As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Blessed words! for do they not tell us that His standing is ours, and His condition as the last Adam the condition in which we now are, as of "the heavenly"? And we know that it was only when risen from the dead that the Lord definitely took His place as the last Adam. Not till then did He breathe on His disciples, even as the Lord God of old had breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the man He had formed of the dust of the ground, and man became a living soul. They had had life before, now they possessed it "more abundantly." (Gen. ii. 7; John xx. 22; x. 10.)

To the race of the last Adam, then, each believer belongs. We have passed off the standing ground of the first man, and are on the standing ground of the second. We are not of the earthy company, but of the heavenly; we are not in Adam, but in Christ.

But some may ask, How has this been brought about? By what means and in what way have we been taken from the platform of the earthy, and placed on the platform of the heavenly? We

answer, By death and life — life in the power of the Spirit of God. This, of course, requires further unfolding.

First, as to the passing out of our old associations as in Adam. We have died with Christ. "Crucified, dead, and buried with Christ" is the epitaph which the Spirit of God has written over the grave in which every believer lies entombed when viewed as of "the earthy." "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20) is clearly not the same thing as Christ crucified for me. Christ's going down into death and the grave for me is not the same as my being dead and buried with Him. Both are true, however, and the same scriptures that declare the one affirm the other. Nor is it a matter of experience which one believer may have, but not another, but wholly of faith. The very voice that tells me that Christ died for my sins tells me that I have been crucified with Christ. There is but one authority for either statement. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him." (Rom. vi. 6.) We have died out of that state in which we once were, and are in it no more. "Ye are dead," is the emphatic language of Col. iii. 3. Of this we may find an illustration in Joshua iv. In the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood, Joshua set up twelve stones, a stone for a tribe; and when all the people had passed over, followed by the priests, the waters of

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Jordan returned unto their place, and buried those stones out of sight for ever. Into the deep, dark river of death, of which Jordan was a figure, Christ went in grace for us. There He bore the judgment due to our sins, and there too "sin in the flesh" was condemned. In that terrible hour, when all that we had done came under the judgment of God, we as of "the earthy" were for ever set aside. In that death we see our own as children of the first man Adam. Our history is solemnly closed there; we are dead with Christ, and in His grave have we been buried. Thus by death, our death with Christ, we have passed out of the scene in which we once were, and out of the associations in which we once lived and moved. Blessed be God for so great a deliverance!

But more. If there were twelve stones set up in Jordan, there were also twelve other stones taken out of Jordan and set up on the Canaan side of it. Dead in sins we were, the common condition of all mankind; for "if one died for all then were all dead." And this not the result of our individual sins, but by the offence of one, even Adam, whose sin plunged his posterity into a state of death. (Rom. v. 15.) Into death's dark domain the Saviour entered. He died and was buried. But now He lives, and we also; for God hath quickened us together with Him. If in the cross of Jesus we see our end as of Adam, in His opened grave we see the beginning of a

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new history, as of the last Adam. We are now identified with Him, and share the fruit of His mighty work and glorious victory as surely as we shared in the ruin of our former head. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Thus we are in Christ, and on the standing-ground of the last Adam, with the death and grave of Jesus, in which we died and were buried, lying between us and our former state and standing as of the family of "the earthy."

Not only so ; for if we share the life of "the heavenly," we have that life, as already stated, in the power of the Spirit of God. To us the Holy Ghost has been given, and it is by His indwelling that the truth we have been considering is made good in our souls, and that we have the distinct consciousness of our being in Christ. The Holy Ghost is the seal, the earnest too of what is yet to come, and the unction from the Holy One ; and it is more particularly in connection with the latter character that we have intelligence as to our new position. See 1 John ii. 27 in support of this, and the Lord's own words in John xiv. 20 might be quoted in further proof : "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." That day is come, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost now characterizes the Christian state, so much so that we are said to

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be not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, even as we are not in Adam, but in Christ. (Rom. viii. 9.)

The recognition of this immense truth clothes the opening words of Romans viii. with profound meaning. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*." It is not only that there is no condemnation to them that believe in Him (which is most blessedly true), but the Holy Ghost is dealing not so much with the results of our faith as with our being *in Christ*. To that state, unchangeable and eternal, there can be no condemnation. Were such a thing possible, then Christ Himself, risen from the dead, the last Adam, the second Man, might yet fail even as the first Adam did. That we know to be impossible. We, too, as in Him, are far beyond the reach of condemnation. There is none, there can be none, to them that are *in Christ*.

And this is our *present* place before God. What is still future is declared in the verses that follow: "We have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." But for this we wait till the dawn of the resurrection day. Ere enlarging upon this the apostle in few words sets aside the prevailing notion that death will be the portion of all. "We shall *not* all sleep" is the brief and decided declaration of the Spirit of God. Why then should any say we shall? Are they wiser than God? Shall not His counsel stand for ever, the thoughts of

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His heart to all generations? But though we shall not all sleep, "we shall all be changed;" for flesh and blood—that is, man as he is at present constituted—cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Then the image of the earthy shall be put off for ever, and we shall be conformed to the image of the heavenly. A body of glory shall each raised or changed one have like unto the body of the heavenly One.

Great practical results flow from these great truths, but Paul is not led to enter upon them here. He has done so elsewhere. Nor can we, within the required limits of this paper, attempt to set them forth. May it be given unto us to know better our place "in Christ," and keeping these wonderful and gracious unfoldings of divine wisdom fully in view, may we give earnest heed to the apostle's closing words, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
 And I have died with Thee;
 Thou'rt risen: my bands are all untied;
 And now Thou liv'st in me.
 The Father's face of radiant grace
 Shines now in light on me."

WAITING FOR GOD'S SON FROM HEAVEN.

THE common idea of thousands of the children of God is, that they will have to serve Christ for a time here, and then die; and it is very difficult to persuade them otherwise, notwithstanding the clear testimony of Scripture. It is true, of course, that any Christian may die or fall asleep through Jesus at any moment. Multitudes have thus passed from this world, and many are daily departing "to be with Christ" by the way of death. (Philippians i. 23.) Absent from the body, but present with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.) But is this what the word of God teaches the Christian to look for? Is this the hope taught by our Lord and His apostles? Let us search and see.

With the earnest desire to bring Scripture testimony simply before our readers, we would turn to a few passages which directly or indirectly bear upon this all-important subject. The whole will be found to teach that the Christian should not be looking for death, but *awaiting his Lord's return*, though liable to pass through death into the unclothed state, if in the longsuffering of God grace still reign, and judgment be delayed.

In John xiv. 3 our Lord said to His disciples, "If

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I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again*, and receive you unto myself," &c. In Mark xiii. 35: "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not *when the master of the house cometh*, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." And in Luke xii. 35: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that *wait for their lord*."

Now, many interpret these and similar passages as though they had reference to death, but the careful perusal of the verses should convince such of their mistake.

Take again the testimony to the disciples of the two men in white apparel. Said they, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come* in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i. 11.) Here we have angelic testimony to the fact of Christ's return, which is our chief point for the moment. We shall refer to the manner of its accomplishment further on.

Turn next to the Pauline epistles, and we shall find them full of the precious truth of the Lord's return. It was an integral part of the gospel which Paul preached. He wrote to the Thessalonians, saying, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how

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ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and *to wait for His Son from heaven*, whom He raised from the dead, *even Jesus*, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) Note the language; not to wait to die and go to heaven, but *to wait for God's Son from heaven*.

The blessed truth of our Lord's return was so real to them, that when some of their company fell asleep through Jesus, they sorrowed, thinking that they would not have part with Christ when publicly manifested in glory. This led to the apostle's writing that wondrous scripture, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that *we which are alive, and remain* unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For *the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then *we which are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 13-18.)

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Now, where in all this is there any thought of the believer's looking for death? It was a surprise (and grief until explained) to the Thessalonians that any of their company should die at all; and the apostle unfolds in detail what will transpire at the Lord's coming for His people. Now note the language which he employs. If he himself had been looking for death at the time, could he have said what he did? He does not say, *We*, the dead in Christ, shall rise first, and *they* which are alive and remain, &c., but "the dead in Christ shall rise first, and *we* which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with *them* in the air." He includes himself, Silvanus, and Timotheus with the Thessalonian saints, as amongst those who would be caught up to meet the Lord without passing through death at all. It is true that at a later day, when Paul the aged, he learned that he would die, as he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 6-8.) But even then he only spoke of *his own* personal departure, and of others as *loving the Lord's appearing*.

And Peter too, speaking of the coming king-

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dom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, said, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ *hath shewed me*. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance," &c. (2 Pet.i.13,14.) He does not bring out the truth of Christ's coming for His people as the apostle Paul, who was the chosen vessel to communicate this and other truths; but he was occupied with and also witness of both the coming kingdom and the eternal state, and speaks of his decease, as the above scripture shows, as "putting off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ *hath shewed me*." In common with all the early Christians, his hope, whatever the measure of his intelligence, was *his Lord's return*.

Again, in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52 we find Paul saying, "Behold, I shew you a mystery: *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*"

And again, in 2 Cor. v. 1-4, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

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For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: *not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon*, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." The teaching here is most clear that the desire of the apostle and his fellow-Christians was not to be unclothed, or to die, the spirit being separated from the body, but to be clothed upon—that is, to be glorified without falling asleep—that mortality, which is the condition of men living on the earth, might be swallowed up of life, not death.

And again, in Philippians iii. 20, 21, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also *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 unto Himself."

This last scripture is incontrovertible as to the fact of the Lord's return not meaning death; for at that moment *this vile body* (or body of humiliation) will be *fashioned like unto His glorious body*; whereas, as every one knows, when a Christian falls asleep, though his spirit lives with Christ, his body goes to the grave and corruption.

And in beautiful keeping with all this, in Romans viii. 23 the apostle says, "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, *the redemption* of our body" (not its corruption). And in Ephesians iv. 30, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye

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are sealed *unto the day of redemption*" (not corruption).

In referring too to the Lord's Supper he says, "Ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come*" (not till you die). (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

And remark further, in Matthew xxv. 10, that when the Bridegroom comes, the whole company of the wise virgins go in together with Him to the marriage, and not one at a time, which surely would have to be the case if it had reference to the death of the body. Christians do not die all together, but individually; whereas here the five who represent all the Christians waiting at that moment go in together. The force of the original is, "*The ones* that were ready went in with Him."

The Lord's coming, then, does not refer to the Christian's dying or falling asleep; but there is a moment at hand when the One who died was buried, rose again, ascended and sat at the right hand of God, will descend from heaven to receive His people to Himself, to share all the glories which the Father has given to Him as the Man who glorified Him on earth. This is the proper and immediate hope of the Christian—to wait for God's Son from heaven, even Jesus. Men may question, doubt, or wrest the truth of it, but it is true for all that. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. iii. 4.) "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," are among His own parting words to His loved

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ones; and come again He will. "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. x. 37.) "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv. 35.)

Furthermore, not only will the Lord Himself descend from on high for His heavenly saints, raising the sleeping, and changing the living ones in a moment, so to be for ever with Himself; but after a brief interval (during which the present fast ripening apostasy of Christendom will be fully developed, and antichrist come upon the scene), the Son of man will re-appear in power and great glory, as King of kings, and Lord of lords. (Rev. xix.) All His saints will accompany Him, and all His holy angels. (Zech. xiv. 5; Matt. xxv. 31.) He shall judge the quick (or living nations), and reign with His saints in heavenly glory over the earth for a thousand years. And after that (and not till then) shall the end of the world come, the heaven and earth flee away, and the wicked dead be judged, followed by an eternity of bliss for His own. All these things must come to pass.

The Christian hope embraces, then, not only the coming of Christ for His people, to introduce us to the Father's house, but also manifestation with Him in the public and official display connected with the kingdom, and eternal blessing in the day of God.

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When He comes for us—and He may come at any moment—none but His loved ones shall hear His voice and see His face. It will be a secret rapture, a sudden translation by divine power to meet Christ in the air, glorified in His image. When He appears in power and glory, *every eye* shall see Him, and the saints shall appear with Him. (Rev. i. 7; Col. iii. 4.)

Beloved reader, in view of this blessed hope, this glorious future, what manner of persons ought we to be? Can you joyfully invite His return? His blessed promise is, "Surely I come quickly." Can you add from the heart, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? If your mind and heart are filled with a thousand and one schemes in this poor world, apart from His will, the thought of His speedy return can only fill you with dismay and fear. How will you render account to Him? But if, with broken will, your heart is in the enjoyment of His love, what greater joy can you have than to anticipate the moment when He shall call His church, His bride, away, and make good His rights in this world, and you have part for ever with Him in the glory above? May He graciously keep each Christian heart true to Himself the little, little while, so that all our ways may be coloured by the light of the coming glory. And may every unconverted one who reads these lines be warned ere it be too late, lest he should meet Him as a Judge.

E. H. C.

“THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

HABAKKUK ii. 1-4.

THERE is a subject of much importance of which I wish to speak, and it is summed up in this sentence, “*The just shall live by his faith.*” Thrice we find it quoted in the New Testament, and each time a different truth is brought out in connection with it. In Habakkuk the prophet stands upon his watch-tower. God had something to say to him that was not only important to the prophet, but to every one far and near; so important indeed that it had to be written down, and made so plain that any one and every one might see it, that even the runner might read it, for it should contain the very marrow of the gospel. But what is it that is to be so revealed? “*Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.*” What does this mean? In one brief sentence man is made manifest;—his soul is lifted up, and is not upright. This is the result of the reasoning in the opening chapters of Romans; in fact, one might almost say that it is Romans iii. in miniature, for there we find there is none righteous, and that *all* have sinned. And not only does God say that *all* have sinned, but also that there is no fear of God

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before their eyes. What a sweeping condemnation this is! But the same verse that tells of the ruin speaks of the remedy, and immediately we read of the "just." Now the question is, Who are the *just*?

It may perhaps add an interest to the subject if I tell you of Luther, who, as you know, was once a monk. He was at Rome on one occasion, and while going up a stone staircase on his knees as a good work, he suddenly got up and walked down again; for he seemed to hear a voice saying in his ear, "The just shall live by faith," and at once he saw that it was not by prayers or penances or good works he could ever get to heaven, but only by faith, and this is what I want to press home now.

I am sure you have often heard that there is no such thing as good works earning you God's favour, and that we owe everything to His mercy and the finished work of Christ. But while no one can stand before God on the ground of works, neither can they on the ground of ordinances. Ordinances cannot save the soul any more than good works can. No one ever got life by baptism or the Lord's Supper.

I will ask you to look now at Romans i. 17. There the apostle announces the gospel, and where does he turn to get it in a nutshell, as we say? Why, to this verse in Habakkuk. "But who are the just?" you ask, "and where are they to be found?"

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So long ago as Job's time the question was asked, "How should man be just with God?" And if Job asked this, where are we to find them? Now, the apostle does tell us where to find them; but first he shows us where they are not. The opening of Romans is like a search for the just, and they cannot be found. At the time the apostle was writing there were in the world two great classes of men—namely, Jews and Gentiles; that is to say, those who had the oracles of God, and those who were sunk in darkness—the heathen. Were any of the latter the just? Did any of them live up to the light they had? This is argued out in Romans i., and we read, "That which may be known of God is manifest unto them . . . for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." The light of creation was theirs, by which they might learn at least the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator, though creation gives comparatively little light, and does not reveal to us that God is love. But did they even worship God as they knew Him? Read verses 21–23, and you will see that they "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things." Then they are certainly not the "just." There is also the light of con-

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science. Everyone sits in judgment on his neighbour, a proof that he has a conscience, and is thus really condemning himself. The first verse of Romans ii. describes this—"Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest also thyself." The man proves the existence of a conscience, and makes himself without excuse.

Finding no just among the heathen, the chapter proceeds to speak of the Jews instructed out of the law, besides having the light of conscience and creation. What ought a Jew to have been? A law-keeper. And what was he? A law-breaker. Read verses 21,23,24, "Thou . . . which teachest another ;" and, "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." Is not that a solemn statement? False to the light he has got, he certainly is not "just." The first three chapters of Romans prove every mouth stopped, and not one just before God.

Here we may mark the wisdom of the Spirit of God in anticipating a point that might with some show of reason be advanced. A Jew might ask, Would you not say that Abraham was just? This is anticipated, and the apostle goes on to speak of Abraham, and asks whether he was accounted just by his works? No, but by his faith he was one of the just. But he had not always lived up to his light; he had worshipped

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idols till God appeared unto him, and bade him leave his country. Then God called him to the door of his tent, and told him his seed should be like the stars. And what did old, childless Abraham do? *Believed God*, being “fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform.” And he was counted just or justified. Why? Because he believed God. And now let me ask, Who are counted just? Is it those who live up to their light? There are none such. But it is those who believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Do you want to be justified? Well, you must believe God. Are you resting on Him who was raised again for our justification? If so you are justified. No charge can be laid against you. You are made just, not by works, but by faith. This text in Habakkuk gave Paul his subject, and you see the way he has worked it out.

Turn now to Galatians iii. 11—“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” The point in Romans was, Who are the just? Here it is what makes them just. It is not the law, but *faith*.

The Galatians had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, and now they were listening

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to those who sought to lead them back to works of law. The apostle upbraids them with the words, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?"

There are many nowadays who say, when they hear that salvation is to be had by simply believing in Jesus—that is, by faith, not works—"Then every one must be saved, for all believe." Now, it is quite true there is general and widespread belief about the Saviour, but that is not the same as believing on Him as my Saviour.

Let us see from Scripture what it is to believe. You remember that beautiful chapter, Numbers xxi. The Israelites had got to the border of the promised land, when they sinned against God, and He sent fiery serpents among them. The people came to Moses, and asked him to pray God to take the serpents away. Moses did pray for them, but God did something far better than merely removing the serpents. For though it would have been a good thing, of course, for the people who were not bitten to have had them taken away, it would not have been any good to those who were bitten, and were dying. Just as people sometimes say now, Why does God not turn sin out of the world? It would be very good for every one not born yet, but no good to you and me, for we have sinned. God did not take away the serpents, but He told Moses to make a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole,

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and whoever looked at it would live. All they were asked to do was just to look, and there was only one thing that could make any sure it was for them, and that was that they were bitten. Then they were sure. And it is the same now. How can you be sure that the Lord Jesus was on the cross for you? Because you were a sinner, and apart from Christ must have gone to hell. I knew I was a lost sinner, and my need made me look to Jesus. Just as the poor bitten Israelite's need made him look at the serpent of brass, and the moment his eye rested on it he was healed, and then he felt healed afterwards. Now, there are many people waiting to feel happy before they believe, but they never will. The bitten people in the camp of Israel might have said, “We know *all about* the brazen serpent;” but unless they looked up at it it did them no good. Suppose I had gone past, and seen a man just bitten with a serpent. I say to him, “Oh look, quick, at the serpent of brass—there it is!” But he tells me, “Oh, yes, I know it is there, well enough; in fact, I know every thing *about it*; I will look presently!” And by-and-by I pass that way again, and see him dead. What good did *knowing all about it* do him, when he did not look for himself? Knowing *all about* the Lord Jesus Christ will not save you. Have you ever looked to Him for yourself? Have you ever had to do with Him as a poor lost sinner?

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If not, look to Him now. Remember, one look of faith gives life.

Now turn to Hebrews x. 36-39, the third passage where we find this text quoted. We have seen that in Romans the emphasis was on the word *just*, in Galatians the point was *faith*, and here it is a question of how to *live*. There are two classes spoken of here: those who draw back unto perdition, and those that believe to the saving of the soul. The Spirit of God says, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." *But we are not* of them who draw back; if we were we would not have faith to save the soul. You see it is impossible to belong to both classes. Thank God, if I am His child by faith, I can never be lost. But how am I to live here as a child of God? Well, by faith, as has been well said, "The first look is life, and every look after is the power of living." So in Gal. ii. 20: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." People are sometimes hindered from confessing Christ by the fear of not being able to keep up their confession. Well, how am I to keep it up? By faith. It is a life of faith, and a path of faith. You remember Peter, when the Lord was walking on the water, and he wanted to go to Him, the Lord told him to come, and with His word for it Peter stepped out of the ship, and walked on the

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water—an impossibility to nature. How long did he go on, though? Just as long as he kept looking at Jesus. But when he looked away from Him he got frightened, never considering that even if the water was smooth he could not have walked one step on it alone, any more than when it was rough. But the Lord did not fail him in his failure. He was within arm's length, and caught him. He never fails, and there is no such thing as any of the Lord's people going to the bottom. They can always go on while looking in faith to the Lord.

I want to say a word more about ordinances before we close. No one was ever counted just by ordinances. (See Rom. ii. and iii.) But just as circumcision made a man a Jew *outwardly*, baptism makes a person a Christian *outwardly*. But a man may be a Christian outwardly by profession, and not be born again, not have life in his soul. There is no such thing as living apart from faith, and ordinances never give life. A man may be a Christian outwardly, but if he die unsaved it will only increase his condemnation. Of course, it is a great thing to have the profession of Christianity, and we have great advantages over the heathen. But if you are not born again, you are only like the man at the marriage feast who had not on a wedding garment; and if not born again, you cannot be in heaven.

Now a word about the Lord's supper. The

Romanists have what they call mass, and say that the eating of it gives eternal life ; and the extraordinary part of it is that they found this doctrine on a verse that does not speak of the Lord's supper at all. Of the four gospels, Matthew speaks of both baptism and the Lord's supper, and so does Mark. Luke speaks of the Lord's supper, but not of baptism, and John speaks of neither. It speaks indeed of John's baptism, but not Christian baptism, and yet, strange to say, people go to it for both. Now look at the passage in John vi. 51. It is very simple. Look on to the end of the verse, and you will see what the bread was He spoke of: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." These people were looking for the Messiah, and could not think of Him being crucified, but the Lord told them, as it were, that unless they received Him crucified, there was no life for them. The apostles never preached the Lord's supper for salvation, but that "the just shall live by faith." But how does the Lord's supper come in? you ask. Very blessed it is in its place. Read 1 Cor. xi., and you will see that it is for those who know the Lord to remember His death. It is too often confounded with the gospel supper in Luke xiv. That supper comes first, and then the Lord's supper. But you have no place at the latter till you have eaten the former: then you can have communion with Him.

JUSTICE BEFORE GENEROSITY.

“WE must be just before we are generous” is a wholesome proverb. The reverse would upset everything. Think of a man acting in mere kindness at the expense of his creditors! He might acquire for a moment the name of a philanthropist, but shortly he would be committed to prison for dishonesty. Nor could the plea of a generous character annul the prior claims of law and equitable dealing.

Now if this be so amongst men, where dishonesty is so common, how much more is it true of His ways whose throne is established in righteousness. It is true that God is generous, most generous, as all His ways have proved. He knows no parsimony. His hand is lavish, and His heart is liberal. When Adam was placed in the garden, he was given title to every tree except one; and four rivers flowed from thence.

Further, God makes the rain to fall on the unjust as well as on the just; His sun to shine in like manner. In the Father's house is bread enough and to spare; so that if creation fail of her ample furnishing, and supply not her quantum of food, it is only because of the sin of the creature: her diminished resources are a merciful

correction to the pride of man. But, withal, God is generous; and if generous in mere creature needs, so too in the far deeper need of the soul. He loved us when we were dead in sins. Wonderful fact! But then His compassion toward us, and His desire to save, could not be exercised until justice were first satisfied. This withstood the acting of love. To save a guilty sinner on the ground of mercy alone, and therefore at the expense of justice, or of that element of government which demands retribution for disobedience, would clearly be to subvert all government, and to overturn the throne itself.

The first great question to be settled was the satisfaction of justice. God must be just; He could not be otherwise; and must act in full and perfect consistency with His character. The enquiry, "How can man be just with God?" and "how," in this connection, "can God be just with Himself?" finds its answer in the same place.

It is necessary that God should find satisfaction for His throne, outraged as it has been by man, so that justice should have her due, sheathe her sword, and entitle mercy to act freely in the fullest blessing of the very people who had deserved the stroke. Justice satisfied is mercy liberated, so that both can move hand in hand in the deliverance of the guilty.

But how? The answer is given us in the earlier chapters of Romans. It is most noteworthy

that in this epistle the *love* of God is never mentioned until chap. v. 5, and that all before is occupied by the Spirit of God in explaining His *righteousness*. Just as though we had in due order justice before generosity, and the holy maintenance therefore of the principle of true government.

Well then, granted sin on our part, and holiness on God's, how can I, a sinner, meet a holy God? How can an insolvent debtor meet a creditor? What is the result of such a meeting? Why, inability to meet my lawful debts implies punishment; that and nothing else in law. Justice is dead against such a one. His case is hopeless.

And so with the sinner. And remember that a sinner is inherently and intrinsically such; that though he may mend his life, and alter his ways, yet he is a sinner still, so that in one way or other it is as a sinner that he meets God. But what is the result? Again justice is against him. His case is absolutely hopeless. Nor could God extend mercy to him but at the expense of His justice, and the destruction of His throne. Oh, the question is solemn!

Thus not only does justice hinder the sinner, but it stands in the way of mercy. Where is the sword to cut this fearful knot? How can mercy be extricated so that she may indulge herself and have justice on her side?

The cross of Christ supplies the blessed answer. There the sinless One died under the full judgment

of God, as the divinely-given Victim and Sacrifice, whose death exhausted that judgment, and brought glory to God, where sin and Satan had triumphed. Not one claim remained unsatisfied, not one demand unmet, not one sin that could not be cleansed by His blood. Justice asked no more. The glory of the Father raised Him from the dead. He sits enthroned as Victor, having made atonement, and having retrieved God's honour, and established the righteousness of His throne. The sword is sheathed; mercy now moves to proclaim a blood-bought pardon; so that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Yes, "God is just." He has demonstrated the equitable way in which He acts in mercy and pardon. No enemy can lift a finger; all heaven is in harmony. A "dying thief" may enter in fullest confidence. We have boldness to do so by the blood of Jesus. The thing that righteously opposed us is now on our side. God would have been unjust in saving the sinner as such, He would now be unjust in not saving the believer. His character is involved. "It is God who justifieth." What a foundation! What a gospel! None can enjoy peace apart from a knowledge of this side of it. It is, no doubt, happy to think of God's generosity; but assurance must be based on something more. The creditor might declare his love for his debtor, but how could the debtor rest assured unless he were consciously clear of the debt? He must know not

only the creditor's generosity towards him, but that he has nothing against him. And God has nothing against the believer. There is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. viii.) The discipline of the Father is very different from the judgment of God. If my ways as His child are faulty He will correct me; but that is widely distinct from His condemnation of the impenitent. This last is eternal; that is, of course, only temporal.

Yes, eternal condemnation is demanded by justice for the sinner who rejects the atonement of Christ, as much as eternal glory is secured for the believer by the same.

As a Saviour God is just; He is the same as Judge. It is happy to know that God is "Love." It is the mark of the day to forget that He is "Light," and these two qualities must balance each other in all His ways. Remember, dear reader, that whilst God is generous He is also just.

J. W. S.

FRAGMENT.

"THE hand of God can do the business of God, though it have but a sling and a stone, or the jawbone of an ass, or lamps and pitchers; and the Spirit of God can do the business of God with souls, though He use but a word, or a look, or a groan."

AM I DECEIVING MYSELF?

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

IT is a sad thing to be the victim of deception, even upon important earthly matters; but to be deceived in that which relates to eternity is indeed an unfathomable woe. Yet there can be no doubt that many have been deceived as to their condition before God, and consequently have been plunged into irretrievable ruin. They have thought that prayers, tears, and charitable deeds would satisfy God; or that God, knowing what frail creatures they were, would treat their shortcomings with great leniency.

Now, the secret of persons being deceived is this: instead of turning to God's Word to learn *His* thoughts, they listen to their own, or rest upon the opinions that are current among men.

If there be any now reading this paper whose hopes for eternity are founded upon anything less than the atoning work of Christ, and the eternal word of the living God, we have no hesitation in saying that such hopes are vain and delusive. We trust the reader will not think we speak harshly. Would it not be unkindness, yea, rather, would it not be the most wanton cruelty, to allow a blind man to walk towards a precipice

without speaking to him of the danger? But to allow a fellow-traveller to eternity, buoyed up with false hopes, to continue a course that will plunge him into the eternal abyss, and not utter a word of warning, would be infinitely more cruel.

Is there a reader who thinks to stand before God on the ground of his own righteousness? Abandon this false hope, we beseech thee; for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. iii. 20.) Is there one who is blindly trusting to the mercy of God? Thine, too, is a false hope; for God hath said He "will by no means clear the guilty." (Exod. xxxiv. 7.)

Do you say, "What, then, must I do to be saved?" Hear God's own answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31); "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

But not unfrequently we meet with those who truly desire to know God's thoughts, and whose trust is in the precious blood of Christ alone; yet, instead of enjoying a stedfast peace, they are often tormented with the fear that perhaps they are deceiving themselves.

It may be the reader is thus troubled, and, if so, we would have a word with him. Suppose, for a moment, that you owe fifty pounds, and have not a penny with which to meet the debt.

A friend, well known for his generosity, hearing of your embarrassment, pays the whole amount. He comes to you, and, handing you the receipt, says, "My friend, I know your need, and have therefore paid every farthing you owe." With these kind words sounding in your ears, and the plainly-written receipt held in your hand, would not every fear be at once removed? If any one were to ask how it was that you had suddenly become so peaceful, you would say that your debt had been paid, and, if necessary, to convince your questioner, you would produce the receipt.

Now, we are all debtors to God, and have absolutely nothing to bring to Him in payment. But the Lord Jesus, knowing our sad condition, in wondrous compassion went to Calvary's cross, and there paid down the full amount demanded by divine justice. His desire was that every believer should know his debt was fully paid, and, therefore, before yielding up His Spirit to God, He uttered those words that have banished fear from many an anxious heart, "It is finished!" That God was satisfied we see in the fact that He raised Christ from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand.

Perhaps you say you are well acquainted with all this, and yet do not enjoy settled peace. I can tell you the reason of that—*you have forgotten the written receipt that God has given you.* If you, as a lost sinner, have fled to Christ; if you are

trusting in His precious blood alone, you will find, by turning to God's Word, that He has written out a receipt of your debt. It reads thus: "*Be it known unto you therefore . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.*" (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

Now, dear reader, how can you entertain a doubt? Christ says the work of redemption is finished, and God Himself has written out and given you a receipt of your debt—"All that believe are justified from all things." Do you not see that if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ *God says you are saved?* Therefore the question is, not whether you are deceiving yourself, but whether *God* would deceive you. "God forbid that I should have so wicked a thought," may be your reply. "I know that God would never deceive me; but although I read in His Word, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,' yet, when I find such evil thoughts within, and, not only so, but find that, much against my will, I am continually giving way to temper, or otherwise acting as a Christian should not, I am afraid to say I am saved, for fear that I should be 'deceiving myself. Should not the Christian be like Christ?"

Yes, dear reader, Christ is the divine pattern for every believer; but there is an important lesson you have yet to learn. It is this: "In

me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth *no good thing*." This is true of all, whether saved or unsaved. Directly a man believes in the Lord Jesus he is born again—a divine life is implanted. But what about the old nature? That remains in him unchanged; it is a bad tree, and can produce nothing but bad fruit.

Many think that upon conversion the old nature is improved, but this is a mistake. God has condemned sin in the flesh, and we are told to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." The old nature can never be improved; but if there be on our part a conscious weakness, leading us to turn to Christ for strength, He will enable us to walk according to the new nature we have received. "My strength," says Christ, "is made perfect in weakness."

The Christian, then, while on earth, has two natures—the new, according to God, and the old, entirely contrary to God. He is responsible to keep the old nature under. It is an enemy that will not be dislodged until death or the coming of the Lord. The apostle Paul says, "It is no more I . . . but sin that dwelleth in me." (Rom. vii. 20.) Sin is not, however, for a moment, to be tolerated; for "how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

But notwithstanding that we find within us the working of sin, and have frequently to mourn

over failure in walk, let us not doubt our safety in Christ. His word, "It is finished!" still remains true; and we have, for the comfort and assurance of our hearts, God's plainly-written receipt of our debt—"*All that believe are justified from all things.*"

"Ah!" says one, "what makes me think that I am deceiving myself is this: I often fear that I do not love Christ, and I read, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.'"

All believers are saved, dear reader, not because they love Christ, but because He loved them, and gave Himself for them. Still it is true that wherever there is divine life there is love to Christ and to His people. Often, however, the believer's love is, as it were, dormant; for various reasons it is not in activity.

Let me explain myself. A husband starts from home in the morning to manage his business in the distance. He leaves behind him a devoted wife. But during the day the numerous cares connected with household matters so fill her mind that she scarcely thinks of the absent husband. When evening brings him back, his loving words and kind attention naturally cause her to be occupied with him, and her heart is filled with a reciprocative love.

Dear reader, apply this illustration to your own case. Instead of being occupied with Christ,

you are harassed by thoughts of self. If you were to receive God's Word in childlike simplicity, every fear would be removed. Thus you would be free to think upon the love of Christ; and as something of its magnificence entered into your soul, you would experience no difficulty in saying, "We love Him, because He first loved us."

Many are in trouble because they do not *feel* themselves saved. We would ask such to carefully read the following scripture: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life." (1 John v. 13.) This is written to believers, not that they may *feel* that they have eternal life, but that they may *know* it. Directly believers in Christ rest upon God's Word *they know they have eternal life, simply because God has said so*. Knowing themselves saved, they of course feel happy.

Oh, dear reader, let not Satan keep you occupied with your feelings, but honour God by believing what He says. If Satan tells you that you are deceiving yourself, tell him that God is not deceiving you, and He says that you are saved. Thus resisted, the great adversary will flee away, and you will quietly pillow your soul upon the word that shall endure when "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

C. H.

REJOICE EVERMORE.

1 THESS. v. 16.

FROM the beginning to the end of God's holy Word, it seems most clear that it is His will that His people should rejoice. Not that they should make-believe to be happy and glad when they are really sorrowful. Oh, no! God wants reality, sincerity, and truth, even though it be to own that we can see no ground for rejoicing. When God's people of old sat in captivity by the waters of Babylon, what complete hypocrisy it would have been for them to have even talked of rejoicing.

While there it was but right that they should hang their harps on the willows and weep. But *why* were they there? Surely the One who had *come down* to deliver their fathers from Egypt's bondage, who had made a path for them through the sea, who had led them through that "great and terrible wilderness," feeding them there with angels' food, who had driven out the heathen from before them, and *planted* them in the mountain of His inheritance, surely that One could have no pleasure in casting them out of that goodly and pleasant land where He had told them to *rejoice* in every good thing which the Lord had given them.

No; but they (and remember they were God's own chosen people) had forsaken Him, and would none of His ways; therefore God gave them into the hand of their enemies, to learn through deprivation how good were the blessings He had given them to rejoice in, but which they had lightly esteemed. And while captives in the *strange* land, they remembered *and thought upon* Zion.

Oh, when our heads hang down, and our lips refuse to sing, is it because there *are* no "good things" to rejoice in? Is not the fault in ourselves? Is it not we who have forsaken our own mercies?

If we look for a little at Luke xv. we get a most beautiful picture of the Father's house, into which we as His children are brought. Oh, the fulness and completeness of blessing we who believe have in Christ—*no* good withheld! The prodigal son was *forgiven* and kissed while he was yet a great way off, and before he had time to enter and know the gladness of the father's house.

In the same way, merely to know our sins forgiven will not of itself make us "rejoice evermore," though it is the first necessary step towards so doing. Supposing the father, after forgiving the son, had left him in his rags and hunger-pangs to get on as best he could, do you think he could have rejoiced till he danced for joy? I think not.

But the father did not so. After forgiving his son, he had him clothed with the best robe, dressing him in princely fashion, with a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and he took him into the house. More than that, the fatted calf was killed for him to feed upon. The soul knows a hunger *after forgiveness* that Christ alone can satisfy. And having provided Christ as our all-satisfying portion, our gracious God and Father says, “Let *us*” (Jesus said, when on earth, He was the *bread of God*—that which God feeds upon) “Let *us* eat and be merry.” No mournful countenance or hanging head while feasting in the father’s house. And still more, there was music and dancing, heard also by those *outside* the house.

Do *we* know anything of the *music* and *dancing* of the Father’s house? Do *outsiders* know and hear that *our* hearts leap and dance with the gladness of that house?

David, in Psalm xxx., speaks of his mourning being turned into *dancing*, and himself girded with gladness. Oh, let us seek to “*rejoice evermore!*” We shall (indeed I do not think we can do otherwise) if our eyes are once opened to see that, having Christ, we *all* possess. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?” Again, “*All* things are *yours*,” whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come. (See 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) A. B.

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD.

THE holy person of the Son of God is most jealously guarded in Scripture. The whole fabric of Christianity is built upon this momentous truth. The divinity of Christ is fundamental. When men said that the Son of Man was Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets, Peter, taught of the Father, confessed Him, saying, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" To deny it, call it what you will, is infidelity. But "whosoever believeth that *Jesus is the Christ*, is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) And "whosoever shall confess that *Jesus is the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1 John iv. 15.)

The truth, professed by all Christendom generally, that there are three Persons in the Godhead, is abundantly confirmed throughout Scripture, the full revelation coming out in the New Testament. It has been very lucidly expressed in the following language: "The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God."

In John i. 1 we read, "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 in verse 14, "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." Nothing could be clearer from this, than that the Word was God, and that *the Word became flesh. Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, was that Word*; for, in Matt. i. 20, an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. *Now all this was done*, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name *Emmanuel*; which being interpreted is, *God with us.*"

At His baptism, "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 16, 17.)

"Unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, *Thou art the Son of God.*" (Mark iii. 11.) Legion, too, in Luke viii. 28, "when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, *Jesus, thou Son of God most high?*" And when the Roman centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus on the cross, saw the earthquake, and those

things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, *Truly this was the Son of God.* (Matt. xxvii. 54.)

The apostle Paul, in bringing out the privileges of his kinsmen after the flesh, says, "Of whom as concerning the flesh *Christ came*, who is *over all*, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. ix. 4, 5.) And again, in 1 Tim. iii., "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: *God was manifest in the flesh*, justified in the Spirit," &c. Of course, when men are daring enough to deny revelation, they must of necessity deny this blessed truth as part of it. But it is astonishing that any who profess to believe the revelation of God in His Word can for a moment think of denying so plain a fact, stamped upon the whole page of inspiration, as the divinity of the Son of God.

If Jesus was not the Son of God, who was He? "A good man doubtless," some will reply. A good man? "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," says the wise man. (Eccles. vii. 20.) "There is none that doeth good, no, not one," &c., says the apostle. (Rom. iii. 12.) "There is none good but one, that is, God," says Jesus Himself. (Mark x. 18.) A good man? How could He be a good man, when He said He was the Son of God, if it were not true? But *it is true*. He was and is the Son of God, the Holy One and the Just, who went about doing good, who knew no sin.

When the blind man had his eyes opened, in John ix., and was cast out, Jesus found him, and said unto him, "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, *Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.*" And he said, *Lord, I believe.* And he worshipped Him." (vv. 35-38.) Would that many more poor misguided souls, blinded by Satan, the god of this world, might get their eyes open, and believe on Him also; for "he that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life: and he that *believeth not the Son* shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

The deep importance of souls tenaciously holding to the truth of the divinity of Christ was seen in the following incident. The writer, who had been preaching in a country place, was one day crossing a railway bridge, when he met a respectable married woman, mother of a large family, walking at a great rate, and evidently in the deepest distress. "Why, what is the matter?" he exclaimed, knowing that for some time past she had been exercised about the salvation of her soul.

"Oh, I am so glad I met you!" she replied. "I couldn't stay in the house any longer. Satan has been telling me that Jesus is not the Son of God. He is the Son of God; He is the Son of God, is He not?" And her haggard look and straining

eyes told how deep the mental anguish was within. Trying to calm her, he assured her of the blessed truth, and uttered a short prayer to God to give her rest of soul, and soon after had the joy of seeing her happily believing on Him, at peace with God. Ah, dear reader, everything depends upon this. *Jesus is the Son of God.* Satan knows it right well. Yes, *Jesus Christ is the true God, and eternal life.* Without Him your case is utterly hopeless. But he that believeth on Him, who died for sinners on the cross, hath everlasting life. (John vi. 47.) To let go this blessed truth, as many have done, is to stake and lose everything for eternity. “*If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.*” (John viii. 24.)

“But I believe in God,” say many. Yes, so you may, and be found in hell for ever. “The devils also believe.” Are *they* saved? (James ii. 19.) “*And tremble,*” it adds, which we fear many have never done, who talk so lightly and flippantly of their belief in God, but deny His only begotten Son. Listen to the solemn words of the epistle of John, “Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:* but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.” (1 John ii. 22, 23.) Then follows a word of deepest moment for every believer, “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from

the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*" (vv. 24, 25.)

Finally, we would call our readers' attention to two passages in 1 John v.; viz., 9-11 and 19, 20: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God *which He hath testified of His Son*. He that believeth on *the Son of God* hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that *God gave of His Son*. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in His Son*." "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And *we know that the Son of God is come*, and hath given us an understanding, that *we may know Him that is true*, and *we are in Him that is true*, even in *His Son Jesus Christ*. *This [or He] is the true God and eternal life*. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

E. H. C.

"WHENEVER the saint ceases to act aggressively on the world the world will begin to act aggressively upon him. The world and the flesh will encroach if we are not drawn out in energy of love for the souls of others."

“A HIDING-PLACE FROM THE WIND.”

ISAIAH xxxii. 2.

ONE windy day, whilst two little girls were playing together, one said to the other, “I wish He would not send the wind *to blow our hoops down.*”

“No, Kathleen,” said the other, “He sends the wind *to dry the clothes.*”

The child’s saying reminds us that faith always puts the *best* construction on what *God* does. “He doeth *all things* well.” So Job thought when “the great wind” (Job i. 19) had done its deadly work. The *bereaved one* became a *worshipper*, saying, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” Thus faith rides in triumph on the waves of adversity. “Ye have *heard* of the patience of Job, and have *seen* the end of the Lord.” (James v. 11.) Then was Job seen to be *no loser* (chap. xlii. 13), and God was a positive gainer, for His servant *fell down and worshipped Him*. (Chap. i. 20.) The Creator and Commander of the wind was “a hiding-place” for him.

And what but “a *great* wind” could have produced such marvellous results as those related in the book of Jonah? (Chap. i.) There God is seen to be using even the prophet’s disobedience to

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further his own purposes, and “the great wind” which He sends out into the sea results not only in the *restoration of Jonah*, but also in the *blessing of all the crew*. Who could call that “an ill wind” which brought a ship’s crew of guilty sinners into living contact with Jehovah, and replaced the feet of His erring servant in the path of obedience? “Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man.” (Job xxxiii. 29.)

Alas! some of us are very good fine-weather Christians; we like the south wind to blow softly (Acts xxvii. 13), and even a *little* storm in our circumstances will fill us with “great fear,” and we are at our “wit’s end.” But even then our hearts need never want for anchorage, whilst we have such words as these, God is for us. (Rom. viii. 31.) Yes, FOR US, when our friends are *against us*; when the world hates, when trials press, and when sorrows pierce, it is *still* true, God is “*for us*.” Whom He loves He chastens. (Heb. xii.) “*He shall rest in His love*,” and invites us to rest there too. We cannot, dare not, rest in our love to Him; but in the Father’s love *to us and for us* our hearts may truly find repose, while we call to mind the blessed fact—

“The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love for us.”

Not only is God *for us*, but what comfort there is in the *Saviour’s* words for our hearts, “Lo, I am *with you alway*, even unto the end.”

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(Matt. xxviii. 20.) Literally it reads, "*All the days;*" whether they be bright or cloudy, calm or stormy, *He is with us in them all.* You never went a journey without *Him*; you never had a trial but *He* was with you in it. We may fail, *He never* will. The Church may become more like the world, and the Christian through unfaithfulness may lose his reward, but the presence of Christ (as well as eternal life) is a thing *never* to be lost. His promise is an *unconditional* one, "Lo, I am with you *always.*" If we are *with Him*, He will minister of His abundance to our souls; but if we leave Him, He will follow us (if it be with a rod), in order to bring us back to the place of blessing we had departed from. We often lose *the sense* of the Lord's presence, and this accounts for *so much* of our sorrow, and *so many* of our fears. The disciples could never have thought of sinking in the deep had they had a true sense of His presence. It is this which *stills us in the storm*, "It is I, be not afraid."

"At all times, in all places, *He standeth* by my side,
He rules the battles fury, *the tempest* and the tide."

H. H.

Peace.—The ground of settled peace, in the midst of a world of sin and sorrow, is to assure my soul that God is true when He says, that He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

CHRIST THE ONLY THEME.

ONE of the most affecting indications of Judson's entire consecration to Christ, as his one object and theme, was afforded in his native land, when he revisited it in broken health, after an absence of thirty years. Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town, and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the close of the usual service, and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear intent, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the "precious Saviour," of what He had done for us, and of what we owed to Him; and he sat down, visibly affected. "The people are very much disappointed," said a friend to him on their way home; "they wonder you did not talk of *something else*." "Why, what did they want?" he replied. "I presented, to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world." "But they wanted something different—a story." "Well, I am sure I gave them a story, the most thrilling one that can be conceived of." "But they had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes." "Then I am glad they have it to say, that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to

tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the gospel of Christ; and when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people to-day, and remembering where I should next meet them, how could I stand up and furnish food to vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge, ‘I gave you one opportunity to tell them of ME; you spent it in describing your own adventures!’”

A Word on Worship.—“It is never right for believers, when met together for worship, to speak of themselves as sinners. We worship not as sinners, but as saints. We cannot be at home, as sinners, in God’s presence; whereas worship supposes drawing near to God. If, as individuals, we are confessing sin, or if the whole Church is confessing sin, that is a different thing; but where it is a question of worship, we do not worship as sinners. ‘God be merciful to me a sinner’ was a man wanting justification, not worshipping. You cannot worship as a sinner. You ought not; because all that a sinner ought to do is to prostrate himself before God and cry for mercy, and that is not worship.”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ACTS xi. 26.—We understand the word “Christian” to mean one who professes to follow Christ, and in that sense it may be applied to all who stand within the wide circle of Christian profession. But it is evident that multitudes who would call themselves Christians, so as to be distinguished from Jews and the heathen, are only such in name and not in reality. To be a follower of Christ in truth one must needs be born again. At Antioch the disciples were first called Christians, we presume by the world.

Secondly. The Church of God, whether viewed as the body of Christ or the Bride of the Lamb, is only composed of those who are truly saved. This is clearly a narrower circle than that of profession only. At the latter ere long judgment will begin according to 1 Peter iv. 17 ; and what its earthly end will be is to be seen in Rev. xviii.

1 JOHN i. 5-7.—“God is light.” This expressive name speaks to us of the unsullied holiness of God’s nature, and the perfect righteousness of His ways. Unlike the false and imaginary gods of the heathen, who were represented as being swayed by evil and violent passions, “God,” the God of the Bible and of Christianity, “is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” But if God is light, He is also “in the light.” It was not always so. “The Lord said that He would

dwell in the thick darkness." (1 Kings viii. 12.) "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." (Psalm xcvi. 2.) But now He is in the light. God is fully revealed in the person of His Son, and we know Him now both as LIGHT and LOVE. It is in the light of this perfect manifestation of God that we believers walk, and thus we have fellowship with Him and with one another. Those who walk in darkness are in ignorance of God—they know Him not. And let it be remarked that the point is *where* we walk, not *how* we walk. It is in the light that the believer walks, though, alas! not always according to it. Do any ask, How can we walk in the light of a God fully made known? How can we rejoice in the soul-subduing fact that "*God is light*"? The answer is found in this, that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

. LUKE xxii. 36.—We hardly think the concluding words of this verse are to be taken literally. Would not verse 38 and the Lord's action in verse 51, to say nothing of His words before Pilate in John xviii. 36, forbid our doing so? Is He not rather indicating the change that was about to take place by His being crucified and slain by wicked hands? When He had sent them forth without purse, and scrip, and shoes, to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick, they had lacked nothing; but now He who had sent them thus was about to be put to death—judged unworthy to live. What then might His servants expect? (See John xv. 18–21.)

“WE ARE THE LORD’S.”

ROMANS xiv. 8.

THERE is precious comfort, yet deep solemnity, in the thought that we belong absolutely to the Lord. There is *comfort* in knowing our close and eternal relationship to Him; there is *solemnity* in seeing the responsibility which that relationship involves.

No doubt need remain in the mind of the feeblest believer *as to the fact* of our belonging to Him, for the Scriptures assert it so clearly. They speak of us as “His own.” (John xiii. 1.) He calls us “My sheep” (John x.); and in praying for His disciples He said, “They are Mine.” (John xvii.) Dear reader, have these words thrilled your heart? Is it your delight to cry, “I am my Beloved’s, and His desire is toward me”? (Cant. vii. 10.)

We are His as the gift of His Father. He said, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” (John vi. 37.) And again, when speaking to His Father, He said, “Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me.” (xvii. 6.) He speaks of us many times as those who are given to Him by the Father. Not that we cease to be the Father’s. Divine giving is not like the world’s, a giving *away*, so that the gift is no longer the giver’s, but it is bringing into fellow-possession in communion. Thus He says again, “Them

IV.

which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them.” (vv. 9, 10.) How precious we must be to His heart as those whom the Father has given to Him. With ourselves, if it be ever so small or worthless a gift, if it be given by one whom we love, how highly do we prize it. And we, poor worthless things, are given by the Father to the Son. Well may we wonder and adore!

We are His as the objects of His own love; as it is said, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” (John xiii. 1.) Paul said of Him, “The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) Again it is said, “Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” (Ephes. v. 25.) How naturally we think much of *our* love, and *our* choice of Him. But there is something before and beyond all that—the spring of deeper, fuller joy. *He* loves, and in the sovereign graciousness of that love has chosen us as its objects, and made us His own. The love-token which He has given is *Himself*. Who, then, can doubt His love? We may wonder at the manner of it; but we know it as a truth that the Son of God loves us.

We are His as the result of His sacrifice. Though loved by Him, we were sinful and guilty. In such a condition we could not be His companions. Neither could we cleanse ourselves from the stain of sin. Hence the necessity for His giving Himself; He must either die for us, or remain for ever alone. (John xii. 24.) Was His love equal to such a terrible extremity as bearing our sins, enduring the stroke of judgment, and laying down His life? It was, ever blessed be His name! He “died for us, that, whether we

wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” (1 Thess. v. 10.) He “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people.” (Titus ii. 14.) His precious blood atoned for our sins, and they are remembered no more. He has purified us to Himself, a people who are His exclusive possession. Oh, how great the love! How marvellous the sacrifice! How blessed the results! He has for ever as His own, in perfect righteousness, those whom He has loved and chosen.

We are His as separated from the world. He spoke of His disciples as “the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world;” and said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John xvii. 6, 14, 16.) He never was of the world. He came into it as divinely sent and commissioned, was rejected and crucified by it, and on this account it lies hopelessly beneath the doom of God’s judgment. But those who belong to Him are not of it—they are no more of it than He was. We are of God as born of Him (1 John iv. 6); we are delivered from it through Him who gave Himself for our sins (Gal. i. 4); we have a place in companionship with Him who is rejected (John xii. 48); and we look for His coming to call us to Himself in glory.

We are His as intended for glory. “I go to prepare a place for you,” He said to His troubled disciples, on leaving them in this world. They must have no other place than His own in the Father’s house. Love cannot bear distance. We must live together with Him. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John xiv. 2, 3.) Oh, what joy will

be ours when with Himself in glory! What joy will be His when He welcomes us there! His Father’s gift of love, the objects of His own affection, the redeemed by His blood, those for whom He has cared in their weary journey through this world, these shall be with Him throughout eternity in the Father’s home. Blessed fulness of joy!

We are His now. The moment we pass from death to life, believing on the Son of God, we are included in the happy company marked out by the precious words—“His own.” We live eighteen hundred years after those disciples to whom Jesus spoke on earth, but we are brought into the same company. He said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold [the Jewish enclosure]: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be *one flock*, and one shepherd.” (John x. 16; see R.V.) Also, in speaking to His Father, He graciously thought of us, saying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one.” (John xvii. 20.) Thus He looked forward throughout this time during which the testimony of the apostles is heard and believed, and such believers He connects with His disciples of that day in oneness of blessing. Nor does all the confusion which exists in Christendom alter this blessed fact, for in the midst of wide-spread profession “the Lord knoweth them that are His.” (2 Tim. ii. 19.) And with His Word in our hands, apart from all the discussions and controversies which rage, as simple believers, we may know that we are His, and have the comfort of this filling our souls.

We are His for ever. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and

I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." (John x. 27-29; see R.V.) As a shepherd, to whom the sheep belong, jealously guards and keeps his sheep, because they are his property, and he has a special interest in them; so does the Lord keep His own. Some tremble, fearing that with all their efforts they may be lost for ever. But reflect. If we belong to Him, will He not securely keep us? Not *our* efforts make us safe, but His love to whom we belong, the strength of His hand and that of His Father. If we are the gift of the Father to Him (yet belonging to the Father), will He not *in faithfulness to Him* keep us? Hear His words: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing." (John vi. 39.) Will He be faithful to His Father's will? No one can doubt it. Ah, beloved reader, if we are His, we are His for ever. The very fact of our belonging to Him is our eternal security.

If then the divine comfort and unspeakable joy of this precious truth have filled our hearts, let us meditate upon the responsibility which attaches to it.

It is possible for us to snatch the comfort of our being the Lord's, to make sure of being in heaven with Him, whilst we are forgetful of the important bearing of that fact upon our ways in this world. It was somewhat thus with the Corinthians. Evidently they were living in much self-indulgence whilst professing the Lord's holy

name. Therefore the apostle in writing to them reminded them that they were *not their own*. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) As the body of a slave belongs not to himself, but to his master who has bought him, so is it with the believer. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” And again, “He that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant [in bonds, as a slave]. Ye are bought with a price.” (vii. 22.) Thus the blood shed for us has not only cleansed us from our sins, but also claimed us entirely for God. It has not only fitted us for heavenly glory, but also set us in earthly service. The Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, is not only the earnest of that glory, but also the seal, showing that we belong to God whilst we are here upon earth. Free we may be, as not being slaves of men, but we are in bonds to Christ. The call of God’s grace not only sets before us the sharing of His rest, but also puts us in labour for Him on the road. Beloved reader, has this its due place in our hearts?

We call Jesus Lord. We do so rightly. He commended those who thus addressed Him when He was upon earth, for it was the confession of the glory and dignity of His person. But now, as the Man who died, glorifying God in His death, He has been highly exalted, and made both Lord and Christ at God’s right hand. (Acts ii. 36.) He has a place of absolute authority given Him, with rights over all, both dead and living. God has decreed that every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess Him Lord. Even unsaved souls, who have sinned away the day of grace,

and demons who can hope for no salvation, must thus bow and confess Him. But the believer owns His rights *now*, as with reverent joy, taught by the Holy Spirit, he says, "Lord Jesus."

Thus was He owned by Saul of Tarsus in that important moment when he cried to the crucified One in glory. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Surely every one of us, standing in a servant's place, in bonds to Him whom we gladly call Lord, echo that cry, desiring the knowledge of *His* will. We own that we are not at liberty to think our own thoughts, to adopt our own judgments, to run our own way, or to assert our own will. Henceforth we are His, to be guided by His thoughts and judgment; to tread in the path His wisdom marks out, and to fulfil His will. Let us then inquire why He has left us here upon earth.

It is very simply set forth in our Lord's parable in Luke xix. 11-27. He speaks of Himself as one of noble birth, who goes into a far country, to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return. Those who reject Him are pictured in the citizens, who hate Him, and utterly refuse His authority.

In the midst of these He leaves His servants, committing to them His interests, saying, "Occupy till I come." How vividly the mind pictures the position of these servants! Separated morally from those who surround them, who hate Him whom they love, they stand for an absent, rejected, but coming Lord, anxiously caring for His interests in view of His return. Such, beloved Christian reader, is our position in this world. We are not left here to seek our own things, but simply and only to attend to His interests whom we own as Lord.

The man had a taste of this blessedness whose history is given in Luke viii. 26–39. When he met the Lord he was a raving demoniac; but he was delivered by Him, and at the same time morally captivated by His goodness and the graces of His person. The Gadarenes, sadly blind to all this, besought Jesus to depart from them—loving, alas! far more than Him, their unclean gain. The delivered man showed devotedness to his Deliverer, in face of all their opposition, beseeching Him that he might be *with* Him. But the Lord, tenderly denying his request, left him as a witness *for* Himself among those who had rejected Him.

There was a similarity afterwards in Paul’s history. Jesus had been rejected by the world, and was in heavenly glory when Paul was brought to know Him. He spoke of Him as “Christ Jesus, MY LORD.” He was in a strait between two desires; he longed to be *with* Him, yet he rejoiced in being here *for* Him, and he scarcely knew which to choose. But his heart was attached to the saints upon earth, knowing their preciousness to Christ, and for His sake and theirs he was willing to forego his own joy of being with Him that still he might serve Him in them. If the question were put to us, What is it detains you from being in heaven with Christ? could we truthfully reply, It is only *His interests*. We long to be *with Him*, but we are willing to stay here *for* Him, if He can in any way use us for the furtherance of His blessed work?

Some may reply, Ah, that is high truth, and suited to Paul and others like him; as for me, I have to work hard all day long. A domestic servant may thus speak, who drudges at her work

perhaps beneath the frowns of a hard mistress. Or a poor mother, with many children, and many household cares; or a business man amid the bustle and worry of commercial life. Ah, dear friend, whatever may be your portion in life, it is as much your privilege to serve the Lord in it, and to care for His interests, as it was that of the apostle Paul. An earthly master has various servants for different kinds of work, and he disposes of them according to his own will. Thus our Lord has called His servants as it has pleased Him, and He appoints to each the suited sphere of service. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, minister of the gospel and of the Church, yet not disdaining to work with his own hands in making tents, when it was his Lord’s will. Onesimus was a slave of Philemon, and was returned to him by Paul, that he might do with him what he would. It was clearly as much the duty of Onesimus to present himself at Colosse and submit himself to the will of his master, as it was that of Paul to go hither and thither preaching the gospel. In so doing each in his own appointed path was serving the Lord. Let it be firmly rooted in our minds that we are the servants of the Lord, and that it is our blessed privilege *always* to serve Him; then let us consider the position to which He has called us, and seek to glorify Him in that place. If a servant, though it be the lowest kind of service we perform, let it be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is the principle which ennobles every action of our lives. That which the world esteems most degrading becomes most elevating when performed as an act of service to the Most High God. That which the world seeks rapturously is not to be

thought of by the servant of Christ if he cannot seek it as carrying out the will of his Master. It were far better to sweep a crossing all our days in service to Christ, than wield a sceptre in opposition to His will. Let us not then be afraid of what is called “drudgery,” but bow ourselves wholly to our Lord’s will, and do all things for Him.

A Christian poet has beautifully written—

“A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th’ action fine.

“This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold ;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.”

Read the various exhortations addressed in the epistles to servants, who were then most frequently slaves, and say if such are not called in a very distinct way to serve our Lord Christ.*

And what shall be said of the high honour which God places upon the Christian wife and mother? Let no mean or low thought be entertained of the duties of married life. In loving and caring for their husbands, in bringing up children, and in guiding the house, they are walking in the very sphere which God has ordained for them, and may confidently count upon His smile and blessing. They may also have the opportunity of showing hospitality, lodging strangers, of washing saints’ feet, performing any acts of courtesy or kindness upon those whom the Lord loves, and also of relieving the afflicted. These things fall peculiarly within woman’s reach,

* Ephes. vi. 5-8 ; Colos. iii. 17, 22-25 ; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2 ; Titus ii. 9-14 ; 1 Peter ii. 18-25.

and opportunities should never be neglected. Woman’s sphere of service to the Lord is all the more sweet because it is more secret and hidden than man’s, generally being found within the house.

More difficulty may present itself when we think of what is called “business,” for in commerce we have to do, more or less, with worldly men who act upon worldly principles. What, then, shall *we* do? Act upon *divine* principles. The Holy Scriptures contain sufficient, not only to guide us to Christ as a Saviour, but also to enable one so guided to conduct his business in this world in such a way as to glorify that Saviour. If we may be permitted to name one small portion, the book of Proverbs is a mine of wealth for every one who has to do with the world; yet, alas! how little is it known or appreciated. Business men know the value of proverbs, which contain wise principles in short, concise sentences. In God’s book of Proverbs *divine* wisdom directs our path through a world which sin has made intricate and difficult. We must not give up our position as servants of the Lord to do business, but we must do business *as* His servants. Paul could make tents as an act of service to His Lord, could give counsel to the ship-master in the Fair Havens, or could gather sticks for the fire; but in all this remembering that he belonged to God, and served Him. (Acts xxvii. 23.) Whatever matter of business it was that took Phebe up to Rome, she went there as a servant of the Lord, and owned the saints in connection therewith. (Rom. xvi. 1, 2.) It has been said that a Christian man ought so to do business as though, not his own name, but the name of the Lord Jesus Christ were on his

sign over the shop door. “And *whatsoever ye do* in word or deed, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” (Colossians iii. 17.)

Whatever, then, may be our lot in life, we must recognize that we are left here for the interests of Christ; and these commanding our hearts and minds, we serve Him in whatever He gives us to do. This holy principle is brought down even to the every-day actions of eating and drinking. Romans xiv. shows us that it is our privilege to know our Lord’s will even as to the food we eat, and in eating we eat to Him, and give God thanks. We neither live nor die to ourselves. “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. x. 31.)

We all, as believers, have duties toward each other; and these should be recognized, the Lord being before us in fulfilling them. Indeed, every saved soul instinctively feels that it is his privilege to associate with his fellow-believers. But what is to be the basis of such association? Are we at liberty to act according to our own will in this matter, and to go where we please? Surely not. Not even our own comfort or blessing is to be the rule, though God truly desires our blessing. We must enquire in this, as in every matter, What is *our Lord’s* will? We would affectionately ask our Christian reader, Have you the same assurance from the Word of God as to the ground of your association as you have concerning the salvation of your soul? Do not rest content with anything short of this.

If we would act in a way which is acceptable to our Lord, whether in the household, the Church, or the world, we must have the knowledge of His will. Every servant must be instructed in his master’s ways, and it is so in a pre-eminent degree in the case of the Lord’s servant. Mary of Bethany shines forth in Scripture as a beautiful example of that which is acceptable to Him. We all remember how she chose to sit at His feet and hear His word, whilst her sister was careful and troubled about many things. On the eve of His death, how acceptable was her service, when she came forward to anoint Him for His burial! She alone was in unison with His own spirit, her love and her knowledge of Him combining to give her the sense of what was suitable in that solemn hour. As she sat learning her sister upbraided her as idle, and as she stood serving the disciples murmured at her as wasteful; but in both instances she had His approval and vindication. Do we value that approval more than all beside? If so let us see in Mary how it is won. If we would have the ready hands and feet of the servant, we must have the quick ear of the scholar.

But it may be asked, How can this be carried out *now*? We reply, By reading the word of God, as in the immediate presence of the Lord, our hearts waiting upon Him for instruction, in prayerful dependence. It is written, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) Every divine principle which is needed for our path and service

is found in this precious volume which God has given and faith values.

But let it be remembered that God has given it for the obedience of faith. We are never at liberty to set it aside, or to supplement it, by our own thoughts. Let us recall the solemn instance of Israel’s first king who was rejected for disobedience. (See 1 Sam. xv.) Saul received commandment from God to smite Amalek, and to destroy all they had. This commandment he interpreted by his own thoughts. He utterly destroyed that which he deemed vile and refuse, but that which he called “*the best*,” all that was “*good*,” he spared, to sacrifice, he said, to the Lord. Thus, professing to honour the Lord, he was found in rank rebellion against Him. “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king.” What a solemn warning to all who come after him, that they adopt not their own thoughts of what is honouring to God, but are guided simply by His own Word! Many cry, “Must we not do good?” “Certainly,” we reply; “do good unto all; but remember that the only rule and measure of good works is the Word of God. If we reject its teachings and precepts for our own rules and measures, much as we profess to honour God, we shall be found rebelling against Him. Whatever He commands or directs it is for us to obey.”

But when faced with some distinct principle from His Word which demands no compromise,

some are apt to exclaim, Oh, we have not *faith* for that! The exclamation of the apostles was similar. When the Lord pressed upon them the duty of forgiving an offending brother, even to seven times a day, they cried, "Increase our faith." But where faith is in exercise, it goes calmly on in obedience, thinking not of itself, but counting upon the almighty power of God, before which all obstacles vanish. Underneath this cry, which seems so pious, *self* lurks in a deceitful way. It is as though we reasoned in our hearts, that if we could possibly accomplish such a wonderful thing, much credit would be due *to us*. But what is sought for in a servant is *simple obedience*. As we walk in that path, all the power of God is ours; yet when when all is done we have nothing to accredit ourselves with. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke xvii. 3-10.)

But *power* is needed, some will say. It is true; but faith has it, for it always depends upon God. Who can doubt the truth of the Lord's saying, "*With God* all things are possible"? (Matt. xix. 26.) But do we equally remember that He said, "All things are possible *to him that believeth*"? (Mark ix. 23.) "I have strength for all things in Him that gives me power,"* exclaimed one. So Colossians i. speaks of our being "strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory." (See R.V.) Can we then complain of lack of power? Surely not. All the might of His glory is ours to strengthen us with all power to suffer and endure with joyfulness in our path

* A literal rendering of Philippians iv. 13.

of service. Then why, it may be asked, are we practically so powerless? We reply, Because we are so little dependent upon God. And why are we so little dependent? Because we so little realize our perfect weakness. Paul was made to realize it in a special way. The Corinthians despised him because of his weakness. He did not seek to hide it, but at length, in the most touching way, told them the reason for it. As "a man in Christ" he had been caught up to the third heaven, and there had heard transcendent things which cannot be uttered here upon earth. Yet such is the nature of the flesh that it would vaunt itself in such an experience, and the servant who had passed through it might think himself self-sufficient. Therefore the Lord took peculiar care of him. When he found himself again upon earth, it was not only in a mortal body, but that body exposed in a peculiarly trying way to the power of Satan: there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. His heart immediately turned to his Lord, whose mercy he had proved, praying Him three times that this might depart from him. His Lord answered him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My power is made perfect in weakness." There was a breaking down of every bit of pride or self-sufficiency, that he might continually feel that he could not get on one moment apart from his Lord; thus was Christ's power perfected in his weakness. His answer was very precious: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak,

then am I powerful."* How we covet power and shrink from weakness, learning very slowly that realized weakness is the way of divine power! Is this wonderful? May we not learn a lesson from the babe? What is so feeble in the whole creation as a helpless infant? All it can do is to cry. Yet that feeble cry of utter helplessness is mighty, for it brings in all the power of a loving parent. The very weakness of the child is its power. So it is with us. In our conscious weakness we can do nothing but cry, yet that cry moves the arm of Omnipotence.

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee," exclaimed the psalmist. (Ps. lxxxiv. 5.) What constitutes its blessedness? It brings us into continual intercourse with Him, and love delights in this. Morally, our power for service is found in occupation with Him. Love is ever self-forgetful, and, delighting in its object, would gratify it at any cost. Let us learn again from the child. Nestling in her mother's bosom, she has learned her love; gazing up into her face, she has rejoiced in her smile; that bright sunlight has kindled love in her own tiny heart; and now, as she grows, what delight has she so great as in some little measure serving her mother? Her service may be feeble, awkwardly and imperfectly rendered; but it is her heart's delight, for she longs to give pleasure to her loving mother. And what is so grateful to that mother's heart as her little child's labour of love? A hireling would do the work far better; but it is the motive and spring of service which renders it so acceptable. Ah, beloved reader, it is not all the truth that the

* 2 Cor. xii. 1-10.—"Weakness" and "infirmity" are the same word in the original, as also "power" and "strength."

Lord needs servants, for angels willingly serve Him; but if His love has kindled a reciprocal affection in our hearts, He would find an outlet for it in service here upon earth, graciously taking pleasure in our poor bungling work done for love to His name. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be well-pleasing to Him." (2 Cor. v. 9; see R.V.)

And the day speedily approaches when He will call home His beloved servants, and, as manifested before His judgment-seat, He will show us what His perfect estimate of our service is. He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then each shall have praise of God. How many a little act of service done through love to His name will He bring to light; unknown perhaps to all but the doer, and even forgotten by him, but never to be forgotten by Him for whom it was done. Oh, what joy it will be to hear Him pronounce our poor names, and to have His commendation of our imperfect service; and, above all, to rest from our labour with Him, our eternal joy, He Himself ever rejoicing over us!

Beloved reader, He who shall be our joy for ever is the One who has called us to serve Him a little while. He was Himself the perfect Servant upon earth, who, tenderly rebuking the pride of His disciples, said, "I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke xxii. 27.) Thus He is our perfect model in service, as our Object of unfailing delight, whose love moves us to service, and the faith of whom sustains us in it. Let our souls rejoice in Him increasingly, that we may be found working in faith, labouring in love, and patiently waiting in hope for our loved Lord's return!

J. R.

ONLY A LAD.

“There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes : but what are they among so many ?”

JOHN vi. 9.

ONLY five barley loaves and two small fishes ! Well might Andrew say, “What are they among so many ?” Man could do nothing with such a supply in view of so great a need, but the Lord could. But it is especially about the young lad who brought the scanty but sufficient provisions that we would say a word. What a privilege to be the bearer of food for five thousand, and he only a lad ! It is a day of small things, and God often uses the weak things and the despised things to effect His purposes. Matthew, Mark, and Luke speak of the loaves and fishes, but it is only John who mentions the lad who brought them. This, one of the last-written books of the Bible, rescues from oblivion the interesting fact that it was a lad who had brought this little store ready for the Master’s use.

“There is a lad *here*.” He was just where the Lord could use him. Had he had several cart-loads of fish elsewhere they would have been of less use than the two where the Lord was, and where the need was. Many of us have loaves and fishes somewhere. Let us get them out, and

take them where the need is, and we shall find Jesus there before us. We can always find some one in need, and if it be only an encouraging word, it is a privilege to supply it.

The lad had very little with him, it seems, but it was enough for God. Has not this a voice for one who seeks to minister to souls? Quite likely you have had to speak to many about the things of God, and have felt your weakness and your ignorance. With all your honest use of spare time you seem to have dug but little into the mine of spiritual wealth. And now you have to stand for the Master, and minister to the need of souls. Courage! Take what you have. God will not give you a miraculous insight into truths all at once, but He can make what you have sufficient for the occasion.

The supply was not multiplied in the lad's basket. It would have been too much for him. May we remember, if the Word is used to the pulling down of strongholds, that it is in the Lord's hands it does such wonders.

We are not told what the young lad received for the fishes, but we may be quite sure he was not without his reward. The Master would never have taken from him five loaves and two fishes and given him nothing in exchange. It may have been but a look—a look never to be forgotten, or a glad "well done," that thrilled his soul with joy. Of all the happy faces on the mountain side it is

easy to believe that the young lad's was one of the happiest. And when we see the Lord in glory, when we too hear that voice, what joy it will be to hear His "well done" for even *one* talent wisely and faithfully used.

To sum up. Let us be near to the people who need our ministry. Let us be near the Lord, that it may be used by Him to meet the want of each. Let us be sufficiently insignificant in our own eyes not to be elated if used by Him, and then surely we shall find His hearty approbation a rich reward for our service.

S. E. Mc N.

THE OVERCOMER.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God."—REV. iii. 12.

IN this day of sad declension,
 'Midst the wreck of all around,
 Some there are, a feeble remnant,
 Pleasing to the Lord are found.
 These are they who 'midst the ruin
 Seek to give His heart delight,
 Walking here amid the darkness
 As the children of the light.

Poor in spirit, weak and feeble ;
 By the world despised, unknown ;
 Boasting in the name of Jesus,
 Holding fast His word alone.
 These are they who in their weakness
 Gathered to His name we view ;
 Owning Him alone their Centre,
 Who is *Holy*, who is *True*.

THE OVERCOMER.

Here, according to His promise,
 Ever in their midst He's found,
 Filling every heart with gladness,
 While Himself they cluster round.
 'Tis His love they are remembering,
 Which to *death itself* could go,
 While His body they discerning
 In this world His death do show.

Now in resurrection glory,
 As the Church's risen Head,
 There they know Him, there they hail Him
 As the Firstborn from the dead.
 Hearts now filled to overflowing,
 Holy priests, to God they bring
 Incense, rare, and sweet, and precious,
 As the worth of Christ they sing.

Till He come for whom they're waiting,
They His heart with joy would fill ;
 Seeking here to walk before Him
 In obedience to His will.
 Then no more, as now, in *weakness,*
Pillars they of strength shall be ;
 God's blest name engraven on them,
 And His *own new name* we'll see.

L. W.

FRAGMENTS.

"FALSE notions are learned much more easily than truth. The Truth meets with the opposition of the flesh in us, whereas error meets with no such opposition."

" 'The wiles of the devil' (Eph. vi. 11) are the by-paths of Satan. A wile is a by-path—a path that professes to conduct one to the desired haven in an easier way."

"Separation from evil brings divine intelligence."

THE OPENED EYE.

WHAT a difference there is in seeing the truth when the eye is opened! It is a fact that we are all born spiritually blind, and that we need to have spiritual eyesight in order to distinguish spiritual objects, just as surely as we need natural eyesight to see the things around us. And so the Lord said to the learned Nicodemus that he had to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God. The things of that kingdom were all obscured and hidden from him until that mighty change took place. And if thus with him, so too with all.

Not only is there no entrance into that kingdom, but there can be no correct apprehension of its nature apart from the New Birth. This lies at the threshold of all true religion, and is the *sine qua non* of Christianity.

Now, when, through God's infinite grace, the soul has thus been "born anew," it sees things in a new and true light. It sees self—that hideous, vile, loathsome self—as it is, a thing corrupt and wholly beyond improvement; that nature, inherited by all, from common and fallen parents, which displays itself in the hatred of God and in the love of evil, and which, under all possible culture, education, and discipline, has produced nothing but

a crop of miserably bad fruit ; that inner spring of sin that has poisoned creation, and blighted the whole scene—this is seen and felt and known. The result is, *self-aborrence*.

A happy result too ! For the man that has not learnt to abhor himself has not yet entered the gate of true knowledge. He is yet in darkness.

“Man, know thyself,” is a human proposition ; but, “Man, abhor thyself,” is, I may say, a divine command. Anyhow, it comes in the line of true self-knowledge. Ah ! how abhorrent must that nature be which said of the blessed Son of God, “Away with Him, crucify Him !” Never speak in praise of such a self !

Think not, dear reader, that I am painting in too black colours, or exaggerating the truth. I fear that no language could fully depict the deadly character of self. The word of God says that it is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” (Eph. iv.) Again, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” (Jer. xvii.) “*Desperately*” is elsewhere translated “*incurably*.” Now think that you and I have a heart that is wicked beyond cure ! Startling, but true ! We speak of “a good-hearted fellow,” and we speak of a thing that does not exist. True, a man may be kind, sociable, generous, and so on ; but go to the root, and you will find beneath a welcome exterior, a core of desperate and incurable wickedness. Let the suited test be applied, and this is the result. Read the book of Job, for example. The crucible drew out

his cry: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" and Job had certainly been what is called "a good-hearted man." He is a happy man who has found out that self is beyond improvement, and that "in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. vii.) Very happy, and why? Because he turns completely from self to Christ, from his own fancied goodness to what is so fully provided in Him. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

And then again, such a soul sees God in a new light. Hitherto it looked on Him as "austere," gathering where He had not strawed, and reaping where He had not sown. But how different now is its vision. "God is love." This bright and blessed truth has broken in upon the darkened spirit—like the dawn of day, and the smile of sun as night retires—carrying with it hope and joy. A new scene has opened. Nature's ignorance of God, attended by its desolate train of guilt, suspicion, distrust, dread, terror, is met by this gladsome beam of love, and these three pregnant monosyllables, now accepted, banish for ever the darkness, the doubt, and the gloom. Glorious morning! Heart-captivating gleam from on high! All is clear, for "*God is Love*"!

Yes, clear indeed, for if God love me He will seek my weal. That is an immense point. Had the prodigal known this, as to his father, his homeward steps would have been quicker and his heart

lighter. For the love of God was toward us when we were dead in sins. Wonderful, but true.

Now, place self—that self we have viewed as so inherently abominable—in front of the love of God. Well, God does not love sin nor self, but He does love the poor fallen and guilty sinner who has been indwelt by sin and characterized by self, and, to demonstrate that love, has given His Son to the death for such. The death of Christ was necessary, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” But having died, and borne the judgment, God is now able to justify the guilty who believe in Jesus. The death of Jesus supplies the ground. God can now righteously save. He can take up the most vile, and, in fullest harmony with the highest claims of justice, make that soul His child and His heir.

It is not, therefore, the mere hope of mercy. No, it is the solid and eternal foundation of accomplished redemption by which all the character of God is vindicated. His holiness, His abhorrence of sin, His love and His truth, it is on this mighty basis that the believer stands; and all is made good to him, and in him by the Spirit.

Oh, what a God is ours! Oh, to speak well of Him, even now! His grace is the spring; the blood of Christ is the ground; our faith is the instrument; and our works the evidence before men of all this gracious blessing.

“Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.” J. W. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CROYDON.—That Abraham was an idolater before the call of God reached him appears to be placed beyond question by Joshua xxiv. 2, 14, 15.

HEBREWS xiii. 10, 12.—The “we” of verse 10 refers to Christians, the “they” to those who clung to Judaism. There were some who sought to combine the two—to put the new wine into the old bottles. At first God in grace bore with this. It was a transition time, and many of the Jewish Christians continued to offer sacrifices according to the law; indeed we are distinctly told that a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts vi. 7.) The Hebrew Christians were in danger of returning to that from which in a practical way they had never been fully delivered. Hence the solemn warnings of this epistle. It is this point that is expressly dealt with here. Meats had not profited them that had been occupied therein, why then should the Hebrew Christians still go on with them? Why hold Christianity with one hand and Judaism with the other, seeing that the latter was no longer owned by God, and to go back to which was an evidence of hopeless apostasy? (Chap. vi. 6.) “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” Yet these Hebrews were acting as if it were otherwise, as if those who served the tabernacle had a right to eat of the Christian altar. It is not so,

they had no such right. Let them then have done with the tabernacle. Let them not try to join together what God had not joined. Do any ask, What is the altar? We answer, No material thing that the eye can see or the hands handle. The Jewish altar was the way of approach to God, on it the various sacrifices were offered. We have an altar—a way of approach—and that altar is Christ.

In verse 13, the writer of the epistle definitely calls upon them to abandon the camp—that vast religious system with which they had been formerly connected—and go forth *unto Him* without the camp. His blood had been presented in the Holiest, pardon and peace and access to God there were the results. His place within the veil was theirs; now let them share His reproach “without the camp;” for outside of it He was. Here there seems to be an allusion to Exodus xxxiii. 7, where we are told that “Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it *without the camp*, afar off from the camp,” and everyone who sought the Lord went out unto it.

Verse 11 appears to us rather to connect itself with the verses that precede. Of old it was forbidden to the priests to eat of those offerings for sin whose blood was carried into the holy of holies by the high priest. (See Leviticus vi. 30.) They were burned outside the camp. But we, who find in Christ the blessed Antitype not only of the sin-offering, but other of the offerings also, may feed by faith on Him. We have communion with God about Him whose death has so glorified God and secured our eternal blessing. Not so those who sought to serve the tabernacle still.

THE JUBILEE.

LEVITICUS xxv. 8-10 ; PSALM lxxxix. 14-16.

WE have heard a great deal about the Queen's jubilee lately, and we have every reason to honour her, and to thank God for all the mercies we have enjoyed during her reign ; but the fact of its being the fiftieth year of her reign is the only reason I know of for its being called her jubilee, and the only respect in which it resembles God's jubilee, of which we read in this beautiful chapter in Leviticus. Turning back to the book of Exodus, we find that after God had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt He brought them into the land of Canaan, and gave to each man an inheritance or portion. This was all simple and easy at first, but as the years went on things changed ; for one man was careful and thrifty, another an idler and a spendthrift ; and so it came about that the spendthrift would be in need, and have to sell his inheritance. To remedy this God appointed the jubilee, when they were to "return every man unto his possession." Every fiftieth year every one was to get back what he had originally, and if anyone had lost his freedom, or been sold as a slave, he was to be set free. When the trumpet of jubilee was sounded it was a wonderful time,

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and if we read on we see that if they bought or sold a field or anything else, the price was to be regulated according to the number of years before or after the jubilee. The land could not be sold for ever.

The verses in Psalm lxxxix. refer, I have no doubt, to the sounding of the trumpet of jubilee: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." Let me ask you to remark the occasion of the sounding of the trumpet, that it was to be on the day of atonement. "Justice and judgment," says the psalmist, "are the habitation of Thy throne;" and that being so, we may well ask, How can he speak of its being a joyful sound when we are what we are? Often we hear people speak of trusting to the mercy of God, because they have such poor ideas of Him, but can you trust in His righteousness? Why, it is the very first thing He speaks of in the gospel. (Rom. i. 16, 17.) He could never pass over sin, His righteousness makes it impossible for Him to do so, nor could He send out the joyful sound, until His throne was established in justice and judgment; and so those people who are trusting in the mercy of God, apart from His righteousness, have no settled peace.

Let us look at a passage in the New Testament which shows us something of this—Romans iii. Do you know the contents of that chapter? It tells us of all the world being "guilty before God." People talk of seeking God, and there

was a time when God told man to seek Him—"Seek ye the Lord," etc.; but here He tells us that there are none who do so, and He is now seeking man. God Himself comes to seek and save, and that is why anyone is ever found. "There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one." There is not a man, woman, or child who does not come under these condemning words, so that every mouth is stopped. If the very best one among us, or of all the people that ever lived, stood before God, and the books were opened for him to be judged according to his works, he would be found guilty, his mouth would be stopped. The man who had not on the wedding garment could not say it had not been offered to him, or that he could not get it, when he knew it could have been had without money and without price. He was guilty, and he was speechless; he had simply nothing to say, no excuse to offer for having slighted the kindness of the one who had invited him. No matter on what count God takes man up, he is guilty; and have you ever thought that if God entered into judgment with you, you would not have a word to say? He is not waiting till the day of judgment, however, to tell us how we stand before Him; He tells us now in this third chapter of Romans, and leaves every one speechless and guilty.

Well now, it is wonderful that the first thing

God speaks of to guilty sinners is His righteousness, and not His mercy. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," etc. (v. 21.) Perhaps you say, I thought God was holy; and, if so, and I have only to do with His righteousness, whatever am I to do? or how is it possible to escape judgment? Ah! God only wounds to heal, and in verses 24-26 we have a most wonderful thought, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." There is the answer to your question. Did you ever ponder these verses, and get out of them all there is in them, beginning with righteousness and ending with justification of the ungodly sinner that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ? You say, Justifies the ungodly! How can that be? I could understand it if you said that God justifies the righteous; but how can He justify the ungodly? What should we think of a judge, having a felon brought before him proved guilty of fraud and theft, if he turned round and discharged the man as innocent? Why, we should say he was an unjust judge, and the authorities would soon hear of it, and he would be dismissed from his judgeship; and yet here God

brings the whole world in guilty, every mouth stopped from saying a word of excuse, and yet He ends with justification, and more than that, challenges anyone to lay aught to their charge. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." (Rom. viii. 33.) But we may well ask, How can He justify people proved guilty? Do any say, "It must be at the expense of His character, of His holiness." Oh, no! Let me explain. Let us look first at the cross, and then we will go back to the type. You all know the story of the cross, how man took the blessed Son of God, who had been here among them doing them good, and crucified Him. There He hung on the cross, and they looked upon Him as "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." They thought He was under God's displeasure when they saw Him hanging there, and so they mocked Him and reviled Him. Then at noonday there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, or three o'clock, and during those three hours what do you think was happening? God was entering into the question of sin with Christ. If God entered into judgment with any creature, it could only end in the lake of fire for ever and ever; but here how different. The Man with whom God entered into judgment was none other than Jehovah's Fellow, the Son of God Himself.

I will refer you again for a moment to Rom. iii., and ask you to look once more at the

twenty-fifth verse, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the passing over [margin] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Do you ask, What does this mean? and how could God pass over sin? He did pass over the sins of the Old Testament saints in forbearance, in view of Christ's death; but it is no longer forbearance, since Christ has come, and He has punished Him, and He is therefore just and righteous now when He justifies a sinner that believes. If you observe (Lev. xxv. 9), there was no trumpet of jubilee, no joyful sound, until the day of atonement. Chapter xvi. gives us the full details of all that happened on that day, how Aaron was to take a bullock, and later on two goats; how he was to kill the bullock, dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat; meanwhile a cloud of incense was going up and filling the place. Exodus xxx. 34 tells how the incense was compounded, and we find in it a beautiful type of Christ in the perfect evenness of His character. Every ingredient in the incense was to be of equal weight. Just as in our blessed Lord nothing preponderated, everything was perfect and even, and the fire brought out all its excellencies, and raised a cloud of sweet incense; so that Aaron went in, so to speak, in all the perfection of Christ, this cloud rising up all round the mercy-seat.

Then he was to kill the goat of the sin-offering, and bring its blood in, and do the same with it; and then the living goat was to be brought, and the sins of the children of Israel confessed over it. What was the meaning of all this? It was a type of Christ's death. The blood on the mercy-seat showed the way of God's righteousness, the only way God could be just and yet justify the sinner, and it was only when the blood was there that the trumpet of jubilee could sound. Now turn to chapter xxiii. 26-30. The great day of atonement came round every year, and it was in view of it that God could go on with the people from year to year; but we find in these verses what a deeply solemn time it was for them; they were to afflict their souls, and they were to do no manner of work. There was to be no trifling in view of it, they were to afflict their souls (that is, to repent), and anyone who failed to afflict his soul, or who did any work, was to be destroyed from among his people. And you see the same now; the sure way to go to hell for ever is just to despise or neglect the sacrifice of Christ, God's "great salvation;" it needs no more than that. The man failing to afflict his soul on the day of atonement was destroyed, and also the man who did any work; in other words, the man who did not repent, and the man who worked, or, as people would say, "did his best."

Now let us suppose the people have been fifty

years in the land of Canaan, and that it is the night before the day of atonement in the year of jubilee. What a night it is to everyone. One man says, "I am going to get back my inheritance to-morrow." The slave says, "To-morrow I shall be a free man." And even the debtor in prison says, "To-morrow I shall be out of this prison." All are looking forward to the morrow. And so the night passes away, and at dawn of day everyone is astir. There is no light talking; for it is the most solemn day of all the year, and any kind of work means death.

Then the high priest puts on the linen clothes, kills the bullock, puts the blood in a basin, fills his hands with incense, and disappears into the tabernacle, where he sprinkles the blood on the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and puts it on the horns of the golden altar, etc. All is hushed, and the people afflict their souls till he comes out. The priest then kills the goat and goes in again with its blood to make atonement, and comes back, and then the live goat is brought, and the sins of the children of Israel confessed over its head, and the goat is sent away into the wilderness. Then the priest puts off the linen garments and washes in the holy place, and puts on his garments and offers the burnt-offering. The sin-offering is burnt without the camp, and all is finished; the priest puts the silver trumpet to his lips, and the jubilee sounds. Oh, what a

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joyful sound. The slave goes free, the debtor gets back his liberty, and every man returns to his inheritance. But amid the general joy some poor wretches are dragged forth to die. One has been busy working, and would insist on doing his best, though God had said they should not do any manner of work. Another would not afflict his soul, and so death is to be the portion of each.

We do not need to go far for a parallel to all this. The great day of jubilee has been going on ever since Christ died. He is gone in with His own blood, and the gospel is preached, and we are told that salvation is to him that *worketh not*, while God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Now, to neglect this is to be lost. The Lord came to preach deliverance to the captives. (Luke iv. 18.) But the people did not know the joyful sound, and they took Him and crucified Him; and He is gone; but very soon we shall hear that joyful sound again. Will *you* hear it? Are *you* listening for it? It will be the real jubilee to the Lord's people; for Christ has not got His rights yet, nor have we got our glorified bodies or our inheritance, but we shall when the trumpet sounds.

God's jubilee for poor sinners is going on now; it began when Christ suffered on the cross; and God says, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound." Do you know it?

M.

DEAF AND BLIND, BUT SAVED AND
REJOICING.

A LITTLE while ago, chancing to meet a deaf and blind woman, we asked her if she had any interest in those things which, though not seen, are eternal.

“Oh, yes, sir, I have indeed,” was her bright reply; “for when I was a little girl of five years old I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and was converted. But at the age of nineteen I became blind and deaf through a severe illness, and since then, that is nineteen years ago, these eternal realities have been far more my joy and delight than ever they were before.”

“Soon,” I said, “you will *see His* blessed face, and be like *Him* in whom you have believed and put your trust, and whose precious blood has cleansed you from all sin.”

“Yes,” she replied, with tears, “I wish it were His will to come *now* and take me to His own blessed presence, so that I might know more of *Him* who has loved me so much.

“And I do hope, sir,” continued she, “that the dear man who invented this alphabet will have a fine bright crown of glory; for it is such a comfort to have you reading to me, on my fingers, such sweet scriptures as these, as I have only the Gospel of St. John in the blind alphabet.”

Some of the portions of God's word read to her were 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, and John ix. 1-7, and 35-38, which the reader is requested to refer to and read for himself.

The following day we happened to meet a man deaf and dumb, with whom we had a conversation on the fingers. He was cheerful enough so long as we talked about the *weather*, his *health*, and his *wearing apparel*; but when we referred to *sin*, *death*, *judgment*, *eternity*, and the love of God, he became restless at once, and went away.

Stone-blind spiritually, and not interested in eternal things! What a contrast between these two persons! Friend, you doubtless have good cause to thank God that you are not afflicted as these were; but, may I ask, can you thank God you are *saved and rejoicing* through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ?

You are blessed with natural eyesight, and can read these pages; but how sad, after all, if you are still spiritually blind. You may *think* you are all right enough, but, I beseech you, make quite *sure* of it.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) When Saul of Tarsus was making such havoc among God's people *he*

thought he was all right, and had no idea whatever that he was spiritually blind; but so blind was he that he had to be made naturally blind for three days before he had his eyes opened spiritually. Jesus, who opened his eyes, wanted him to help others, and said to him, "I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified *by faith that is in Me.*"

My reader, do not, I pray you, let *that* be true of you which Paul witnessed against the Jews when he reached Rome: "*Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the HEART of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*" (Acts xxviii. 26, 27.) Because, note particularly, that if you do let *that* become true of you, you will remain blind in lonely outer darkness for ever and ever.

When Philip the evangelist went to the eunuch, who sat in his chariot in the desert reading Isaiah liii., he asked him if he understood what he was reading. The eunuch said, "How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would

come up and sit with him." The eunuch, who was spiritually blind, asked Philip whether Isaiah was speaking of himself or of some other man. Philip, beginning at the same scripture, preached unto him JESUS. The eunuch, having now his eyes open, said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . . And he went on his way rejoicing."

Reader, will *you* have your eyes opened? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Then you may go on *your* way rejoicing. Then, instead of lifting up your eyes in hell, being in torments, you will ere long see Him "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) *Which*, oh, in reality, which shall it be? J. N.

THE TREASURE AND THE PEARL.

MATTHEW xiii., a chapter full of instruction for the children of God at the present moment, opens with Jesus going out of the house and sitting by the seaside. In the close of chapter xii. He had spoken most solemnly to the religious leaders of the Jews concerning the last condition of the nation. At every step the blessed Lord had been met with infidel questioning or open opposition from those whose blessing He had come to seek. He now takes a new position.

Multitudes gather to hear His teaching, and He speaks to them in parables. The first was that of *the sower*. When the disciples came and said unto Him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you *to know the mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given," &c. (Matt. xiii. 10, 11.)

Now, the mysteries or secrets of the kingdom bring before us the character of things that would transpire within the sphere where the Lord's name and authority would be outwardly owned during the period of His rejection. We would call our readers' attention specially to two of the parables. Christians have the spiritual capacity to understand them, for, like the disciples, it is given unto us to know these things. We have the sure teaching of the Spirit of truth.

Rejected by His own and by the world, Jesus, the Messiah, Israel's King, is crucified. The kingdom cannot be manifested in power and glory without the King. Jesus went away from this world to the glory above. The King is hid in heaven. He will come out again in the future, when all shall acknowledge His sway, and the kingdom shall be in His hand. The government shall then be upon His shoulder, and the heavens will rule. But meanwhile *the mysteries* of the kingdom come in whilst the King is absent.

In chap. xiii. 44 Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom

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of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

It has been a very common interpretation of this passage to call the treasure "Christ," and the man that finds it "the sinner." But this is the result of coming to Scripture with pre-conceived notions, and occupied with ourselves. The key to unlocking Scripture is to first find where *Christ* is in the passage. Now, He compared the kingdom of heaven to treasure hid in a field, which is found by a man, &c. And in verse 38 we are told that *the field is the world*. Does the sinner find Christ hid in *the world*? No; He is hid in the heavens. But the Man Christ Jesus found a treasure in the world, which was valuable in His eyes. His people, His saints, are that treasure. To possess Himself of them He gives up all. Yes, down here in this world of sin Jesus found a treasure. For joy thereof He went and sold all that He had, and bought the field. "For the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame," &c. (Heb. xii. 2.) "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor," &c. (2 Cor. viii. 9.) He went to the cross and poured out His soul unto death. He bought the field in order to obtain the treasure. He bought *the world*, at the

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cost of His own life, in order to possess the saints. These are *redeemed* by His precious blood; but the field, the world, is included in *the purchase*. The world, as well as the saints, forms part of His purchased possession. To interpret it as the sinner finding Christ as his treasure would necessitate our buying the world to obtain Him. How could this possibly be?

His beloved people are a rich treasure to the heart of Christ, and soon He will claim them for the glory. Hereafter He will display them with Himself in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, when the purchased possession is redeemed. (Eph. i. 14.) At that day He shall ask of Jehovah, and He will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. (Psalm ii.)

Although then it is perfectly true in another sense that Christ is, or ought to be, the treasure of the believer's heart, in this passage it is Christ that buys the field (the world) for the sake of the treasure (His saints).

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (Matthew xiii. 45, 46.)

In interpreting this parable also, thousands, without fully weighing the teaching, have jumped to the conclusion that the pearl of great price

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must be Christ. But this would necessitate the sinner being likened to a merchantman, *seeking goodly pearls*; whereas the whole teaching of the New Testament is, that the sinner's heart and mind are so corrupt that he naturally seeks *the bad things* of this poor world. "There is none that seeketh after God." Moreover, the merchantman, when he had found one pearl of great price, sold all that he had, and bought it. What has the sinner to sell? Nothing. What great price can he bring? None. He is poor, penniless, a beggar dependent upon the bounty of God. No, the merchantman represents Christ. He it is who was seeking goodly pearls, and He it is who found one pearl of great price. And what is that? What, beloved reader, but the Church of the living God—that one beauteous assembly so dear and so precious to the heart of Christ! In the one pearl we see the moral beauty, unity, worth, and glory of that Church whose great price was the precious blood of Christ. Yes, He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." (Ephes. v. 25.) He went and sold all that He had, and bought it. Who can estimate what Christ gave up to obtain this beauteous pearl? "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

Yes, beloved reader, the merchantman is Jesus, the Son of the Blessed. He it is who, seeking

goodly pearls, espied the beauty of the Church of God. Of infinite value in His eyes, the Son of God became the Son of man, suffered, died, and bled on Calvary, that He might possess Himself of this pearl of pearls. And the great price, the infinite cost, was His own most precious blood. And now the pearl is His. The Church belongs to Christ. He bought it. And ere long, when the mysteries of the kingdom are over, and He shall come forth to claim His rights, when the rule shall be in His hand, then shall the Church be displayed in heavenly glory over the earth as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Viewed in John's marvellous vision as the holy city descending out of heaven from God, one of the chief features in that glorious description of her beauty is, that every several gate was *of one pearl*, in beautiful keeping with the figure used by our Lord in Matthew xiii.

How blessed then, beloved reader, to know that the Lord's people are His own precious jewels, His special and peculiar treasure. And, too, that notwithstanding all the power of Satan and the will of men producing the sad confusion visible on all hands in the Church of God, yet that in His eyes, and in His thoughts of grace and purposes of love, the Church is always perfect in comeliness, moral beauty, and glory—*one pearl of great price*.

E. H. C.

THE SAMARITAN SIEGE.

2 KINGS vi. 24 ; vii.

THIS portion of Scripture sets forth in type the salvation of God. The latter part of chapter vi. discloses a condition of want and misery that could scarcely be surpassed. Israel is besieged ; Samaria, her chief resource, is surrounded by the armies of Syria ; all supplies cut off from without, and only want and destitution within. The mournful cry for help is all that breaks the dreadful silence of the beleaguered city, a cry, however, that meets with no answer. The king paces the city wall with sackcloth upon his flesh, but only to find his own misery augmented by that of his subjects in the sight that met his eye and the sound that reached his ear—"Help, my lord, O king !" Sorrowfully he replies, "If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee ? out of the barn-floor, or out of the winepress ?" Alas ! that Lord who only could help was against the people in judgment. The king hears the story of unparalleled misery, but could offer no relief ; and instead of rightly humbling himself before God on account of the evil which had brought this judgment on his

realm, he vents his passionate feelings against the Lord's prophet, and consummates his wickedness in an attempt to take away Elisha's life.

Little need be said to show how all this sets forth the condition of the unrenewed sinner. Away from God, the source of all blessing; dead in trespasses and sins; a child of wrath; no help within; no help around; and without hope from above. What words can adequately describe this terrible condition so graphically expressed by the four lepers in chapter vii. 3, 4?

It is when this night of sorrow has reached its darkest point that the grace of God shines forth. In the desperateness of their misery the lepers rush to the Syrians' camp, and *in the very place of their judgment* find their enemies had all fled, and every provision for their need spread out before them. Eagerly they satisfy their hunger and want, and then haste to bear the glad tidings to the besieged city and its dying inhabitants. They dared not hold their peace, and by their simple but thrilling message the city is relieved of its misery, and gladness and rejoicing take the place of mourning and sorrow.

Oh, how blessedly does this foreshadow the grace of our God! It was in the darkest night of man's sin and misery that He gave His own beloved Son to accomplish the mighty work of bearing our judgment, and on the cross of Calvary the blessed Saviour suffered all for us.

“ Alone He bare the cross,
Alone its guilt sustained ;
His was the shame and loss,
And He the victory gained ;
The mighty work was all His own,
Though we shall share His glorious throne.”

What part had Israel in the work of that memorable night of which we have spoken? What part had the sinner in the work of Calvary? None whatever. Friend and foe alike left Jesus alone in that dreadful hour. Darkness was over all the land, and in the solitude of that darkness all the judgment of the sinner was borne by the Saviour—the cup of wrath emptied, the question of sin all settled between God and His Son, a work in which we had no part whatever, no more than Israel when the Lord discomfited the camp of their enemies, and scattered them far away. It is not without interest to see who are the first to share the spoil of this wonderful victory. The poor lepers, the most despised, the most depraved, are the first to taste the sweetness of relief, and become fitting vessels to convey the glad tidings to others. And how it magnifies the grace of God when we think that the first trophy of the conquest of Calvary was a man whose sin and violence had made him intolerable on earth, but whom the virtue of Christ's blood had made meet to be His companion in glory! And amongst the other early spoil of that victory may be numbered the woman out of whom were cast

seven demons, and the man whose hatred to Christ only found relief in madly persecuting His humble followers. What shall be said of that precious blood that *has* cleansed away sins *like these*, and made their perpetrators vessels in which God shall display His glory for ever? We might well bow down and worship before such grace, and, as we enjoy it, say to ourselves, "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now, therefore, come, that we may go and tell the king's household." Paul felt himself a debtor to all; for he knew every sinful child of Adam was an object of God's grace in the gospel, and he felt a "woe" rested on him if he enjoyed this wondrous blessing alone, and refused to tell of it to others who were as much its objects as himself. And do we not owe to all that we should not withhold these glad tidings? It may be that in seeking to act on the impulse of such a feeling we shall need wisdom and grace so as not to frustrate the very object we have in view; but this will only cast us each on the Lord to know just when and how we may speak for Him. But whether opportunities are given or not it is a good thing to have our hearts always in the freshness of grace, so as to be able to say with Paul, "*As much as in me is*, I AM READY to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." (Rom. i. 15.)

H. A. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

1 CORINTHIANS iii. 9, 16.—The subject in this passage is that of ministerial labour. The assembly at Corinth, as indeed everywhere, was God's building. Paul, according to the grace of God which had been given unto him as a wise architect, had laid the foundation. That foundation was Jesus Christ, and there could be no other; but there were many builders, and each should give solemn heed as to how he built thereon; for the day would surely come when every man's *work* would be tried. Two sorts of workmen he then speaks of, both of whom were converted men, and held fast to the Foundation. One built with enduring material represented by gold, silver, and precious stones, and his work abides and receives its reward. Not so the other. Wood, hay, and stubble were the ignoble symbols of his worthless work, which would be utterly consumed, though the man himself be saved in spite of the fire that declared the character of his fruitless toil. In the one instance, the man studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. ii. 15.) In the other, the foundation was indeed maintained; but while owning Christ as the only Saviour, the man failed to cleave to "the form of sound words" (2 Tim. i. 13); and giving heed to fables and "the commandments and doctrines of men," not only fell

into error himself, but by those very means may have introduced into the assembly those who should not have been there. Then in verse 17 he speaks of a third person, who by evil doctrines and ways corrupted God's temple ("which temple ye are"), and who should reap the reward of his deeds by being himself destroyed. Here it is evident that the man is wholly a stranger to Christ. He does not build upon the foundation even with bad material; he is simply a corrupter, whose end shall be according to his works.

MATTHEW xviii. 10.—Does not the Lord warn us in this verse not to think little of those of whom the world thinks little? for what more insignificant and less to be considered than a little child? But heaven's thoughts agree not with earth's as to this, and we are to take heed that heaven's thoughts be ours. So far from "these little ones which believe in Me" being thought nothing of in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of His Father there. We understand by "angel" one who represents another, himself being absent, and in the Lord's words there is evidently an allusion to the practice of Oriental courts, of which an example is found in Esther i. 14. The Lord speaks in popular language to convey the more forcibly what was upon His mind. These little ones then were not to be despised; heaven did not despise them, nor were they unrepresented there, and those who did represent them held no mean place; for they always beheld the face of His Father. Beautiful and gracious words!

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