

# SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

## A Monthly Magazine.

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“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.



### SANCTIFICATION.

SANCTIFICATION is a subject which, at the present moment, engages the attention of many. But what is it? How is it attained?—if, indeed, it be a matter of attainment. What is its source? Is it perfect at the outset of our Christian career, or is it progressive? Does it constitute our fitness for heaven? If so, shall we be entirely sanctified in our dying day, or are we to look for it before? Such are some of the questions which immediately arise when the subject begins to be seriously considered.

Assuming it to be asked, What is sanctification? we venture to say the answer it will commonly receive will be something like this: “It is the work of grace in our heart by which we are cleansed from corruption, purified from sin, and made holy by having our affections set free from the defilements of the world and placed supremely upon God.” Of course, the reply may not be couched exactly in those terms, nevertheless, in nine cases out of ten, it will come to very much the same thing.

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But surely sanctification, as spoken of in the Scriptures, must have some other meaning than that. For instance, in Genesis ii., it is said that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." No one, I suppose, would affirm that the seventh day was subject to a work of grace, by which it was cleansed from corruption and purified from sin. But it is not hard to see that, before Creation's rest was broken by the entrance of evil, the seventh day was set apart from other days, and blessed. *Set apart* I say. For we believe it will be found that the idea of *setting apart* always enters into the word whenever used in Scripture. Perhaps we might go further, and say it is the *prime* idea.

This is clearly so in Exodus xiii.: "*Sanctify* unto Me all the firstborn . . . both of man and of beast." The command is repeated in verse 12 with a slight variation, which only makes it the more decisive: "Thou shalt *set apart* unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast." The firstling of an ox or of a sheep was, therefore, sanctified unto the Lord. Will anyone tell us that every such firstling was cleansed from corruption, purified from sin, and had its affections detached from the world and its defilements? We shall not accuse you of levity, good reader, if you smile at a question so palpably absurd.

The Jewish altar, and all its vessels, in like

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manner, are said to have been sanctified—that is, they were *set apart* for the service of the tabernacle. And in the last chapter of Isaiah we even read of wicked men who did “sanctify themselves” to do evil.

Nor can we forget that the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself in John x. as the One whom the Father had *sanctified*, and sent into the world. Now, there is not a Christian on the surface of the globe who requires to be told that the blessed Lord had no sin from which He needed to be purified, no wandering affections which had to be recalled from the defilements of the surrounding scene. But we can all understand, and indeed we know, that He was *set apart* by the Father to fulfil His great mission, to do a work which should bring infinite glory to God, and immeasurable blessing to us. To accomplish this, the Son was *set apart* in the counsels of eternity, and sent into the world when the fulness of the time had come.

In a similar sense the word is used in relation to Jeremiah. The Lord tells him, that before he was born—ere he had any being at all—“I *sanctified* thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jeremiah i. 5.) He was *set apart*, according to God’s sovereign pleasure, to the office he was to fill and the work he was to do.

Let us lay hold of this plain meaning of the word in connection with ourselves. For we, too, are sanctified. Hence, the saints at Corinth were addressed as “*sanctified* in Christ Jesus.” Jude

wrote his epistle "to them that are *sanctified* by God the Father," and Peter his to those who were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through *sanctification* of the Spirit." Every believer, therefore, is actually a sanctified person. He neither seeks, nor hopes, to become one, for he is sanctified already. Once for all has he been sanctified, according to the will of God, and by the one offering of Jesus Christ. (Heb. x.) Nor can he ever be more so, for sanctification, *as we now speak of it*, admits of no progress or degrees. It is perfect and absolute from the very first in each believer's case.

Do not stumble at what we are saying, and throw aside this paper as if the writer were propounding some deadly error. Kindly read on, and remember that at present we are using the word in the Scriptural sense of *setting apart*. What we affirm is, that Scripture views every believer, no matter who he be, as sanctified, or *set apart*, once and for ever, to God—to be for Him, a vessel for His service, and for His alone.

Have you, converted reader, understood that you, even your own very self, are thus *set apart*? In your unconverted days you were of the world. To yourself you lived, and, so far as you were able, you did your own will, and loved to do it. But in your conversion, when you were born again by the Word and Spirit of God, you, by the same Divine Person, and in the same divine operation, were sanctified for evermore. Have

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you seriously, solemnly, recognized this? Do you see that you no longer belong to the world, any more than the stones of which your house is built belong to the quarry out of which they were hewn, so that hand and foot, eye and ear, mouth and mind, all belong to Another, and are to be used for His glory? Whether you are alive to all this or not, such is, indeed, the case. You are sanctified for the remainder of your earthly days. May our gracious God impress you with this great fact.

Is there, then, no such thing as *progressive* sanctification? Indeed there is, and of this we proceed to speak. But we beg you to carry in your mind that aspect of sanctification of which we have already spoken, and in which there can be no progress. Now in progressive sanctification, let the reader understand, there is no bettering of the evil nature inherited from our first and fallen parents. That nature holds no germ of good on which God may by His Spirit work, subduing and developing, till the individual becomes exactly what He would have him. Progressive sanctification is not the removal of any disfigurements which sin cast on that which had no blemish when first created. There is no restoration to the likeness of Adam innocent—no reinstating, in his descendants, of the man who fell in Eden. “The *last* Adam” has come who displaces the first, and the believer shares in the life that flows from Him. There is a new creation, not a cleansing and burnishing of the old.

The Lord Jesus, in John xvii., prays that His people may be sanctified through the truth. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." Here, then, is the instrument employed. In the progressive sanctification of the believer, the truth holds a most important place. It is vain to think of sanctification if the Scriptures be not carefully, continually, and prayerfully read. I say, *prayerfully* read. For it is easy to read them as an intellectual pastime, or to satisfy a conscience that would be otherwise uneasy. And when read thus they profit little. But if we read them with reverence; if we pray to be led into their hidden meaning; if we read them with uprightness of heart, then shall we know them in their sanctifying power, and by the truth we shall be sanctified. In this there is progress. And as the light of truth shines round about us, revealing the Father's name and love; as the roots of our spiritual being strike down into this heavenly soil, we shall find that which feeds the soul, and sets us apart from whatever is contrary to the truth. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" asked one of old. "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word," was the prompt reply. No other means exist. This is progressive sanctification indeed—our inner life nourished by the truth, and our outer life directed and controlled by its living Voice. Believer, What do we know of this?

Referring once more to John xvii. we find the

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Lord saying, "For their sakes *I sanctify Myself*, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." In what way, one may ask, could He speak of sanctifying Himself? Let us see. The word signifies setting apart, as we already know. The Lord was about to quit the place of His rejection. Refused by the nation whom He came to save, He would stand apart, for the time being, from all the hopes connected with Israel, and take another position—in the heavens. His people should know Him *there*, and possess, in a risen and glorified Christ, an Object for their deepest spiritual affections. No tongue can tell what sanctifying power lies in having the heart engaged with Christ, living, risen, and glorified. It weans from all earthly things, and teaches us to look upon the world's choicest gifts as poor and mean and worthless in comparison with Him. How largely the apostle Paul entered into this we see in Philippians iii. Let us read that chapter often; it will do us good. From how many things was the heart of that beloved man detached through his growing knowledge of Christ. Things that were gain to him were flung away as dross, or worse, on account of Christ. It will certainly be so with us too as we grow in acquaintance with Him.

And in the face of that risen and glorified Man shines the glory of God. (2 Corinthians iv. 6.) All that makes the name of God glorious, all the Father's glory, displays itself in Him. We see

these things now not merely written down in a Book—though that Book be divine, and from that Book we learn them—but we see them connected with a living Person on high. As we gaze on the face of Jesus Christ in glory we see in Him the power that raised Him from the dead and set Him in that glorious position. We see the righteousness of God manifested in His exaltation—righteousness which declares that no lower place than *that* was due to Him who glorified God on the earth. In Him, too, we see the pattern to which divine love has predestined us to be conformed. And it is for our sakes He is there, that we, having our hearts engaged with Him, might be sanctified in truth.

Here we must bring our short paper to a close. This only would we say—Do not suppose progressive sanctification to be progressive fitness for heaven. You will be grievously mistaken if you do. Meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light is, through grace, already ours. (Colossians i. 12.) Cleansed from our sins by the precious blood of Christ, and possessing a new nature as having been born again, we are thus made meet for heaven, and no growth in sanctification can make us more so. Every child of God is fit to be in his Father's house. It is because of these things that the Lord would have His people practically apart from the defiling world, sanctified by the truth, and by the ever-deepening knowledge of Jesus Christ in glory.

## COUNTING THE COST.

THERE seems to be a very poor conception in the minds of many people to-day as to what it means to "follow Christ," and the reason why there is so much coldness in the lives of professors of Christianity is because the true conditions of discipleship are slurred over in the reading of God's word, and but slightly alluded to in the preaching of it. Almost anybody will pass for a Christian these days; almost anything will be accepted as Christianity. Not so, however, in the days of our Lord. When He called men to follow Him, He gave them to understand that discipleship was no sinecure; and when in the hours of His popularity—which were few and far between—men flocked to His side with loud professions of allegiance, He bade them count the cost. Preachers are afraid of dealing with men as Christ dealt with them, and we see the fruits of such fears in the "weaklings" which are sent forth into the world as "professed" converts. When Christ sent forth His disciples He said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." What does this mean? Simply that they need not be surprised if the world set on them and tore them to pieces. What effect had this upon them? It acted as a winnowing machine. The mere professors, as is said in another place, "went back, and walked no more with Him," but the true disciples clung more closely to His side. It was a repetition of the sifting of Gideon's host, which had to be reduced to the true-hearted three hundred before God could use them. Again, we remember when Christ was approached by a man with the words, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," He opened the man's eyes as he had never had them opened before. Instead of hailing with delight the addition of another convert, He, if I may be allowed to paraphrase it, said: "I am afraid you are mistaken in your ideas of what following Me means. You will be a very unpopular man before long, and will have to suffer much. The foxes have dens, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." We have no record of the man following Him after that. Apparently Christ missed a convert then; but it was better for Him not to get a disciple at all, than after having apparently got one, to lose him because he had not understood what he was going in for. Let us be faithful with men, even as our great Master was faithful. The offence of the cross is as living a reality as ever. If we work along this tack we may not have so many "professed" converts, and the results of our labours may not be so "glaring" as those of others, yet our work will be lasting, and we shall be fulfilling the almost parting commission and desire of our blessed Lord, when He said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that your fruit should remain.*"

H. G.



## THE UNEVANGELIZED.

HOW large a place in your prayers do the millions of the unevangelized occupy? To what extent does your heart go out to them? This is indeed a test question, and yet we believe that in proportion as we get near to the heart of Christ, so will our love go out to those who have never heard of Him. We are not blind to the fact, that in a day of declension such as this, much needs to be done in Christendom. Babes need to be strengthened; wanderers need to be reclaimed; those entangled in error need to be delivered from it, and assemblies need ministry. But is that all? Many, alas, seem to think so, and to act as though His church were Christ's *only* interest on earth. And yet scripture will not bear this out. Surely, if anyone entered into the mind of Christ as to the church, it was the Apostle Paul, he to whom was committed the truth of the mystery. (Eph. iii. 8, 9; Col. i. 24-27, &c.) Who can lay claim to such zeal for the saints as was manifested in his life? And yet his heart ever went out to the "regions beyond" (2 Cor. x. 16), to the places where Christ was not named. (Rom. xv. 20.) And this was not confined to him alone. The commission of the risen Lord to

evangelize the whole world, which is variously recorded at the close of the first three gospels, seems to have been faithfully executed by the early "heralds of the Cross," for in the epistle to the Colossians (chap. i. 6) the apostle speaks of the gospel having come at that time to all the (then known) world.

If, as another has said, "a remnant is characterized by the brightest trait of the original," surely one who professes to have a place in "the remnant" will manifest the characteristics of the early Christians in their zeal for those who have never heard the gospel.

Now it is not for us, or for anyone, to dictate to a servant as to his path. Even the servant himself should not have a say in it. The Master alone can direct in this. But there is something that each can do. *Every one can pray.* In view of the millions in darkest Africa, in neglected South America, in China, Japan, India, and the Islands of the Sea, who are living in the grossest darkness, is there not a need for deep exercise before God in prayer? We cannot send forth labourers, but we can at least respond to the request of the Master in Matt. ix. 38, "*Supplicate* therefore the Lord of the harvest, that *He* send forth workmen unto His harvest." (N.T.) If your prayers have not gone out for the unevangelized hitherto, will you not get before God for them *now*? Who knows how abundantly the Lord

may answer them. While Peter was praying on the house-top (Acts x.) the Lord showed him that His purpose for the gospel extended beyond the narrow circle of Judaism to the nations. While those in the church at Antioch (Acts xiii.) were waiting on the Lord, He revealed to them His purposes, from which flowed out the mighty missionary labours of the Apostle Paul. And be assured that such waiting on God to-day will not be without its results. Enlargement of heart will follow. Our love will flow out to others who come within our reach, but who have hitherto been passed over; and God may be pleased to raise up those even in our very midst, who in the few remaining hours before the Lord returns, will go forth, in dependence on Himself, to carry the glad tidings unto the regions beyond. Oh, what joy to know that in such blessed service we may have a share, and that, too, in the quiet of our own rooms, where no one knows of it but ourselves and God! Reader, will *you* go in for a share in this business? It may cost you a little, but it will bring you in present and eternal gain.

\* \*

“The time will soon come when we shall say of all that has not been Christ in our lives and ways, ‘That was all lost.’”—J. N. D.

## SISTERS' SERVICE.

THERE are several ways in which a young brother gets helped along the narrow path, and he is encouraged by finding how many are ready to give him a helping hand, and an opportunity to develop a possible gift.

There are special Bible readings for young men, and, in some places, prayer meetings also. In open-air preaching, and excursions for tract distribution, he finds ready outlets for spiritual energy. He becomes known to his brethren, and secures an interest in their prayers. Recognizing the great possibilities of a devoted life, and the need for gifted service, we are not surprised by the kindly interest felt in a Christian youth of some ability, with his heart set on the Lord's service. Perhaps many of us have felt the inspiration of our gifted brethren's company, have been stimulated by their example, and helped by their advice, and their zeal has encouraged us to give all diligence in following after our Saviour.

But about sisters' service? I can imagine a reader saying, "I hardly know to what you refer. We need not look far to see how useful our brothers may become in the Lord's harvest-field, in feeding the flock of God, and in guiding the assembly; but *sisters'* service—what is that?"

Of course our sisters will not be found in any very conspicuous sphere. Certainly the path of subjection to the Word will never earn for them the title of "platform women"; neither will what is "with observation" characterize their labours. Perhaps, on this very account, their spiritual interests may be overlooked. A young sister's future does not offer such attractive possibilities as that of her brother, and she does not always find so much interest and attention on the part of those who are most able to help her. Meetings for young women are by no means so common as for young men. With similar dangers and temptations, the special "means of grace" are less abundant.

The writer can only speak from a limited observation, but there seems reason for calling attention to a possible peril. Where there is less cultivation there is likely to be less growth. It *may* become more difficult to find a sister who wholly follows the Lord than a modern Caleb. Our sowing is the measure of our reaping, and the life-partner of some earnest man may fall short of being a help-meet.

It is still true that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," and whatever dwarfs a woman's spiritual life menaces the highest good of her children.

Unused resources are not only a danger—they are a loss. The special ministry for which a

sister is fitted can be done by no other. The words she might have spoken will be left unsaid, and the touch of sympathy remain unfelt, if her life be not guided to that communion which results in service.

When we speak of a woman's influence, we know we are dealing with a great force, of wonderful capabilities. We see its effects everywhere around us, colouring, moulding, transforming the shifting scenes of life. Undemonstrative, almost unnoticed, it is yet most powerful for good—and for evil. A thoughtful mind will recognize as great possibilities for usefulness in a young sister as in a brother. The mode of working will be different, but its motive and result the same. We need not suppose that the purely domestic occupations referred to in 1 Tim. v. 14, compass the whole range of woman's work. From the same apostle we learn otherwise (Rom. xvi.). "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" is not an exhortation for the male sex only.

Every Christian man and woman is here to further Christ's interests in this scene. It behoves each one to seek divine guidance as to individual service. True, the Lord's interests include guiding the house, and training children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and such occupation will qualify, in a peculiar way, for a character of sympathy and service for which others are unfitted; but sisters who have neither houses nor

children have still a wide sphere of usefulness before them.

There is so much that a man cannot attempt; so many forlorn hearts, hedged round by a barrier of decorum, through which only a woman's tact, and a woman's sympathy, can find a way. There are girls drifting on the stream of fashion and folly whom none but a sister's hand can stay. By the roadside, or in the railway train, there are many to whom a tract may be handed, and a quiet word be spoken, by some handmaid of the Lord, bent on commending her Saviour.

Then there are the many young women who attend our meetings, of whose spiritual state we know all too little, and whose doubts and trials we ignore. Are they taught in the truth, rooted and built up in love, and walking with God? Amongst such there is abundant need for consecrated, whole-hearted service. Everywhere there is latent energy to be directed, zeal to be stimulated, study to be guided, service to be encouraged, sympathy to be developed—the whole force of womanhood to be claimed for the Master's use. We learn from the memoirs of Frances Ridley Havergal and "Sister Dora," as well as from the writings of Anna Shipton and others, the wonderful possibilities of a devoted woman's life.

And may we not look farther afield? What of foreign parts? Women have souls as well as

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men, but on the Continent there is not the same freedom for individual evangelization that we enjoy at home. There, most emphatically, the gentler sex must be reached from amongst themselves. They live, and love, and sorrow, and die, but their cheerless pathway is not lighted with the light of life, and their souls are dwarfed and withered because uncared for.

Dear reader, you have drunk at the fountain-head. You have found streams of refreshing flowing to your soul through many channels of ministry. Will you now take the more blessed part, and give what you have been getting? Will you carry the water of life to your sisters in their need? Of course there are difficulties, and many inconveniences to encounter, but God is still over all.

One may say, Were I twenty years younger I might have contemplated such service. I would remind such an one that the gifted writer "A.L.O.E." went to India at the age of sixty, and spent seventeen years there in devoted and successful service.

ANON.

## A FATHER'S LETTER TO HIS SONS.

MY DEAR SONS,—I must send you a few lines of love; my heart seems so full of *His* love. Oh, why are we not more occupied with it, or rather with Him? It is useful to know prophecy, dispensational truth; all is profitable, and needed in its place; but as our Lord says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood



is drink indeed." It is Himself—the "living bread"—Himself the food of our souls, slain for us, that we really live by, and grow strong upon. I have been greatly enjoying the Word of late, the Lord has been so opening it up to my soul. How different it reads at times! When it is winter, and clouds and mists cover the earth, how dismal the scenery appears; but when the fogs go, and the sun shines, how fair and lovely all seems!

It is just so with the precious Word of our God. The green pastures, the still waters, how fresh they are at times to the soul! At other times there appears no attraction or verdure in them.

The Word that has been so sweet to me of late has been Matthew xi. The Lord had laboured, and, as regards *man's* response, *in vain*. The heart that had poured itself forth in words of grace, and works of divine power and love, now could only upbraid them for their unbelief. Oh, how terrible are woes from those gracious lips!—earnest of those soul-appalling words, the "wrath of the Lamb." Who shall be able to stand that wrath, to endure that woe?—the wrath, the woe of rejected grace and love!

Where could His heart find repose when all around was full of pride, and He found Himself "despised and rejected of men?" At that time He could say, "Father, I thank Thee." He could rejoice in His sovereignty over heaven and earth, and in His righteous government of man—the goodness that hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Then He could rejoice in His own position. (Ps. xvi.) This passage in Matthew xi. so breathes the spirit of that psalm. All was delivered Him of the Father. The Father knew Him, though none else could know Him. His name, His person, Son of God, Son of man, Wonderful, but He knew the Father—could reveal Him. Oh, words of incomparable blessedness for the babes! To them the Son

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reveals the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, His Father and their Father, His God and their God! What deep, eternal blessedness! His invitation is founded upon this—"Come unto Me; I can reveal the Father, and I can give you rest. Take My yoke, bear My burden, the yoke the Father has laid on Me, which I know is easy and light. Learn of Me; I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Now while this invitation is to the soul, at the first, when conscious of its weariness and need of rest, it is the word for every day, every hour. His Word is always to us, "Come, come unto Me." We should begin the day with it, every hour with it, never attempting any service till we have obeyed His precious Word, "Come unto Me." It is the Word of all words, "Come unto ME!" He wants us near Him; He cannot teach us at a distance. We must be near Him to serve Him, near Him to learn, near Him to find rest unto our souls. Is it not blessed that He should say, "Come," "Come," "Come," and that we can give Him joy by responding to His gracious voice, "Behold me, Lord; here I am!"

Another word that I have found very precious is, "Watch and pray." Watch, danger is nigh, and our Good Shepherd warns us of it. Pray. Oh, it is a lovely word! It tells us of a Father's ear open, a Father's ear listening, a Father ready to answer and to give what we ask and need. Are we not rich in His promises and in His love? Is not our portion the finest of the wheat, and the fatness of His house? Isaiah lv. 1, 2 is for every day, as for the beginning of our pilgrimage.

COME, LEARN, SERVE—WATCH, PRAY.

Your affectionate Father,

J. G. D.

## BREADLESS DISCIPLES.

READ MATTHEW xvi. 1-20.

IT is not a little significant that the merely religious often unite with the openly infidel in their attack upon Christianity.

In the depth of every human heart there is enmity against God. Whether the veneer that covers it be that of religion or of mere indifference it little matters; at the bottom there is downright hatred of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

It was religion that led the attack upon Christ in the days of His flesh. It was religion which afterwards persecuted His followers, and not only refused the gospel, but sought to hinder its outflow to others. The apostle Paul, speaking of the Jews, says, they "are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved."

It was thus the Pharisees—the merely religious of their day—and the Sadducees, infidel though religious, the ancestors of the present day "Higher Critics"—united in tempting the Lord, asking for a sign.

They could read the face of the sky, but religious and infidel eyes alike could not read the signs of the times. No sign would be given them but that of the prophet Jonas.

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Just as Jonah was cast into the boiling sea because of his own sin, and was miraculously preserved in a fish's belly three days and nights, so Jesus would enter into the flood-tide of God's judgment upon sin—not His own, but that of others—and, dying, would lie in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, and be raised by God Himself, the Saviour of His people. None but faith could read the sign, or interpret the riddle. To reason it looked like nonsense.

Christ turned then to His disciples, and bade them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. This exhortation to them was an *enigma*.

They had witnessed a magnificent crowd of four thousand men, besides women and children, fed by the hand of power. Seven loaves and a few small fishes, multiplied in His hands, furnished a hearty meal for those who had hungered for three days, rather than miss the matchless ministry that flowed from His gracious lips.

Yet the power of *His* touch, the impossibility of the drying up of their resources when in His company, did not lead to carelessness and waste. Seven baskets of broken meat were collected together, and, it may be, they served to satisfy the hunger of Him who refused once, at the bidding of Satan, to work a miracle to supply His own need—not in this case the fasting of three, but of forty days.

Yet, again, they had surely forgotten a still greater crowd, who had experienced the bounty of His hand. Five loaves and two fishes sufficed to supply the need of five thousand and more, and twelve baskets of fragments were collected.

So these disciples, who had witnessed such scenes so recently, *reasoned* amongst themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

Yet they were in the very presence of the One who had had compassion thus on the hungry multitudes—nay, of Him who satisfieth the desire of every living thing.

Very God and very Man He was, supplying the lack of thousands by the touch of omnipotence, yet knowing hunger and thirst as His own portion. Blessed, precious Saviour, Son of God, well may we bow before the inscrutability of Thy blessed holy Person!

He graciously turned to His disciples, and explained to them the enigma that puzzled their brains.

He spake of the snare of legalism and that of infidelity—the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

And how easily such leaven works amongst those who are real, let each of us honestly answer.

The religion of the Pharisees was for show, to gain the applause of men. We should act otherwise. Our outward and public life should be the outcome of our inward and private life.

If our Christianity appears differently to the eyes of our fellow-men to what God actually sees it to be, there is the Pharisaic element in it. If there is the holding of doctrines in our heads, without knowing their power in our hearts, if there is the praying without answers, the preaching without converts, the talk without power, the outwardly orthodox walk without the real fruit in our lives to God, there is the Pharisaic element in it all.

Oh, let us see to it that we are real and genuine with God, and then we shall be so with men. Let us come to God in the full knowledge that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

On the other hand, how prone we are to the leaven of the Sadducees. Infidelity is in all our hearts by nature. Even after conversion many young men have told me how infidel doubts troubled them. I was not surprised, for I knew my own heart.

The Sadducean leaven is at work to-day in Christendom. From many a pulpit it goes forth to work its awful way into the very vitals of profession. Alas! more or less, real Christians are affected by it.

Eternity of punishment, the inspiration of the Scriptures, atonement by blood, and everything that goes to make up Christianity, is taken from us. The shell is left without the kernel. Leafless

boughs and a sapless trunk take the place of the living tree.

An imperious intellectualism, calling loftily for a sign, is exchanged for the earnest preaching of Christ crucified, dead, and risen, as the sinner's only hope.

In this vaunted nineteenth century the leaven of both Pharisees and Sadducees is everywhere making itself seen; gorgeous ritual and empty ceremonial appealing to sight and sound on the one hand, and a carping, sneering infidelity, on the other. All this is too painfully evident to be ignored. The slumber of death is over the land. Death reigns in many a pulpit and pew. Faith languishes, and Hope hangs her head.

And the spirit of all this overtakes, far too often, the real Christian; indeed, we carry the seeds of it all in our own hearts. What is the cure for both—the safeguard in a day of peril?

### TO KNOW HIM.

The Lord asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Speculations were rife as to who He was. Some said one thing, some another—John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Then the Lord further asked, "Whom say ye that I am?"

Then came Peter's memorable confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That

## BREADLESS DISCIPLES.

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confession—not poor Peter, who so soon denied his Lord and Master—was the rock upon which Christ would build His Church. Peter was a stone—a living stone—built into the rock, but the foundation is the confession of Christ Himself. Against that Church the gates of hell shall not prevail—the hellish machinations of Satan shall come to naught.

To apply all this to ourselves personally, the knowledge of the Person of Christ is enough to keep us from formalism and infidelity.

As the young Christian loses his first love, and grows cold, the world draws him to herself. Nature abhors a vacuum, and if the heart is not filled with Christ, it *must* be filled by something.

World-bordering breeds the Pharisaic leaven; the Holy Ghost is grieved; prayer becomes a burden; the reading of Scripture a dry task; and the maintenance of *outward* orthodoxy becomes wearisome and dull and empty and powerless. Oh! may the Lord draw such back to His wounded side, and recover their backsliding.

Or, again, as faith languishes, reason asserts itself. The proud intellect “traffics in unfelt truth,” and the result is infidel and Sadducean. And all this may go on beneath a calm, Christian exterior. We don’t expect answers to our prayers, converts from our preachings; and certainly we should be surprised if the Lord were to come,



and we should be with Him in the twinkling of an eye!

Let not money (it has ruined thousands spiritually), pleasure, intellectuality be first; but let Christ have the chief place. Seek to be here for His interests. Esteem the building up of a broken heart, the encouraging of a lukewarm saint, the winning of a precious soul for Christ, more than the amassing of a fortune, or the cheap triumph of your wit over another Christian.

Above all, think much of Christ. Let the greatness of His Person be your holy meditation. Let the Christ, the sent One of God, the Son of God, in His wonderful incarnation, His gracious life, His matchless death, His glorious ascension to the place of power, engage the affections of your heart, and you will possess a secret that will preserve you amidst the abounding ritualism and rationalism of the day. You will be like the tree whose roots are by the flowing stream—ever green, and affording a cool, refreshing shade for the tired wayfarer, whilst all around is parched and dry.

The secret of being kept is communion with Jesus. Keep close to Him, and yet closer. He loves intimacy, and invites confidence. This is the secret of fruit-bearing. May He lead us into a deeper and fuller knowledge of Himself.

A. J. P.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. C.—Whatever disclosures await us at the judgment-seat of Christ, whatever the things brought to our recollection there—things done in the body, whether they be good or bad—these will not be for the eyes and ears of others. They are matters between ourselves and the Lord alone. For we cannot think that the life of each believer will be exposed, in all its numberless details, to the gaze of every other saint. At least we know no scripture that lends support to such a thought. All that we are, all that we have done, both before conversion and since, is already known to Him with whom we have to do. Does this distress us? Not in the least, for we know that grace imputes nothing, according to Romans iv. 7, 8; viii. 33, 34. About all these things we have had to say to the Lord already. We own the guilt of them, and are assured that in the precious atonement of Christ divine justice has found a full answer to all its claims. And if in the perfect light of the judgment-seat of Christ we see what our life has been, as we could not see it through the distorting shadows of earth, if blots and blemishes that escape observation now are then made plain, it will only beautify the grace that bore with us when far from God—dead in trespasses and sins—that bears with us now and to the end.

E. D. (Luke iv., viii.).—You are quite right in your thought that the Lord Jesus in the temptation in the wilderness is seen as a dependant man, and as such meets every assault of the tempter with the Word of God. He might have done so in words which His own perfect wisdom had suggested, but this He did not do.

It was fitting, in the circumstances in which He was, that He should repel Satan's attacks with "the sword of the Spirit," and in so doing He is our great Exemplar. Were we wise, we should always meet the advances of the foe with the same weapon, not with arguments and reasonings of our own. Tin swords do well enough for children fighting mimic battles, but they are of no use in real war.

Referring to the storm on the lake, we cannot say whether Satan was the instrument in raising it or not, as Scripture is silent. There have been times when the enemy's power has shown itself in similar ways, as in the early part of the book of Job, but then it was distinctly permitted by God. We are not disposed to credit Satan with unlimited, or even uncontrolled, power over the elements. God may use him as His servant when He sees fit, but we may be quite sure he has his limitations, beyond which he cannot go. In the case before us the storm was permitted to test the faith of the disciples, and to show them that He who slept while the storm raged was Creation's Lord. All power was His, and with Him in the boat there was naught to fear. Blessed lesson for us!

J. W.—We cannot undertake to explain the words of another, especially when they relate to so profound a subject as the Person of Christ. Our explanations, were we disposed to offer any, might not correctly express the writer's views. You had better, therefore, address yourself straight to him for whatever explanations you require.

ENQUIRER.—Will you kindly allow us to defer answering your inquiries respecting the Lord's Table till we have looked afresh into the subject.

## PERFECT PEACE.

**I**S it possible that any should enjoy perfect peace in a stormy world like this? Peace, indeed, there may be—or, rather, brief intervals of peace, like gleams of sunshine from a broken sky. But who can have perfect peace in a scene of sin and sorrow—the arena of hot contentions and ambitions—where the story of so many lives is a story of struggle and disappointment, of cruel wrongs and bitter tears, and blighted hopes? One almost hears

### THE HOLLOW, MOCKING LAUGH

at the merest mention of perfect peace.

And yet the Scriptures speak of it; and, therefore, such a thing must be, even if *we* enjoy it not. Ah! reader; would it not be grand were it yours? But where shall it be found? Who can divulge its secret, or tell us the conditions which will ensure its passing into our possession?

Let us, in pursuing this inquiry, guard ourselves against all possible mistakes. For long centuries ago there were men—religious men, and leaders into the bargain—who cried “Peace, peace,” when there was no peace; and plenty of people believed them, to their own confusion. (Jeremiah vi. 14.) The successors of those miserable

and misleading men live and labour in the midst of us to-day. The Lord has sent them not, yet they prophesy in His name. Smooth things, these are the burden of their song, and Conscience sleeps and dreams, while Judgment whets her glittering sword. Let us, then, beware; lest heeding them, we also sleep and dream, and build our house upon the sinking sand.

One thing is certain—perfect peace there cannot be, apart from knowing how we stand with God. Leave *that* out, and perfect peace is nothing more than a perfect fraud,

FORGED ON THE DEVIL'S ANVIL,

and palmed off upon us for the very purpose of leading our souls blindfold to irreparable disaster.

And we must remember that we are in circumstances where there is no standing still. The steeds which are harnessed to the chariot of life never rest. Day and night they gallop on as if in a hurry to reach the eternal world, where God and ourselves must meet. But what will that meeting result in? Ah! that's the question. Do *you* know? Does anybody know? Yes, it will end in one of two things; and what they are, we are plainly told in Matthew xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." This being so, how can any sinner have perfect peace, if he knows not how he stands with God?

Now, it is written that "God so loved the

## PERFECT PEACE.

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world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Blessed words, which alter the aspect of everything! For assure my poor heart that God loves me, and hope springs up where

## NAUGHT BUT DESPAIR

had been. Yet that love, mind you, is not the easy tolerance of evil—the sickly sentimentality of a being too weak of will to punish the evil-doer. It is a profound mistake to suppose that God will call us to His bosom, and bid us nestle there, as if it mattered not whether we had sinned or no. Not in that way could the love of God be shown. Never, never, never, is His love divorced from His righteousness.

Do you not see that in order to have perfect peace the sin question must be taken up and set to rest in some way or other? For if it be not settled,

## HOWEVER BRIGHT THE BLUE

above our head, there are threatening clouds on the horizon, which, ere long, will darken the whole face of the sky. It is better—ininitely better—for us that the matter should be settled now on lines that suit God's glory, than that it should be postponed to the day of judgment? And if it be thus settled—righteously settled—no accusing voice shall at any time be heard, and our conscience henceforth may enjoy perfect peace.

Now, God has thought of all this; and, knowing what would maintain His glory, He has Himself found a Ransom, and, in so doing, manifested His great love. Turning our eyes to Calvary, we behold the Incarnate Son nailed to a cross of wood—there offered to bear the sins of many—Himself, the supreme Object of the Father's love, yet forsaken of God,

DYING THAT THE DEAD MIGHT LIVE.

There we behold the most solemn judgment of God against sin, and there, too, we see His love to sinful men most marvellously displayed. I speak not now of the love of Christ—immeasurable, and passing knowledge—but of the love of the Father who sent the Son—the love of God to sinners like ourselves. (Romans v. 6–8.)

Before we go further, I should like to ask—In what relation do you stand to these things? Have you seen yourself to be a lost sinner, and, as such, sought the presence of God, confessing your sins, and relying for pardon solely on the ground of what the Saviour suffered? We press the question the more earnestly, because on every hand there are those who readily assent to the truths of Scripture, and yet go no further. It is only too evident that, with all their knowledge, they have never fallen on their face before God in broken-hearted confession of their sin and guilt. If the necessity of doing so has ever forced itself upon them, if they have seen that

## PERFECT PEACE.

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such an attitude is the only right one for them to take, their hearts have been

TOO PROUD TO BEND ;

and so they remain unforgiven, unsaved. Are you one of these? If such be the case, believe me, no words could adequately describe the greatness of your danger—all the greater in that you are not sufficiently alive to it.

At the moment in which we write there may be seen on many a London hoarding a fine pictorial advertisement, which strikingly illustrates your position. A young lady, with her eyes bandaged, is being led by the hand of a stylishly-dressed man towards an open trap-door, whose yawning mouth is ready to receive her. All unsuspectingly, with a look of artless confidence, she lightly trips towards the fatal spot, guided by her smooth-tongued, villainous companion, whom she so foolishly trusts, and who is bent on her destruction. As we stand and look upon the picture, every feeling urges us to

RUSH TO HER RESCUE.

We see she has but to take another step to fall into the awful trap. Is there no one to seize her by the arm, and to tear the silken bandage from her eyes?

In a similar way the god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not. By a thousand different expedients he hides the lurking danger



while he lures his victims to their everlasting ruin. Oh, that your eyes were open, and your heart ready to admit Him who has been standing so long at the door, knocking, knocking, knocking, till His head is filled with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night. (Song of Solomon v. 2.)

It may be, however, that you have fled to Christ, but, like many more, you have not perfect rest as to your soul's salvation. Doubts beset you, and at times you wonder whether there has been any reality in the profession you have made. Is this because you find

SO MUCH IMPERFECTION WITHIN,  
and because your efforts to bring about a better state of things have been in vain? Ah! you are looking for peace from a quarter whence it never comes. Let the greatest possible improvement in yourself be supposed, and were you to rest on *that*, you would lean on a broken reed. Christ alone must be your resting-place, even He who died for the *ungodly*, and for those who have *no strength*. (Romans v. 6.)

Looking back to the cross, the believer in Christ is entitled to say, "All was settled then; every sin of mine, from infancy to old age, was borne by Jesus. For me He drank the bitter cup, for me He was wounded, bruised, and smitten; and God is satisfied, and justice has no more to claim." Then, looking up into the glory, and seeing Christ

## PERFECT PEACE.

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there, he can add, "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.)

But perfect peace, even about so great a matter as that of which we have been speaking, is not perfect peace about everything. Most of us make very good

## FAIR-WEATHER SAILORS,

and when the south wind blows softly, and the ship goes merrily over the waves, we can be calm and brave enough ; but our hearts too often sink when the winds and the waves are contrary. For it is quite possible to believe on God to the saving of the soul, and yet utterly fail to confide in Him when circumstances alter, or health gives way, or old age creeps on, or our loved ones are laid in the silent grave, and we are left alone with none to keep us company. These are things that test us all. Now, God would have us be in perfect peace when all these changes are round about us, though we may, and ought to, feel them deeply. And we shall be, if we do but follow His wise and loving counsel. Do any inquire what that counsel is ? It will be found in Philippians iv. 6—"Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Are we doing this ? Think of

## THAT EAR BEING EVER OPEN.

Think of God saying to you, "Come, tell Me everything. Whatever care, or burden, or sorrow,

or fear, or anxiety you may have, come, tell all to Me." Mark, you may not get the thing removed. He does not promise that. But if you make everything known to Him with simple, unwavering confidence in His love, you will find that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

It is beyond our power to make one hair white or black, nor can we, by taking thought, add one cubit to our stature. But God is omnipotent, and there is no exhausting of His riches. The stars are His, the silver and the gold, the cattle

UPON A THOUSAND HILLS ;

while not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. Nor is that all. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their griefs." (Psalm cxlvii. 3, marg.) "A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation." (Psalm lxviii. 5.) Oh, what a God is ours! The same Hand that guides the stars in their courses binds up, with more than a mother's gentleness, the griefs of His sorrowing saints, and wipes away their tears.

We cannot close without calling attention to Isaiah xxvi. 3—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." Was the prophet mistaken in saying this? or is it sweetly true? Your heart, dear Christian reader, shall give the answer.

God will keep him in *perfect peace*. Yes, *He* will keep; none other can. But he only is kept whose mind is stayed on God, whose trust is in Him. And in this

## THERE MUST BE REALITY.

To speak of the blessedness of faith is one thing, but to exercise it is quite another. Let us learn to trust Him more. Let us withdraw our expectations from all others, and place them only upon the living God. On Him only let us wait, in Him only let us trust. Then, whatever the morrow may bring in its hand, we shall find the grace of Christ sufficient; and, whether our ship sails on smooth waters, or across tempestuous seas, He will keep us in perfect peace.

“Peace! perfect peace! in this dark world of sin? \*  
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

“Peace! perfect peace! by thronging duties prest?  
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.

“Peace! perfect peace! with sorrows surging round?  
On Jesus’ bosom nought but calm is found.

“Peace! perfect peace! with loved ones far away?  
In Jesus’ keeping we are safe, and they.

“Peace! perfect peace! our future all unknown?  
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

“Peace! perfect peace! death shadowing us and ours?  
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.

“It is enough; earth’s struggles soon shall cease,  
And Jesus call us to heaven’s perfect peace.”

\* The reader will observe that in these lines of Bickersteth’s Incredulity confronts the soul with a series of challenges, to which Faith furnishes her triumphant replies.

## GOD IS ABLE.

“My grace is sufficient for thee : for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”—2 COR. xii. 9.

VERY simple words are these, but many can bear witness to the encouragement received from them in times of trial and conflict.

The grey-headed old veteran, who has repeatedly borne the shock of battle, the young recruit, who has only just smelt powder, have alike experienced the wonderful support of this divine assurance when surrounded by spiritual foes.

But these lines may catch the eye of some whose hearts are sad, and whose courage has almost gone. The road has been difficult, the temptations strong, and they are smarting from frequent defeats. Can the young pilgrim, who made such a bright and happy start some time ago, be the same as he who now limps along so despairingly? Yes, he is the same, but God is training him, that he may become a faithful and useful servant, and teaching him not to trust in feelings and happy experiences, but in God, who changes not. Take courage, downcast brother! There is an unfailing source of strength in Christ which can always be drawn upon, and against which nothing can stand.

I would like in this paper to set before you some of the ways in which the Lord Jesus can work on your behalf.

I. "He is ABLE...to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."—HEB. vii. 25.

The One who was once crucified in weakness, has triumphed over all the power of the enemy, and sits in heavenly glory now. Thus, He has shown how infinitely superior He is to Satan. However much the foe may beset you, he must give way before this triumphant One. Satan has been defeated, Christ bears the Victor's palm. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Moreover, *He ever liveth* there. You will always know where to find Him—be it in the press of business, or in the crowded street. At all times He is there to hear the silent prayer, to catch the upward look.

Have you any fears about your future course? Do you feel that you will never be able to make a stand for Christ? Those fears, too, are needless, for it is *to the uttermost*, right to the very end, that He is able to save. Nor will He relinquish His watchful care till the pathway of His people ends in the blissful country for which they are bound.

Do not forget that you have always admittance, by faith, into the presence of God. If any dare to question your right, if your heart should ever shrink from such a holy presence, point to that One seated at God's right hand, for you can "*come unto God by Him.*"

II. "He is ABLE to succour them that are tempted."

HEB. ii. 18.

The former Scripture brings before us the place which the Lord now occupies; the one I have just quoted, the place which He once passed through. He has had an especial preparation in order to assist us in our journey; that is to say, He has travelled the *whole path* before, and there is not a difficulty, or sorrow, we can meet, that He has not already faced, so that we can say of Him:

"He knows what sorest trials mean,  
For He has felt the same."

When a man is in deep trouble, he finds more sympathy in the simple grip of the hand from one who has passed through a similar trouble, than he does in a multitude of words from one who has never experienced it. Now whatever the trial is, you will find, in our Great High Priest, One who can give you just that real sympathy which is so helpful. And not only sympathy, but succour. He is able to come right down to you, and lift you above the trouble. A poor, ignorant man was converted, and in consequence he met with many rough words and harsh deeds. Being asked how it was that he could bear these taunts so calmly, he answered, "I saw right by my side a vision of the blessed Lord Himself." It is the conscious presence of Christ that keeps us calm and courageous. "I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."

III. The difficulties of a young Christian often

arise from the fact that he has only feebly entered into the grace of God. He is weak in faith. He is very conscious of it himself, and unfortunately others show that they are quite aware of it, but

“God is ABLE to make him stand.”—ROM. xiv. 4.

Perhaps some weak brother is reading this. What a dull life he has of it. He is always blaming himself because he relishes his dinner, or enjoys a conversation with a friend, so much. Oh, that our hearts might be released from this *bondage of legality*, and dive deep into the ocean of God's free grace! For it is the happy liberty of grace to which we are called. Not liberty to please ourselves, but to turn our backs on ourselves, and, through love to the Lord, to follow Him, and definitely to refuse what displeases Him.

Another quagmire into which the weak brother may fall, is that of *Infidel Doubts*. Oh! brother, grievously did you hurt your soul when, in that careless hour, you took up that book “just to see what it said,” or listened to that smooth-tongued friend of yours, who boasted of his broad-minded, up-to-date views. But what can eradicate the poison? Nothing but getting back to the Lord, confessing your guilt, and going on in communion with Him. Only be devoted to Him, and you will find His blessed Person just the antidote you need.

IV. “The Lord is ABLE to give thee much more than this.”—2 CHRON. xxv. 9.

My reader, you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, but are you a follower? You have entered



the strait gate, but are your feet carefully treading the narrow way? I think I hear you say, "I shall have to give up so much if I become a follower of the Lord." Learn the lesson that Amaziah had to learn. He had hired 100,000 Israelites to help him fight his enemies, but the Lord commanded him to send them home. "But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?" Listen to the answer: "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." What is it that you cannot give up? Novels, the clubs, the comic paper, concerts, &c.? And are these the things which you think are more likely to give satisfaction than a life of consecration to Christ? What a mistake. Nay, do not longer cheat yourself, but take all these paltry objects, bind them together, and write *Banished* across the whole. And if you do so, what will be your loss? Read Philippians iii., and you will find the answer there.

IV. "Our God whom we serve is ABLE to deliver us."—DAN. iii. 17.

"Shall I not meet with much opposition and persecution if I walk in this path, and become a true follower of Christ?" You may, for did not the Lord meet with it? Never was one so beset with enemies, so hated by man and Satan as He. And shall we expect to have nothing but sunshine? Shall we shrink from our little share of the cross? Let us learn our next lesson from Dan. iii. The

story is a familiar one. The image has been set up; the fiery furnace has been prepared; the royal decree, commanding all to bow the knee to the idol, has gone forth. Three faithful men stand before the king, they will not commit an act so dishonouring to the true God. The situation is, indeed, a terrible one; they are in the hands, and at the disposal of an Eastern despot, who will not shrink from inflicting the most awful tortures if his command be not obeyed. Yet, listen to their words—"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." What was the secret of their confidence. Simply this; they measured the tyrant's threats by the side of the exhaustless power and infinite love of the Saviour-God.

Yet God does not always hold back the threatening hands. It may be His will that His faithful followers should honour His name by passing through the fire. Now listen again, for the three words that follow form one of the grandest utterances that have ever fallen from human lips. "But if not"—if Nebuchadnezzar is allowed to work his worst upon them, and they must lay down their lives that day—"But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

VI. It is time to close this paper, and I would like to do so by referring you to the grand triumphant doxology at the end of Jude's epistle.

It has often been noticed that this epistle has an especial importance in our day, because the evils which are now full-blown were making their presence felt in earlier times; and were, to a large extent, indicated by Jude. The days are perilous in which we live. Temptations and snares are encountered at every step. *Infidelity* meets us in all its forms, from the atheist who boldly declares his unbelief in anything, be it God or devil, heaven or hell, to the preacher who fills the heads of his audience with modern thought instead of gospel truth. The attractive display of *ritualism*; the continual round of *pleasure*; the most shameful *vices*; these, too, are some of the pitfalls of which the young Christian has to beware. Yet these things need not make us despair; for there is One above them all, whose eye never wearies, whose arm never fails, whose love can never be extinguished. In the midst of the confusion we can turn to Him; and as we do so we shall drop the recital of our difficulties, and join Jude in his outburst of praise to Him who is able to bring us through every danger, and to have us in His presence without one stain or scar. Let the words encourage your heart, my reader, "Unto Him that is *able to keep you from falling*, and to *present you faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

S. H. P.

## CHRIST OUR ONLY OBJECT.

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” (Philippians iii. 7, 8.)

WE find that when a person is converted Christ is everything to him, and the world is no more than a vain show—vanity and nothing. It has passed from the mind, and unseen things fill the heart. But afterwards, as the man goes on with his duties and his intercourse with his friends, though Christ is still precious, he does not continue to count all things but loss as he did at first. Often it is only that he *counted*. But Paul says, “I *do* count,” not I *did*. It is a great thing to be able to say it. Now Christ should always hold such a place in our hearts as He did when salvation was first revealed to us.

Of course, if a man has not Christ at the bottom, he is no Christian at all. But even where Christ is in a man, and he is walking blamelessly, yet, if you speak to him of Christ, there may not be an echo in his heart, though his life goes on smoothly. Christ is indeed at the bottom, and a fair Christian walk at the top, and between these two a hundred and fifty things that Christ has nothing whatever to do with. His life is practically passed without Christ. This will not do. It is the terrible levity of the heart that goes on without Christ until it

becomes the highway of whatever the world pours in.

You may tell me that you have the forgiveness of sins. I rejoice to hear it, but I ask, What is governing your heart now? Is your eye resting on Christ in glory? Is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus so before your soul as to govern everything else, and make you count everything loss that is in the way? You will have temptations I know; but nine-tenths of the temptations which beset and hinder would not exist if Christ had His place in the heart. It is just like a baby with a plaything. If you try to take it away, it will be held the faster; but put a prettier before the child, and the other will be dropped at once.

We all have our daily occupations, but these should not hinder our having Christ as our Object. If a labouring man has a family, he does not forget the affections of his children because of his work. On the contrary, when his work is done his tools are thrown down, and he returns home with all the more joy because he has been absent from it. His labour did not enfeeble the affections of his heart.

There is another danger we also have to watch against. When there are not other objects, there may be distractions, and we must guard against these, and have habits of jealousy of heart for Christ, else there is immediate weakness. Then, when we go into God's presence, instead of

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rejoicing in the Lord, the conscience has to be talked to. It is sad indeed when the walk in the world has been such that, on going back to Christ, we find that He had not been thought of in it.

Can you say, as Paul said to Agrippa, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am"? Are you happy enough to say that? Can you say, "I am so rejoicing in Christ, and see such excellency in the knowledge of Him, that I would to God you were like me?"

The Lord give us to have our eyes so anointed with eye-salve that, seeing Him, our hearts may be detached from other things, and have no other object than Himself before them. Perhaps we shall have the cross to take up, for we are passing through a place where people do not care about Christ. The Lord give us to say—and it is in His heart to do so—"This one thing I do." J. N. D.

## SEVEN SUCCESSIVE STEPS.

**M**AY I ask you to read a sermonette on seven words, each of which begins with the letter "B"?

And, first, let us take one which speaks of the commencement of life. I mean the word

"BIRTH."

Now, what an amount of interest attaches to each little babe that makes its appearance in the

family circle, and how quickly the report of its arrival is published amongst friends and kinsfolk !

But, in order to live, *birth* is necessary, for that event lies at the very threshold of life.

So, too, in order to live spiritually the "new birth" is necessary. No one is a child of God who has not been "born again."

A person may be old, as was Nicodemus (John iii.), or he may be young, when "born of God"; but whatever age, unless that mighty and God-wrought change take place, no one can enter the kingdom of God. May I ask you, dear reader, if you have thus been "born of God" ?

If not, do not expect that you shall reach that holy and blessed kingdom, nor give yourself any rest until, through God's grace, you know that you share in this first mark of divine and eternal life.

For, besides having a nature which, alas ! hates God, and which could not enjoy His presence, we are guilty of sins as well ; and He who knows the total depravity of our fallen nature, knows also the multitude of our sins. *We* may have forgotten them—not so *He* !

And hence we read, in Job xiv. 16, 17, "*For now thou numberest my steps ; dost thou not watch over my sin*" ? Certainly He does ! God knows all ! And, hence in the following sentence, we reach our second word—

"BAG."

"*My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.*"

Yes, there it lies in a bag, or bundle—a great, heavy bundle, too—as poor Christian proved, while yet in “the city of Destruction.”

The smallest bundle of sins is intolerable when once it is really felt. Sin’s load is leaden! A guilty conscience is a bag of vile abominations. It is sealed up, sewed up; you cannot open the bag’s mouth, and shake out the evil contents! No, they are tightly enclosed, and your agonized conscience has to carry them. No one is so wretched as he who carries the load of unpardoned sins!

Say, dear reader, are your sins pardoned? How sad your case, if they are not!

Pardoned? No! How, oh, how can sins be pardoned?

Ah! that is an important question, indeed, but one which, thank God, can be readily answered.

Our third word tells us about the ground of forgiveness. It is the word

“BLOOD.”

Let me quote one verse—“*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” (1 John i. 7.)

What a grand, sweeping, divine statement!

May I ask you to analyze this verse, and take it bit by bit—

1. “*The Blood*” (and nothing else).
2. “*Of Jesus Christ*” (the only perfect Man).
3. “*His Son*” (the Creator, the Beloved, the Eternal).



4. "*Cleanseth*" (removeth from God's eye).

5. "*Us*" (poor, guilty sinners who believe).

6. "*From all sin*" (leaving none unremoved.)

How complete! how perfect! But could anything satisfy justice if that blood could not? Nothing! But God Himself declares the all-cleansing efficacy thereof, and, on its glorious basis, He invites the faith of the poor awakened soul to rest. Harken to that which was said by a deeply-troubled saint of Old Testament days—a wonderful saying, and one that leads us to our fourth word—

"BACK."

Hezekiah said, in Isaiah xxxviii. 17, "*Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.*"

Hitherto that bundle had been on the back of Hezekiah; now God casts it away behind His own. He would remember it no more. Hezekiah was relieved of the awful load, and so, too, is every soul, whether king or pauper, who turns, in like manner, to our sin-pardoning God.

Have you, dear reader, turned to God? If not, turn now. As some one has said, "You must either turn, or burn!" If we turn to God, we receive all His favour, as our fifth word declares; it is the word—

"BLESSING."

"*Ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*" (1 Peter iii. 9.) What an inheritance! It is quite true that the Christian is already "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly

places in Christ"; but, along with this infinite favour, he has many a sorrow and many a trial by the way, for he has not yet reached his home; but, nevertheless, he is called to participate eternally in an inheritance of perfect and unalloyed blessing.

Ah! we can thank our God for the present, and we can rejoice in view of the future. We are blessed now, and are to inherit blessing then! It is grace to-day, and glory to-morrow. What a portion!

But then, what about our sorrows and cares? Well, they are short-lived, at longest. And what does our sixth word say? It speaks of a

"BOSOM."

Once the disciples had a difficulty, for which they desired an explanation from their Lord. (See John xiii. 23.) John was appealed to. He, in turn, asked his Lord; and, as he did so, he lay on the Master's bosom. He learned the explanation there.

Lay your weary head down on the bosom of divine love; and, as sure as you do so, you will experience—not, indeed, the removal of the cause of trouble, but the peace of God that passeth all understanding. He<sup>h</sup> has cast all your sins behind His back; now He asks you to lay all your sorrows on His bosom!

What sweet familiarity! So it is; and He loves us to cultivate affection and confidence. We cannot be too much *at home* with Him.

That is communion! Read what our last word tells us. It is the word

“BOOK.”

*“And a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name.”* (Mal. iii. 16.) We love to think of the names we esteem; we treasure their memories; we cherish their sayings; all about them is dear and precious to us.

And we love to think of the name of Jesus—our blessed Saviour, Lord, and Friend.

In turn He loves and values our poor meagre recollections of Him and of His Name—a book is written before Him for such. His remembrances are thus continually present to Him. Our sins are behind His back, our sorrows on His bosom, and ourselves before His loving and unwearied eye!

It may seem but a small thing that we should think upon His Name. Yes; but it is the secret of all devotedness. No mighty works can make up for the lack of it. As the deep-hidden love-springs are kept at work, as His sacred and precious Name is cherished within, so will our outward witness be becoming. The lovely sap will silently and effectively produce its own proper fruit, and the Christ cultivated in the heart will be the Christ spoken by the lips and illustrated in the life.

J. W. S.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

X. Y. Z.—Your heart, dear friend, seems all unhinged and in a state of great bewilderment, so that you can hardly tell whether the things in the midst of which you have lived these many years are phantoms or realities. Why is it thus with you? Is it that when Satan has thrown his fiery darts, the shield of faith has not been raised to quench them, or is it that in the whole course of your experience you have never measured yourself in the holy presence of God? The latter is probably the secret of your distressful condition. In saying so we are not suspecting you of insincerity. It is more than likely you have found intellectual pleasure in the acquisition of Scriptural knowledge, and, like many more, have mistaken that for spiritual enjoyment—a grave and growing error from which it is an immense mercy to be delivered at whatever cost. But the cost is sometimes great, as you may be finding out. The patriarch Job is a case in point. It cannot be doubted that he was a sincere saint of God, and while everything went prosperously, his outward life was as bright as a summer day. But changes came—God suffered them to come. Dark and yet darker grew the night, and stormier the sky. Then, what questionings arose, what an arraignment of God's ways, what bitterness of spirit, what perplexity! Nor did this end till Job knew, and confessed *in the presence of God*, that he was vile and that he abhorred himself. Then the silver streaks of the morning began to appear, ushering in a brighter day than Job had ever known. Now, we greatly fear you have never been in the presence of God in heartfelt confession of your own personal vileness. Do not misunderstand, you may have owned this verbally both to yourself and to others, but to confess it to God,

in deep abasement and self-aborrence, is another matter altogether. It is just here that the work in so many is fearfully superficial, and hence, though credited with much intelligence and spirituality, they have not peace with God—they know not deep down in their souls the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, our earnest hope is that God will grant you to see yourself in your true colours. Then you will loathe yourself, and, withdrawing the eyes from an object so unlovely, you will be glad to fix them on Christ through whom we are saved, and in whom we are accepted. Many a word had Job spoken before he reached the place of blessing. He had darkened counsel by words without knowledge, but in the presence of God he could only lay his hand upon his mouth, and, keeping silence, learn the priceless lessons God would teach. Do not then be arguing with yourself as to whether you have the indwelling Spirit, nor spend time in bemoaning the hardness of your heart and the shallowness of your feelings, but sink upon your knees before God in true confession, and His forgiveness shall not be withheld from your knowledge. Read Psalm xxxii., and may God bless it to your soul! We shall be so glad to hear of you again.

A. M. D.—The meaning of the term “righteousness,” in Romans iii. 25, 26, is explained by the concluding words of the latter verse, which tell us that God is *just*, and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. It is God’s righteousness shown in the sinner’s, or rather, the believer’s, justification—not His mercy, but His righteousness. He is righteous in reckoning righteous the one who believes in Jesus. In chapter iii. 21, 22, the thought is somewhat different, at least, so it seems to us. After having shown that man has no righteousness, for “there is none righteous, no, not one,” the apostle proceeds to show that there is righteousness that

God confers, entirely apart from law, and this righteousness, while it is unto all, is only upon all them that believe. With respect to the "by" and "through" of verse 30, the point is simply this—God will justify the Jew *by* faith, on that principle and not by works of law, in which he was ready enough to boast; and as to the Gentile, He could, and would, justify him *through* faith. To the one every door was closed save that of faith, and to the other that same door should be open.

MULTITUDES.—The mixed multitude, we presume, was composed of persons not strictly of Israel, though preferring to follow their fortunes rather than remain in Egypt. Professedly, they were under the leadership of Moses, for, in common with the rest, they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. But they were a snare to Israel, as we learn from Numbers xi. 4. They prefigure the mixed multitude of the present day, who have succeeded in gaining a place among God's people, though not really of them—professors, not possessors.

J. D. — Do not suffer anything to lead you to doubt the love of the Lord Jesus. When He first revealed Himself to your soul, He knew perfectly all you had been, and all you would be in days to come. Yet He called you in His grace, and you are His for ever. But the knowledge of His unchanging love, instead of making us indifferent to evil, should lead us to be more watchful against it, for how could we lightly grieve the One who loves us so? And since your conversion, you have given way to bad language and gone to the races! We do not wonder at your being unhappy—it would be alarming were you not. But we beseech you to go to God in sincere confession of your sins—not, indeed, as an unsaved sinner, but as a child of God who has been beguiled into sin. And 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.) We notice what you say about your broken resolutions, and your sinking deeper into the mire. You had better give up making resolves, and just look to the Lord to keep you hour by hour. Do not forget to read your Bible prayerfully, and give yourself to prayer, too, as you find opportunity. If you will send us your address, we will endeavour to place you in touch with Christian friends likely to help you on your heavenward road. We shall always find pleasure in answering any questions, so write freely.

INQUIRER.—The authority of a master, or parent, or husband is fully maintained in Scripture, and subjection is enjoined on servant, child, and wife. But this has its limits, and when it is a question of God and the earthly tie, then God must be first, no matter what the consequences. No one has a right to lord it over the conscience of another, though it is always a serious thing to run counter to the wishes of one to whom subjection is naturally due. But if a master, for trade purposes required his servants to lie, or a parent called upon his Christian children to burn incense to a heathen god, are they to do it? On the other hand, if an unconverted husband had, or thought he had, a grievance against anyone, and said to his Christian wife, "I forbid your speaking to that person," she might with good conscience conform to his wishes, even if she thought them wrong. But the other ought to understand that, in ceasing to speak, the wife was simply yielding to her husband, and that her own heart cherished not the slightest ill-will, but rather the contrary. We speak now of broad principles, and God may be counted on to give wisdom in smaller details when those principles are called into play.

## THEATRE-GOING.

A PLAY is going the round of the theatres just now, entitled *The Sign of the Cross*. It places before the spectators the way in which the early Christians conducted themselves, and how they were persecuted by Nero, the cruellest of the Roman emperors. The actors sing a hymn upon the stage. One of them preaches the Sermon on the Mount at one of the secret meetings of the Christians, which is broken in upon by the persecutors. A love story is interwoven, in which a noble Roman adopts the Christian religion through his affection for a Christian girl, and the story ends in the martyrdom of both, and of others, too.

The theatres have been unusually crowded to witness the play. Many ministers have attended, and advised their friends to attend. Some have gone so far as to urge their congregations not to miss such an opportunity. *Many* Christians, who had never been to a theatre before, have seen the play, witnessing it with tears, and declaring afterwards that they had heard a more powerful sermon from the stage, on a *week-day*, than they usually hear on a *Sunday* from the pulpit.

I am not generally in the way of hearing

XIII.

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theatre intelligence, nor have I gleaned one item of my news from the current newspapers. These facts have been forced upon my attention by hearing of Christians of all kinds debating whether they should go to see the play, and of those who have been earnestly recommending others to go. In all my experience, I have known nothing of its kind which has made so profound an impression upon the entire community. It strikes me as being a very clever move of the Devil to get in the thin end of the wedge of worldliness, and a proof that the Christian profession has no sense of the great gulf existing between Christ and the world. It speaks loudly of the widespread Laodiceanism of the day, and of the great and growing need for every true Christian to be separate in heart and ways from the world, as though it were but yesterday that Christ had been rejected, and the cry had rung from the frenzied lips of hot fanatics—"Away with *Him*! Away with *Him*! Crucify *Him*! Crucify *Him*!"

I had occasion the other day to visit the manager of a large public building, a man of great natural ability and influence.

He said the day had gone by for telling those who went to theatres that they were in danger of hell-fire. Many broad-minded, liberal ministers, said he, went nowadays, *especially when they were visiting London.*

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The last phrase sounded rather ominously in my ears, especially as I had heard of some of these gentlemen changing their coat and collar before going up to that great city.

He also instanced the prejudice that existed against a popular evangelist, who was at that time drawing great crowds to the very building of which he was manager. "How can they truly criticise," he asked, "when they have not heard him? In the same way, how can people denounce theatre-going, if they have not seen a play or two for themselves?"

But this argument will not hold water. Must we become drunkards before we can denounce intemperance? Must we be open and profane sinners ere we can stand up and warn such to flee from the wrath to come?

Then, again, another argument struck me as having considerable force in it. If actors preach such telling sermons by their performances, how is it that they do not practice what they preach? Would we listen to a preacher who simply *acted* his part in the pulpit, and did not even pretend to follow the maxims that flowed from his lips so constantly?

If what has been urged in respect of theatres is to have any real weight, actors, as a profession, should be examples of Christian piety and zeal. But are they? I never heard of an actor who, when he was converted to God, did not for *con-*

*science* sake give up his profession, and take to other means of livelihood.

But to come to the *real* point at issue. The professing Christians, who recommend the seeing of this particular play, I make bold to say, do not see that the people of God are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world (John xvii. 14); that they are sent from heaven as He was (John xvii. 18); and inasmuch as the world has rejected Christ, their present part is with Him in His rejection, knowing that "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

Imagine one of the distressed Israelites who had fled to David, in the cave of Adullam, slipping off to Jerusalem to see a play performed under the auspices of King Saul! The illustration is ludicrous, but the application is eminently practical.

Look at Abraham and Lot. Abraham dwelt in godly separation on the plains of Mamre. Lot pitched his tents in the well-watered plain of Jordan, which was *like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar*. How did he know what the land of Egypt was like? Ah! in a moment of unfaithfulness Abraham had journeyed thither, and the charms of the *foreign* land were photographed on Lot's heart. Henceforth he *desired* such a dwelling-place.

How different to that magnificent statement in

Heb. xi.—the chapter that thrills the soul with its clear clarion note of encouragement, telling us that GOD IS ABLE—"But now they *desire* 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."

"Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, *and pitched his tent* TOWARDS SODOM." The tent of a pilgrim pitched towards Sodom is a sadly incongruous sight. Yet how many Christians are so situated! How many long for the leeks, and onions, and garlic of Egypt, and *loathe* the manna—the heavenly food!

At last Lot, who *deliberately* placed himself on the edge of the vortex, found himself a magistrate in Sodom itself; he sat in the gate.

And now let us imagine a conversation between two influential citizens of Sodom.

"I'm glad Lot has accepted a prominent position in our council chamber. Such as he are needed. We have much to be proud of in our city—its commerce, its prosperity, its luxury. Yet with it all there is much wickedness about—drunkenness, crying social evils, gambling, impurity, and the like. I'm sure Lot is just the man to be where he is, broad-minded and liberal in his views. Don't you think so?"

"Certainly; his conduct is more to be praised than that of his uncle Abraham, who is a shrewd man of business too, I hear. In fact, he is a

more able and substantial man than his nephew. The weight of years, too, is upon his shoulders. He would adorn the civic bench. But there! he is bigoted and narrow-minded in my judgment. He shuts himself out from his neighbours, because he worships a different God."

"Yes, that is exactly what I think. Public offices and politics are adorned by men like Lot. He's not one of your hard and fast bigoted men. Why, he's as religious as Abraham, but he keeps his religion to himself, and does not obtrude it upon us in business or politics. His daughters, too, have married well—married to prominent citizens—and so Lot's interest and connection with Sodom are strengthened."

So the two friends gossip, and settle things to their own satisfaction.

But let time run on a little, and see how things turn out. Sodom is doomed to destruction for its wickedness. Soon the prosperous, busy, wicked city is to be laid low by a lurid shower of fire and brimstone.

Lot is startled by the visit of the two angels; while Abraham, on the heights of communion, is pleading with their Master and his that Sodom might be spared.

Once Abraham had taken his household servants, and had rescued his worldly nephew from the hands of victorious invaders. Sodom's king had offered him a reward, but he had lifted up

his hand to the Possessor of heaven and earth that he would not degrade his God by accepting bounty at the hand of his enemy.

Nay, more, that mysterious personage, Melchizedek—type of a glorious risen Christ—had just met him with bread and wine, and had blessed him. Thus sustained and cheered, the allurements of Sodom's king little attracted his great heart.

And now we see him, as the two angels pursue their way to Sodom, pleading before the Lord. What a lovely picture!

How different is it with worldly, broad-minded, liberal Lot! He hurries off to warn his sons-in-law. Hitherto their conversation had been on far different topics. The affairs of the city, business and politics, family interests, had engrossed their talk. Now he comes with a message from God, earnest, importunate.

Startled himself, he suddenly becomes the evangelist of the family. He warns them of imminent danger, of coming judgment. "*But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.*" How humbling! There was no divine weight, no moral power behind his word.

Lot preaching in Sodom, Samson grinding in prison with shortened locks, Eli falling from his seat and breaking his neck upon the ground, Elijah once fearless and zealous, but now faint-hearted, and offering his resignation to God, Peter

warming himself at the enemies' fire and denying his Lord—all these are beacons to warn us off the sharp and jagged rocks of half-heartedness, of world-bordering, of lukewarmness.

Now, for one moment, look upon two pictures, sketched so graphically on the divine page. Lot and his two daughters, constrained by the angels, are fleeing from Sodom just as the awful storm is gathering thick over the doomed city. His wife—fit emblem of a professor—is looking, as Lot taught her years before, *towards* Sodom. Her body is out of the city, but her heart is still in it, till God stops its beating, and stereotypes her for ever as the figure of a mere professor. “Remember Lot’s wife.”

Lot hurries on. Hear his miserable, maundering pleading that he might live in Zoar, because it was a *little* city. Oh! for a *little* pleasure, a *little* recreation, let me read *just* a few choice novels of a religious character! Thus plead those who have fled from Sodom and long for Zoar.

Poor Lot, he even fears Zoar, and finally flies to a mountain, and in a lonely cave, drunk and degraded, he becomes, by his own daughters, the father of the enemies of God’s people.

We fail to see any redeeming point in the sad history, yet the Holy Ghost, quick-sighted to discern anything of Christ in any one of us, says that God “delivered *just* Lot, vexed with the

filthy conversation of the wicked: for *that righteous man* dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his righteous soul* from day to day with their unlawful deeds." How refreshing is that verse! It is like an oasis in the desert, a silver lining to a gloomy cloud.

Now look upon the other picture. "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord." Hallowed spot! Thither did he repair, and from thence he looked down upon the smoking cities of the plain. What a figure he presents as he calmly stands and views the tragic scene! Of Abraham himself we make nothing. He was but a poor idolater till the vision of the God of glory broke in upon his soul, and transformed him ever after, even as the sight of the plain of Jordan, "like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar," affected poor unsatisfied Lot.

So the vision of a Christ in glory has broken in upon our souls. "We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Our future is with Him in glory.

Shall we not then walk in holy separation from the world? Can we, *if we love the Lord*, take the hand once pierced on the cross for our many sins, and grasp at the same time the hand of the world, stained as it is with the blood of His murder?



The cure, the only cure, for worldliness is the positive engagement of our hearts with Christ. Mere separation from the world is nothing less than monkishness, if our hearts are not more than recompensed by the enjoyment of the company of Christ. But if occupied with Christ, separation becomes positive privilege, and our testimony to the world will be in the power of the Spirit. Then warnings of coming judgment will be real in the ears of our listeners, and many will be led to flee from the wrath to come.

Our opportunities are few, and our days but short. Christ, the Bridegroom of our souls, is quickly coming. Let us then, attracted by the glories of the risen Christ, take our stand here with a rejected Christ. Let us seek to be here for Him ; and may everything else, whether it be family, business, or social life, subserve to this.

“The friendship of the world is enmity with God.” “The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.” “The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

A. J. P.

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“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.”

## DEVOTEDNESS.

THE storm was hushed. The judgment had been borne, atonement made, the work finished, and Jesus had bowed His head in death. Tender hands lay His body in a bed of spices. Binding Him with linen, they gently bear Him to the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa, and roll a great stone before the door to guard against all intruders. On the morning of the first day of the week, while it was yet dark, the devoted Mary Magdalene hastened to the sepulchre. Great was her surprise to find the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, and the Object of her love gone. No Jesus there! What sorrow! She runs to tell the disciples, and, in breathless haste, exclaims, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." Peter and John hasten to the sepulchre, they look and enter in, and leave, and go back to their own homes. But Mary stood without, weeping. Left alone, alone in her grief; yet not alone, for there is One who knows the desolation of her heart. Peter and John can go unto their own homes, but not so Mary. She had no home now. The home of her heart had been the company of Jesus,

and now that He was gone, everything was gone for her.

Stooping down, Mary looked into the sepulchre. The tears of love water the stony floor, and, as she weeps, she is visited by angels. They say, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Mark the answer. It is not now, "They have taken away *the* Lord," as heretofore, but "They have taken away *MY* Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Deep and real, indeed, was her love for Christ.

So Mary stands before the empty grave — the grave of all her sins, and of a thousand cherished hopes and joys. Not intelligent as to the resurrection, she knew not that He must rise again. But her heart was bound to Him, and what intelligence did not do, love did. She had cause to love Him. She remembered how the Lord had cast out of her seven devils, and her heart was knit to Him with this sevenfold cord, not easily broken. But there was more than that. It was what she saw in Himself that had bound her heart to Him with the fetters of love. Could she do ought but weep, as she found the tomb empty, and her heart bereaved of the only One she treasured? Great must have been her grief as she beheld her Lord suffer at the hands of man, and now, when she found the sepulchre empty and Jesus gone she knew not where, her heart was

crushed with sorrow upon sorrow. It might have been said, "Behold how she loved Him." Does such love, believer, dwell in our hearts?

Our Saviour and Lord has been down into the valley of Elah, and silenced Goliath for us. He has agonized and poured out His life's blood to save us, and has He not driven out of our hearts a thousand devils, worse than Mary Magdalene's? Have not our sins been buried in the empty tomb of Jesus? Can we rehearse the story of His love, and remember what He has done for us, and the heavenly flame not kindle in our breasts? By the love of Jesus to our souls, let us ask ourselves whether this affection for Christ flows through every vein of our moral being. Has He captivated our hearts? This cannot be, when other lovers enter the habitation of Christ, and drive Him out. Where is the habitation of Christ, but in the hearts of His people? The apostle says, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Not visiting, but dwelling. Ah, to invite Him to dwell, to take up His abode, and illuminate our hearts with heavenly light! Mary had no home but to be with Jesus. She would dwell among the tombs, if Jesus were there; for to her He was not only the chiefest among ten thousand, but the altogether lovely.

Oh, that we could remember the pit from whence we were digged. Then would we think of the Deliverer. How untiring the devotedness

of Christ, and His love and service to us—a service that should make us His willing captives. How wonderful it is, that He should seek after the love and affection of our hearts, and be exceeding patient in His search. To woo us, He tells us of His love in the past, His present love, His glory. If we yield ourselves to Him, He will fill our hearts with joy, He will tell us of His riches in glory, He will unlock the casket of eternal treasures for the exploration of our wondering souls. For such blessing we should not need much pressing. We ought to be able to adopt the language of the Canticles, and to say, “Thou hast ravished (margin, taken away) my heart.”

The days get darker. Evil abounds. The love of many grows cold, and our blessed Lord is as much rejected to-day as ever He was. Every Christian then should stir up the smouldering embers of his love, and in this day of unreality and self-seeking, strive to be whole-hearted for Christ. And the Holy Spirit is ready to bring Christ before us as the satisfying Object of our hearts. Perhaps you say, “I want to be more for Christ. I long to be more devoted. I do earnestly desire to yield myself wholly to Him. But how is this brought about?” It is as the heart gets occupied with His love, with what He has done, and what He is, that we find ourselves led into deeper and more intense affection for Himself.

## DEVOTEDNESS.

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We need to pray this into our souls. The ship that is to ride triumphantly over the rocks and breakers of coldness and self-seeking, must have its sails set so as to catch the heavenly breezes. No doubt the first thing that knit the soul of Jonathan to the soul of David was the deliverance David had effected for him. But Jonathan should have gone on. He did not follow David into the cave. Hence he knew less about the man after God's own heart, than he might have done.

"We love Him, because He first loved us." Here is the motive power. It was the story of His love, that won our hearts as sinners, and it is the same story that shall win our hearts as saints. Then drink at the fountain of His unchanging love. Get your pitcher filled from the heavenly well, and you shall know the truth of Jesus' words, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." And if the love of Christ becomes the guarded citadel in which we dwell, then no discouragement, cast by the half-hearted, will chill the heart. No cry of, "It is waste," will hinder the lavishing of your all upon His adorable Person. With Himself before you, His glory will be the paramount desire of your life. Nor will there be any such thought as giving up this or that.

Devotedness to Christ knows no such thing as loss. When it thinks of Christ it is all gain;

for the compensation, profits, joys, which Christ gives to the soul that surrenders itself to Him, are indeed many. There is no loss in following Christ, but positive gain. We should not talk about loss if someone took a base coin from us and gave us five hundred good ones instead. Everything, too, connected with Christ is in the superlative degree. It is, and must be, always the best.

May the Lord, by His Spirit, so warm our hearts by His love, that, with renewed ardour, we may seek to be more devoted to Him and to His service. May we stand for Christ in an evil day. And, if filled with Christ, we shall speak well of Him. We shall cheer the hearts of His people, visit the sick, lift up the hands that hang down, speak of His love to the sinner, and talk in affectionate terms to old and young of our Beloved and our Friend. The Lord create in all of us the desire to be thoroughly devoted to Himself. May our prayer be, "Lord, cause my heart to be entirely consecrated to Thee."

"Take Thou our hearts, and let them be  
For ever closed to all but Thee ;  
Thy willing servants, let us wear  
The seal of love for ever there."

J. H. L.

## GRAND, GRANDER, GRANDEST.

THE heading of this short paper was suggested by what occurred in a recent interview we had with a very aged Christian, whose earthly home is in a remote spot in one of the Yorkshire dales, far away amongst the hills. Very poor is she so far as this world's goods are concerned, but very well off indeed as regards the true riches. This advanced sister in Christ—familiarly called by her neighbours “Betty Webster”—marvellous to say, is in the one-hundred-and-sixth year of her age, and for a large portion of her long life she has had her face towards the Rest that remains for her and for all the people of God.

After a brief but, we trust, profitable conversation, we asked this dear, aged, Spirit-taught saint if she had anything special to say to us, seeing she was of such an exceptionally great age as compared with ourselves. Her bright response was, “It was *grand* when that young man in the far country turned away from the husks that the swine did eat, but it was a *grander* thing when he found out the fulness of the Father's house of plenty.”

This honoured centenarian was clearly in the secret of the *positive* and the *comparative*, but we think she had not reached the *superlative*.



She saw the *grand* and the GRANDER, but had not realized the GRANDEST. Like the prodigal of Luke xv., and many others, she had discovered the worthlessness of this poor, empty world, and enjoyed much of the good—*for herself*—of the Father's love. But it had not, we judge, dawned upon her soul that the *Father* has wonderful joy in receiving the lost and found ones to Himself.

In the divine parable it is said, “*When he was yet a great way off*, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” And, mark, this was before the prodigal had begun to tell his tale, and ere it was half told “The father said to His servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be *merry*: for this my son *was dead, and is alive again*; he *was lost, and is found*. And they began to be *merry*!”

When souls who have spent their *all*, and felt the pinch of the mighty famine, begin to think of returning home, their thoughts are far below the love of the Father's heart. They fear the kind of reception they will get. There is not confidence in a loving God, who “spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” If you, my reader, know, through grace, something of this wonderful scene, may it be your happy portion to be led of the Spirit more deeply into its joy

on the *Father's side*. But if still a stranger to the Father's love, may it please the Lord, in His rich grace, to lead you into the knowledge of it. Perhaps *you* are not quite sure as to the kind of reception *you* would get. If so, oh think once more of that prodigal! Think of the joy it gave *the father* to receive him, and to cover him with kisses. We read, "*It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad.*" God will not charge you with being such-and-such a sinner, true as that may be. No; the father never referred to the rags, nor alluded to the conduct of the prodigal, bad as it had been; but he covered him with kisses before he could know what he was about.

So you will find it to be with yourself when, through grace, you are brought back to God! But it is solemn, indeed, to find that the natural heart can even presume upon the *mercies of God* in slighting His grace and neglecting His offer of salvation. We found that some of Mrs. W.'s neighbours were counting upon a long life in consideration of the healthy district and the unusual age of their friend, and so were heedless of their souls' great need. Thus does the enemy ensnare his victims! *God* says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

It is fearfully dangerous to put off the question of your soul's eternal destiny. It is just what Felix did, when the apostle Paul reasoned with him

about "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Felix trembled, *and said—'When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee.'*" But we never hear of that convenient season ever coming! *That moment* was the most convenient season; it was God's ever-present and gracious NOW!

May that NOW be your convenient season. May the God of all grace be pleased to reveal to you the secret of the *positive, comparative, and superlative*—or, as our title has it, the *grand, the grander, and the grandest*! Then, ere long, you will be in the Father's house above, according to that gracious word, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me."

"How blest a home! the Father's house!

There love divine doth rest;

What else could satisfy the hearts

Of those in Jesus blest?

His home made ours—His Father's love,

Our hearts full portion given;

The portion of the First-born Son,

The full delight of heaven.

"Oh, what a home! But such His love,

That He must bring us there

To fill that home, to be with Him,

And all His glory share.

The Father's house, the Father's heart,

All that the Son is given

Made ours—the objects of His love

And He, our joy in heaven."

J. N.

## GIVING THANKS UNTO THE FATHER.

IT is the privilege of all Christians to give thanks to the Father, "who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 12-14.)

Giving thanks unto the Father implies the relationship of a child known and enjoyed. In nature we are at a distance, in darkness and death, but having believed the gospel of God, we are brought into present relationship with Him as our Father, His Spirit witnessing with ours that we are His children. (Rom. viii. 16.) Henceforth we can draw near to Him with confidence, for through Christ we have access to Him by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 18), and thanksgiving flows from hearts grateful for the wondrous blessing of which we are partakers. This blessing is not simply the fruit of the love of God, but *of the Father*, as so blessedly set forth in the full revelation of Christianity. We give thanks, therefore, *unto the Father*, "who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

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Israel in the future will be fitted for the inheritance on earth ; Christians have been made meet by the Father to be partakers of the inheritance, or portion, of *the saints in light*. These are the heavenly saints who have been called to enjoy a heavenly and eternal portion together, where the Father dwells. The light of His presence is the blest and eternal home of the children of God. Already He hath made us fit to be partakers of it. It is no question of progressive or future fitness, but an accomplished act of the Father's sovereign grace. He *hath* made us meet. He has done it for the satisfaction and joy of His own heart, and for those who, in themselves, were not only utterly unworthy of the least favour, but deserving of eternal judgment at God's hand.

And not only so, but as verse 13 adds, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." The whole blessing here unfolded is already an accomplished fact. The Christian is no longer under the power of darkness, but is even now in the kingdom of His Son. Those who partake of this blessing are apt sometimes to wonder at the darkness of others, but the expression employed by the Spirit of God in this verse shows how completely hopeless we all are in the unconverted state. We are not only in darkness, but *under the power*

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*of it*, and utterly without strength to deliver ourselves. But for the Father's gracious intervention in power superior to all (He is greater than all) we had still remained so. But He delivers His own completely and eternally from it. And not only so, but He translates them into a new sphere altogether, the kingdom of His dear Son (or the Son of His love). Enoch was *translated* from earth to heaven, clean out of one sphere into another. We are clean translated into the kingdom, not physically, of course, but through the work of the Father in our souls. We are completely set free from the condition and sphere in which we were, and translated into an altogether new sphere of privilege and blessing. In the future we shall be *manifested* in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, but already we are set in it. Delivered from the power of darkness, we are under the rule of the Son, with new principles to govern us, new motives to guide us, and new aspirations and prospects to encourage us. Already in the kingdom, with a new nature that finds its delight in all that is suited to Him who brought us there, henceforth it is a service of perfect liberty, till the consummation of His purposes of love, and the Son having claimed His own, shall display us with Himself before a wondering world, which shall know at that day that the Father has loved us as He has loved His Son. (John xvii. 23.)

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Further, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The words "through His blood" are not found in the original of this verse. In Eph. i. 7 they are correct, but here they have been added, possibly with good intention, but shewing that whoever did it had failed to apprehend the mind of the Spirit in the passage. The main point all through the Colossian epistle is the presentation of Christ, as the One in whom the whole blessing is found, for the saints there were in danger of allowing false teachers to bring in something between their souls and Him. Of course redemption is *through* the blood of Christ, but the epistle is here showing not what it is through, however true, but *in whom* we have it. "*In whom* we have redemption;" that is, *in the Son of the Father's love*. Blessed thought! We have redemption in the One who has glorified the Father, overcome death, and who lives in resurrection-life before Him, the delight of His heart, the object of His love. Who can enter into the depths of love and affection existing between the Father and the Son whom His glory raised? (John iii. 35.) In none other than Him we have that plenteous and eternal redemption which He has obtained for us, even the forgiveness of sins.

Well may we give thanks to the Father, as our souls grasp one after another of these precious truths unfolded in His everlasting word. *Sins*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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*forgiven.* All our sins gone for ever ; eternal forgiveness in Him. Not one remembered against us. He who bore them and their judgment once for all is in the presence of the Father without them ; hence they are wholly forgiven. This is true, blessedly true for every believer, even the very weakest. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.) As has often been noticed, the Father *hath* made us meet, He *hath* delivered us, He *hath* translated us, and we *have* redemption in the Son of His love, even the forgiveness of sins.

It is a wonder we can ever cease giving Him thanks for all the riches of His grace. May these feeble lines be used to deepen the sense in our souls of all we owe to Him, that a sacrifice of thanksgiving may flow forth continually from our hearts, acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ, the Son of His love.

E. H. C.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. P.—The principle laid down in Leviticus v. i. is not to be ignored, though it has its limitations. If to anyone's knowledge a Christian is guilty of sin *which calls for assembly action*, he is under obligation to speak of it, so that the conscience of the Assembly, being informed, may be cleared from all complicity in evil. But everything does not require dealing with in



the same fashion, and it is truly deplorable to bring every failure—real or imaginary—into the Assembly, and burden the minds of the many with it, when the matter might be dealt with in brotherly, pastoral care.

A. B. C., BARBADOES, 1 Corinthians xi.—The earlier part of this chapter speaks of the relative place of the man and the woman. The covering of the head, though it may be justly worn as an adornment, is also a sign of subjection—the wife being subject to her husband. But we cannot suppose that every sister, no matter what her age or relationship in life, is called upon under all circumstances, and at all times, to wear this symbol. Let us not forget that “the letter killeth.” The spirit of the passage is of far greater moment than the mere letter of it, though, speaking for ourselves, we think it comely for a covering to be worn when anyone passes under the headship of another, as a woman when she enters the married state.

With reference to your other questions, there may be, as you say, a great deal of typical teaching in connection with the nurse and damsels that went with Rebekah when she left her father’s house. But we frankly confess that we have no light upon it at present, and fear lest our imagination should beguile us from the paths of plain and simple truth.

J. H., Isaiah xl. 2.—Many have found it difficult to see in what sense the word “*double*,” is here used. Lowth translates the passage thus: “Speak ye animating words to Jerusalem, and declare unto her, that her

warfare is fulfilled ; that the expiation of her iniquity is accepted ; that she shall receive at the hand of JEHOVAH [blessings] double to the punishment of her sins." But to support this sense he is obliged to supply the word "blessings," which he tells us the words in the original will very well bear. We are disposed, however, to think that "double" does refer to judgment and wrath. If it be asked—how? We answer, that Jerusalem has had and will have to bear judgment at the hand of God, governmentally, because of her sins. Not, indeed, in the way of atonement, for that could not be without her everlasting condemnation, but rather as chastening for good. Into this Christ, in spirit, was pleased to enter, though Himself always and absolutely perfect of course. Besides all that, He suffered in atonement for that people, and by so doing, made it possible for God to deal with Jerusalem thus in chastening, having her good in view. But the question is profound, and lies beyond the range of questions answered in these columns. It is discussed at length in "*The Sufferings of Christ*," by J. N. D. Should you possess his collected writings, and will turn to *Doctrinal, II.*, page 237, you will see this very passage dealt with more fully than we can deal with it here. Zech. ix. 12 evidently refers to blessing.

A. B. Y. Z.—We believe there may be, and often is, a work of the Spirit of God on the conscience of an individual before He works in quickening power. Something goes on analogous to what we read about in Ezekiel xxxvii., when, following the prophet's

preaching, "there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone," in the valley of dry bones. It was after this that the Quickening Breath came and breathed upon the slain, and then they lived. But we should remember that the operations of the Spirit of God follow no fixed rule. He is sovereign in His action, and works where, when, and how He pleases. As to whether Nicodemus was born again before he came to Christ on that memorable night in John iii., we really cannot tell, but should suppose not from verse 7.

L. K.—We earnestly beg you to read James i. 5, 6, and Psalm xxxii. 8, 9. These passages show us to whom we should look for guidance as to our path on earth. A son ought to help his parents if they need his help, and should his present earnings not enable him to do so, he might look out for a situation where the wages would be higher. Still, wages are not everything. This is just one of those steps where divine guidance is greatly needed, and it will assuredly be given if sought with singleness of eye. Replying to your second question, the following our daily calling in no way hinders our having Christ before the heart. We serve the Lord Christ in serving our earthly master, and no one should serve better than one who knows and serves Christ. A Christian servant, whether male or female, should be the best on earth, according to the measure of ability possessed. To imagine that we cannot serve Christ, live to Christ, and be in the unbroken enjoyment of His love, because we have to work for our living, is a very great mistake.

## A CRY FROM AFAR.

*(Being an Answer to a Correspondent.)*

IT was not by chance, dear friend, that a copy of *Simple Testimony* reached you in your home in the bush, in the far away land from which you write. What kindly hand sent it you we cannot tell, but over that hand, guiding and controlling it, was the hand of Him whose eyes run to and fro the whole earth, and who sees His hidden ones in the lonely places where their earthly lot is cast. Your prayers, like those of Cornelius, have come up for a memorial before God, and perhaps He is sending you, through these homely lines, the very words that shall lead you into peace and joy. God graciously grant that it may be so!

You are unable to understand why it is that your prayers for peace and joy and the Holy Ghost have not been answered. God has been silent, so you suppose, and His silence leads you to conclude that you cannot be one of His children. And this distresses you much. Yet, in fact, God has not been silent. He has been speaking to you for many a long year, and is speaking still, if you had but an ear to hear. Are *we* not speaking to you now? It is true you

do not hear our voice, for we are thousands of miles away, but the words we write are just as truly ours, and just as truly intended for you, as if we were sitting talking to you in your own homestead. In a similar way God speaks to us through the printed pages of His own blessed Book, and it is when we believe what He says, and trust in Him, that joy and peace fill our hearts.

No amount of prayer, however earnest, will give you peace and joy and the Holy Ghost. Prayer can do a great deal in its own province, but it cannot give you these. If you ask, Why not? we answer, Because it has pleased God that *Faith*, and not Prayer, should be the hand-maid to conduct us into the enjoyment of these priceless blessings. Prayer can work wonders, but the belief of the truth—and this is faith—alone can give joy and peace.

Many have been long hindered through portions of Scripture being misunderstood and misapplied. Probably you have. For instance, it is said, in Galatians v. 22, that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. They read this, and then begin to reason thus—"I haven't love, joy, and peace. I wish I had. It is certain that I have not the Holy Spirit, or love, joy, and peace would fill my soul. I am no Christian, and if I have ever thought myself one, it was all a mistake." So they keep on praying, praying,

praying for the Spirit to be given to them, that they might be filled with the fruit of the Spirit. But it is all of no avail.

Those to whom Paul wrote saying, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," had already received the Holy Spirit. The second verse of chapter ii. shews that. But though they were children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and were sealed with the Spirit, they were giving ear to misleading teachers, and beginning to bite and devour one another, for so low may real Christians sink. (Chap. v. 15.) Having seriously admonished them as to this, the apostle proceeds to contrast "the works of the flesh" with the "fruit of the Spirit," as you may see if you will only read the verses.

But all this does not apply to those who are seeking peace and joy in connection with the saving of the soul. Do you not remember that when the risen Saviour appeared in the midst of His disciples, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you," He shewed them His hands and His side? (John xx. 20.) From those wounds had flowed the peace-making blood, for He made peace by the blood of His Cross. (Colossians i. 20.)

So the gospel of peace is preached unto us now. It tells of One who once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, and who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. It tells us that the

Saviour, who suffered once, is now in glory, and that it is *in Him* we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians i. 7.)

Perhaps you have been confounding the work of Christ, which is a finished work, with the work of the Holy Spirit. But what the Spirit of God is able to work *in* you is never the ground of peace. Can love, joy, peace—the fruit of the Spirit—put away your sins, and place you in present and perfect acceptance before God? Most certainly not. The work that accomplishes all this is a finished work. Christ has done it all, and God has accepted it, and is satisfied. Moreover, the One who did it is in heaven, in full, divine favour, and we are *in Him*—taken into favour in the Beloved. (Ephesians i. 6.) Surely it is these things, when known and believed, that set the heart at rest. But the testimony of God, as to them, must be believed, for, as we have already said, it is the belief of the truth which alone can give joy and peace.

Let us suppose ourselves speaking to someone much concerned about the salvation of his soul. In course of conversation, we become quite satisfied that, as a poor, guilty sinner, he has turned to God, and looks for pardon alone through Christ and His atoning work. Yet he has no joy and peace. He longs and prays for them, but gets them not. Troubled and per-

plexed he fears he has not come to God in the right way, that he has not repented enough, that his faith is weak, that he does not live close enough to God. He has asked others to pray for him, believing that the fervent prayers of very holy persons will be surely heard. But no answer comes to his desponding soul. Deeply moved at his distress, we say to him, "Dear friend, how do you know that you are a sinner?"

"The Bible, the Word of God, tells me that I am a sinner, and my own conscience also bears witness to the fact, so that I cannot deny it."

"Why is it that in your unhappiness you have fled to Christ, believing that no one else can save you?"

"Because the Bible, the Word of God, bids me do so. It tells me that there is salvation in none other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Besides, Christ Himself invites the heavy-laden to come to Him, and sure am I that there is no one else to whom we may go."

"You do well to believe what the Bible says about these things, or rather what God says in the Bible. Now, just shew the same faith in what God has said about His beloved Son, and about those who believe in Him, and the joy and peace you so earnestly desire will be yours at once."



Our friend looks at us inquiringly, as if he wished us to explain our meaning. So we continue—

“You tell me you believe in Christ, that you have no hope outside of Him, that you cast yourself upon His grace, and yet you have no joy and peace, because you do not know whether you are saved or not. But the Bible tells us that all such *are* forgiven, *are* justified, *are* saved. Whether they believe it or not is quite another matter. We are not forgiven when we believe we are forgiven; we are not justified when we believe we are justified; we are not saved when we believe we are saved. It is when we believe and trust in Christ that all this is true of us, but the knowledge of it reaches us through the Holy Scriptures. Many truly believe on Him who either do not know, or do not believe, what the Scriptures affirm concerning those who believe on Jesus. In the latter case they make God a liar—a very solemn sin. You may think you are not of that number, but just read John iii. 36; v. 24; Acts xiii. 38, 39; 1 John ii. 12, and then tell me whether you receive those precious statements as the very word of God for your soul? In reading those four passages, mark well their *haths* and *ares*.”

And we shall ask you, too, dear friend, to read those passages, and to regard them as God's message, sent to you.

It is the present knowledge of our pardon and acceptance with God that sets the mind at rest. Now God would have us possess this knowledge, so that we might be filled with all joy and peace in believing. (Rom. xv. 13.) *We do possess it when we believe His word.*

Think of a man in debt to twenty tradesmen in the town in which he lives, and not able to pay one of them. When contracting the debts he seemed to treat the matter lightly enough, but now he feels his humiliating position, and walks about with his head hanging down like a bulrush—a miserable man, involved in difficulties from which he cannot extricate himself. Some generous friend goes and pays every shilling, but does not tell the debtor what he has done. Is the man any the happier now that his debts are paid? Not one bit, for he knows nothing about it. Three weeks later he learns what has been done, and rejoices, of course. “I am glad,” says he, “that my debts are paid, but if I had only known it three weeks earlier, I should have been spared three weeks’ terrible anguish of mind.”

And our debts, too, have been paid. Christ has paid them all, and not only are we clear of them, but we are now one with Him in resurrection-life. “As He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John iv. 17.) But the most blessed, joyous news that ever came from heaven to earth will never make one heart glad, if it be not believed.

We affectionately counsel you to cease praying for joy, peace, and the Holy Ghost. Rather believe the gospel, and joy and peace will be yours. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." So God hath said, and you may be assured He means what He says, and that to His word He will be always true.

However right it may have been to pray for the Holy Spirit before the day of Pentecost, we are never told to pray for it afterwards. When the gospel of our salvation is believed, then God seals us with His Spirit according to Ephesians i. 13—seals us unto the day of redemption—the day of coming glory. (Ephesians iv. 30.) It is because the believer has already received the Holy Spirit that He is exhorted not to grieve Him; and what can grieve Him more than the sin of unbelief? But if grieved, He does not leave us, but leads us to judge ourselves before God, to confess our sins to Him, that the broken link of communion may be re-formed. Not the link of salvation, for that can never be broken by any power, however great, but the link of communion—a link so fragile that the least sin can sunder it.

May the Lord give you understanding. We shall be glad to hear from you again, and shall think it no trouble to answer any question. Read what we have written once more.

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## THE GREAT PROBLEM, AND ITS SOLUTION.

**A**N ancient story tells of a certain knot which was tied in such an intricate way that it baffled all attempts to loosen it. A large reward was offered to anyone who should succeed in untying it, and many tried their skill, but all in vain. At last came a man who was determined not to be beaten. Failing in his attempt to untwist the knot, he drew his sword, and with one stroke cut it open. The mystery of the Gordian knot was solved, but—mark the point!—*it was solved in the wrong way*, and the reward was forfeited.

There is another problem that has been propounded, a problem so important that some of the wisest men that ever lived have laboured to solve it, but in vain. Yet matters of eternal importance depend upon its solution. Unless this knot be untied in a lawful way, unless this question be answered—and answered *aright*—there can be no blessing in any shape or form for *you*, my reader. It is a matter that deeply concerns yourself and your everlasting welfare.

Give me, then, I beg you, your closest attention while I lay the problem before you as clearly as I can.

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There are THREE GREAT FACTS which are so plainly stated on the sacred page of Scripture that they cannot escape the notice of the most casual reader.

The problem is this: Reconcile those three facts, if you can !

## FACT NO. 1

is *the great wickedness of men*. Twice do we read of the holy eye of God scanning the earth throughout its length and breadth. On the first occasion, He looked down from heaven to take note of the inroads that sin was making upon His fair creation. And what did He see ? “That the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Gen. vi. 5.)

On the second occasion it was a very different motive that led God to look down upon men—not this time to take note of *evil*, but to discover if there were any trace of *good* remaining. We read that “the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.” (Ps. xiv. 2.) And what was the result of His search ? Alas ! the sad verdict was that “They are ALL gone aside, they are ALL TOGETHER become filthy: there is NONE that doeth good, no, NOT ONE.”

Suppose that one morning an article were to appear in one of the daily newspapers, describing the depravity and vileness of a certain slum in the East-end of London.

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Says one man as he reads it, "Every line of that article is true. The picture has not been coloured one shade too deeply."

"I can hardly believe it," says another. "Of course there may be some bad people there; but if I were to search, I think I could find *some* good, *something* to commend, even in a slum like that."

"Well, let us try," says the first. So they agree to go, independently of one another, on a visit to the slum in question.

The one man goes round with memorandum book in hand, making a note of every unclean word, every act of vice, every sign of depravity that comes under his notice.

The other goes from house to house with a very different motive. He is on the look-out for evidence that the place is not so black as it was painted; and he climbs the broken staircases, and descends into the dark cellars, searching high and low for signs of virtue and goodness. But all to no purpose. Vice, and not virtue, reigns supreme. He can find nothing whatever to commend.

At the appointed hour the two friends meet. "I need not tell you the result of *my* search," says the one; "on all sides there was vileness enough to speak for itself. But tell me how did *you* fare?"

Mournfully the other replies, "You are right.

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I searched diligently to find *some* trace of goodness, but I have to confess that I failed to discover a single redeeming feature."

Exactly the same is the conclusion which *God* has arrived at, after having searched this world, first to detect evil, and then with the desire of discovering good. His verdict is not only that there is plenty of evil in the heart of man, but that there is ABSOLUTELY NO GOOD THERE.

This, then, is the first fact that I want you to get hold of with a firm grip; that man is so totally corrupt, so abandoned, and so vile, that not even the all-seeing eye of God can perceive any good in him.

Now for FACT NO. 2,  
which is "*the infinite love of God to the guilty.*" Full of crime as the world is, we read that God has *loved* it. (John iii. 16.) Filthy and wicked as men and women are, God commends His *love* to them. (Rom. v. 8.) Place these two things side by side, and see how they look:

"GREAT  
wickedness."  
(Gen. vi. 5.)

"GREAT  
love."  
(Eph. ii. 4.)

Can you think of anything more astonishing, more stupendous, than for the heart of man to be raging with hatred against God; and yet, at the same time, for God's heart to be brimful of burning love to man?

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"But," exclaims someone, "wherein lies the problem? If God loves men with such a mighty, measureless love, He can forgive them their sins, and cleanse them from their guilt, and give them a place in His home on high. I see no difficulty at all."

Stay, friend! I have brought before you *two* facts, but there are *three* that you must grasp before you can understand the difficulty of the problem.

## FACT NO. 3

is stated in Ps. cxlv. 17, "The Lord is **RIGHTEOUS** in all His ways, and **HOLY** in all His works."

In order to forgive men in the way that you suggest, God would have to act contrary to His own character. He would have to thrust His righteousness on one side, and that He can never, never do. If He cannot preach pardon to sinners from a *righteous* platform, He can never preach it at all.

Suppose that a man is on his trial for murder. Witness after witness stands up, and gives crushing evidence against him. His guilt is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, and the jury bring in a verdict of "Guilty." But see! the presiding judge turns to the wretched criminal as he shivers with fear. "Prisoner at the bar!" he says, "you have heard the verdict of the jury. There can be no doubt as to your guilt. But I have resolved to acquit you; you may now leave the court a free man."



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What would you think of a judge who could act like that? What would the newspapers say of him? Why, public opinion would hiss him from the bench, and pronounce him unworthy of his high position.

Now if it would be scandalous for a human judge to acquit the guilty, how can the God of truth do so? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do RIGHT? Can He, who is righteous in all His ways, have less regard for the claims of justice than a weak mortal. A thousand times, No!

Herein lies the problem. *God is love*, and to satisfy His love, must He not bless the sinner?

But it is also true that *God is light*, and to meet the necessities of justice, must He not condemn the guilty?

This is a dilemma indeed! Which shall it be? Shall Love, deaf to the claims of Justice, be allowed to triumph? Then the angels may blush, and bow their heads in shame, for their God is not a God of truth and holiness.

Shall Justice, thrusting Love aside, be permitted to take its course? Then demons may rejoice, for not a sinner shall escape the doom of hell; the purpose of God to bless shall be thwarted, and His heart shall remain ungratified for ever.

Is not such a problem far too difficult for the mind of man to solve? Yet love and justice alike call for a solution. Well may it be said,

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“Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.”

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No. 1. THE WISE WOMAN AND THE EXILED  
PRINCE. (2 SAMUEL xiv.)

One of the foremost princes of the realm had committed an awful crime, and was forced to flee from the country. For three long years he remained in exile, but all this time the heart of the king, his father, longed to restore him to his royal favour. But how could he do so? How could a criminal of such deep dye be received at the court of Jerusalem? Impossible! Outraged justice would cry “Shame” at the bare thought of it.

But a crafty courtier, Joab by name, perceives the king’s desire to bring back his erring son; and in order to ingratiate himself with his royal master, he devises a plan for bringing about the return of the banished prince.

He learns that in the city of Tekoah there dwells a woman, well versed in the art of deception. He sends for this woman, and after instructing her as to the part she is to play, introduces her to King David.

The rôle assigned to her is that of a helpless widow, craving mercy from the king, and skilfully she acts her part.

“O King,” she says, “my only son has been guilty of murder, and justice is clamouring for his

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blood. But I throw myself upon your royal mercy. Save my son, the stay and support of my old age."

This pitiful tale at once excites the king's compassion. "Your son shall be spared," he says; "not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground."

Emboldened by such grace, the crafty woman continues, "O King, if you can act on that principle towards *my* son, why not act upon it towards *your own* son? If you can so freely forgive one murderer, why not forgive another murderer in the same way?"

The king sees the point at once. He has committed himself to the principle of acting in mercy at the expense of justice, and he must carry it to its logical conclusion.

"I have done this thing," he cries; "go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again."

Mercy triumphs, but righteousness is trampled under foot! Such a solution of the problem might do for King David, but it will not do for God. No; if He holds out the offer of blessing to condemned sinners, it must be with a *righteous* hand, as well as with a hand of mercy.

True, He *longs* to shew favour to the sinner, as King David *longed* to show favour to his guilty son, but He cannot be deaf to the claims of righteousness.

Thus, the solution which the wise woman of Tekoah offered, is really no solution at all. The problem still remains, and we have still to say:

"I must confess I do not see,  
How God can bless yet righteous be."

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But let us see if another will not be more successful in finding an answer to the great question.

## No. 2 THE KING OF THE MEDES AND HIS PRIME MINISTER. (DANIEL vi.)

A law is passed, making it a criminal offence to pray to the God of Israel. Daniel, the prime minister of the realm of Media, disobeys this law, and persists in his daily devotions. In consequence of this he is arrested. The penalty for the infringement of the law is, that the offender shall be cast into a cave of wild beasts.

But the king has long counted Daniel as his favourite minister, and he determines, if possible, to save him from so cruel a fate. We read that he "set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and *he laboured* till the going down of the sun to deliver him."

Mark those words: "*he laboured*." Look into the king's study. See him with his face buried in his hands. He is deep in thought. He is *labouring* to find a solution to the great problem. Listen to his words as they drop unconsciously from his lips.

"Alas!" he says, "that I should be in this dilemma. I love Daniel, and willingly would I save him if I could; but the law is unalterable, and must be upheld. I cannot be merciful at the expense of justice. What can I do? I can do nothing, but let the law take its course. Daniel must die."

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So the man whom the king loves is sentenced to death, and is cast as a prey to the lions. Mercy is thrust on one side, and justice triumphs.

Do you see, my reader, that it is precisely the same problem that was before both the wise woman of Tekoah and the powerful king of Media? The question which each of them tried to answer was this:

Shall mercy triumph over justice, or justice over mercy? Or can justice and mercy be reconciled?

The answer of the wise woman was: "I cannot reconcile them, so let MERCY triumph."

King Darius answered the question differently: "I cannot reconcile justice and mercy, so let JUSTICE triumph."

The one took as her motto, "*All mercy, and no righteousness.*" The other took as his, "*All righteousness, and no mercy.*"

Both were utterly unable to reconcile the two things; but again let me repeat, unless mercy and justice *can* be reconciled, there can be no glory for God, and no blessing for us.

Can we accept the solution offered by the woman of Tekoah? Then the name of God must be for ever tarnished. It cannot be.

Can we accept the solution offered by the King of Media? Then every one of us must be cast as a prey to the lion of the pit, not one shall escape.

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What an awful dilemma. Let us start yet once again in our search for

## ONE WHO CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

Come with me to the top of yonder hill. Gaunt and ghastly there stands a gibbet, apparently prepared for some miserable culprit.

A motley rabble is gathered there, shouting and jeering at some one in their midst. Who is it? Look! Did ever you see a face so marred, and yet so heavenly? Did ever eyes speak so eloquently of love to sinful men as His? What is His name?

It is Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth.

Where is He going? What is about to happen?

I will tell you. In infinite mercy He has stooped from the lofty heights of the eternal throne, to open the way for the love of God to reach the sons of men. He is now going to that cross to solve the problem of how God can be just, and yet the Justifier of a believing sinner.

Men nail Him to the tree. The storm of their bitterest hatred bursts full upon Him. But soon they expend their malice, and sit down to watch Him. A cloud, thicker than that which wrapped Egypt in darkness, gathers over that awful scene. The earth trembles and quakes beneath their feet, and they tremble with fear.

But what of Jesus? He is in the midst of the storm. Love had *given* Him, and now Righteous-

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ness *smites* Him. God in mercy had given Him to be the sinner's Substitute, and now the sinner's righteous judgment is poured out upon Him.

Listen! A piercing cry rings through the darkness, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" What does that mean? It means that *the blow has been struck*. The LOVE of God provided a Victim for the JUSTICE of God to smite.

Here lies the solution of the problem. What Justice claimed, Love has rendered.

"*Jesus* the curse sustains! guilt's bitter cup *He* drains!  
Nothing for us remains—nothing but love."

Righteousness, thus satisfied, must be displayed. On the third day the holy Sin-bearer is brought from the silent tomb, and, after forty days, is seated upon the highest pinnacle of glory. No throne too lofty for *Him* to fill! No crown too bright to be placed on *His* brow! No song too jubilant to be sung in *His* honour!

The righteousness which was *against* Him on the cross is *for* Him now, and not for Him alone, but also for all who trust Him.

Thus the mighty problem has been solved. Justice finding all its claims fully met, sets Love free to act. Righteousness and mercy join, to lavish blessing after blessing upon the heads of unworthy sinners.

Oh, reader, let this sink into your soul and there abide, that now divine righteousness is as

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much *on your side* as divine love is; and that if you have been blessed, you owe it to *justice*, as much as to *mercy*. If grace reigns, it is "through righteousness." (Romans v. 21.) If it is glad news that "God is love," it is also gospel that God is righteous. (Romans i. 16, 17.)

A simple illustration will serve to make this clear. In a certain town, during the cold months of winter, the poverty and distress are great. Work is difficult to obtain, and in many a family the last crust is eaten, and there is no prospect of another meal. At the corner of the street yonder stands a baker's shop. Thin, hunger-pinched faces are often pressed against its windows, and eager eyes gazed wistfully at the shelves of bread within.

The baker, a kind-hearted man, observes them, and would fain bring gladness to those sad, care-worn countenances by the gift of a loaf to each person. Listen, as he speaks to himself: "How I would like to help them! If it would give them pleasure to receive some bread, it would give me even greater pleasure to see the poor things eat it. But what can I do? It would take a little fortune to give a loaf to every applicant, and already it is all that I can do to make two ends meet. There is the house-rent now due, and the men's wages, and the children's schooling, and the doctor's bill. No, I cannot do it. I must be *just* before I am generous."



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You see, reader, that the claims of *righteousness* forbid this good man to carry out his charitable desires.

One day, however, a wealthy gentleman steps into the shop. "Baker," he says, "I have been noticing the crowds of hungry-looking people that pass up and down the streets, and I wish to do what I can to help them. So I am going to deposit with you the sum of £100, and I want you to give a loaf to every one who applies for it, as long as the money lasts." So saying, he lays down the money and departs.

Without a moment's delay the good baker, his face beaming with genuine delight, places a notice in his window:

*"A loaf of bread free to every applicant."*

Soon a crowd surrounds the little shop, and one by one the hungry people enter and apply for the bread. Imagine the baker's pleasure in bestowing the gift. How it gratifies his heart to see the thankful smiles of the hungry men and women. He really loves them, and it delights him to meet their need.

But let me ask you, reader, is it kindly interest *alone* that prompts him to hand loaf after loaf across the counter? No, it is *righteousness* as well. He owes it to the one who has paid the money, and it would be *positive unrighteousness on the baker's part* to refuse bread to a single person.

See those two men standing outside the shop.

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“What makes you so sure of receiving a loaf if you apply?” asks the one. “Is it merely because you know the baker to be such a kind-hearted man?” “No,” replies the other, “he *is* that, but he is also a *righteous* man. The gentleman has provided the means, and from what I know of the baker, I am sure he will gladly dispense all the bread that he is *righteously* enabled to. It is his *righteousness* I depend on.”

It is easy to understand that *righteousness enables* the baker to give what his heart *delights* to give, and that thus justice and love join to meet the need of the hungry. Then is it not also easy to understand, since the claims of God’s character have been met, and His love set free to act, that now *righteousness* and *mercy* alike secure salvation for every applicant. Can we not *intelligently* sing—

“And my salvation now is sure,  
Since Christ the work has done,  
For God declares, in righteousness,  
HE OWES IT TO HIS SON.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The great problem, then, is a *solved* problem, and its solution has made forgiveness free, and salvation certain to “all that believe.” Then, dear reader, take present and eternal comfort from the knowledge, that *every attribute of the mighty God of heaven is pledged to give you untold blessing, the moment you trust Him for it.*

H. P. B.

JAMAICA, January, 1896.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. T.—The crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the crown of glory, are held up as encouragements in times of special trial, to cheer the heart that loyally cares for the interests of Christ. In 2 Timothy iv., Paul tells us that his course was coming to an end. He had fought a good fight, and had kept the faith. This does not mean that his own individual faith had been kept alive in the face of every Satanic effort to extinguish it. “The Faith” means all that vast range of Christian truth which it had pleased God to make known, and which is handed down to us in the Sacred Writings. This Paul had kept. He earnestly contended for it at Antioch, when the vacillating conduct of Peter placed it in jeopardy (Gal. ii.); at Corinth, when some among them said there was no resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv.); at Colosse, when philosophic and Judaizing teachers sought to beguile the saints with enticing words. On all sides Satan had made desperate assaults on “the Faith,” on all sides Paul had defended it, and kept it intact. He stood up valiantly for the rights of Christ, insisting on and guarding them wherever assailed. All this the Lord, the righteous Judge, would not forget in the day of His appearing. *A crown of righteousness* should be his reward. It should be given unto him, and not to him only; but to all who, like-minded, loved His appearing. Such a crown no Demas of any century need expect to get. (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

The apostle James speaks of *the crown of life* in chapter i. 12, and it is also named in the letter to Smyrna, in Revelation ii. 10. It seems to us the fitting encouragement to those who, for Christ's sake, were losing their life here. To save our life here is to lose it; but to lose it for Christ and the gospel's sake, is to save it. This does not necessarily refer to martyrdom, though it may include it. To lose one's life is a lifelong thing. It is to turn from all that which the world presents on the side of advantage, counting it to be loss for Christ. When this is done, there is indeed an abundant compensation even here, and the soul thus *enduring* temptation drinks the more deeply at the well-spring of everlasting life. But the saint, at his best, feels there are hindrances here to the full enjoyment of that which he prizes most, so he is encouraged to endurance and unwavering faithfulness by the sure prospect of this new and blessed life in which he already shares, being crowned in another sphere. A crown of life shall be given unto him.

*The crown of glory*, mentioned in 1 Peter v. 4, is in connection with caring for, feeding, shepherding the flock of God. If any care for that flock as God's flock because it is His, let him not be weary in well-doing. It may bring but little manifest reward as men judge, but he shall assuredly receive an unfading crown when the chief Shepherd shall appear.

But let us not be too materialistic in our thoughts of these things, as if these three crowns will be found made of gold, and studded with gems. The crowns with which the victors in the ancient games were

crowned had no intrinsic worth, for they were made of leaves, which soon faded away. It was the honour connected with those fading garlands that men prized so much. The glory of the world is but for a moment, its crown is corruptible; but those whom the Lord shall crown as victors in the day of His glory shall receive an imperishable reward. May the thought of this stimulate us to "earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints," to endure temptation, and, as far as in us lies, to care for the flock of God.

A BELIEVER. — Your question as to whether a believer can ever fall away and be lost is often dealt with in these pages, sometimes directly, and sometimes in connection with other subjects. But you will find it simply and fully discussed in a pamphlet entitled *Fallen from Grace*, price 2d., which can be obtained from the publisher of this magazine. See also an article entitled "For Ever Saved" in our issue of May, 1893, and which is still on sale.

H. N. — JAMES v. 14. There is not the slightest ground for supposing that anointing with oil, in this passage, is to be taken in a figurative sense. We believe it to be a literal anointing. To anoint with oil was a very ancient custom, and practised in varied connections, according to the manner and order of those days. The good Samaritan used oil and wine in succouring the wounded traveller; the twelve disciples made use of it in healing the sick (Mark vi. 13); and mention is made of it in the passage about which you enquire. We regard the reference

to it here as placing the divine sanction on a practice long in vogue, and not in the light of a command to be obeyed always and everywhere.

G. J. L.—ROMANS ii. 6-10; ACTS x. 35. These passages, as we understand them, show the unchanging principle on which God deals with men. To the well-doer He will render glory, honour, peace, eternal life; and to the evil-doer, tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, be he Jew or Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God. Whether or not an unregenerate man is ever one of those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and incorruptibility, is a totally different question, and one that admits of a decided answer. The Christian knows it is impossible. He bows to the solemn fact that man, at his best estate, is a ruined creature; and if he now seeks to patiently continue in well-doing, it is because he has been born again, and thus made a partaker of a nature that loves the good and hates the evil. It was thus with Cornelius.

B. H. W.—HEBREWS ii. 10, v. 9; LUKE xiii. 32. The Lord Jesus was ever, in Himself, absolutely perfect, and nothing could make Him more so. He did no sin; He knew no sin; and in Him is no sin. Every impulse of His heart was always in perfect unison with the will of God, and never more so than when, on the cross, He was forsaken. The words "perfect," "perfected," therefore, have no reference to what He was intrinsically. But in view of the offices He was to fill, according to the good pleasure of God, it was necessary that He should go through

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all that lay in His earthly path. He went through it unflinchingly, and, being thus "perfected," He entered on those offices of which the Spirit so distinctly speaks in the epistle to the Hebrews.

ENQUIRER. — Hebrews xi. 2. The elders spoken of here are those Old Testament worthies whose honoured names are recorded in this glorious chapter. The testimony borne to them is the fruit of faith, for faith was the principle of their walk, even as it should be of ours. The promises of verse 13 refer, we presume, to earth, and the fulfilment of these the saints of earlier days did not receive. But they walked with God, and were led on to heavenly hopes. These they embraced, and confessed that they were strangers on the earth. In verse 39 the promise relates to future and heavenly glory. Their fully entering into this, however, tarries for the completion of other and still better purposes of God, which concern the saints of the present period; for He who works all things after the counsel of His own will, has so ordered it "that they without us should not be made perfect."

CROYDON. — 2 TIMOTHY 22; HEBREWS x. 22. A pure heart is a heart upright, in which the fear of God is—a heart that departs from evil, that loves and cleaves to the good. "A pure heart" hardly conveys the same idea as "a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience." The latter has reference to our being set free from everything that unfits us for the holy presence of God. It is the "one offering" of Christ that gives freedom from "an evil conscience" when its eternal efficacy is apprehended by the Spirit's power.

## GOD'S SALVATION: *IS IT YOURS?*

SOME little while ago, a young man might have been seen sitting on a waggon in the open street of a large manufacturing city intently reading his Bible.

Attracted by such a sight we stopped, and ventured to enquire what he had found in the Bible to make him pore over its pages thus.

"Do you know your sins forgiven? and are you saved by the One of whom your Bible speaks?"

"I shall be saved," he replied, "if I continue in the faith, and hold on to the end."

"On what ground do you hope to be saved? Is it by your own works, or the finished work of Christ?" we asked.

"Of course it is on the ground of the finished work of Christ. But must we not hold on to the end?"

"It is time enough to talk about holding on to the end, and continuing in the faith, when you know that you are *really in the faith*, and are resting on the solid rock—Christ and His finished work.

"It would help you greatly," we continued, "if you saw the force of those words in Romans v. 9, 10, 'Much more then, being now justified by



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His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.'

"It is plain from these verses that the believer in Christ is already justified, or cleared from all charge of guilt, by the blood of Christ, and that he is also reconciled to God by the death of His Son. This being so, Paul argues that there is no possibility of the believer ever being lost. As to the future, 'we shall be saved from wrath' through the very One by whose blood we are *now* justified, and through whose death we have been reconciled. As to the present, we shall be saved every step of the journey by His intercession. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.'

"He is our great High Priest with God, sustaining us in all our weakness here. He is our Advocate with the Father, taking up our cause in heaven's court should we fail.

"Turn to Hebrews x. 9. 10, 'Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' Sanctification, you know, means setting apart to God.

"Is it not plain from the verses you have just

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read that the believer is set apart to God through the work of Christ, done once for all?

"Well, now, read verses 14-18, 'For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.'

"Are not these verses as clear as daylight? The entire sanctification, or setting apart to God, of all believers by Christ's finished work is plainly taught. Moreover, those who are sanctified are said to be *perfected for ever*, which simply means, in perpetuity, like a lease which never runs out. And the Holy Ghost testifies *to us* by the written word, that our sins and iniquities God will remember no more.

"How gloriously complete is such a salvation, how worthy of the God of all grace!"

Having said these few words as a passing stranger, we left our friend to ponder them, in the hope that his soul might be further established in the true grace of God.

That salvation is entirely of grace, and not of works or merit on our part, Scripture over and over again asserts. Paul says, "And if by grace,

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then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." (Romans xi. 6.) "But to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Romans iv. 5.) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and *that not of yourselves*: it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

But a person may say, Are we not told in the epistle of James that Abraham was justified by works, when he offered up his son Isaac upon the altar? And does not Paul also say, "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, *unless ye have believed in vain?*"

The statements in both paragraphs are quite true, though at first sight it may seem difficult to reconcile them. But we must ever remember that Scripture *never* contradicts itself. There may be difficulties, but we may rest assured the ignorance is *in us*. The Holy Spirit who indited the Scriptures, alone can, and *will*, make them plain to those who in lowliness of mind desire to learn.

It is most important to see that James takes a man up on the *profession* of his faith, and asks him to prove his faith by his works. He rightly says, "What doth it profit, though a man *say* he hath faith?" James is intensely practical, and is not content with the mere profession of a man's lips. He says, "*Show me* your faith by your works? I cannot read your heart to

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see whether you have faith, but I can see your conduct." He, therefore, brings Abraham forward to prove his point.

Many fail to understand the difference between Paul and James on the subject of justification. Some have said James was not inspired, because they thought he contradicted Paul. But this is not so.

The *apparent* conflict between Paul and James vanishes, when we see that Paul speaks of justification *before God alone*, which is by faith only. James speaks of our justification not before God only, but *before men*. Paul makes mention of Abraham's justification before Isaac was born. He believed God, when promised a son from whom a seed should spring as the stars of the sky for multitude, and his faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

When Isaac had grown up to manhood, God thought fit to test Abraham's faith by bidding him offer up Isaac, from whom this seed should spring. Abraham obeyed God, and bound his son upon the altar, thereby proving the reality of his faith. Men could see all this, though they could not see whether there was faith in his heart. God knew right well that faith was there, but now it was proven, beyond doubt, by the works he performed.

When a man professes faith in Christ, he must then prove the reality of his faith by a life of

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good works, and thus *adorn* his profession. This is justification before men.

All works to be acceptable to God must have faith as their spring, else they are what Scripture calls, "*dead* works." For *without* faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews xi. 6.) And though faith could not be called a work, yet it "*worketh* by love."

As to "believing in vain," a reference to the context will at once show what is meant.

The chapter in which this statement occurs (1 Cor. xv.), shews that some amongst the Corinthians were boldly denying the resurrection of the dead. Paul begins by reminding them of the gospel he had preached to them—that Christ had died for their sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. This gospel they had received, in it they stood, and by it, he adds, "*ye are saved.*"

He then brings forward the evidence of living eye-witnesses to the fact that Christ was raised. So strongly does he speak on the subject, that in verse 14 he says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain," while in verse 17 he emphatically asserts, "If Christ be not raised, *your faith* is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

But, thank God! Christ is risen. Having died for our sins, He settled the whole question of them with God eternally. He perfectly satisfied

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God's righteousness in doing so, and as the righteous answer to His blessed and gloriously finished work, God raised Him from the dead and placed Him in the highest glory.

So then those who truly believe in Christ as having died for their sins, and risen again for their justification, are *not* in their sins, *nor have they believed in vain*.

Do we deny, then, the importance of continuing in the faith or of holding on to the end? By no means. We earnestly insist upon it, as Scripture most emphatically does. If we are amongst those who receive the seed into the "good ground," we shall hold on to the end, for we are kept by God's almighty power, through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Paul said to some, when warning others, "We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak" (Heb. vi. 9). "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. x. 39).

"Far as is east from west, are sundered wide  
Thou and thy sins: no whirling tide  
Of righteous condemnation e'er shall roll  
O'er thee, believing sinner—Christ has died  
To save thy soul—  
Has died, and *lives* to show the work complete:  
Kneel, kneel, adoring at the feet  
Of Him, Jehovah—Jesus Christ—the Word,  
That was—is—shall be. With Hosannas greet  
Our coming Lord."

P. W.

## THE LORD THY PORTION.

CHILD of sorrow, raise thine eyes ;  
 Mourner, from the dust arise ;  
 Jesus, stooping from above,  
 Speaks to thee—and speaks in love.  
 Listen to His gracious voice,  
 Let it lead thee to rejoice ;  
 Hear Him say, “ Whate’er it be,  
 Cast thy burden all on Me.”

Art thou destitute, and left  
 In the wilderness alone ?  
 Of beloved friends bereft ?  
 All thine earlier treasures flown ?  
 Drooping spirit, weep no more,  
 Jesus will thy joy restore ;  
 Will Himself for ever be  
 More than all thy friends to thee.

Art thou aged or distressed ?  
 Poor, in sickness, or in pain ?  
 He will give thy spirit rest,  
 And renew thy youth again—  
 He will ever to thy soul  
 Health and boundless treasure be,  
 Long as countless ages roll  
 Through a blest eternity.

Soon shall poverty and wealth,  
 Soon will all this chequered scene,  
 Sorrow, pleasure, sickness, health,  
 Be as though it had not been.  
 Oh, believer, let it go,  
 In the Lord thy portion see ;  
 From His love alone shall flow  
 Everlasting joy to thee.—*Selected.*

## GROWTH.

SOME time ago a paper appeared in this periodical, entitled "Soul-declension"; the present one on "Growth" is its sequel. And growth is the surest antidote against soul-declension, for we cannot be advancing and declining at the same time.

1. It will be well just to enquire "What is meant by growth?" Before doing so, it may be helpful to see what it is not. By growth is not meant becoming more fit for heaven. The finished work of Christ entitles us to that, and growth is out of the question; either we are fit for heaven, or we are not. A Christian is described as "giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) Nor by growth do we mean advancing from forgiveness of sins to having "peace with God," or even being sealed by the Spirit. While, on the other hand, there can be no growth until the soul is in the possession of these blessings, yet real growth begins when we have received the Spirit, for it must be remembered that forgiveness and peace are preparatory to this, and it is the indwelling of the Spirit which is the new and positive blessing that characterizes



us as Christians. It is He who leads us into the enjoyment of all that is ours in Christ, and it is by His operations, and as we yield to His influence, that we really grow.

It is of the utmost importance, then, for each believer to ask himself (as the apostle Paul asked of those at Ephesus in Acts xix.), "Have I received the Holy Ghost?" Not that we can ever obtain it by looking within, for it is when we *believe* that we are sealed; but we ought to know if He really indwells us, and there are three ways in which we may know:

1st. He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, so that this love is consciously enjoyed, and not a mere doctrine. (Rom. v. 5.)

2nd. We cry "Abba Father." This is the Spirit's cry within us. (Rom. viii. 15.)

3rd. We know consciously that we are in Christ before God. (John xiv. 20.)

Not only will the Holy Spirit make us conscious of these things, but if He is ungrieved and unhindered, He will keep us in the continual enjoyment of them.

Growth, then, is not our being justified, or having a purged conscience, for by one offering we are perfected for ever (though it is admitted that our apprehension of these things may develop), but it is practical deliverance from the flesh, so that we have no confidence in it; walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;

enter upon God's purpose concerning us in Him ; put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth ; and grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

There is one thing in us which will seek to hinder all this, and that is the flesh. It cannot bear to be displaced by Christ, and the flesh is therefore

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GREAT ANTAGONIST.

The reason many of us enjoy so little of His power, and, as a consequence, grow so little, is because He has to be continually occupied in keeping the flesh in subjection. Perhaps some of us have before now enquired, "Why, if I have the Spirit, does He influence me so little?" The answer is, either we are not prepared for a greater manifestation of His presence, or else, as we have said, He is compelled, by reason of our state, to be engaged with keeping down the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is produced only as He is free to occupy us with Christ.

2. Having indicated what is meant by growth, the enquiry naturally follows, "How do we grow?" In 1 Peter ii. 1-3, we read, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*." This is

the commencement. The first sign of growth is displacement—we lay aside. This law operates in the natural world. Every autumn the old leaves drop off, we are told, because the new ones have already begun to form. They are really pushed off. We may be hardly able to discern it, but such is the case. So is it in the spiritual world. We lay aside that which is evil, because, being born again, we now desire that which is good. We never could *desire* the sincere milk of the word until a new nature was implanted within us. This is what led us to *desire* the word. Before, we might have read a chapter as a matter of habit or form, but now we really desire it. And it is as this desire is fostered and satisfied it becomes stronger, until our appetite for the word increases, and we grow *thereby*. To grow we must feed, and our food is the word of God. If we dealt with our bodies as we sometimes do with our souls, would they not have

#### A VERY EMACIATED APPEARANCE ?

It is of the utmost importance to find time for prayerful Bible study, and, if possible, this time should be before we descend to the ordinary duties of the day. The manna had to be gathered early: when the sun was up it melted. Does not this convey an important lesson, namely, the imperative necessity of feeding upon Christ in the word before we are exposed to the influence

of the world? Worldly things will spoil our taste for Christ; but, thank God, it is equally true that Christ will spoil our taste for worldly things. Should we not meet everything in a different way if we had taken care to meet Christ first? We should not be easily overcome by the influence of things around us if we had been feeding upon the manna. It is our support in the wilderness. We have had to do with One who found all His resources in God, and lived a life here of entire dependence and obedience. This is what we are called to, and, as we feed upon Him, we are enabled to walk here as He walked.

Above all things, let us seek to find Christ in the word. The mere reading of a chapter may have not the slightest effect upon us. What need, therefore, as we open the inspired volume, to be continually seeking the Holy Spirit's illumination. In the tabernacle of old, the lamps on the candlestick were to "give light over against it," *i.e.*, the light was to fall upon the table of shewbread, teaching us it is by the light the Holy Spirit alone gives that Christ can become food to our souls.

3. Having laid aside what is bad, we now become occupied with what is good, "if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*." This is the real secret of growth. It is of the utmost importance to remember that we never grow by

being occupied with evil. It is very easy work to discover failure and inconsistency in others, but, if occupied with it, we shall find it very unprofitable for ourselves. It is much more difficult, but far happier, to be able to show them the good. If saints give us the cold shoulder, how apt we are to treat them in the same fashion. But if we have tasted His grace, it means we have found out how good God has been to us when we deserved nothing, and this closes the mouth about the failings of others, and opens it to speak of the goodness of God.

As one well known has said, "The great secret of growth is the looking up to the Lord as gracious," *i.e.*, an abiding sense of our own unworthiness and of that love that could do everything for us because of Another, even the One who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, "manifest," as the apostle says, "in these last times for you," and whose precious blood has redeemed us to God. It is not the amount of doctrine in the head, but the extent to which grace has touched the heart, that produces real growth. To think less and less of ourselves, and more and more of Christ, is a sure sign of real growth. As one said of himself, "I am now sinking from a poor something into a vile nothing, and wish to be nothing that Christ may be all. I am

"CREEPING DOWN THE LADDER

from self-complacence to self-aborrence. The more wicked men grow, the less ashamed they are of themselves; and the more holy men grow, the more they learn to abhor themselves."

4. Further, if we are to continue growing, we must be *weaned*. Peter mentions the bad things to be laid aside which everyone would condemn; but there are other things which cannot be classed with these, but which, if allowed, will surely hinder our growth. From these we need to be weaned. We lay aside known sins the moment we are converted. Weaning is a longer process. Perhaps a Christian smokes, and he sees no harm in it. You cannot convince him that it is sin; he must be weaned from it. That can only be accomplished by offering him something better; just as with a child who may have a dangerous plaything, the surest way to get him to relinquish it is not to tell him the danger of it, but to offer another attraction.

We have an example of weaning in the case of Isaac (Gen. xxi. 8): "And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned." The point is the great feast. The great feast is when we really enjoy Christ by the Spirit. It is indeed a wonderful moment, and makes us forget the painful process of weaning. But we must not think the flesh will never again intrude. Just as Ishmael mocked, so the flesh will lust against

the Spirit. It is precisely here that we begin to find the flesh a hindrance, and to discover that these are contrary the one to the other, and our growth depends upon how far we take sides with the flesh or the Spirit; for the flesh would make something of us, the Spirit everything of Christ. If we can say as the apostle did, "I am crucified with Christ," the great hindrance to growth is removed. Blessed indeed it is when that day is known in the history of the soul, when Christ, the true Isaac, gets His right place. It is then we enjoy the great feast.

A little further on in Isaac's history, we have another incident that helps to illustrate the growth of a Christian. We refer to chapter xxvi. There is a famine. And the Lord appeared unto Isaac, and said, "Go not down into Egypt, . . . sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee." Isaac obeys. And in verse 12 we read, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him." An hundredfold! This was a good return! But so it may be with each one of us, if we are content to be morally what Isaac was in figure—a dead and risen person. Do we not read, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"? We only reap vexation and loss from sowing to the flesh; all our disappointments come from things here,

and we have to learn that "the flesh profiteth nothing." If we want a hundredfold, we must

GO TO THE RESURRECTION SIDE

for it, where we live in the eye of Christ; then we seek the things which are above, and, as we do so, what was true of Isaac will become true of us: "The man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great."

If it is asked, "How can we be dead and risen whilst still in this mortal body"? the answer is, "Only because Christ is dead and risen, and we are dead and risen *with Him*." The more we desire Christ the greater hindrance we find the flesh becomes, until we are glad to accept deliverance and say, "I am crucified with Christ." May each one have grace to accept it.

5. Another thing. If we are to grow we must *work out our own salvation*. No one else can do this for us. The apostle Paul could not have done it for the saints at Philippi. No ministry, however spiritual, no pastoral oversight, however devoted, and no amount of attention on the part of others, however gifted, can ever take the place of obedience to the apostle's command, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." And the reason is not far to seek. In the next verse we read, "For it is *God* which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." It is an immense thing to have to do personally with God. We may think what



advantages the early saints must have had over us, in having the apostles to minister to them: but when we remember that many who had listened to them, were either walking badly or imbibing false doctrine, it may serve to remind us that after all, the great thing is having to do individually with God. The apostle, in writing as he does to the Philippians, seeks to occupy them with the importance of this; "*it is God which worketh in you.*" Here again we have displacement; as God works in and we work out, what is of ourselves will drop off. Instead of our own wills ruling, we learn to will and to do His good pleasure. What characterized us as men in the flesh, drops off, and we do all things without murmurings and disputings. The work that Christ did *for* us, is perfect and complete, and in this aspect we are perfected for ever; but God still has a work to do *in* us. This He continues to carry on, and

#### WE SHALL BE LOSERS

if that work is hindered. May we each one seek to get more alone with God, to give Him more opportunity to work in us. How little we know in these days, of the quiet retirement of the Divine presence. Doubtless a great work was carried on in the soul of Moses, as he dwelt at the backside of the desert, and of Paul when he was in Arabia, which could not have been done so effectually amid the busy haunts

of men ; and it behoves us, too, in these bustling days to be much alone with God. The result of working out our own salvation, will be that we do all things without murmurings and disputings, blameless and harmless as the sons of God, shining as lights in the world, and holding forth the word of life. May this lovely delineation of practical Christianity characterize us in some measure.

Having considered some of the aids to growth, it may, perhaps, be profitable to mention a few of the hindrances.

1. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews complains of those who were "dull of hearing," and, as a consequence, they were only babes instead of being of full age. It is hard to explain why some believers have such a lack of interest. This is a class, which more than any other, puzzles the servant of God. There is nothing definite, perhaps, to put the finger upon, but there is no response, and the reason is, they are "dull of hearing." To such what the apostle had to say was hard to be uttered. Is it not so that

#### THE MOST MAGNIFICENT TRUTHS

falter on the tongue, when the ear, which should be all attention, is dull of hearing?" To any such who may read these lines, we would say, "This spiritual apathy is a complete hindrance to your growth. Are not the amazing truths of God's

word worthy of more decided interest?" There are three scriptures that apply to such a state, and may the Holy Ghost graciously use them to any who are thus dormant, so that that sword, which He alone can wield, may pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and become a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

"Let us *labour*, therefore, to enter into that rest." (Hebrews iv. 11.)

"Let us go on unto *perfection*." (Chap. vi. 1.)

"That ye be not *slothful*." (Chap. vi. 12.)

2. If we are not to be "dull of hearing," neither should we be "slow of heart." The Lord had to say to the two going to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." How often this rebuke would apply to us. How comparatively little we take in what God has for us.

"Yet oft we credit not  
He freely gives as God."

We do not open our mouth wide that He may fill it. We are unbelieving believers; we only nibble where we might enjoy a feast; we do little more than peep through the keyhole when we might be inside the banqueting-house. God has opened His boundless resources to us, and He delights in the faith that draws most largely upon Him. Let us go in for God's best, and the world's best and the devil's best will have no attraction.

3. Another hindrance is found in false teaching. The apostle says to the Galatians, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth." The secret of it is disclosed in the earlier part of the epistle (chap. i. 7), "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." The sure mark of false teaching is that it always in some way dims the glory of Christ. And true growth is checked, for the only true growth is the growing up into Him in all things. How many have been spoiled, as the Colossians were in danger of being, "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

4. A carnal state, too, will hinder our growth. The Corinthians came behind in no gift, and yet they had to be addressed as babes. They were giving the natural man a place where he is not entitled to any recognition. Man has his world, and can very well understand the things of a man, but in the things of God the Spirit alone is to have place, for "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." How often the natural man, in some specious way, is allowed to obtrude where only the Spirit should be tolerated. Our growth is as we pass from the carnal state to the spiritual. In the first epistle of John we read of the three grades in God's family—babes, young men, and fathers. It has

been said it is no disgrace to be a babe, the disgrace is to remain one. The babes know the Father. They not only know Christ as Saviour, but they have been sealed with the Spirit, and they know the Father. The Spirit puts us in company with Christ, and when we are in His company we learn to know the Father. The love the Father has to Christ is in us, and we do not love the world. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him," because to love the world is really to despise Christ.

The young men are marked by another thing, they have overcome the wicked one. Satan's effort is to divert us from Christ. In order to meet him we must have the word of God abiding in us, to enable us to distinguish between Satan's suggestions, and what is really God's word, because he often quotes it, though always wrongly.

Of the fathers the apostle says, that they had "known Him that is from the beginning." More than this he cannot say. The Person of Christ has eclipsed everything; all that went before is obliterated; just as we fail to recognize the light of the stars in

#### THE GLORY OF THE RISING SUN.

It is not shadows, or types, or even doctrines, but the Person to whom all relates, that they have principally before them. To them, as another inspired writer has said, "Christ is everything and in all." Most of us have but

## GROWTH.

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faintly apprehended this, and some may seem to look at it from a still greater distance ; but, at least, we see that growth in the believer is clearly recognized in Scripture, and the highest attainment is before us all. May we each, in the language of the apostle Paul, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," for only thus can growth take place.

It is hoped, from the foregoing remarks, it will be seen that growth depends upon our being able to discern between good and evil, to distinguish between what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit, and to be spiritual instead of carnal. The more we adopt the one and discard the other, the more will growth be maintained. May each reader be so really in earnest that the one desire may be to enjoy Christ, and this can only be as Christ is allowed His true place. This is not accomplished by effort, but as we are led by the Spirit. Oh, that we may be so convinced, on the one hand that "the flesh profiteth nothing," and on the other of "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," that we may surrender ourselves fully to the Spirit's guidance.

R. E.

## SMITE.

Read 2 KINGS xiii. 14-19 ; 25.

THE faithful, aged servant of God, Elisha, was lying on his death-bed. For long years he had followed the fortunes of his nation, and many a time he had shewn by his acts God's love and care for the people. Joash, Israel's king, was aware of the prophet's approaching departure, and he felt grieved at heart to think that he was now to lose him. He resolves to pay him a farewell visit, and his words at that last interview indicate the value he set on Elisha, and his sorrow at the prospect of losing him, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

But the prophet had a last blessing to give him. The arrow shot out of the window at his command, was a sign that God proposed to lead the forces of Israel against the Syrians, and to give them victory. But this was not to be done apart from Joash. He was not to be a lifeless tool in Jehovah's hand; on the contrary the extent of the victory was to depend on the king's expectations. He was commanded to smite on the ground. He was well enough acquainted with the symbolism of the East, to know what this

figurative act implied. Each arrow, sent quivering into the floor, represented a victory. One would not be sufficient; he took bow and arrows, and smote into the ground once, twice, thrice—and he *stayed*. But the prophet was angry; “Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.”

We Christians are warriors too; engaged in a nobler battle than the Israelites of old. Our object is to attack the enemy's ranks, to carry off his soldiers and enlist them under our Captain's banner. God, in the exercise of His invincible power, might have saved souls all the world over without employing such weak creatures as ourselves. But it has pleased Him, in His grace, to use us in this service, and doubtless He has filled the hearts of many Christians who read this paper with a desire to win souls for Christ. The word to all such is “*Smite*.” The measure of a worker's success often depends on his expectations. What he goes in for, he will obtain.

“Do you expect to get conversions every time you preach?” said an old and honoured evangelist to a young preacher, who complained of his want of success.

“Oh no, not every time.”

“That is the reason you do not get them,” said the other.



Whether our work is public or private, with adults or children, let us take it up in faith-expectancy, and with the earnest desire that souls may be saved.

Again, when the blessing begins to come, when the drops begin to fall, let us not settle down satisfied with what has been given. If we have prayed long and earnestly, and the answer begins to come, the meeting becomes bright and fresh, the saints are stirred up, one or two souls are saved, then is the time *to pray on*—not to be satisfied with the droppings, but to look out for the showers—not to smite three times and stay, but five or six times, so that we may get the full blessing God has it in His heart to give.

May He encourage every one who seeks to spread the gospel. Go on, pray on, work on. Be not distressed or hindered if some stand by and coldly criticise. If God gives us the consciousness of His approval it is sufficient. Be not weary in well doing, for in due time ye shall reap if ye faint not. Quickly are the opportunities for loving service passing by. Happy will it be for us if we can meet our Lord in the day of manifestation, with our little handful of wheat for His garner, and hear words similar to those addressed to one of old, "She hath done what she could."

S. H. P.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. S.—The Jews of old, to whom the Law was given, were under an obligation to keep holy the Sabbath-day, and it was one of Jehovah's complaints against them that they profaned His Sabbaths. To us Gentiles the Law was never given, we were outside of that and other privileges, exclusively and peculiarly Jewish, as anyone will see by comparing Rom. ix. 4, 5, with Ephesians ii., 11, 12. Lest, however, we should be misunderstood in saying this, we hasten to add that the standard of conduct for a Christian is higher than that which regulated the walk of a Jew. Christ is our Standard, and it need hardly be said that, if we follow His steps, the righteousness of the Law will be fulfilled in us, though we ourselves be not under it. Moreover, the Lord's day is not the Sabbath. The one is the seventh, the other the eighth day—or the first day of the week. They are clearly distinguished in Matthew xxviii. i. The seventh day is connected with earth and the old order of things; the eighth day is connected with resurrection, and the new order which the resurrection of Christ inaugurated. And the difference is important. Not on the Sabbath, but on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread (Acts xx. 7), and it was on the Lord's day that the special power of the Spirit rested on the apostle John in Patmos, and he was given to see great sights. But though the Lord's day cannot be confounded with the Jewish Sabbath without spiritual damage, yet it holds a special place

among days. Speaking for ourselves, we should be sorry to set our hand to our ordinary occupations on that day if it could possibly be avoided, and we should not feel free to travel unnecessarily either by 'bus or rail. But had we an object in view that was for God's glory, on which we could sincerely seek His blessing, we should not scruple for a moment to use, if necessary, whatever means were available, nor would any Sabbatarian ideas have any weight with us whatever. In these and kindred matters, every one's conscience is not alike, and conscience, be it well or ill-informed, cannot be violated with impunity. To meet this very question the Spirit has given us Romans xiv. There the question is discussed and set in heavenly light, while we are exhorted to have in all these things a tender consideration for the consciences of others.

With reference to Philippians iii. 8-10, we must not suppose that when the apostle speaks of winning Christ that Christ was not already his. Things that were *gain* to him he had counted loss on account of Christ, and he continued to count them as loss that he might have Christ as his *gain*. He could not have both, and he gladly flung away the former that he might have the latter. Blessed choice! And all that Paul calls "mine own righteousness" was but his own—a righteousness human and legal—a very different thing from that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness of God. Let others boast in what they would, and run toward what goal they pleased; for his own part, he desired only to be found in Christ, boasting in that righteousness which was all of grace.

“LET US PASS OVER UNTO THE OTHER  
SIDE.”

IT is of very great importance that the Christian should understand, and maintain in his own soul by faith, the truth of his relationship with God, of his association with Christ in the glory of God, and also that every moral tie that connected him with Adam, the first man, and with the first man's world, has been dissolved in death. “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. ii. 20) breaks the link with Adam. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom (or, by which) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. vi. 14) severs him from the first man's world. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. iii. 3) connects him with a new scene, into which Christ, the Second Man, has entered as risen and glorified. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. iii. 4) associates him with the future display of Christ in glory, when He appears to take the kingdom, and to reign.

It may be said, All this is for faith. Exactly so; but faith appropriates these great truths, makes them living realities to the soul, and

enables us through the Spirit to live in the power of them in the sphere of the first man's energies, while confessing that we belong to another, where Christ, the Second Man, is all in all.

So, in one sense, we are already on "the other side," for we are "risen with Christ" (Col. iii. 1), we are *seated* (mark that word) "in the heavenlies in Christ," and every spiritual blessing is ours, in Him. (Eph. ii. 4-6; i. 3.)

Our sins are gone, for they were borne by Jesus (1 Peter ii. 24); our old man has been crucified with Christ (Rom. vi. 6); and now we live before God in the life of the risen, victorious Saviour at God's right hand. Judgment is passed for us, having been borne by our adorable Substitute, who loved us unto death, and though we may be, and are, the subjects of God's disciplinary and governmental ways here on earth, yet God's people will never be identified with the wicked at the great white throne, where the dead will be judged out of the books, according to their works. (Rev. xx. 11-15.) They have part in the first resurrection, and "on such the second death hath no power." (Rev. xx. 4-6.)

But there is a sense in which we are not yet on the other side, but going there. We are on our way to God. We look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. "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." (Heb. xi. 10; Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

In Mark iv. 35-41 we have a picture of this which is full of profit for our souls.

"And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." Rejected by apostate Israel (Mark iii. 22-30) the blessed Lord shews that moral, not natural links bind people to Him now. (31-35.) Then, as the "sower," having sowed the good seed (chap. iv. 1-20), and showed the similitudes of "the kingdom of God" during His absence (26-34), He said to His disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side."

In Matt. xiv. 22 we read, "Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship."

Precious thought! He constrained them. Blessed Master, may we know Thy constraining power! and, delighting in Thy company, may we gladly embark with Thee for the other side!

Henceforth we are to consider ourselves associated with Christ, the earth-rejected One, whether in His present exalted position, or His future manifestation and glory, or in our present wilderness circumstances. "Let *us* (said He) pass over unto the other side." What blessed grace is this that He should so link Himself with His people in all their journey to the other side! "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Such is the language of Him who having

set His love upon us, will not leave us until He has brought to pass all the good that is in His heart for the people of His choice.

But to launch out upon the deep with Him, and make for the other side, involves the severing of the old ties that bind us to this side. It is the carrying into practical life the great truth that we have died with Christ, so as to be able to say, as being *experimentally* true of us, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

We read "And when they had *sent away the multitude*, they took Him even as He was into the ship." (v. 36.)

That surely has a voice for us. There is a vast multitude of things that cleave to us that must be dismissed ere we can really launch out with Him for the other side. We learn what they are as we pass on. "The life of the flesh always cleaves to Egypt, but the principle of worldliness is *uprooted* in him who is dead and risen with Christ, and leading a heavenly life." So said one who "though unknown is well known,"\* and so indeed it is.

It is well for us *individually* to enquire whether we have sent the multitude away—all

\* J. N. D.

that the life of the flesh cleaves to—so as to really launch out upon the deep with our earth-rejected Lord and Master, to go to the other side.

"They took him, even as He was, to the ship." What *was* He? And what *is* He? Though He be all that delights and satisfies the heart of God, He is nevertheless the earth-rejected One. Solemn consideration for any of us who, professing His name, cleave in the unholy aspirations of the flesh, to the world and its principles. We know it was the world that put Him to death, and "the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James iv. 4.)

Yes; we must take Him as He is, rejected though He may be, and henceforth remember that our associations are with God's earth-rejected Son. And *as such* He comes into our circumstances, companies with us, makes His presence felt in a thousand ways, and proves to us that He is superior to all the power of the enemy. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. (Rom. viii. 35-37.)

Nothing short of being in the ship with Jesus, where He is, and where His claims are fully owned, should satisfy us. "There were also with Him other little ships," but what are the "little ships," built by man, in his self-will, and unbroken and independent spirit, compared to the one in which the Lord is! His presence, His



word, His commands, His approval, His smile, should be everything to us. And are these what we possess and prize above all else? Or have we embarked in some "little ship" of our own, where the will of man so sadly obtains?

It is not blessings alone that should satisfy us, there is more, even our being in company with the Blessor. Not only should Jesus be confessed as Saviour, but He should be fully owned as Lord. It is this that tests us in this self-loving age, where the will of man is uppermost, and the authority of Jesus as Lord is set aside. We shrink from full identification with Him as "rejected of men," the stone set at naught of the builders, "the rock of offence," the One exalted to be "both Lord and Christ," because it means *our* rejection, too, and the cutting of us off from things to which the life of the flesh cleaves.

Then, again, if we have launched forth with Him for the other side, we must be prepared to meet the power and opposition of the enemy. We can rest assured that he will make the full force of the storm to break upon those who are the most fully in His company, and who unreservedly acknowledge His claims and authority. But if He is with us, what need we fear?

The disciples had not gone far, when "there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full." (v. 37.)

They had not expected this ; nor do we. We dream of smooth water, and fair weather, forgetful of the solemn fact that He who is in the ship with us, is earth-rejected, though exalted on high, and that Satan is the prince and god of the world, and the prince of the power of the air. What should we expect but storms on the way to the other side, when we know we have such an adversary ?

Our faith is to be tested ; our faith in God ; our faith in the presence of our Lord and Master ; our faith in His changeless love and immutable word. Ample room is given for us to prove our confidence in Him, who loves us with an everlasting love, who, indeed, *does* care for us, and having redeemed us out of the hand of the "terrible," will not deliver us into his hand again. "They shall never perish." He "forsaketh not his saints ; they are preserved for ever." (John x. 27-30 ; Psalm xxxvii. 28.)

But the storm for the disciples—as oft with ourselves—proved too much for their faith. Not only were they afraid, but they even questioned the loving care of Him—the Son of God—who lay asleep in the hinder part of the ship. "And they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish ?"

How soon we lose sight, under the pressure of the moment, of all His past goodness and faithfulness, and of the exhibitions of His power

on our behalf. All is lost sight of in the presence of the over-hanging cloud, and our poor hearts reproach our ever-faithful Lord with a lack of care for us. “Carest thou not that we perish?” Oh, the exceeding sinfulness of unbelief! Calvary, with its tale of Divine love and suffering, is not enough to stifle that vile offspring of the flesh! But how it humbles us with shame to know that a cloud, as big as a man’s hand, will often set our poor hearts a-going with gloomy forebodings of evil, when but one glance at Him, who has embarked with us, would silence every fear, and keep us calm, assured that He is superior to every storm, and sufficient for any emergency.

“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.” (v. 39.)

Though there is much unbelief with the disciples, and the dreadful questioning of His care of them, yet He rises up in the majesty of Him “who hath measured the waters in the hollow His hand,” and hath gathered the wind in His fist, and exercises His power on their behalf. He manifests His care of His own. The storm is quelled, and great calm ensues.

He was truly God and man in one Person, and that Person was the Son of God. He lay asleep in the hinder part of the ship, proof of His manhood; He rises, and in the majesty of His word, rebukes the wind and sea, and thus

proves Himself God. Who would lose such a sight of Him, whom we can through grace call Saviour and Lord? It was the same *Person*, whether we view Him asleep upon the pillow, wearied with His toils, or arising and stilling the howling tempest with a word. The Person is the same, and He is the Object of our worship for ever!

When the storm had been reduced to a perfect calm, the blessed Lord said to them, "*Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*"

How gently and graciously He rebukes; and in the very graciousness of it lies its efficacy. When the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, at a later day, it was a look that broke his heart, and made him go out and weep bitterly. Stern and cutting rebukes are not Christ-like, save when the self-will of man would pervert the truth, and turn others from it.

With the Lord it was always perfection. To the apostate leaders of Israel, He could say, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 33.) And to the troubled disciples, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"

"And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark iv. 41.)

Yes; at every fresh experience of His delivering power, every fresh expression of His love,

every fresh proof of His tender care of us, we are left to wonder in His presence, and to know that it is *Himself* that has done it all; and we are lost in wonder, love, and praise !

And when at His coming we reach the heavenly shore, and look back upon the waste of waters that we have crossed, and have been brought through, our exclamation will be, “What hath God wrought !” Then our eternal Hallelujahs will begin.

On the other side there is to be no more sea, the emblem of unrest and separation, no death, no pain, no tears, no need of the sun, neither of the moon, no candle, no curse, and no night. God and the Lamb will be the light, temple, and glory of that new creation, which by virtue of the “death of the cross” will rest in everlasting repose. God will rest in His love; He will be all in all; righteousness will *dwell* there; and the redeemed will rest in the rest of God, and delight in His worship and service for ever.

“Lord of life and glory,  
As we stem the tide,  
Whisper Thou the story  
Of the other side.”

E. A.

## PEACE!

### A PRICELESS PORTION.

VICTORIES upon the field of battle may fill the heart of a nation with pride and exultation, but real rejoicing begins when the war is over and peace is proclaimed.

Yes, PEACE is a sweet word, and a thing much to be desired both between men and nations. It is not about temporal peace, however, that we wish to write. Eternal peace—peace with God—this is our theme.

Many are complete strangers to soul-trouble. They seem to live at ease. No thought of eternity ever disturbs them. Alas! their's is a false peace. Satan has lulled them to sleep, and lest aught should disturb their slumbers, he carefully surrounds them with whatever will serve his purpose best. It is possible that my reader is one of these. If so, we wish to sound the alarm, for if you are not aroused in Time you will be in Eternity. The hoarse and angry roar of judgment's flood will wake you from your sleep of death, when it will be all too late to find a shelter. Oh! awake! There is danger ahead. Soon your hapless soul may be plunged into a sea of wrath,

and find itself in a place where PEACE is never known.

On the night of the great flood at Johnston, when thousands were swept into ETERNITY, a horseman, spurring his foaming steed, galloped through the town, warning the people that the great dam on the hillside was bursting its banks. The people only laughed at his warning, and probably thought it a huge joke. They never dreamed of danger, and went to their beds and peacefully slept that night; but it was a false peace, and the roaring of the torrent awoke them when it was too late to escape. Let this be a warning to you, my friend. Seek the assurance of salvation and the knowledge of peace with God now. This can be had, and the way is plainly set forth in God's blessed book.

I want to turn you to a few Scriptures which speak of—

1. The ground of peace;
2. The declaration of peace; and
3. The character of peace.

The first verse of Romans v. shows us that peace is the result of justification, consequent on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The other day a man told us he was making his peace with God. Are you on the same track? If so, we would like to have a little plain talk with you. In the first place, how do you

think peace could be made? There is a treaty between three great nations in Europe called the Triple Alliance. Suppose one of these nations were to violate the terms of the treaty, grossly insult one of the foreign ambassadors, and afterwards murder him, what would be the result? Why war would be declared at once. And how could peace be restored? Only in one way—by adequate satisfaction being rendered to the injured nation. Exactly. Now, friend, GOD IS THE OFFENDED ONE, and though infinite love fills His heart, yet His righteousness *must* be satisfied about the question of your sins before you can have peace. For if you have really found out your true place and condition, you will be ready to cry out with David, “Against THEE and Thee only have I sinned.”

Do you think that your own efforts can atone for the past? Will your sorrow for what you have done, and your resolution as to what you will do, wipe out the score that is against you? Do you think it will? What AWFUL PRESUMPTION! Why, my friend, you are a poor bankrupt, and can bring naught to God but your sins and those FILTHY RAGS of your own self-righteousness.

A man is condemned to die for the awful crime of murder. We visit the condemned cell, and find him busily binding together some filthy rags into a strange kind of garment. At our approach he



starts up and exclaims, "Oh! I hope it will do. I have nearly finished it." "Nearly finished what?" we ask. "Oh!" says he, "I am making this robe for Her Majesty. I hope she will be satisfied with it, and send me a pardon in return."

"Poor man," we say, "that will not satisfy Her Majesty's law. It demands life for life, and never will its claims be satisfied until you have been to the gallows."

And is God less righteous than that? Never. His claims must be met. His righteousness must be satisfied. His holy wrath against sin must be borne before peace could be declared. I am sure you will not be so bold and presumptuous as to say that *you* could render satisfaction to God's claims. THE GROUND OF PEACE for you must be alone in another coming into your place and doing what you could not. Praise God! we can tell you that this has been done.

In the greatness of His love, God sent His Son, who came with the same love filling His heart, and we read that He "was delivered for our offences." On the accursed tree HE MADE PEACE. "*The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.*" He was delivered to judgment—the judgment that we deserved—and He suffered there until perfect and eternal satisfaction was rendered to God. Every drop of judgment was exhausted for the believer; and more, GOD'S THRONE was

vindicated, and His name glorified about sin's awful question. It is a blood-bought, blood-made peace. He alone could make it, and now God asks you not to be a *peace-maker*, but a *peace-taker*.

But you ask, IS GOD SATISFIED?

This is an important question truly. Upon it hangs our eternal blessing. Here is the answer—"but GOD raised Him from the dead." (Acts xiii.30.) Here is God's seal upon Calvary's finished work. Not only was Jesus delivered for our offences, but He was "raised again for our justification." He who undertook to accomplish God's will, and settle the question of sin to God's satisfaction, has, in doing so, borne all the judgment that the believer deserved. And if He had not fully met the claims of justice He would not have been raised from the dead. But He is alive now, and everyone who believes in the righteous act of God in raising Him, must see also that His resurrection clears them for ever from charge of guilt.

So we can say "Therefore being justified by faith, WE HAVE PEACE with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here is solid ground for you to rest upon. "*All other ground is sinking sand.*"

But, if Jesus "made peace," and if His finished work is the only "ground of peace," He also was the One who declared it.

When He rose triumphant from the grave, His

love led Him to the upper room in Jerusalem, where His disciples were gathered—storm-tossed, and filled with doubts and fears. He goes to quell the storm, as He had stilled the tumbling sea.

“PEACE UNTO YOU,” He says, “*and showed them His hands and His side.*” (John xx. 19, 20.)

There in His body He bore the marks of the judgment He had endured. His resurrection was the proof that His sacrifice for sin had been accepted. And now His own words carry PEACE to their troubled souls.

My friend, here is your assurance. He made peace for you on the cross, and now His own blessed word assures you of the fact that it is for you.

Link these two Scriptures together.

“*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.)

“THEREFORE, being justified by faith, we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans v. 1.)

Rest, now, upon God’s unchanging word, and rejoice that the CHARACTER OF THE PEACE is as unchanging as His blessed word. “Hath He said, and shall He not do it?”

We read, “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not

depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord." (Isaiah liv. 10.)

JESUS is our peace, and He is in the unclouded light of the Father's favour. He changes not; and as long as He remains there our peace cannot be removed. God will never break it. You may fail, but it depends not on you, but on the fact that God has accepted the work which Jesus did FOR YOU. And now the challenge comes from the throne of God, "Who is he that condemneth." God is the Justifier. Who can lay anything to our charge? Jesus has died, and is risen again.

The question of sin, which broke the peace, has all been settled to God's satisfaction, and is never to be raised again.

Often we lose our joy through our failure and waywardness, and alas ! alas ! we have to say—

"My love is oftentimes low,  
My joy still ebbs and flows."

Thank God, we can add,

"But peace with God remains the same ;  
No change Jehovah knows.

"'Tis everlasting peace,  
Sure as Jehovah's name ;  
'Tis steadfast as His stable throne,  
For evermore the same."

God grant that you may enter into this peace  
NOW, for His name sake. J. J. M.

## SIMEON AND ANNA ;

OR,

READY TO GO, AND READY TO STAY.

LUKE ii. 21-38.

IN Simeon and Anna we see illustrated the double effect produced in us, as, through the Holy Spirit, we are in the possession and enjoyment of Christ. *We* know Him risen and in glory, *they* possessed Him as an infant of days, whom Simeon could take into his arms; it was, however, the same blessed Person, the Son of God. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Joseph and Mary had brought the child Jesus into the temple to present Him to Jehovah, and to do for Him after the custom of the law. The sacrifice they brought betokened their poverty; for, though of the family of David, they availed themselves of the gracious provision Jehovah had made for the poor of His people—"A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons"—offered, as a reference to Leviticus xii. 8 will show, for Mary, and not for the Child. Thus did the Son, in becoming man, connect Himself with the poor of His flock. How great the grace!

At this moment Simeon, directed by the Spirit, came into the temple. He was one of the godly among the people who waited for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. Moreover, it had been revealed to him that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. At once he recognizes in the child Jesus the object of God's purpose, and of his own desire, and taking Him into his arms, he blesses God, and says, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

His hopes were fulfilled; his heart was satisfied. There was nothing more to wait for. He possessed God's salvation; and in Jesus he discovered the Lord's Christ. True, there was much to be accomplished. Somewhat dimly, perhaps, he saw the coming cloud of his Saviour's rejection, when a sword should pass through the soul of Mary, and the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed. But the Person was there, and he possessed Him. This was enough for Simeon. He saw the One by whom everything should be settled on His own side, and who should, as the Lord's Christ, carry out and fulfil all the will and purpose of God.

Thus satisfied, there was nothing to detain him; every tie was broken, and he was ready to go.

It is so with us when the glory of Christ, the

Son of God, is, by the Spirit, before our eyes. We see how His death has removed everything that could hinder, and we desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

In Anna we see the other side. She was an aged widow, devoted to the interests of God upon earth—she served Him with fastings and prayers in the temple, night and day. Coming in as Simeon uttered these words, she saw at once in Jesus, the promised Redeemer, and gave thanks likewise unto the Lord. She found in that blessed One an all-powerful motive why she, feeble woman as she was, should remain—not for her own comfort or pleasure, but that she might devote herself to His interests and service, and speak of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

She abode with God in the temple; and when she went out, it was to speak of the One her eyes had seen there.

Simeon was ready to go, and Anna was ready to stay.

Thus it will be with us, if Christ be really our object; and it is only as ready to go that, constrained by His love, we are rightly ready to stay.

Anna, the feebler vessel of the two, remained. And God is able to sustain such in the darkest days, that they may be for His pleasure and praise.

In Paul, in Philippians i., we see both these effects displayed.

He could say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He desired to depart and be with Christ, which was far better; but when he thought of His interests upon earth, of His blessed service, of the need of the Church, and of his beloved Philippians, he says, so to speak, "I should like to stay"; and the whole matter is settled between himself and the Lord, without any reference to Nero. So confident is he of this, that he can add, "I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith."

Let us remember that these great blessings were not reserved exclusively for Paul, and Simeon, and Anna. Nor are they the peculiar privilege of those who may be prominent in the service of the Lord to-day. They may be known and enjoyed by all God's people. All of us, in the measure given unto us by grace, may so have Christ for our object, that in the very circumstances in which the will of God has placed us, we may be for Him.

May we all be greatly encouraged in so seeking to have Christ for our gain, that, while ready to go, we may be here for His glory so long as it is His will that we should stay.

F. W. G.



## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. C. 1 Corinthians viii. 11.—Bear in mind the subject of this chapter. The question discussed is the eating of meat offered in sacrifice to idols. Could a Christian eat with a good conscience? First of all, a warning word is uttered against mere knowledge. Alone, it puffs up, but if love be there it is well, for love seeks the good of others. Now, we know, in point of fact, that an idol is nothing, but everyone had not that knowledge. There were saints with weak consciences. Were they to eat, their conscience would be defiled. Eating, therefore, would be a sin to them. Not so, if they had knowledge. But *you* have knowledge. Are you, then, at liberty to act in this matter according to your measure of light, regardless of the weak consciences of others, and of the effect upon them of your eating? Such would not be the way of love. Your liberty becomes a stumbling-block to one having less light. Emboldened by your example, he eats that which his weak conscience bids him shun, *and so far as the tendency of your eating goes*, you are causing him to perish, inasmuch as you are leading him to sin against his conscience. We are quite sure, from other scriptures, that God will interpose and deliver him, for it is not possible that a sheep of His flock can ever be finally lost, but that is no excuse for you. So far as your inconsiderate conduct goes, you are making your weak brother perish, and

that is indeed a very solemn thing—the outcome of knowledge without love.

These remarks apply with equal force to Romans xiv. 15, about which you ask. Many other passages express the same thought, though in different forms. “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.” (Rom. viii. 13.) Such is the end of living thus. Now if I drag my brother into things which end in death—however sure I may be that God will not leave him in them—I am causing him to perish as far so my influence can do so.

But, after explaining to your friends all the texts which show, as they think, the possibility of a saved man being eventually lost, they would need something more. Explanations do not settle and establish the soul, though they may clear difficulties out of the way. What they need to know is the nature of that salvation which the believer in Christ receives—*eternal* salvation, as it is called in Hebrews—and the entirely new footing on which he stands with God. He is “*in Christ*”—“accepted in the Beloved”—so identified with Him that it can be said, “As He is, so are we in this world.” And these blessed facts are always true, and in no way dependent on our walk. We know that elsewhere the Christian is viewed as in the wilderness, journeying on to the rest that remains. In these connections the “ifs” come in—such as “if ye continue,” “if ye hold fast,” and so on. This leads to dependence on Another, whose infallible faithfulness we may surely trust. It is said in 1 Peter i. 5 that we are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,” clearly

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showing that we need to be kept. Knowing this, we depend on the power of the One who does keep. Thus our souls are maintained in habitual dependence on God, and that, in itself, is no trifling good.

As to Philippians iii. 11, the goal towards which the apostle runs is "resurrection from among the dead"—the glorious resurrection in which the believer shall have his part at the coming of the Lord. "If by any means" means simply this—that the apostle cared little what the road was like that led him to that point. Be it rough or smooth, gilded with sunshine or darkened with clouds, it was all the same to him. Along that road he ran with diligent haste, eager to reach the end and possess the prize.

A. L.—When people speak of "head-belief" and "heart-belief," we presume they mean by the former a mere educational belief in the genuineness of Christianity, which, however sincere, leaves the heart and conscience untouched, while the latter affects both. In Hebrews x. 39 we read of "them that believe to the saving of the soul," and in 1 Timothy i. 16 of them who believe on Jesus Christ "to life everlasting." In both instances it is a great deal more than the mind yielding its assent to certain truths and doctrines. Now you are anxious to know whether yours is head or heart belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me ask you one or two questions. Do you, as a guilty sinner, knowing your need of salvation, simply commit your soul to Christ? Can you, in truth, say :

“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee”?

God be praised if you can, for head-belief never led anyone to act and speak thus.

But you are looking within, and because you do not seem to realize the love and grace of the Lord, and because you find so little response in your heart to all that He has done, you wonder whether your faith is the right kind. All we can say is that self-occupation will never beget in your heart what you wish begotten there. Fancy a child, with the best of mothers, saying to himself, “I find within me so little response to all my mother’s love, that I fear I cannot be her child at all”! This would but make matters worse. You cannot realize the love and grace of the Lord, without first believing that you are an object of that love and grace. Faith as to this must rest on the Scriptures of truth. Let your heart be open to receive all the gracious things that are declared in those holy writings. Look away from self to Christ, from your love to Him to His love to you, unfathomable and passing knowledge. We know no other cure for your complaint. Write again if necessary.

A CONSTANT READER. 1 Corinthians xi. 27, 29. —Read the whole passage from verse 21 to end, and you will see into what a state the Corinthians had got in reference to the Lord’s Supper. Their manners before conversion, the practices connected with idolatrous worship, with which they had been long familiar, were now being connected with this holy

institution. The apostle remonstrates with them, and sets the Lord's Supper before them in the most affecting way. They are then solemnly warned that to eat and drink unworthily is to invite judgment on themselves; and, indeed, the chastening hand of the Lord had been already upon them for this very thing. Many were weak and sickly, and many slept. Mark, the point here is not that they were personally unworthy, but that they were eating unworthily. Let them, then, examine themselves as to these things; and, laying aside all such practices as the apostle condemns, let them eat of that bread and drink of that cup in a manner befitting so solemn and withal so blessed a feast. There is nothing in the passage to deter the feeblest saint from enjoying this great Christian privilege, but much to lead to thoughtfulness and exercise of heart.

J. S. F.—When the three disciples were with the Lord on the holy mount, they knew at once that the two men who were with Him were Moses and Elias. Paul, too, speaks of the Thessalonians as his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. This could not be were they no more to him than others. But if we know in glory beloved saints whom we have known on earth, we must remember that the ties and relationships belonging to our pilgrim life will have no place in those blessed scenes, where Christ and His glory will be everything. The only links there will be those of the new creation, which grace has already formed, and which shall last for aye.

PERPLEXED. — You will find an answer to your questions in a pamphlet entitled, “*Have ye received the Holy Ghost?*” price one penny, to be had of the Publisher of this magazine. Should you not, we shall feel obliged by your writing to us again.

T. B. 1 Corinthians xiv. 1–3.—A prophet, in the New Testament usage of the term, is not one who necessarily reveals things to come. We know no better definition of a prophet than what you find in verse 3. Anyone speaking in an unknown tongue speaks in language not commonly understood, and consequently not to edification unless it be interpreted. The Corinthians were childishly fond of the display of this gift. The apostle, by the Spirit, forbids its exercise in the assembly unless there be an interpreter. The edification of others, and not display, is the object for which spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit.

As to your second question, it is evident, from the scriptures you quote, that giving of thanks preceded the actual breaking of the bread in the Lord’s Supper; at least, it is named first. No one is at liberty to ride rough-shod over the consciences of others either in this or any other matter.

S. B. 1 Peter i. 5.—Declension of soul is not contemplated in the passage of which this verse forms a part. The believer, begotten to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is heir to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven for him, and he is kept by divine power all

along the road. But this keeping is not apart from spiritual exercises, necessitating faith on the side of the one who is so kept. Conscious of his own weakness, and not altogether ignorant of the forces arrayed against him, he finds courage in knowing that God is on his side. It is by divine power alone that he can be kept, and on that power he depends. Beyond doubt God will bring His people safely through. The believer may indeed fail, as Peter himself did when he denied his Lord; he may bring himself under divine discipline in its severest form, but God will never give up His people, nor suffer any of them to perish.

Referring to 2 Peter i. 9, it is possible for a believer to become blind, and to forget that he was purged from his old sins. Careless in his walk, heeding not the plain directions of God's word, he reaps the fruit of his own ways in spiritual blindness, and in the forgetfulness of what he once enjoyed. It is easier to imagine, than to describe, the bitterness of such a soul, its distress, its agony, when the stupefied conscience is at length aroused, and the individual begins to see to what lengths he has gone. Psalm li. gives us a glimpse of all this. In view of so terrible a state, we are admonished to give diligence to make *our* calling and election sure, according to verses 5-8. We hope shortly to publish in these pages a paper on this very subject, in which you will find your question more fully answered. The article on "*Soul-declension*" appeared in our issue of October last year, which is still on sale.

## SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS YOU.

“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. For 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. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”  
 “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. 14-18, 36.

HERE are verses plain enough for the simplest soul, and startling enough, one would think, to arouse the most careless.

They speak of subjects so momentous, that it may be questioned whether any of us have weighed them as we should. We pass over, all too lightly, these familiar words, and do not grasp the facts which they reveal. They are to us as a tale that has been often told.

But let us spare a moment to examine them afresh, and I promise that our words shall be but few. Tell me what it is *to perish*. Explain that term to me, Christian, if you can. Show me how to fathom its dark depths. Take time—it cannot be done in the twinkling of an eye, and I fain would know.



## 170      SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS YOU.

Suppose you were an artist, and had accepted the offer of a handsome sum to paint the picture of a perished man with his environments. Before you began your melancholy task, you would probably study the story of Luke xvi. 19-31, and take that for your model. The rich man's mansion might be placed upon your canvas easily enough, his sumptuous banquets, his bosom friends, as thoughtless, maybe, as himself. You might show him asleep after one of his carousals, his bed hung round with gorgeous tapestry, and Death, lean and lank, stalking tip-toe up the stairs, catching him in his arms, flinging him across his shoulder, and carrying him away, for ever away, from everything his heart loved. But how could you portray that place which is called *Hell*, and the great gulf impassable, and the fevered tongue, and the torment which can never be assuaged? And everyone who has not received Christ, is perishing, is on the road to everlasting night and ruin, is he not, Christian? Ah, do we sufficiently consider that? Would we not be far more prayerful, and earnest, and anxious about souls, if we did?

Then there are those words, *condemned already*, indicating, as they do, the state of all who have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Not yet judged, not yet condemned, at the Bar of the Righteous Judge, but judged and condemned by their own sin in not having

## SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS YOU. 171

received the One who came from heaven to make God known in the fulness of His love to sinful man. And this judgment, which their one great sin already pronounces, will be formally upheld and proven just before the great white throne, unless, indeed, this and all other sins be forgiven. Christian, these things we know, and are assured of, but do we think of them enough, and act, as if in truth we believed them with all our heart ?

The passage also speaks of *the wrath of God*. Under it, exposed to it, is every unbeliever. He shuts himself out from *life*, and flees not to the only shelter from the coming storm. Seized with a strange infatuation, blinded by the god of this world, he neither regards the important concerns of his soul, nor asks to what bourne the chariot of time is carrying him. This is a sight sad enough to make the angels weep. The wonder is, Christian, that *we* do not weep, that our hearts break not, and that rivers of tears run not down our cheeks, as we contemplate the present state, and future doom, of those who receive not the Saviour.

But to men, perishing, judged already, and justly under wrath, the blessed Gospel comes with its story of love, and light, and life. And that story was first told, not by man, not by angels, but by the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. Listen to it. "For

## 172      SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS YOU.

God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Marvellous words! What a revelation of God do they give! Were you, reader, unsaved, and in your sins—and you may be for aught we know—we would earnestly invite you to consider what the Lord here says. Is it, indeed, true, think you, that God has looked down upon us, loved us, and has had it in His heart, not simply to rescue us from our perishing state, but to enrich us with all that wealth of heavenly blessing spoken of here as "everlasting life"? Was it in view of such a glorious end that He gave His only begotten Son—sent Him here not to condemn, but to save? Have you ever thought of that, and is there nothing in your heart that can be touched by such a revelation of love, nay, of God, who is love?

Think, too, of those words which relate to the Lord Himself. "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." What does the lifting up of the Son of Man mean? No one can answer that question, unless he can tell us all that it was to the blessed Lord to be forsaken of God, to sink under the dark waves of judgment, to receive the deserts of sin in a measure large enough to vindicate God in

## SOMETHING THAT CONCERNS YOU. 173

saving, justifying the ungodly, and giving eternal life to those who merited eternal wrath. No man on earth can tell us *that*, and none shall ever know what the Son of Man suffered when thus lifted up. But this we know, that His cross, His death, opens up the way of life to us. Is this nothing to you? or have you, through grace, in very truth believed on Him to life everlasting?

Nor is there room for the least uncertainty. God has spoken, and if His word be received, no doubt can possibly remain with the one who receives it. "He that believeth on Him *is not condemned.*" Plain words, indeed, and accompanied by others equally plain. "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life.*" The simplicity of those two sentences cannot be surpassed. Nor can one doubt linger in the soul that believes God who thus speaks.

And yet so many do doubt. Their unworthy fears are rooted in the pride and unbelief of the human heart. Little as they suspect it, and vehemently as they may deny it, they are looking, nevertheless, for some good in that wretched creature called *self*, and are guilty of the sin of seeking inward signs that shall confirm God's testimony ere they give it credit.

But our words were to be few, so we go no further. Reader, weigh what has been said, and may the blessing of God make it the means of good to your soul this very day.

## “HE WAS A UNITARIAN.”

SO ended an obituary notice of a man found dead in his chair.

When that word Unitarian is uttered, it sends a kind of chill through one's whole frame. It represents a man who blasphemously denies the God-head of the Son, and, like Cain of old, dares to go to God without a proper sacrifice; in fact, he denies the need of any such sacrifice.

When the Scriptures state, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me,” they speak of the Son of God in His proper deity and incarnation.

A Unitarian denies this, and therefore blasphemes the Son of God. He takes advantage of His voluntary humiliation in becoming a man, in order to die for us, to deny His divine glory. What greater sin could a man commit? “Who-soever denieth the Son, the same hath not the

Father." (1 John ii. 23.) Impossible to have, or to know, the Father, if we deny the One of whom it is written, "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (Hebrews i. 8); and who says of Himself, "I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

All men are to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. And to deny the divine glory of the Son is to dishonour Him and the Father also. What will God say of this in the day of judgment?

As a consequence of denying the essential God-head of the Son, there is the denial of His death as a propitiation for sin. There is the denial, in fact, of any need of it. Thus there is not only the sin of blasphemy against the Son, and in that way the insulting, instead of the honouring the Father, but there is also the awful sin of making God a liar, for God says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews ix. 22.)

God in His Word says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" and "Christ was once

offered to bear the sins of many"; and "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"; and "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (Heb. ix. 14, 28; 1 Peter iii. 18; 1 John i. 7)—when God speaks thus, He speaks of Christ dying as a Sacrifice for sins, not as a Martyr for righteousness, though in suffering at the hand of man His death may be so viewed.

Faith appropriates what God has provided, and says, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah liii. 4-6.)

A Unitarian is a person who, rejecting the Son in His essential deity, and His sacrifice on the cross as the means of approach to God, cuts himself off from any knowledge of God as Father, and remaining in his sins, is exposed to all the terrible judgment of God. Like an apostate Jew, there is nothing for him "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Hebrews x. 27.)

One of that company—an educated, refined, and pleasing lady—lately said, when the truth of the *atonement* was pressed upon her, "If I can't go to heaven by my good works, I don't want to go there at all."

So much for education, refinement, and pleasing manners. Underneath all these there may be a heart full of hatred against the Son of God, and unbelief of God's Word. Well might the Lord Jesus say to Nicodemus, that educated, refined, and religious Jew, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . *that which is born of the flesh is flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 3-6.)

To educate a man with a view to fitting him for heaven, is like decorating a corpse; and to religionize the flesh, is only like whitewashing a sepulchre. "*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*" (John iii. 7.)

Dear reader, what are you? A Unitarian, or what? Your only hope of heaven is in the full confession of the deity of the Son of God, and in your trusting in Him who died as a sacrifice for sins. Only in this way can you be justified, have peace with God, and be amongst the redeemed in glory. (Read Rev. v.)

E. A.



## A LETTER ON ELECTRICITY.

DEAR ———,—I feel led to write you a few lines, and yet do not know why, unless it be this—that there is a tie that binds us to each other, and to the Lord. It is of immense importance to remember that we are all united to Christ, and such being the case, there is no need to wonder if we feel and sympathize one with another, even though oceans roll between us.

I do not know whether you are acquainted with the system of electric telephone. It works in this way: All the wires run to one central office, and if anyone would speak to another, he must first call for “Central,” and then the wires are connected so that he can speak to the desired party. Well, that is a feeble illustration of the way we are all linked together.

The Lord Jesus is Central, and we get our communion one with another through Him. So one often comes across something like this: there may be some poor saint, or labourer, in need, and he telephones to the Lord, that he wants food and clothing. The Lord calls up some other saint, whose *heart* and purse are in a fit state to help, and says to him, “Brother So-and-so is in need,” and the brother immediately responds to the

telephone from the Lord, and either goes, or sends, to the poor one's relief. So you see a perfect circuit is obtained through the Lord, and all rejoice over it. The poor one rejoices to receive, the "wise-hearted" one rejoices to give, and the Lord rejoices over the obedience and subjection of both.

Following up the thought of the telephone, it is interesting to notice that there must be actual contact of the wires—they must touch each other. How true that is of us, and the Lord. We must be near enough to the Lord to touch Him—you understand what I mean? There can be no message over the telephone unless there is actual contact, so we must be in spiritual contact with Him, else there will be no message either to us from Him, or from us to another. Such being the case, of what immense importance it is to be near Him, and if we want to be near Him we must obey the Word. It is to those that have His words and commandments, and keep them, that He will make Himself known. (John xiv. 21-24). This is an absolute necessity. We shall not wonder at all at the provision He has made to fit us and to keep us near Himself, if we remember that the smallest thing that comes between us and Him cuts off our communication with Him. It should surely make us very careful of our spiritual wires.

I have been much interested in noticing that

earth is the best thing to stop an electric current. A very small piece of earth will effectually stop all communication.

How true of us. Anything of earth will effectually stop our spiritual wires.

The Christian is looked upon, in Scripture, as belonging to heaven, so that the more earthly he becomes, the more he denies his heavenly calling. This world has rejected and killed the One, who is, and ever was, the dearest Object of the Father's heart: so the more worldly the Christian becomes, the more he sides with that which hates God, and hates His Son. The Holy Ghost says, "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James iv. 4.)

Surely this speaks to us, and warns us not to let anything of earth come between us and our divine Central, or there will be no messages over the wires. There will be a piece of earth between us and Him—the spiritual wire will be *grounded*.

Well, dear brother, having spoken a little about the worst conductor, I will say there are many grades of conductors, gradually coming up to the best. Wood will conduct a little, but only a little. All metals conduct, some better than others. Water is a good conductor. The street cars run better on a rainy day. In executing a criminal by electricity, the places of contact are wetted. Water is one of the best conductors.

## A LETTER ON ELECTRICITY. 181

And now I want to apply that to us. The water of the Word is the best conductor between us and Him. Beloved brother, we cannot have *too much water*. The messages will come from the Master with increasing sweetness and distinctness, as we get more of the water of the Word. You will remember David says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart," and in Eph. vi., we read of the girdle of truth. If this be true of us, how the messages will come over the spiritual wires!

To know, and be on intimate terms with, the Lord Jesus Christ is better than all else. It is "that good part" which shall never be taken from us, for we shall go on to know Him more and more to all eternity.

I find I have written a whole sermon on electricity. If there is any good in it, take the good and throw the rest away. J. S.

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" **W**E know Him as we could not know  
Through heaven's golden years ;  
We there shall see His *glorious* face,  
But Mary saw His tears.

"The touch that *heals* a broken heart  
Is never felt above ;  
His angels know His blessedness,  
His way-worn saints His love."

## CREATION AND REDEMPTION.

### A CONTRAST.

WHEN the work of creation was finished, we read, in Genesis i. 31, that "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

But when the work of redemption shall be completed, and all its infinitely greater wonders accomplished, "He shall see," we read in Isaiah liii. 11, "of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

He declared the work of His hand to be very good, but in the travail of His soul He shall find *satisfaction*. The first, spite of its creation-beauty, was speedily marred by sin. Soon Satan introduced, through the first man, the evil that was to demoralize and alienate the whole scene.

God's Sabbath, His rest in creation, was broken by sin; and the verdict just pronounced had thenceforth to be changed from "very good" to very bad, as man, the master-piece, dragged down in his fall that creation over which he had been placed. The beautiful work of God's hand was spoiled, as it were, in a moment.

Yet this very creation waits for its deliverance, and shall share in the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. (See Romans viii.)

When they shall be manifested in the glory of their Redeemer—Himself the chief and first-born—then creation shall break her chains of bondage, and enjoy the liberty of glory together with them.

Their bodies, likewise, await adoption. Redemption in power shall be applied to them. The dead shall be raised, the living changed, and all that is mortal shall be swallowed up in life.

Christ shall present the Church unto Himself, “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” The wide creation—things in heaven and things on earth—shall yet be reconciled. Satan shall be vanquished, death destroyed, a new heaven and a new earth shall be indwelt by righteousness, and all things shall be made new.

The sore travail of Calvary, the redeeming work of the Lamb of God, shall assuredly cause this to come about. He shall look back to that awful moment when each intelligence, Satanic and human, was arrayed against Him; when, together with inconceivable physical suffering, He endured the wrath of God against sin—He shall look back on this, I say, as the occasion of His greatest moral victory. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” Blessed Victim! glorious and worthy Victor! All praise be His!

J. W. S.

## TEMPLE BUILDING.

“Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples.”

HOSEA viii. 14.

THE analogy between the conduct of Israel in the past and that of the professed people of God to-day is often most striking. In this passage Israel is charged with two grievous sins—the forgetting of his Maker, and the building of temples. The latter was the consequence of the former. This favoured people owed everything to the Lord, but in the possession of the gifts, they forgot the Giver. Their privileges were of no mean order. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, eventually, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom. ix. 4, 5.)

But although Israel could boast of favours, their whole history confirms the truth of the Lord's complaint. They had forgotten their Maker, and fell a prey to their own thoughts. And the moment men follow their own thoughts, there is no knowing where they will stop, for their thoughts are not as His. (Isaiah lv. 9.) Jehovah

had but one temple, manifestly owned as His by the presence of His glory between the cherubim. This Israel well knew. Yet, in forgetfulness of Him, they multiplied temples after their own liking, thereby dishonouring His Name, denying His truth, and bringing themselves under the rod of His righteous government.

And as we cast our eye on Christendom to-day, what do we behold? The repetition of these grievous sins of Israel on the most extended scale! Israel, under the government of God, is now called *Lo-ammi*, that is, "not My people." (Hos. i. 9.) Christians, the Church, are on the ground of privilege. But have they heeded the prophet's warning? Have they profited by the experience of Israel, though it be written for their learning and admonition? Alas, alas, no words could be truer to-day; for speaking generally of the state of those who profess the name of Christ, they have forgotten their Maker, and build temples.

To Israel, Jehovah by Hosea said, "I have written to him the great things of My law, but they were counted as a strange thing." (Hosea viii. 12.) To the religious leaders of the remnant of that people, the Lord Himself declared in the days of His flesh, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark vii. 9.) And to the same people, after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, it was said, "Ye do always resist the



Holy Ghost." (Acts vii. 51.) To-day Christendom is following in their wake.

On all hands it is evident that God and His claims are more or less forgotten. His word is made of none effect through the thoughts and traditions of men. Human authority has displaced divine, and worship "in spirit and in truth" has been superseded by a mixture of Judaism, Heathenism, and Christianity. The professing Church (like Israel) hath forgotten her Maker, and buildeth temples. Where is Divine authority for, and to what purpose are, all these costly ecclesiastical structures which fill the lands where the light of the gospel has shone? Ostensibly built for the glory of *God*, but art and science, music and painting, are all employed in a thousand different forms to please the senses of *man*? Does *God* require all this? He never owned any other visible temple than that at Jerusalem, and now He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands." (Acts vii. 48.) But the Maker is forgotten and the temples multiply. Or if, as we gladly recognize, there are those who do remember Him, alas, how few stop to consider, or search His word to see, whether the already existing temples, or those about to be built, are *according to His mind*!

Systematized error abounds. Custom and fashion have taken the place of "Thus saith the Lord;" and, "My people love to have it so:

and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. v. 31.) It is easy to understand how mere Christian professors have departed from the truth professed. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) But from Christians, having the Holy Ghost, one expects an exercised conscience, a broken will, a subject heart, and a ready mind. It is vain to admit the authority of Scripture if we follow tradition. It is vain to talk of bowing to it if we allow our own wills to work in the things of God. His word is our guide as much for His worship as for our conduct. Nothing will stand in the day of manifestation but that which answers to His revealed mind. If the principles of the bygone dispensation are to be our guide, why not rear a temple covered with gold like Solomon's, or one as vast and magnificent as Herod's, which took forty-and-six years to build? The most boasted structure in Christendom is but a poor substitute. But who hath required this at your hand? Not God. The dispensation is changed. The nature, character, sphere, and power of worship are all changed. The veil is rent. The holiest of all is open to all believers. God invites us into His presence without a veil. There, where our great Priest is gone, knowing the value of His work, can the people of

God to-day draw near, as true worshippers, to worship in spirit and in truth. The outward visible building is nothing; a convenient place merely to assemble, on account of the exigencies of the case, suffices, but bears no sanctity in itself. In the presence of God we have all. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me." (Leviticus x. 3.) Gathered by divine power and grace unto the name of His beloved Son, He is there to sing God's praises, and lead ours also to Him. (Psalm xxii. 22.) There we have a foretaste already, as we remember Him, of the joy of that scene, where we shall shortly worship in holy liberty for ever.

If we forget our Maker, the poor heart of man must have some substitute, and he turns to the building of temples and all connected therewith, from the invisible to the visible, from what is divine to what is human. But if we remember Him, and find our heart's joy and satisfaction in Himself, we begin to discern at once that all that merely ministers to the senses, all that is visible, only hinders that worship in spirit and in truth, which is His blessed due from the hearts of His own. May all who read these lines be warned by the complaint of the prophet, lest they should repeat Israel's sin; rather may we learn through the word and Spirit of God what spiritual worship really is.

E. H. C.

## THE TOUCHES OF CHRIST.

THE touch of a hand ! How much there may be in it. Some, perhaps, can tell of how their whole lives have been changed by the touch of some kindly hand laid upon their shoulder in a moment of temptation. What then must be the power in the touch of His hand, who came into this world as God's Servant, His Elect, in whom His soul delighted. (Isa. xlii. 1.) We shall find this brought out beautifully in Mark, the gospel which speaks to us of the Lord Jesus as God's perfect Servant. It is interesting, too, to see that this gospel relates for us seven occasions, when the touch of Christ is mentioned, a number which in itself speaks to us of perfection.

The first occasion is in chapter i. 30, 31. "Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever." There she lies, restless, hot, tossing to and fro. Does not this speak to many a heart ? Worldling ! behold thyself ! Art not thou restless, tossed to and fro ? Is there any peace in thy heart ? To-day's pleasures will soon be over, and then thou wilt desire something else to-morrow, only to learn afresh that earth's pleasures cannot satisfy. But listen ! "Anon, they tell Him of

her." Hast thou ever poured into His ear the story of thy restless heart? If not, let this encourage thee to do so without delay.

Picture that scene once again. The poor woman tossing upon a bed of pain, and He, the mighty God, walking this earth in human form, takes her by the hand and lifts her up, and the fever leaves her. What wondrous grace! Can any doubt a welcome after that? Surely not. Oh, then, go to Him. No other touch will ever give thee rest; no other hand can ever lift thee up from where thou art, and speak peace to thy troubled heart.

In verses 40-42 we get the account of the leper. He comes to the Lord with a deep sense of his need. He kneels before Him and beseeches Him, saying, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Here we get a picture of one who knows his sin, who feels it as a burden upon him. He knows, too, the Lord's power to take that burden away, but he doubts His willingness. "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him." A poor, despised leper, unfit for the company of his fellow-men, and yet Jesus put forth His hand and touched him. Sinner! this is the One who died to save you. Do you doubt His heart of love? He knows your sins, He knows the weight of that burden which you carry. Again, He is "moved with compassion"; come to Him, He will put

forth His hand, and touch you, and say to you, "Be thou clean."

Another picture is drawn for us in chap. v. 41. Verse 35 tells us that the little girl is dead—there is no need now to trouble the Master about her. Faithless words! But have we not sometimes spoken thus of a case which we considered almost hopeless? Some friend or relative, perhaps, that we have prayed for so long, and he is still apparently untouched. We begin to think that he is beyond the reach even of God's hand. We are mistaken. His hand is not shortened that it cannot save, but there are many souls still "dead in trespasses and sins," and only His hand can reach them.

We can almost see that scene in Jairus' house. His only child is lying with the chill hand of death fast closed upon her. No wonder that they "wept greatly"—it was sorrow too deep for human comfort. But the Master had come. He enters that death-stricken chamber where the little maid is lying. He takes her by the hand and bids her rise. Even death must yield up his prey at the bidding of His voice. "And straightway the damsel arose." It was so in that day, and it is still true of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins." The voice of the Son of God can reach their cold dark hearts, and His hand can raise them from the sleep of death.

The next incident in which the touch of Christ

is mentioned is in chap. vii. 31-37, "They bring unto Him one that was deaf." This man, no doubt, was physically deaf, but there are many around us who are morally deaf. They have ears for much that goes on in this world. You may talk to them of politics, of business, of pleasure, and of a thousand other topics. They will listen as long as you please. But speak to them of Christ. Tell them how He walked this earth in man's lowly guise. Tell them how He went to the cross "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Hebrews ix. 26.) Tell them how He lives again "in the presence of God for us." (Hebrews ix. 24.) They will be deaf to this story, they care not for such a topic as this; heaven's music has no charm for them.

Let us notice the deaf man's friends for a moment. "They beseech Him to put His hand upon him." (v. 32.) They believed in the power of His touch. Do we? Perhaps we have proved it for ourselves, but shall we stop there? Have we friends, or relations, who are still deaf to His call? Let us bring them to Him in prayer, and beseech Him for them. His touch can unstop their deaf ears, that they may hear His voice and follow Him. Then, surely, they will join with us in proclaiming the oft-told story, "He hath done all things well." (v. 37.)

In chap. viii. 22-26, we find the account of a blind man being brought to Christ. We may

note the same faith on the part of his friends as in the case of the deaf man. We see, too, the wondrous grace of Him who met the need of all who came to Him. No touch but His could heal those sightless eyes. He takes the blind man by the hand and leads him out of the town. (v. 23.) Friend! would you have your eyes opened? It must be by the touch of His hand once pierced for your sins.

Perhaps you see no beauty in Him, that you should desire Him. (Isaiah liii. 2.) You have never looked, by faith, upon Him, who is "the chiefest among ten thousand" (Cant. v. 10), the "altogether lovely." (Cant. v. 16.)

Go to Him, He will lead you away from the noise and bustle of this world, and will speak to your heart alone. He will put His hand upon you, He will open your sightless eyes to behold His beauty, and then you too "will see every man clearly." (v. 25.)

Let us turn now to another scene in chap. ix. 14-27. The subject of the narrative is a little boy, and an only child. (Luke ix. 38.) Not in the icy grasp of death like Jairus' daughter, but bound in the chains of Satan, the dwelling-place of a foul spirit. He was oftentimes cast into the fire, and into the water, but the object was always the same—destruction. Friend! who is your master? Is Christ? If so, all is well. If not, you must be in the service of Satan. He may



lead you in a gilded pathway, but, beware, his object is your destruction. But to return to our story. Is there no hope for this little one? Is there no deliverance from such terrible bondage? Listen! We hear the Saviour speaking. What does He say? "Bring him unto Me." Even as he comes the foul spirit puts forth his power, so that he was "as one dead." "But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose." (*v.* 27.) You who are bound fast in Satan's chains, who have sought to free yourselves many a time in vain—you who have, perhaps, lost all hope—behold, in this child, a picture of yourselves. But do not stop there. The same Hand that was stretched forth to set him free, is stretched forth to give you liberty. Go to Him in simple faith: "if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (*v.* 23.)

We come now to the last occasion in which the touch of Christ is mentioned in this gospel. We shall find it in chap. x. 13–16. How well we know the story of the little ones being brought to Him. We could almost wish to be little children again that His special blessing might rest upon us. "He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." (*v.* 16.) Let us connect this with another scene in Luke xxiv. 50. We find the Lord in the midst of His own. Not now the little children clustering round Him for His blessing, but those

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for whom He had died, "children of God." He was going to leave them in a world of sin and sorrow, and "He lifted up His hands and blessed them." Fellow-Christians, we, too, are left in a world of sin and sorrow; our Lord is not here, He has gone up on high. What a comfort to us, as we journey on to the place where He has gone, to know that His blessing rests upon us, for "the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." (Prov. x. 22.) J. L.

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PRAIRIE. There is no reason whatever to suppose that the apostles themselves were ever baptized with *Christian* baptism, and if any insisted from Mark xvi. 16 that baptism was essential to salvation, they must at least admit that the apostles were saved without it. In saying this, we have no desire to reduce that ordinance to a lower place than Scripture assigns to it. But to speak of baptism as something without which no one can be saved, is to exalt it to a position it was never designed to fill. Had it been otherwise, it is hard to understand why Paul should have thanked God that he had baptized so few, and gloried in the fact that baptism formed no part of the commission he had received from the Lord. (1 Cor. i.) But we are not disposed to argue the point with any. It would lead to no good. And you, too, will find it far better to build up souls in the great truths of the gospel, than to engage in dis-

cussions of such a nature. Nor do we think you have much cause for regret in being debarred from preaching the gospel in the school-house, because of your not making baptism necessary to salvation. We marvel that you could support by your presence a system of doctrine so subversive of the gospel of the grace of God. You had better let such people alone, at least not discuss baptism with them, for in so doing you will not be giving the Master's household meat in due season. Experience shows that it is possible to argue such a question with the heart far away from God, and in general it will be found that it leaves the soul dry and barren.

W. B. Many thanks for the extracts you have kindly sent us. We shall find them most useful.

X. Y. Z. If our answer to your remarks should strike you as being brief, it is because we have little to add to our former reply. The great and sole remedy for every ill is Christ; and in the measure in which He fills the vision of the soul, self is displaced. It is painful to be misunderstood, to have our motives misjudged, to be wounded in the house of one's friends. Under such circumstances the spirit is liable to be chafed and fretted, and we are apt then to judge others, and think unkindly of them. But let us in meekness turn to the Lord, commit our way to Him, and rest in His love. We observe that you subscribe yourself, "*One whom Jesus loves.*" Is not that enough? To be loved by Him, to know and be assured of it, is indeed no trifling thing; and if we have the sense of His approval, it matters little who else approves, or blames.

## UNIVERSALISM.

**A**T New Rochelle, N.Y., there stands a tombstone with this simple sentence chiselled on its marble face: "I . . . hope for happiness beyond this life." Underneath the tombstone lies the mouldering dust of *Thomas Paine*!

His groundless hope, like Balaam's worthless wish, is but the evident expression of a deceived and an unbelieving heart. In *hell* the feeblest throb of joy is never known; and the source of heaven's happiness is *Christ*. If men despise Him here, where shall they look for joy hereafter?

This noted infidel's recorded hope is the unwritten creed of Christendom. All, nearly, "hope for happiness beyond this life." Blasphemers, drunkards, and libertines indulge the hope in secret, while a host of hollow hypocrites confess with confidence that they are going to "make the best of *both* worlds."

But the Universalists positively promise heaven to all. Judas, they say, will yet enjoy the sweet companionship of John. Arm-in-arm the covetous traitor and the disciple whom Jesus loved are to tread the golden street. Paul and Pilate are to walk in white together, for they both alike are

“worthy.” The holy martyrs and their merciless murderers are to share one common home in heaven. “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars,” shall *not* have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, but shall have part in the holy city, and God will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Rev. xxi. 1–8.)

They assure us that the *unrighteous* shall inherit the kingdom of God. Fornicators, and idolaters, and adulterers, and effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and thieves, and covetous, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners *shall*, they say, inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.)

The population of the Universalists’ heaven must be made up largely of such characters. And, as the Scriptures plainly declare that the eternal destiny of the finally impenitent is inseparably bound up with that of the devil and his angels, we suppose that they are also to be there. (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xx. 10; xxi. 8.) An inviting place, indeed, must heaven be then!

Apart from the conclusive testimony of the word of God that “the wicked shall be turned into hell” (Ps. ix. 17), there are three considerations that oblige us to reject Universalism as a fabrication, forged by the “father of lies.”

(1) The incorrigible wickedness of the sinner's heart. (Jer. xvii. 9.)

(2) The holiness of heaven. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

(3) The certainty that after death comes judgment. (Heb. ix. 27.)

1. First, both *inspiration* and *observation* convince us that *all* men are possessed, by nature, of an inherent evil principle which manifests itself in hatred towards God, and an irresistible desire for sin.

Inspiration abounds with the most unmistakable declarations of this. We instance a very few of the many.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and *incurably* wicked." (Jer. xvii. 9, lit.) Being incurably corrupt, it cannot by any means be improved. Neither religion nor education are sufficient to make it fit for God. "That which is born of the flesh *is* flesh." (John iii. 6.)

Hear the testimony of Him who was "the Truth," and who read the hearts of men as you now read these pages: "from *within*, out of the heart of *men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (Mark vii. 21, 22.)

It is not, notice here, the heart of outcast men, or abandoned women, but "the heart of *men*." It is an accurate and detailed description of the

utter sinfulness of every human heart, however fair and polished the exterior life may be.

Last, and worst of all, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7.) There is a subtle, changeless hatred lurking in the most benignant breast against the gracious God of love. This was demonstrated to perfection when, with wicked hands, men crucified His Son at Calvary, and, by murdered martyrs, sent the message of rebellion back to heaven: "We will not have this Man to reign over us."

Observation *confirms* what inspiration *affirms*. Every person in the land is a standing memorial of the ruin of man. Every policeman is, unwittingly, a preacher of prevalent depravity. Safe manufacturers and locksmiths are unconscious witnesses of the deceitfulness and dishonesty of men. Men trusting in themselves that *they* are righteous are, we know, not wanting, but they are loth indeed to trust their fellows. They prefer notes, by far, to promises. The Apostle Paul, after a most thorough and painful introspection, confessed the total depravity of his whole moral being. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth NO GOOD THING." (Rom. vii. 18.)

How, then, can man, unless renewed by grace, be fit for heaven? Ah, he has no moral fitness but for hell!

Some months ago I was told of an illiterate

man who, years before, had emigrated to America. In some unaccountable way, he soon amassed a comfortable fortune, and determined to visit his less fortunate friends and relatives across the sea. Having plenty of money, and wishing to sail in style, he took a first-cabin passage on one of the finest trans-Atlantic steamers. But he soon discovered that he had made a grand mistake, and that he had no intelligent fitness for the place he sought to occupy. Seated at the table, side-by-side with polished aristocrats and such distinguished personages as ex-Mayor Grant of New York city, he made a sore display of his utter unfitness for such society, supping water from his finger-bowl, and picking bones held firmly with both hands. They ridiculed the poor fellow most unmercifully, and when he returned to America he wisely took a *steerage* passage. Here he felt thoroughly at home.

And how out of place would unconverted sinners feel in heaven! How could the enemies of God, unreconciled, be happy in His presence, or how could Christ-rejecting rebels ever stand and sing before Him? And how could the unsaved ever feel at ease in the company of the redeemed, whose society they now avoid and count so irksome and so dull?

Shall the wicked, then, go unrenewed to glory? No, never! "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)



2. Second, the holiness of heaven forbids the thought of a universal admittance of the ungodly.

The "holy city," New Jerusalem, is a rigidly exclusive place, as is indicated by its four walls, which are great and high. "And there shall *in no wise* enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

"For *without* are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. xxii. 15.)

Will the graceless worldling, then, depart from the haunts of folly and vice "to be with Christ"? will the despisers of God leave "the seat of the scornful" for the promised throne of the ransomed? and will the "song of the drunkard" be merged into the sublime anthem of the glorified redeemed? Nay! no sinner in his sins shall ever gain an entrance to those courts of *light*. All are holy there. The gold is "pure"; the glass "transparent"; and all garments "white and clean." "Blessed *and holy* is he that hath part in the first resurrection." (Rev. xx. 6.)

Heaven is a place as much unsuited to the sinner as the sinner is incapacitated to enjoy its pleasures. The unconverted would no more feel at home in heaven than a holy angel in a scene of sin.

Some sixty years ago an evangelist, named Jacob Knapp, was journeying, by stage-coach, from Auburn to Oswego, in New York. He found himself seated with six gentlemen, five of whom were converted. With them he had a delightful season of conversation, but on turning to the other and introducing the subject of salvation, he was politely and frankly told to "mind his own business." Mr. Knapp replied that he was doing so; that it was his business to warn sinners of the wrath to come, and to point them to Christ, and that he meant to attend to it faithfully. He soon found that the man was a confirmed Universalist, and finally suggested to him that if a few hours conversation with Christians in a stage-coach was unendurable, how did he think he could stand it in heaven, where there would be millions of saints, much holier than they were then, and where all would be absorbed with such subjects. He replied that he did not care to trouble himself about the matter. It was not long, however, before he called to the driver to stop and let him out, saying he would rather lose his fare than ride with saints and be bored with their talk.

A few years afterwards Mr. Knapp was relating this occurrence before a congregation in Schenectady, when, to his astonishment and delight, a gentleman arose and stated that he was the man referred to; and he went on to

say that from that hour he had no peace till he had renounced his Universalism, and found "peace in believing" in Jesus. As he trudged on in the mud that day, the questions that had been propounded to him kept ringing in his ears. He began to realize that heaven must, of course, be a holy place, and the inhabitants of it must be engaged in speaking and singing the praises of the Lord Jesus; that there would be no business, nor amusements, nor worldly conversation there; and that if he got in there he would not be able to get out as easily as he had got out of the stage; and if he could get out of heaven where else would he want to go? He saw the sinfulness of his nature and the need of a regenerating change, in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Uneducated beggars, clothed in filthy rags, would be no fit occupants of kingly courts. The returned prodigal was arrayed in garments befitting his father's house and presence.

And a certain fitness is required in all who are to sit for ever in the holy and happy presence of God. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath made us meet* (fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) "That we should be *holy* and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. i. 4.) "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. . . . 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." (1 Cor. vi. 9–11.)

3. The third consideration is the certainty that there is no possible opportunity for repentance after death. After death the judgment. (Heb. ix. 27.) "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be." (Eccl. xi. 3.)

"There are no pardons in the tomb,  
No grace beyond the grave."

The Universalist may not deny that the sinner's heart is desperately wicked, nor dispute the fact that heaven is holy; but he cruelly deceives himself by supposing that the wicked will be purified for heaven by fire. This is a base falsehood, and a subtle slight upon the blood of Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, alone can cleanse from sin. Those who in life despise that blood shall die "without mercy," and those who die without mercy shall be consigned without hope to an eternal hell.

The Lord Jesus said of some that they should die in their sins, and where He was about to go they could not come. (John viii. 21.) This is conclusive. If a man believe not in Christ, he shall die in his sins, and where that blessed Saviour sits enthroned in glory he can never, never come. He must be driven away in his wickedness to share the fate of devils and the unbelieving damned.

"The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." (Luke xvi. 22, 23.) The tormenting flames were not purgative but *retributive*. He prays, but receives a hopeless answer. "Afar off," from the joys of paradise, he is admonished to "remember" his guilty, godless past; he is reminded of the "great gulf fixed," and then the curtain falls, and without the faintest shadow of a hope he is left to the "blackness of darkness *for ever*."

"Sodom and Gomorrha . . . are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7.) Their doom is fixed for eternity.

We are not surprised that the Universalists make but few appeals to the Holy Scriptures. It would not be wisdom to ignore them altogether, but they are extremely careful in their arguments to refer to the word of God as little as possible. The following are a few of their favourite passages: John xii. 32, Acts iii. 21, 2 Cor. v. 15, 1 Tim. iv. 10. Let us look into the verses one by one.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." (John xii. 32.) Here the Lord evidently refers to His death by crucifixion and the consequent results. "All men," or, men of all nations, would be drawn to Him. In this gospel He is rejected by the Jewish nation from the outset. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

(Chap. i. 11.) In this twelfth chapter the Greeks come up to see Him, and it is the fitting time to declare the hopeless apostasy of Israel. The offer of salvation would no longer be restricted to that nation, for He had "other sheep" outside the Jewish fold. (Chap. x. 16.) Them also He must bring. He must "die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (Chap. xi. 51, 52.) He is, therefore, now drawing all classes, characters, and nationalities to Himself. This is *conversion*, not Universalism. There is not the faintest shadow of Universalism in the passage.

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 21.)

The latter part of the verse, which explicitly explains the apostle's meaning, is frequently omitted by opposers of the truth. God *has* spoken of the reparation of a ruined creation. The prophets, too, have written of the restoration of the now outcast nation of Israel, but we search the Old Testament in vain for the slightest hint of the universal salvation of the wicked. The restoration is restricted to "things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets."

“He died for all.” (2 Cor. v. 15.) He is indeed God’s propitiation for “the whole world,” and not for one class or nation only. (1 John ii. 2.) Forbearance with a guilty world has thus been made consistent with the strictest claims of justice. (Rom. iii. 25.) If it were not that Christ has died for all, God would be compelled, in righteousness, to cut the wicked off at once, without a moment’s warning, or forbearance.

But He died a *substitute* for those who shall by grace believe on Him. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” (1 Peter ii. 24.) This is the language of believers. All whose iniquities have been borne shall be justified. He bore the sins of many. (Isa. liii. 11, 12.) The “many” here are believers. The unbeliever must bear the awful punishment of his own sins in the fearful lake of fire.

“The living God, who is the Saviour” (preserver, lit.) “of all men, specially of those that believe.” (1 Tim. iv. 10.) From the context it is easily seen that this passage refers exclusively to the *temporal* preservation of God’s creatures. He cares for believers in a special way. They have been made precious to Him by redemption, and He has taken care to number even the very hairs of their head. The passage does, indeed, teach universalism. But it is universal *preservation*, not salvation. (See also Job vii. 20.)

Ere closing, I would quote a passage which

must certainly be universal enough in its scope to suit the broadest-minded reader.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.)

We accept the passage as it stands. God loved the *world*. He loves it still. He is not willing that *any* should perish. He desires *all men* to be saved. His glorious Son has died and given Himself a ransom for *all*. *Whosoever* believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. But despisers must perish; he that believeth not shall be condemned.

The sentimental sophism that God is too loving to put His children in hell is mere moonshine. He will not put *them* there, we know. But not because He is too loving, but too *righteous*. The Lord Jesus by His precious blood hath put away their sins. He will say at last, with all His own redeemed around Himself in glory, “Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” (Heb. ii. 13.)

But we are only made “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26.) The unbeliever is a child of wrath, and the wrath of God abideth on him. The believer has been delivered from the wrath to come by the sufferings of his Saviour. (1 Thess. i. 10.)

“*Flee from the wrath to come!*”

C. K.



## THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS ;

OR,

“ I COME QUICKLY.”

REV. xxii. 16-21.

IN this well-known and much-loved scripture the Lord Jesus introduces *Himself* to us in a most touching way, and in a manner that powerfully appeals to our affections. He reveals Himself in the book of the Revelation in many wonderful characters, some of them so grand and majestic that even John, whom the ancient fathers used to call “the embosomed man,” was dumb-founded. But now, at the close, He resumes His dear, personal, familiar name “JESUS.”

“I Jesus.” How sweet ! What memories cluster around that name, the name by which He was known on earth—memories of Olivet, of Sychar, of Gethsemane, and of Calvary !

Let me at the outset ask whether there is not a danger of our being too much engaged with the time, the manner, the circumstances of His coming, to the forgetfulness of Himself ? I think so. We speak of the Lord’s coming, but that is an event in which His *coming* is the prominent thought, whereas, if we keep to Scripture, we shall rather

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speak of "the coming of the Lord." That brings the *person* who is coming before us. Surely that is what we want.

His Godhead and His manhood are both implied in the double title that follows. As the *root* of David, He is David's Lord, the One from whom David sprang; as "*the offspring*," the babe of Bethlehem. He will be the source of all blessing to Israel, but, for the time being, she is dumb. The earthly bride had no desire for Him, no eyes to see His beauty, no heart to estimate His worth, nor has she now. But through grace we have! As "*the bright and morning star*" *we* wait for Him. Has the reader noticed that the last chapter in the Old Testament presents Him as the sun of righteousness to Israel, the last chapter in the New Testament as the bright and morning star to the Church? When the sun rises it disturbs a sleeping world, man goes forth to his labour, and everything is astir; so when Christ appears in His glory, for the redemption of His earthly people, it will cause a terrible commotion in the world. But the morning star rises and wanes, and disturbs nobody; it leaves the world as it finds it—asleep. The world will not see Him when He comes for His saints. How quietly and quickly we shall be caught away! May we be watchers through the night, and thus He will be the *bright* and morning star to our souls!

Then comes the response: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." This is "praying in the Holy Ghost"! I know of no passage that illustrates so well those words of Jude.

But there are those of our fellow-saints who do not say, "Come." They are encouraged to do so by the next word—"Let him that heareth say, Come." Finally, our thoughts turn to the poor world. We think of its doom when Christ comes, and so we invite all who are athirst to come and take of the water of life freely. If the heart is right toward Christ, everything follows in its place; we keep in touch with the truth both of the Church and the Gospel!

Then we have another "Come," and it is the Lord who uses the word this time. How He delights to linger on the word—"Surely I come quickly." But some say, "How can that be? He has tarried already 1800 years." Ah! but you know that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and *a thousand years as one day*; so that, in the reckonings of faith, it is only like yesterday that the Lord gave this parting promise. In Hebrews x. we read, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "Tarry" means *loiter*. Suppose you are waiting at your door in the morning for a letter. "Dear me," you say, "how late the postman is. Go down to the corner, Mary, and see if you can see him." The child goes, and presently she

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catches sight of him. Is he loitering? Not a bit. She sees him running up and down the steps of the houses; he wants to get done. Says he, "I am coming as quickly as I can." And that is what Christ says. "*I come quickly*" means "I am coming as quickly as I can." When the Father gives the signal, when the last elect sinner is brought home, He will come. His heart will not brook a moment's delay!

"Surely I come quickly." Beloved, these are the last words of Jesus. We all know how the last words of a loved one are valued. They may sound common-place to a stranger, but how we treasure them. Well do I remember, a quarter of a century ago, standing by the death-bed of my dear father. "Peace, peace, perfect peace," were the last words that fell from his lips. Can I forget them? Never. And shall I value the last words of an earthly parent more than the last words of my Saviour? Oh, let the response come from our lips and hearts, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus"!

Notice in closing that when Christ speaks of Himself, He says "*I Jesus*" (v. 16); when we speak to Him *we* say "*Lord Jesus.*" (v. 20.) But when it is blessing—present blessing—He must bless us to the full. Hence it is His full title that follows. "The grace of our *Lord Jesus Christ* be with you all. Amen."

S. J. B. C.

## THE ARMOUR OF GOD.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”—EPHESIANS vi. 12.

WE should be careful not to confound this warfare with what is described either in Romans vii. or Galatians v. 17. If any do, they will greatly err. In the former, Paul narrates the painful experiences of a soul struggling in the meshes of the Law, striving after the good the Law demands, but increasingly conscious that it has no power to attain to it. This kind of conflict is not proper *Christian* experience, though it be the experience of many new-born souls on the road to Christian liberty, but not yet in it. In Galatians v. it is another thing. There we learn that the Spirit and the flesh are ever contrary to each other. Both are in the Christian, “the flesh” being that principle of evil inherited from fallen Adam, which is enmity against God, is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be, and “the Spirit” being the gift of God to the believer consequent on his faith in Christ. But though these are always antagonistic, it does not follow that they are always struggling, each for the supremacy, every moment of the Christian’s life. Two opposing armies may be in the field, each keeping a sharp look out on the

other; but they are not always fighting. Indeed, if we "walk in the Spirit," the desires of the flesh will be held in check; and, instead of being perpetually engaged in keeping inward evil down, the Spirit will lead our hearts into the conscious possession of the spiritual blessings which constitute the believer's proper portion.

We are left in no uncertainty as to the foes we have to meet. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. With these Joshua had to fight in taking possession of the land of Canaan, but the Christian conflict is with foes of another order. Wicked spiritual powers—the devil and his angels—are arrayed against the Christian, and seek to overcome him by fierce onslaughts and subtle wiles. In earthly warfare it is fatal to underrate one's foe. Into this mistake the Christian host is apt to fall. Too often are our foes forgotten. We act as though they had no existence, or had but little power; and, being culpably ignorant of their devices, we fall into some crafty ambush, and suffer severely for our forgetfulness and folly.

Recognizing then the powers arrayed against us, let us remember that we are to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." No strength avails but that which the Lord supplies. Self-confidence may plunge us into conflict, but it can never sustain us in it. Defeat is always the result. Nor is the matter mended by Self-confidence having Mr. Sincerity as his armour-

bearer. Simon Peter found this out to his cost. He was sincere enough in avowing his readiness to follow his Master to prison and to death; but before morning the boastings of the preceding night were shamelessly belied. So much for confidence in self. Against this, then, we are warned at the very beginning. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude" (2 Chron. xiv. 11.) So Asa spake, and such should ever be the language of our hearts.

The armour which the Christian warrior is to take is called *the armour of God*. Every piece is therefore perfect. He is also directed to take the *whole* of it. Every part is therefore necessary. Let us beware, lest we substitute any other for it, or march to meet the foe with any piece of the armour wanting.

First in order comes the girdle. This was an essential part of a military dress. Jonathan gave his sword, his bow, and his *girdle* to David. From the girdle the sword of the soldier was suspended (2 Samuel xx. 8), and the girding up of the loins denoted preparation for battle, or for active exertion, as the marginal reading of 2 Kings iii. 21 shews. The Christian warrior then must have his loins girt about with *truth*. "The word of Christ" should dwell in him richly.

When this is so his loins will indeed be girt about. The importance of reading, and meditating upon the truth of God cannot be exaggerated; for by these means Christ is formed in the heart and the spiritual affections are developed. A neglected Bible is the precursor of dire disaster. By prayerful and serious meditation the inner man is brought under the power of the truth by which the Christian soldier is preserved, sanctified, searched, comforted, and fed. And truth is no narrow thing. It embraces not only what God has given by the ministry of Paul and John, but what He has also given through Peter, James, Jude, and all the other inspired writers. The Christian girdle has been woven by many hands, but all controlled by one Spirit. We say this because there is grave danger in being engaged with one line of truth to the neglect of others. This leads to innumerable and sore evils. We think the particular truth that engrosses us is the only truth worth contending for. We are apt to despise other of our brethren and to look upon them, either as lagging behind, or going too fast, soaring too high, or sinking too low. We grow impatient with them, and instead of seeking to serve them in lowliness of mind, and in unwearying love, we become satisfied with the fellowship of those who, without their, or our, being aware of it, are as one-sided as ourselves. The Christian character is formed by *truth*: it is



ill-formed when it is shaped by one line of truth alone. It lacks grace and symmetry. In a perfect face every feature is in due proportion. Should we call a face either perfect, or beautiful, if one feature dwarfed all the rest—the nose and ears of a giant, with eyes, mouth, and chin of a pigmy? Smile, good reader, if you like, only heed what we say, and see to it that your loins are girt about with truth—truth in its many sides.

The breastplate of righteousness comes next. This is not that righteousness in which we stand before God, and which is imputed to the believer according to the close of Romans iv. It is practical righteousness—the doing of what is right, the rendering to every one his due, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, to God the things that are God's. How careful Paul was as to this—scrupulously so. “Herein do I exercise myself, to have *always* a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” (Acts xxiv. 16.) In the blessed Lord this was perfectly seen—“Which of you convinceth Me of sin?” (John viii. 46.) The breastplate of righteousness was ever on. It was not so with Achan when he saw, and coveted, and took the goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold, and hid them under his tent. How disastrous the consequences! Instead of being victorious, the Israelites were smitten before the men of Ai! Let us be mindful of the breastplate. Let us “render to all their dues: tribute to whom

tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything." (Rom. xiii. 7, 8.) Godward and manward let us preserve our conscience unsullied. Let the breastplate of righteousness be always worn.

The feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Shod feet are suggestive of the habitual walk of the Christian soldier. The peace which the gospel announces, which the believer enjoys, should shed its benign influence over his daily life. Beautiful, it is said, are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. Surely those words should be descriptive of every one of us according to our measure. Moreover, if the inner man be governed by the truth, and the conscience be clear on the earthward and heavenward sides, the peace of Christ will rule in our hearts. We shall be kept in peace, though in a scene of conflict and unrest, and as far as in us lies we shall live peaceably with all.

It is by the shield of faith that the fiery darts of the wicked one are quenched. How necessary is this shield! For Satan's fiery darts are terrible, as the soul can tell who has once been pierced by them. It is hard to say what shape these fiery darts will at times assume. They may come in the way of infidel and blasphemous thoughts; or, the shield of faith being down, the enemy by some other method may plunge the soul into darkness and distress. But let us observe

that, with the shield of faith, *all* the fiery darts may be quenched. The shield is simple confidence in God, in His grace and love. And this we always need. How many reasons might be urged why we should trust Him, and never doubt. He loved us even when we were dead in sins. He visited us with His richest mercy, quickening us together with Christ, raising us up together, and making us sit together in heavenly places in Him. Thus God has identified us with Christ in the highest, closest, and most blessed manner. He has taken us into favour in the Beloved. We are His "*dear children*," and He has sealed us with His Spirit unto the day of redemption. And the grace of God is unalterable. It changes not with any change that may be found in us. What unwavering confidence should this inspire! As time goes on, things arise that call for confidence in God if we are to remain unshaken in the midst of them. Should the shield of faith then be lacking, the fiery darts of Satan will play fearful havoc. The Christian, knowing that God is able to do everything, is tempted to disbelieve His love because His power may not have sheltered him from sorrow, bereavement, or loss. "If God does indeed love me, why has He suffered all this to overtake, and overwhelm me?" Thus the soul argues when the shield of faith has not been taken. Oh, let us take care not to overlook this important part of the armour of God!

Following this is the helmet of salvation.

With the helmet on, the Christian soldier may well lift up his head and fear not the face of man. God has saved him, and called him with a holy calling, not according to his works, but according to His own purpose and grace given him in Christ Jesus before the world began. (2 Tim. i. 9.) Very poorly is this salvation known if it be limited to deliverance from the state in which we were when children of wrath. It includes that and immeasurably more. God has brought us to Himself. He has shed abroad His love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us. In associating us with Christ, He has given us entrance by faith into that new world where fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore are found. And Christ Himself, whose riches are unsearchable, has become the present portion of the heart. Was it not the consciousness of the greatness and grandeur of God's salvation that enabled Paul to lift up the head when he stood before Agrippa, and to say, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds"? His was the better part. Having on the helmet of salvation, he could look down upon the brilliant assemblage before whom he stood, and wish that all of them were altogether such as he was!

Then the sword is named—the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. With this weapon the blessed Lord, in the hour of His

temptation, repelled every attack of Satan. He parried not his blows with other words and arguments. The sword of the Spirit was all-sufficient. Every renewed attack was met with a passage drawn from *the written Word of God*. It was the same in the Lord's conflict with the Herodians, Sadducees, and Scribes in Matthew xxii. Our wisdom is to follow His example. If we face the foe with words and reasonings of our own, we shall have abundant cause to rue our rashness. No matter on what anvil our sword may have been forged, or what the brand it bears, it is but a trumpery weapon in comparison with the sword of the Spirit. He is best fitted to cope with the enemy and to carry on aggressive warfare who knows best how to handle this heavenly sword.

In closing, the apostle alludes afresh to the spirit which should ever characterize the Christian soldier—the spirit of entire dependence, of which prayer is the suited expression. Thus he is kept leaning on God; for it is in His strength alone that the Lord's battles can be fought successfully. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." May the Lord give us understanding as to these things, so that, heeding His Word, we may take to ourselves the *whole* armour of God, and being thus equipped, may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

## THE LOVE OF GOD.

LOVE, wonderful love !  
 Love that exceeds our highest thought,  
 Boundless, measureless, infinite, free,  
 Love that so wondrously hath wrought ;  
 Such was the love of God to me,  
 That He spared His Son,  
 That the exiled one might be set free.

Love, infinite love !  
 Love that dispenses its treasure store  
 On guilty rebels such as we ;  
 Love that the sinner's judgment bore,  
 Such was the love of Christ to me,  
 That He gave *Himself*  
 That I might go for ever free. (Gal. ii. 20.)

Love, everlasting love !  
 A bottomless ocean without a shore,  
 Reaching down from eternity past  
 To the bright eternity before ;  
 So grand, so great, so true, so vast.  
 Amazing love !  
 It has broken the rebel heart at last.

Love, perfect love !  
 Love that casteth out every fear,  
 Love that has met me in all my need ;  
 Love that has drawn so very near,  
 That my chains are snapt, the captive is freed.  
 Unchanging love !  
 Oh ! it is boundless love indeed !

Love ! *such* tender love !  
 Speaking peace to the broken hearts,  
 Binding up every aching wound ;  
 Love which such heavenly joy imparts,

That it sheddeth its sunlight all around.

A Saviour's love !

Oh ! what a treasure my soul hath found !

Love ! unending love !

Love that has claimed me as its own,

Love that will never let me go ;

Love that will give the victor's crown,

Love that has vanquished every foe ;

The grandest theme

In heaven above, on earth below.

F.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

IN our correspondence columns of March last we answered an inquiry as to the force of the word *double* in Isaiah xl. 2 ; lxi. 7 ; Zechariah ix. 12. "A LOVER OF THE TRUTH" kindly sends us the following note upon the subject, shewing how the word was understood among the Jews. He says, "It was the custom in old days when a man, or property of any kind was sold, to make two copies of a written agreement or indenture. These were written on two opposite sides of a sheet of parchment, which was then torn irregularly down the centre, the seller keeping one copy, and the buyer the duplicate or *double*. When the year of jubilee came and the man was freed, or the property restored to its original owner, the *double* was returned, so that no one had any longer any claim on the property, or the man. So when God says, 'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem . . . that her iniquity is pardoned : for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins,' it is equivalent to His saying, 'She hath received her pardon, her bond of redemption, her *double*.'"

S. B.—In reference to your question, no definite rule can be laid down, though generally speaking it will be found to follow after, and not to go before.

## FORGIVENESS, SONSHIP, AND GLORY.

**M**ANY think that the knowledge of forgiveness of sins is a great attainment. In their opinion "full assurance of faith" belongs only to those of ripe experience in the Christian life. Others suppose it impossible for any to know, on earth, that their sins are forgiven.

It is strange that it should be so, when God, by the mouth of His servants, has spoken so very plainly on the subject.

Peter testified, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) And Paul preached, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts xiii. 38.) And John says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.)

The knowledge of forgiveness, through the work of a risen Saviour, sets our souls at perfect peace in God's presence as to all the past.

But you may ask, How can anyone be really sure that his sins are forgiven, and all put away from God's sight?



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This is a most important question, and I shall endeavour to answer it plainly by an illustration.

In days gone past, there was a place called the "debtor's prison." When anyone became bankrupt, the law demanded his imprisonment until the debt was paid; but if a substitute could be found, the bankrupt could go free. The law, however, would by no means release the substitute until the debts were paid.

Suppose a person had become insolvent. The law demands his imprisonment. A well-known friend offers himself as substitute, whom the authorities accept. After some time you meet the friend walking about the streets at liberty. What conclusion could you draw but that the debts had all been cleared off? Therefore the substitute is out of prison, and in the enjoyment of perfect freedom.

The claims of the law were satisfied when the debts were fully paid, and *righteousness* must open the prison doors and let the substitute go free.

This simple illustration, in some measure, represents our position in God's sight. We were hopelessly insolvent. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We were totally unable to meet our just liabilities. Hence, on our side, we were absolutely without hope. If help could not be found elsewhere, we must go into the awful prison-house for ever. But God, who is rich in mercy, gave His own Son to

# FORGIVENESS, SONSHIP, AND GLORY. 227

bear the just judgment we deserved. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.)

We see Him go to the cross to bear the heavy load of our guilt; when all is over we hear Him cry, "It is finished." From His pierced side there flowed forth blood and water—the evidence that death had taken place. Atonement was made. God was glorified. The veil of the temple was rent in twain. His body was laid in the grave. After three days the tomb is empty. Jesus is risen, and appears in the midst of His disciples, and says, "Peace be unto you." He had completely finished redemption's mighty work. He had triumphed gloriously. Thus, having satisfied divine righteousness by His sufferings and death, divine righteousness vindicates Him by raising Him from the dead.

Now mark well the ground on which Paul preached forgiveness of sins to those in Antioch. He had just spoken of God having raised Christ from the dead, and adds, "Be it known unto you *therefore* that *through this Man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness is offered through the One who met the whole question of sin to God's full satisfaction. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the

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forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.)

"O groundless deeps ! O love beyond degree !  
Th' offended dies to set th' offender free."

And now, dear reader, if Christ has borne the judgment due to our sins, and if God has shown His full satisfaction with that work by raising Him from the dead, is it not perfectly plain that the one who believes is free as well as the Surety?

To use the illustration : Christ became my Substitute, and went into the dismal prison-house of death, and bore the wrath of God, and so met all my liabilities. His being now out of death, proves that I am free. *No charge can be laid to me.* I am now, so to speak, the blessed man of Psalm xxxii., whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.

The death of Christ has put my sins away from before God, and in believing God's testimony concerning His (Christ's) resurrection I know they are gone from me. (1 Cor. xv. 17.)

But some may say, "What about the sins we commit after we are converted?" That no one can live without sinning is a fact that has been urged against us when we have spoken of all our sins being forgiven, and such passages as, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20), have been brought up to support the objection.

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Quite true, my friend; no one does actually live without sin. We have an evil nature in us called "the flesh," which lusts against the Spirit, and, if negligent, it may break out in ways which will surprise and humble us. "In many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth *no good thing*." (Romans vii. 18.) "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.)

In this last passage we have God's most gracious provision for the sins we may commit after our conversion, through unwatchfulness and not walking in lowly dependence on God. Christ is the propitiation for our sins. He is now in heaven, a living Saviour. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. We are saved by His life. We cannot do without Him, nor would we if we could. He not only died to save us, but He lives to keep us. He lifts us up when we fall, and brings us back when we wander.

"To those who fall how kind Thou art,  
How good to those who seek."

As our Advocate with the Father, Jesus does two things. He maintains our cause in heaven's court, in the face of our accuser the devil. He also, by the Holy Spirit in us, brings upon our conscience the sin we have committed, so that godly sorrow might be wrought in us for the

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evil done. This sorrow leads us to repentance, which calls forth honest confession of our sins to God our Father, whereupon we are freely forgiven. "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.)

How gracious all this is. On God's side we are cleared by the intercession of Christ. On our side we are cleared by the confession of our guilt. How simple, and how needed.

So far from the forgiveness of sins being a great attainment, or only known to a few advanced saints, the whole family of God on earth are supposed to be in the enjoyment of it as a present reality. "Even as God for Christ's sake HATH forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 32.) "Having forgiven you ALL trespasses." (Col. ii. 13.)

No one is regarded as a Christian, in Scripture, who does not know his sins forgiven, and who has not received the Holy Spirit. Now it is when a person believes the gospel of his salvation that the Spirit is given to dwell in him. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.)

Not a few who seem to be God-fearing people

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think it presumption to say that all their sins are forgiven. So far from it being presumptuous, it is the greatest humility to believe what God says about it. Nothing honours God more than child-like, simple faith, which exclaims with Paul, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." (Acts xxvii. 25.)

By the unerring word of God we are entitled to know that we are forgiven and saved from coming judgment, and also that we are now children of God and heirs of glory. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John i. 12.) "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 15-17.)

This is much more than being forgiven. Forgiveness clears us from our guilt; but there is also a new and divine standing given unto us, and we are owned as children of God. Being born of God, we partake of the Divine nature, and the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts God's love. This is the highest blessedness. To know the Father's unchanging love will be our eternal joy. To enjoy the love wherewith the

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Son is loved will satisfy our souls for ever. Nothing will ever exceed this!

In the eyes of the world we may not look very like sons and heirs of God; nor did the true Heir when He was here. "He was despised and rejected of men." The world knew Him not, therefore it knoweth us not. But soon God will bring back the true Heir, and give Him a throne in the very place where He was disowned and rejected by men. Not only as Messiah will the government of Israel be entrusted to Him, but as Son of man the government of the whole world will be given into His hands. As God's great Administrator, He shall dispense all blessing, whether it be to the Church, to Israel, or to the nations of the millennial earth. God will yet put all things under His feet. His glory as Man shall fill the whole universe. When He takes His throne, we who have shared in His rejection shall sit on that throne with Him. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) When Paul compares our sufferings in the light of "that day," he says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.) Lord, haste that glorious day!

P. W.

## WALKERS AND TALKERS.

TWO or three days ago, in our visiting, we came across a woman of scarcely middle life, with a spinal complaint, which prevented her walking.

During our conversation she said, "*I can't walk much, but I can talk.*" Now, considering she had kept up an incessant talk for some minutes without any signs of weariness, we thought she spoke the truth.

When we left her cottage we could not help thinking how truly many of us could have repeated her words, in regard to our Christian life, "*I can't walk much, but I can talk.*"

Now *talkers* should be *walkers*. It is sad, and humbling in the extreme, where there is "*high talk*" and "*low walk*."

In the case of the offerings in Leviticus, the inwards and the legs go together; that is to say, the affections, and will, and all that was hidden—open only to the eye of God—expressed itself in the wondrous, perfect walk of the Lord Jesus Christ, and found its highest expression in His offering Himself up to God without spot.

The Jews, in scorn and hatred, could demand of Christ, "Who art Thou"? He could answer, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." His talk and walk—be it said



reverently—ever agreed. There was absolutely no discrepancy between His speech and His life. He was what He said He was. What a testimony!

So it should be with us. And just in proportion as our *words* lead people to think we are more perfect than we really are—more devoted, more intelligent in the things of God—just in that proportion are we Pharisees, and just in that proportion our talk and our walk do not agree.

Talking without walking is powerless, nauseating cant. It finds its full-blown expression in mere profession.

Talk without walk breeds more infidels, casts more stumbling-blocks in the road of anxious sinners, and does more harm to the Church of God, than any outward attack.

A body of consistent, earnest Christians, is the complete refutation of all the infidel arguments that were ever spun out of the depraved heart and head of man. A young man told his minister that it was not his preaching that had been used to his conversion, but his own mother's practising. In the long run the life tells more for God than the lip; and the lip only gains its authority and force when the life is behind it. Let us be more careful that walk and talk agree, so that in dependence upon God, by the Holy Ghost, we may be here wholly for His glory and use.

A. J. P.

## EUTYCHUS.

IN Acts xx. we seem to have the decline of the Church foreshadowed in two ways. First, by the allusion to the days of unleavened bread in verse 6; secondly, by the incident in connection with Eutychus. These two events become important as showing how that decline was brought about, and possess additional importance when we consider that the decline of any individual Christian proceeds in the same way. It is in both these connections we wish briefly to look at this history.

Before considering the two points mentioned, it is perhaps necessary to state that we regard the reference to the days of unleavened bread, and also to the fall of Eutychus, as having a wider significance than a mere mark of time or local occurrence could possibly possess. We believe that in Scripture the real meaning often lies beneath the surface, and that what might appear but a casual incident is, for us, of lasting importance. This makes the Bible

## SUCH A MARVELLOUS BOOK.

It can attract the youngest by the simplicity of its narratives, it can instruct the oldest and the wisest by its profound and inexhaustible meaning.

With regard to the first point, observe in verse 6 it says, "And we sailed away from Philippi

*after* the days of unleavened bread." Please notice that Paul was not one of the "we"; he had gone on before. (See *vv.* 4, 5.) He was therefore absent. If, then, we connect his absence, and also the fall of Eutychus, with this reference to the days of unleavened bread being past, it will not be difficult to understand its significance. Does it not convey the thought that when Paul had really left this scene altogether, and his labours were ended, the days of unleavened bread in the Church's history would be ended too?

This would be the first step on the downward road. "The days of unleavened bread" ought to have characterized the Church the entire period of her sojourn on earth. Does it characterize her now? Indeed, just the opposite; she is thoroughly leavened in all directions. But what was the first step in

#### THIS DOWN-GRADE MOVEMENT?

Was it not when she left her first love?

Paul could write to the Corinthians in his second epistle, chapter xi. verse 2, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." This apprehension on the part of the

apostle was partly verified even before he left the scene, but was fully realized when John wrote to the Church at Ephesus, "Thou hast left thy first love." Then it was that leaven first began to work.

There is no opportunity for leaven to be introduced when we give Christ His true place. But if He ceases to be the absorbing object, if He is no longer paramount, the next step is that we cease to care supremely for what suits Him, and begin to care more for what suits ourselves. And this is leaven, though, perhaps, not in its worst form. No doubt it began with man being allowed a place; next, what suited man would naturally follow, and thus false doctrine would come in. For false doctrine is the propagation of what suits man's views instead of the word of God. It is easy to see how Christ, in every way, would be displaced; but it all began with this: "Thou hast left thy first love."

And is not this where decline begins with every one of us? Christian reader, let us beseech you not to allow anything to come between your soul and Christ. Let Him be your object. In your daily life, in your service, yea, in every circumstance, seek to live unto Him who died for you, and rose again. Satan will seek, by any means and by every means, by what is good in itself as well as what is bad,

TO DIVERT YOU FROM THIS,

and should he succeed, there is no knowing where the downward road will end.

Do not let it ever have to be recorded in your case that the days of unleavened bread are past.

We are exhorted, in 1 Corinthians v. 8, to "keep the feast"; viz. the feast of unleavened bread. This feast was to last seven days, which denotes the whole period of our lives. The first thing necessary was to put away leaven. Leaven, we know, is always a type of evil. Then we are to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. In other words, it is not enough to put away evil; we must feed upon the good. We are to be dead to sins, but we are likewise to live unto righteousness. What will enable us to do this? If we turn to 1 Peter ii. 24 we read, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Mark the repetition of the word "own." It was Christ Himself who bore the awful judgment our sins deserved. And if we enter, to some extent, upon what this means, it will make us, if anything will, dead to sins, and alive to righteousness. Nothing gives us such a true estimate of sin as the cross; and the cross is the foundation of all holiness, because it brings to light God's hatred of sin and God's love to the sinner. It is the measure of both. And thus as we gaze upon the cross, and

DRINK INTO THE DEEP LOVE

of the One who hung there for our sakes, we put away "leaven," and we "keep the feast."

“Take Thou our hearts, and let them be  
 For ever closed to all but Thee ;  
 Thy willing servants, let us wear  
 The seal of love for ever there.”

Then, indeed, we shall be keeping the feast.

We get the next step in the Church's downward course strikingly portrayed in the fall of Eutychus. The reference to “After the days of unleavened bread” sets forth rather what was working within; but the outward effects soon became visible. No one can see when the heart first swerves from entire allegiance to Christ; it is only some outward circumstance that makes manifest what the inward process has been.

#### EUTYCHUS WAS ASLEEP!

It foreshadowed what would soon be the sad condition of the Church according to our Lord's own words, “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” Sleep in Scripture is frequently an indication of spiritual indolence and apathy. How soon this was to characterize the Church! At first a heavenly stranger, devoted to her Lord, with undefiled garments she passed as a pilgrim across this world, seeking no place here, but conscious that she was blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. But when her affection for her absent Lord began to wane, she began to seek her ease, until at last she became content to accept place and position here, and was rocked to sleep in the lap of the world.

The ardour of her love to Christ drooped first, and then love of ease completed the downfall. Like Eutychus, she slept, and she fell. And her Lord has to send this message to her, "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art *fallen*, and repent, and do the first works." But she never did recover, she was never again in her affection seated in heavenly places in Christ; and consequently to Pergamos it is said, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where *Satan's seat is*." (Rev. ii. 5 and 13.)

And is not this the record of many an individual since? Have not many, in the freshness of devotion to Christ, left everything here? But the cost has been too great, and they have settled down in this scene once more. May it not be said, fellow-believer, that love of ease, in some form or other, is our greatest danger? Do not

#### THOUSANDS FALL VICTIMS

to this, who are never guilty of any vice? It is because we feel the danger of it for ourselves and for others, that we seize this opportunity to show, from Scripture, that our belief is not unfounded.

Let us say a word first to those who may never, perhaps, have known what real devotedness of heart to Christ means. Turn, then, to Jeremiah xlviii. 11: "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither

hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." Does not this describe the history of many? They have been at ease from their youth. Their fathers, perhaps, fought the Lord's battles, and gave up much for His sake, but they have never been called upon to make any sacrifice. Their lives have, perhaps, glided on as smoothly as a river, with only an occasional ripple upon the surface; and they seem content to have it so. They hardly seem to realize that there is any fighting to be done, or any service requiring the expenditure of strength and energy; or that we are called to leave all and follow Christ, that he that loveth his life shall lose it, "and he that loseth his life for My sake, the same shall find it." Like Moab, they are at ease from their youth. Thus they are settled upon their lees; they are characterized by what is natural to them. Their taste remains, and

THEIR SCENT IS NOT CHANGED.

They mind earthly things, knowing nothing of Christianity in its true power.

How gracious of God, when He breaks in upon such a state, and empties them from vessel to vessel. Does the reader know anything of this? Once, perhaps, you were at ease, immersed in your own self-complacency. Latterly, however, you have found no rest for the sole of your foot. Do you ask why? It is because you were



settled upon your lees, satisfied with what was merely pleasing to nature, and God would now deliver you from yourself and your surroundings in order that you may enjoy something better.

But is there not another class, viz. those who are in danger of spiritual slumber just because they have been emptied from vessel to vessel? They are wearied, spiritless, perhaps, and they seek rest. But instead of seeking it only in the Lord, it is sought in a natural way. How like the disciples! When He was come He found them sleeping for sorrow. But how unlike the Lord: "being in an agony He prayed more earnestly."

A solemn warning is given to us in the case of the prophet in 1 Kings xiii. 14 as to

#### WHAT MAY HAPPEN

through love of ease. He had been sent by the Lord to cry against the iniquity of Jeroboam in building an altar at Bethel. Having faithfully executed his mission, he went his way, as God had told him, without accepting any hospitality. So far all was well. But after he had gone his way, an old prophet, who lived in Bethel, went after him, and found him *sitting under an oak*. By misrepresentation he was induced to return. We need not dwell upon the sorrowful consequences, for they are well known. But what points the moral is this—that if he had not been sitting under the oak he would probably never have been laid open to the temptation. Had he

done what every servant ought to do, viz. wait upon his Master who sent him, before seeking his own ease, his life would have been spared. Luke xvii. beautifully sets forth the duties of a servant. "But which of you, having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, *Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken*; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?" (vv. 7, 8.) And also, in Mark vi., "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And HE said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."

Isaac, also, is a beacon to us.

#### HOW SAD TO HEAR HIM SAYING

to his son Esau, "Go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me savoury meat *such as I love*." Was it not another form of self-indulgence? And is there no connection between this circumstance and what follows? A man bent on indulging his natural appetite proves unequal to detect the deception that was being practised upon him. "He discerned him not."

How many are hindered through gratifying their natural taste! It may be a taste for music, or painting, or flowers, or finery of some sort,

whether in dress, or about the house. The danger is not necessarily in the thing itself, but in giving oneself up to it in any measure. But if I have

#### A TASTE FOR MUSIC

or painting, is there any harm in cultivating it, and seeking to excel in it? This question may be answered by another—Are you, by so doing, depriving yourself of something better? No one pretends that we can give up every moment of our time to spiritual exercises. But little enough time for these is left, for most, when the ordinary duties have been discharged, and the very utmost should be made of it. And if, instead of cultivating the arts, we seek to cultivate the tastes of the new man, how immense will be the gain. The Holy Ghost is here, and it is said of Him, “He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” (John xvi. 14, 15.)

Another illustration may be adduced from the history of David. “And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel . . . *But David tarried still at Jerusalem.*” And this led him into the awful sin that is the one great blot in his life. What

#### A STINGING REBUKE

to him were the words of Uriah, “The ark, and

Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink?" (2 Samuel xi.)

The words of Jacob with reference to Issachar form a striking commentary on what has been already said—"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." (Genesis xlix. 14, 15.) It was not that the burdens were too much for him, for he is described as a strong ass; but the snare was in seeing that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant. Alas! are we not all in danger of seeing that rest is good, and do we not think, sometimes, this earth a very pleasant place? But as sure as we do,

WE SHALL HAVE TO PAY HEAVILY for it, like Issachar. There are two burdens every devoted Christian would seek to bear. There is the burden of the Lord, and there is "one another's" burden. The one is expressed in the words, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up": the other in "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." In order to do it we must know the meaning of these words, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke

is easy, and My burden is light." (Matt. xi. 29, 30.)

We have seen, thus far, how sleep, regarded in a figurative sense, often leads into failure, if not into open sin; but how much sloth and love of ease rob us in another way! How much positive blessing we lose. No doubt the days in which we live make tremendous demands upon our physical energy; and Satan would often suggest this as an excuse for staying away from

#### A WEEK-NIGHT MEETING,

or not rising quite so early in the morning for prayer and study of the Word. The result of following such advice is that we become spiritually barren, and have little or nothing to give out to others, because we so seldom get anything for ourselves. We sometimes sing—

"Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands our soul, our life, our all."

And truly it does. But the practical question is, before we come to that of "our life, our all," whether we are prepared to surrender a little of our *ease* in order to make ourselves better acquainted with love so amazing. Look at the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. Quite unconscious of the surpassing glories that are around them, because they are heavy with sleep. Within earshot of

#### THE MOST WONDERFUL CONVERSATION

ever held on earth about the most wonderful theme—the dying of Him who was to bring

glory to God, and eternal life, with all that it means, to untold myriads of the human race—and yet they slept. But, thank God, they were not permitted to lose it all. “When they were *awake*, they saw His glory.” With such a vision before them, can we not fancy they somewhat reproached themselves that hitherto sleep had made them oblivious to it? And is it not a matter of reproach to us sometimes that, with these same glories revealed to ourselves, we should spend so little time in becoming acquainted with them? Angels may desire to look into these things, but it is ours to know and enjoy them. But must we not confess how little we do know of God’s love? And why? Is it not really because we do not take the trouble? It is all ours: we can never work for it, we can never deserve it, and yet we have to make it ours. And in order to do so, we ought to dwell upon it, so as to drink it in, and we ought to see that we do not allow anything that would hinder the enjoyment of it. Genius is said to be the capacity for taking infinite pains. Who would think he could ever become proficient in any art, or science, by merely giving the scraps of his time to it? Would not he feel it must have his chief attention? And so the apostle prays that they might *know* the love of Christ. Here is a theme worthy to engage every power of which we are possessed.

The story is told of a little boy, who had been brought up in a narrow alley, and had hardly ever been out of it. When he was taken for the first time into the country, the first thing he did was to look up and exclaim,

“OH! WHAT A BIG SKY.”

He had never realized before what an expanse of blue was over his head. And yet it had been there all the time. So with the love of God. It is all there, and all for us to enjoy, but how much do we know of having our hearts directed into it, and of keeping ourselves in it. (2 Thess. iii. 5; Jude 21.) That blue sky of His eternal love is ever over us, and we can never travel beyond it; but do we not often, as it were, dwell in some narrow alley of our own, and measure God's love by what we see about it? Perhaps when we reach the heavenly country we may exclaim about the love of God as the little boy did about the sky. And perhaps, too, we may wonder why we knew so little of it on earth. Well, what we value we generally obtain. But

GREAT GAINS REQUIRE GREAT PAINS.

The reason we know so little of it is because we want something the world has to give. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” If we valued Christ supremely our souls would always be basking in the sunlight of God's love. But, alas! with many Christians

you can hardly tell the difference between them and the world. They are asleep. This is what robs us all of so much, and we need to take heed to the apostle's exhortation, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee." (Eph. v. 14.)

It is related of a Grecian general that, on finding one of his soldiers asleep while on duty, he plunged his sword into him, exclaiming,

"I FOUND THEE ASLEEP,  
and I leave thee so." How different the treatment our gracious Lord bestows upon us. Once He found us in the sleep of death, but when He passed by it was the time of love, and He said to us, "Live." (Ezekiel xvi. 8.) We became His, and now if, through indifference and coldness of heart towards Him, we fall asleep and become *like* the dead once more, still His grace does not fail, and He says, "Awake thou that sleepest and *arise from among the dead*, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

Oh! that any reading these lines, who are thus asleep (and it is possible to be so without even being conscious of it), may hear His voice, and may arise from among the dead, that thus Christ, in all that He is, as the revelation of all that is in the heart of God, may shine upon us!

Then we shall be ever keeping the days of unleavened bread, and not be in danger of falling asleep like Eutychus.

The Lord grant it for His Name's sake. R.E.



## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ONE DESIROUS OF HELP writes to ask whether the following passages, and others of a similar nature, are true of all believers :

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.” (Eph. i. 4.)

“Accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph. i. 6.)

“For our conversation is in heaven.” (Phil. iii. 20.)

We answer, *they are*. We say so unhesitatingly, and without the least reserve. And what can have led you to doubt it, dear friend? Once you believed they were, and the joy of them then filled your soul. What is it that has shaken your confidence, and put an end to your rejoicing? We gather from your letter that it is the failure you see in others, and particularly in yourself. Now, God forbid that we should make little of failure, or be indifferent to our inward state; but if this be allowed to weaken our sense of what *the grace of God* confers, and where that grace has set us for ever, we shall fall into legality, and lose all power to judge ourselves in those things in which we come short. This is to confound our standing in Christ and the relationships in which the grace of God has placed us, with our state and experiences—a common, but sad, mistake.

Can it be supposed that the glorious truths unfolded in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians referred only to the saints living in the city of Ephesus? Had the saints in Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, Galatia, and elsewhere, no part in them? Were not these chosen in Christ before the world’s foundation? Were they not

“accepted in the Beloved”? Assuredly they were, quite as much as the Ephesian believers. In Luther’s day the great truth needed was that of justification by faith; and this was the truth Luther, by the grace of God, proclaimed. But was “justification by faith” the measure of the saints’ endowment? Did the inventory of the Christian’s blessings contain nothing more?

In the ministry of the truth no doubt the Holy Spirit brings before souls the things they need; and if they are in a suited condition, He will lead them into the deep things of God. We say, *if in a suited condition*, for their state has much to do with it. In this connection you may refer to John xvi. 12; 1 Corinthians iii. 1, 2; Hebrews v. 11–14. Bearing this in mind, it is easy to see that the Holy Spirit would not minister the truths of the Ephesian epistle to the Galatians, nor say to the Laodiceans the same blessed things as were said to the Philadelphians. (Rev. iii.)

Of all Christians it can be affirmed that they are blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Their knowledge, realization, and enjoyment of them is altogether another matter. It is quite true that unless we do apprehend and enjoy them, they are of no practical value to us. In that case we are like a man having a large fortune, who, instead of using it, lives in poverty on a few pence a day. The fortune is, indeed, his; but, practically, what is he the better for it?

Let us hold fast grace; let us take heed that our heart be established with grace—the true grace of God wherein we stand. God has kept nothing back. All

that love could give He has given to the objects of His saving grace. And this is without any reference to any fancied goodness or faithfulness in them; otherwise, grace would be no more grace. (Rom. xi. 6.) This being so, let us fear lest anything should hinder our laying hold of all that God's grace has given; lest, while having everything in undisputed title, we should, through slothfulness, or undue occupation with other matters, enjoy next to nothing of all that is really ours.

ONE WHO IS EXERCISED.—No one can precisely say in what way the women named in Philippians iv. 3 laboured in the gospel with the apostle. But we may reasonably suppose that in a thousand ways which are open to a Christian sister to help on the work of the gospel, these devoted women did help it on. Other passages preclude the thought of their taking part in public preaching. That is reserved for men. But every evangelist knows what effectual service a wise and devoted woman can render in connection with the testimony of the gospel.

Replying to your second question, we believe that a Christian lady may, in all good conscience, distribute tracts from house to house, and in public too, if the occasion demands it. In the latter case she may be safely trusted not to overstep the bounds of womanly propriety. Where the fear of the Lord is, there will be wisdom as to details, about which no fixed rule can be laid down. As to seeking the approval of others, it is a happy thing to have their fellowship, but service is an individual matter; and in reference to it we may well give heed to the apostle's word in Romans xiv. 4: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

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## MARTYRDOM.

IN the Largo do Pelhourinho at Lisbon, a city remarkable for the beauty of its sculptures, may be seen a work of art which, even there, is conspicuous.

A hollow, double, spiral column, of white stone, stands in the middle of the square. Some five years ago it attracted the writer's attention, and he looked at it with admiration, and almost with wonder, for evidently it is the work of a master-hand. But the place has now a greater interest, for one has learnt to connect with it a work, not of art, but of grace; since it was there that, long years ago, Portugal's noblest martyrs laid down their lives for their Lord.

Without any intention to honour the memory of heretics, there burnt at the stake, the artist has symbolised that which the site must ever recall to the Christian who knows the history of the place. Alone, frail, beautiful, unique, the column stands, without name or title, like the martyrs, nameless and unknown,\* who stood there alone, but not alone, workmanship of the Spirit of God.

\* Unknown, until someone is found with leisure and Latin sufficient to search out the story of their "good confession" in the records of the Inquisition, still preserved in the Library of the Torre do Tombo.

“Faithful unto death” is the inscription still hidden in the marble from all but the few who have eyes to see it standing out in bold relief, and gilded with glory from on high.

“Faithful unto death!” We all can appreciate the principle of self-sacrifice, although we may shrink from its practice to any inconvenient extent. Even the Christian may be influenced by the spirit of the age, which is self-seeking, self-interest. That of the martyr is self-sacrifice.

Let us think exactly on this subject. Self-sacrifice is not running great risks for the sake of the glory. That is self-seeking, ambition. Self-sacrifice risks everything to gain its *end*. The individual is eclipsed, extinguished, forgotten, or misunderstood; no matter, the cause is dearer than self, the community than the individual.

One touches the border-line of the great Scripture conception—to live here as dead men. Death is the summit of sacrifice. What a magnificent study!

The enthusiasm of a supreme moment may bring a devoted soul to suffer the death of the body, but an even more intense love is required for the daily mortifying of self; really, actually, positively.

We are so familiar with the doctrine that it sounds commonplace; so unfamiliar with the reality that we are astonished into admiration when we recognise it.

But we are not without examples. This principle illuminates the life of Jesus with matchless perfection. He made Himself of no reputation; He had nothing; He pleased not Himself; He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

The apostle Paul died daily, was always delivered unto death—death worked in him. (Think of it! What would death effect if it worked in us?). He was offered on the sacrifice and service of his convert's faith. He lived if *they* stood fast.

But, while self-sacrifice is not a characteristic of the age, there is yet plenty of it. Perhaps we meet many of those prosaic heroes in the daily round, and little appreciate, indeed hardly notice, their devotion, because it seems so much a matter of course.

They give up their pleasures, they serve, they suffer almost from habit; and we are not much impressed, because we have come to expect it of them. Years ago they climbed the height we see ahead of us; they laid aside the world and its glory; their prospects, their pleasures, themselves. They thirsted for Christ and His glory, His pleasure, Himself; He became the one absorbing object of their lives. To live is—Christ, explains a mystery the world cannot fathom.

What is the essential principle of martyrdom? It is not dying when you can live no longer, or even risking life for the Lord's sake. It is the

calm, deliberate, *laying down* of that life which finds its satisfaction and resource in this scene. Neither, in its most exalted aspect, is it putting yourself in a position from which retreat is impossible, but rather dying daily when the life of nature is within your grasp.

“Well,” you may say, “few are called to that sort of thing now. The age of martyrdom has followed the age of miracles into the past.” Wait a moment, dear young reader. Perhaps you are one of the few. Do you find the cricket-match or the football-field really essential to your health? Then, may be, though you are not yet called to lay down your whole life for the Lord, it will be your privilege to sacrifice that part of it, voluntarily, and when at any moment you have power to take it again.

If we have ever found our body the instrument of God’s dishonour, there will be a new and deeper significance in the longing martyr-prayer, “that Christ may be magnified *in my body*, whether it be by life or by death.”

S. E. MC. N.

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“ALL the truth that you really learn, or that will be worth anything to you, is that which you carry out in practice. Your head may be stuffed with knowledge, but it counts for nothing. Are you walking in the company of the Holy Ghost, or in the company of the world?”

## DEVOTEDNESS AND ITS EFFECTS.

AS one of the great Napoleon's soldiers lay wounded and dying on the battle-field, he motioned to Bonaparte, who was standing by, to come near to him. When the Emperor bowed down to catch what the dying soldier said, these words greeted his ear: "If I had a thousand lives I would lay them down for your Majesty," and he soon afterwards expired.

It has been said that "devotedness is the greatest moral force in the universe." Many instances might be cited in proof of this. There is nothing the Lord so much appreciates as a devoted heart, and there is nothing that so much affects others.

*"Ye are not your own.* For ye have been bought with a price." "Present your bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." If we have been redeemed by Christ, and are thus made His bond-slaves, all that we have belongs to Him, and nothing that we possess can we rightly call our own. All that we are and have should be entirely at our Lord's disposal, to be used as He pleases.

After David had given, in a princely fashion, to help build a dwelling-place for God on earth, he said, "All things come of Thee, and of *Thine own have we given Thee.*"



## 258      DEVOTEDNESS AND ITS EFFECTS.

We often sing—

“Were the whole realm of Nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small ;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

When we use such heroic words, do we sufficiently lay to heart all that is involved in them?

What are we surrendering every day for Christ? He gave up His precious life for us. Are we content to surround ourselves with the comforts and luxuries of life, whilst others are feeling the pinch of poverty, and finding it most difficult to make ends meet? Are we hoarding up treasure where moth and rust corrupt, and the Lord's interests perhaps suffering in the meantime? “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.” This is a divine principle. “And there is that withholdeth more than is meet [fit], but it tendeth to poverty.”

“To him that gives He giveth ;  
And such an one receiveth  
Enough, and still to spare.  
Who mercifully lendeth,  
And bountifully spendeth,  
The better shall he fare.”

Let us put it to ourselves honestly as before the heart-searching, all-seeing eye of God. Are we yielding up all to our divine Master and Lord? Are we using our time, our money, and our strength for His glory, or are we seeking our own things in a world where He had but a cross and a grave, and no place to call His own?

P. W.

## ARCHBISHOP ANSELM'S ADVICE.

**A**BOUT the year 1100, amidst the almost universal darkness of popery, there was a form of consolation sent round for the dying, supposed to be written by Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury.

It was printed in Germany in the year 1475, and read as follows:—"Go to, then, as long as thou art in life, put all thy confidence in the death of Christ alone,—confide in nothing else,—commit thyself wholly *to* it,—mix thyself wholly *with* it,—roll thyself wholly *on* it; and if the Lord God will judge thee, say, 'Lord, I put the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thy *judgment*, otherwise I contend not with Thee':—and if He say, 'Thou art a sinner,' reply, 'Put the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my *sins*':—and if He say, 'Thou hast deserved damnation,' let thine answer be, 'Lord, I spread the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my *demerits*, I offer His merits for the merits I should have had, and have not.' If He still insist that He is angry at thee, reply again, 'Lord, I put the death of the Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thine anger.'"

FELLOW-BELIEVER,—How delightful to know, from this mediæval writing, that in the darkest

days of Romish superstition there was here and there a soul that knew the value of the death of Christ. There was then, as ever, "a remnant according to the election of grace." (See Rev. ii. 24, 25.)

ANXIOUS SINNER,—Trust that death of which the ancient writing speaks—the meritorious, atoning death of the Son of God.

By that death of shame God has been *glorified*, the law made honourable and *magnified*, and the crying claims of iron-hearted justice *satisfied*. Alone, upon the blood-stained tree, the Saviour suffered once for sins. There, on Calvary's hill, He hung, the spotless victim of unmixed, unmitigated wrath.

But the Victim became a *Victor*. By death He rendered powerless him that had the power of death—the devil. He died that He might deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

Learn then, from this old-time tract, the worthlessness of works, or miscalled merit, to justify thy guilty soul. Go, bury in a grave of shame thy filthy rags of human righteousness, and rely alone on the righteousness of God, who is "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "Christ died for the ungodly," "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

C. K.

## THE WORD OF GOD.

IN all ages God's people have found the word of God to be a source of light, comfort, and blessing. They have turned to it as the only means of obtaining any true knowledge of God, and as the only thing which can speak with authority as to the future.

Man being endowed with immortality, there is in him a feeling after God, and a desire to have the problem of the future solved. This can only be done by having recourse to the word of God. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job xi. 7) must be answered in the negative. It is only as God is pleased to reveal Himself that we can know Him, or understand His ways; and, if we turn away from the revelation He has given, we are left to the dreary imaginations of a mind darkened and corrupted by sin. (Genesis vi. 5-12.)

Man's wisdom is utterly unavailing, for it is written, "The world by wisdom knew not God." (1 Corinthians i. 21.)

How blessed then to turn to the Scriptures in the assurance that they are the word of God; that in them God has revealed Himself, and communicated to us His very thoughts.

The mark of those who are born of God is

that they hear God's words; the mark of those not of God is that they do not hear God's words. (John viii. 47; 1 John iv. 6.)

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16); it is the Word that has gone forth out of His mouth, and He says, "It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah lv. 11.) Nothing that God has said will ever fall to the ground. It will stand though earth and hell oppose.

It is abiding and living in its nature. "The word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Man and his glory will pass away, but "the word of the Lord endureth for ever." (1 Peter 23-25.) "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away."

It is not only living in its nature, but searching and detecting in its operations. For this very reason it is shunned by the children of darkness, and sought after by the children of light. The former, fearing to be exposed, hate the light, and do not come to it; while the latter have learnt the blessedness of being in the light, and the joy of having everything exposed, judged, confessed, and forgiven. "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.)

Can you wonder that a man, who hates the light, and loves wickedness, should shun what will lay his outer and inner life all bare, and divinely convict him of sin and guilt?

Then see the intimate relation between God and His word. In verse 12 we read that it is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"; and in verse 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." You cannot separate the word of God from God Himself; it is the expression of His mind: it searches, it discerns, it pierces, it divides, it brings one into His holy presence, convicted and exposed. Then His divine mercy puts the only suited cry into our hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke xviii.)

Satan hates the word of God, and the one who elects to follow him hates and shuns it too. But the child of God can say, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." (Psalm cxix. 103.) "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jeremiah xv. 16.)

What a subject for meditation is the precious word of God. We are great losers by not meditating upon it more. The psalmist could say, "As for me, I will meditate in Thy precepts."

(Psalm cxix. 78.) "My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

(Psalm civ. 34.) And the Holy Spirit exhorts us to meditate upon these things; to give ourselves wholly to them; that our profiting may appear to all. (1 Timothy iv. 15.)

A Christian meditating upon the word of God is very much like a sheep lying down under a shady tree chewing the cud. It not only gathers the grass, but chews it all over again, and thus loses none of the nourishment it contains. How much we need to encourage the spirit of meditation in ourselves and one another!

In a world of moral darkness we need light, and this the word of God supplies. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm cxix. 105.) It surrounds us with light, so that our feet do not stumble. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." (Psalm cxii. 4.) And the light becomes brighter as we near the portals of that scene where all is light. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs iv. 18.)

It is the Spirit of God who enables us to understand the word of God, and who applies it to our hearts, so that we are formed by it. He does this that we may find our deepest satisfaction in the One whom the word of God reveals, and in that scene of which He forms the blessed and eternal centre.

How dark and dreary would be the Christian's path, were it not for the light and comfort of the Scriptures! But, through the "comfort of the Scriptures," hope springs up in his heart, and he sees the glorious end of his rugged path, and the provision God has made for every step of the way. Then in the energy of faith he exclaims, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." (Psalm xxiii. 6.)

Does the great enemy of our souls assail us? We can only vanquish him by using the Word in simple faith. To all his temptations our strong tower is, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew iv. 4.) Thus did our divine Master meet each onslaught of the enemy, who sought, at the very beginning of His ministry, to turn Him from the path of dependence and obedience. The Lord quotes three times from the book of Deuteronomy, the leading feature of which is obedience to the word of Jehovah. In this He was our great Example.

If failure should defile our conscience, darken our soul, and close our communion with God our Father, who is light, what can cleanse our way? It is the word of God. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." (Psalm cxix. 9.) It is by the "water of the Word" that the great



Advocate cleanses us. We are eternally set apart as {cleansed by the precious blood of Christ; but the daily moral stains are cleansed away by the water of the Word. (Eph. v. 26.) "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." (John xiii. 8.)

To go on with God, and to "have part with Christ," where He now is, we must know His gracious work of washing our feet. Peter could ignorantly say, "Thou shalt never wash my feet"; but how soon was he to learn that no saint can get on without it! The love of Christ would not have the slightest distance between Himself and us, nor any abatement of that blessed intimacy which we are privileged to enjoy. Therefore, in His blessed ministry of love, He stoops to wash our feet, so that everything may be removed which may have given the sense of distance. Blessed Master, how much we are indebted to Thee!

There is that in the Word which preserves from sin and the paths of the destroyer. "Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Psalm xvii. 4.) "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm cxix. 11.) How much evil should we be preserved from, and how many pitfalls should we escape, did we but heed the word of God more! God says, "My son, keep My words, and lay up My commandments with thee. Keep My commandments, and live; and My law as the

apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers write them upon the tables of thine heart." (Proverbs vii. 1-3.)

Fellow-believer, may we heed the words of God. How much light, joy, peace, and happiness we lose by not taking heed to the words of God! "My son," says God, "attend to My words; incline thine ear unto My sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto them that find them, and health to their flesh." (Proverbs iii. 20.)

Our love to the Saviour, too, is proved by the place *His words* have in our hearts. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) Vain is it to talk of our love to the Lord if His words are not heeded, and lie unnoticed, and therefore despised by us. What grief to the Holy Spirit, who speaks of Christ to us, if we give the newspaper, the novel, or any production of man's, a larger place than the words of God, which are to abide for ever!

Impossible is it for the Christian to grow spiritually, if the word of God is neglected. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." (1 Peter ii. 2, 3.) The babe is brought before us here to show us the desire and eagerness with which we

should seek the word of God. Its growth depends on the nutriment it takes. So with us. We are "nourished up in the words of faith," "wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. iv. 6 ; vi. 3.) We "*grow thereby*."

Some remain spiritual babes all through their Christian life. Speaking of Christ, in His Melchisedec priestly character, the apostle says, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God ; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: *for he is a babe*." (Hebrews v. 11-13.) In the next chapter the Hebrew Christians were exhorted to "go on to perfection," that is, to full growth spiritually.

How grieved would we be, as earthly parents, if our children remained dwarfs, stunted, and showing none of that beautiful mental and physical development which is according to God. And with what grief must the blessed God regard many of His children, as to their spiritual stature. There is hardly any growth. Signs of spiritual life there may be, but no real development, and they attain to years of spiritual manhood, but in reality are babes. They have "need of milk, and not of strong meat," because

they have not, like the babe, earnestly “desired the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby.”

The dwarfed condition, and the spiritual decline of many, are traceable to the fact that they neglected the *systematic study* of the word of God, accompanied *by meditation and prayer*. May our God give us to feel the importance of these three things.

And lastly, the Saviour, when on earth, said, “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: *the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*” (John xii. 48.)

What a word for the unbeliever! The word of God, which he has despised, will be a swift witness against him, in “the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.” (Rom. ii. 16.)

How exalted a place the word of God has in His estimation, we learn from Psalm cxxxviii. 2: “For Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name.”

Let it be ours to love, venerate, and obey the word of God, assured that it is the only way of blessing. “*To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.*” (Isaiah lxvi. 2.)

E. A.

## THE GRACE OF GOD.

1. ***THE*** *need of grace.* Man's present state needs grace, and nothing but grace can meet his need. Every other remedy is vain. And God's grace is His best for man, now that he has done his worst against God and himself. When man had utterly failed, there was an unfailing resource in God. Grace was there. The depth of man's need is fully unfolded in Scripture. A responsible, fallen, sinful creature, through disobedience, he sinned on. He sinned when left to conscience (Genesis vi.), he sinned when spared from judgment (Genesis x. 20), he sinned under law, when promising obedience (Exodus xxiv., xxxii.), he sinned when warned by prophets (Matthew xxi. 33-36), he sinned when in the presence of grace and truth in Jesus Christ (John xix. 14-19), he sinned against the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51), and goes on sinning to-day, with the Bible in his hand, and will go on sinning till the day of the vengeance of God. Man, whatever he may think of himself, apart from the grace of God is utterly incorrigible—a fallen, sinful, lost creature.

Moreover, if led to consider his state, he is powerless to deliver himself from the bondage he is in. He has been mastered by Satan and sin, and his struggles for relief and deliverance are as

vain as those of a puny dwarf in the hands of a mighty giant. This he is very slow to discern. Self-deceived, he boasts, in the darkness of his soul, of the wonderful progress of education, science, art, parliamentary laws, religion, and in the emancipation of the masses. At best it is but a thin (very thin) moral-religious veneer; the root remains untouched, and unrenewed man, in the most favoured outward circumstances, receives sin's wages, and passes to a hopeless grave and the eternal judgment of God. The distance and depth of man's fall are far too great for recovery by his own efforts, whatever form they may take. Nothing but *the grace* of God can meet his case. And to become the recipient of this wonderful blessing, man must bow to God's testimony against him as a sinner, and own in the depth of his soul, in the presence of the divine Majesty, that he is without strength, helpless, hopeless, lost.

2. *The source of grace.* Now, great as is the depth of man's need, in God there is an unfailing and all-sufficient resource. His remedy, as we have already remarked, is grace, and He Himself is the source of it. God is light and God is love. Man in darkness and sin is not only unfit for His presence, but fears and hates the light, and loves the darkness which he is in. There he would remain of his own choice, and must remain, and that eternally, but for what God is. He is love

as well as light, and while light repels sin and the sinner, love in due time became active in manifestation. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The Son came into the world. He took upon Him man's estate, sin apart. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." That holy Thing which was born of the virgin was declared to be the Son of God. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.) But man in general was unprepared for His reception. Grace would have pleased him, *apart from truth*. We have a striking instance of this in the gospel (Luke iv. 16-30); grace and truth in the person of Jesus Christ, the gift of God's love, were refused. Man's case became irretrievably bad in His rejection and death. Yet *grace* has superabounded. The return of the rejected One to glory brought down abounding grace to man from the very heart of God. Man's crowning act of wickedness served as a platform, so to speak, for God to display Himself as the God of all grace. Man's worst against Him brought out nearly nineteen centuries of grace and patience from the heart of God. Still that grace flows. How great will be the condemnation of all who despise or neglect it! Man, in his darkness and unbelief, sins with a high hand, and follows the lusts and desires of his own heart; a prey to Satan, only too oft in utter indifference as to what is in God's heart towards him.

3. *The fulness of grace.* Grace—God's heart its inexhaustible source and spring—reigns in righteousness, and flows, without limit and bound, through a lost and guilty world. Who can tell its fulness? No depth of need in the blackest sinner's heart can exhaust it; no wounds of sin are too severe, but what grace can heal them; no crowd of sinners is too large for its priceless gifts. All everywhere are invited to participate freely in the abounding grace of God. Alas! that so few should accept the offers of God! And of those that do, how feeble the apprehension of its fulness, how little we enjoy its exhaustless provisions. Where is the man that would take a small cup to dip in an ocean of molten gold rolling at his feet? Would not everyone in his senses fill the largest vessels he possessed? And an ocean of gold is but a feeble figure of the fulness and freeness of God's grace; and yet, alas! how little we receive in the vessel of our souls, as evidenced on all hands by the feebleness of our Christianity. No tongue can declare, no pen can describe, no book can contain, no mind can imagine the fulness of the grace of our God. Height, depth, length, breadth are expressions, but expressions which are utterly inadequate to present to our souls the extent and fulness of that grace which has no limit or bound, which is ever flowing to man from the heart of God in eternal glory, and which has no



end for all who receive it. This grace, in which every Christian stands, has brought salvation—God's salvation—full, free, and everlasting—a salvation which contains all that our souls can possibly need. Pardon, justification, peace, reconciliation, liberty, relationship, heavenly and eternal blessing, all are there. It is the salvation of God in Christ Jesus which grace brings, and in Him we have all. By it every believer is not only eternally delivered from the coming wrath, but eternally identified with the living Christ in glory, to God's everlasting joy, and satisfaction, and praise.

4. *The effect of grace.* Now grace teaches. Man in his blindness and folly is afraid of it. Many say, If all is of grace, you may live as you list. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" replies the Book that is wiser than men. "Far be the thought." Grace does not teach us to sin, but expressly the reverse. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, *teaching us* that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," &c. (Titus ii. 11, 12.) It teaches us to live after a new order altogether, the very opposite way to which the world is living. The world is wild, unrighteous, ungodly. Grace teaches sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. Henceforth the Christian, the subject of

grace, should walk soberly as to his own personal demeanour and behaviour; righteously in all his ways and dealings and relations with his fellow-men; and godly, as brought to and set in the presence of God. This is to characterise him all the way through in *this present world*, as he waits for manifestation in glory with Christ. This is his blessed hope and encouragement. The rejected One, through whom grace has flowed to us, will return in glory. The great God our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has shown us great grace, will appear in great glory. All the recipients of His grace, walking in godliness, &c., here, will appear with Him in glory in that wondrous day. And that day is at hand. Grace not only teaches us to walk so as to please God, but to look for the promised manifested glory of Christ, and, as those for whom He gave Himself, to yield ourselves wholly to Him; purifying ourselves from every form of evil, as His own property, purchased by His death; zealous as His followers in doing that which characterised Him when on earth, *good works*. Grace in Titus ii. teaches us to refuse wickedness, and to walk in Christ's steps, wait for His glory, and work in His name, till we leave this scene.

What a wonderful thing grace is! Are you in the enjoyment of it in its wondrous fulness?

E. H. C.

## THE FAST AT THE RIVER OF AHAVA.

A BAND of defenceless Jews, passing through the territory of fierce, unscrupulous enemies, carrying with them treasure enough to excite the cupidity and avarice of the most ambitious robber !

Yet their leader, knowing full well all this, was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers to form a bodyguard for them. He had boasted of his God before the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him ; but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him."

If Ezra had asked for a guard of soldiers, his boasting would have been mere brag, and the character of his God would have been injured in the eyes of King Darius, whose heart God had so wondrously turned to Himself and His people.

So he is bound to look for no visible arm of power ; God alone was to be his resource.

By the banks of the river Ahava the little band prayed and fasted till God was entreated of them. They sought from Him *a right way* for themselves, their little ones, and their substance. The immense amount of money was entrusted into the hands of reliable men, committed to them to account for at the end of the journey, when it would be required at their hands for the service of the temple at Jerusalem.

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Now they set forth, conscious of God's protection and guidance. No precipitate haste seems to mark their journey. No loiterers were they, but they appear not to have prosecuted the journey as if fear were at their heels. No; God was their Protector, more powerful than an arm of flesh, a greater help than glittering spear and brazen shield, and bronzed warriors; and on they go in peace and quietness, God meanwhile delivering them from the hand of the enemy, and from those who lay in wait.

The journey's end is reached. They rest three days. Then the silver and gold and vessels are weighed out before God, and their weight written down, and then they offer burnt-offerings of joy before the Lord.

It is a quaint old-time picture the Spirit of God has drawn for us. But what vastly important every-day lessons it teaches!

Have we such confidence in God that we need no protection from men? Do we need an arm of flesh to rest on? Do our eyes habitually look this way and that way and every way, till at length we turn to God as a last resource, or do we turn to Him at the first?

Do we know what it is to fast before God, and seek *a right way* from Him, and then through an enemy's land in peace and quietness pursue our way?

These and kindred questions are searching to

the last degree. Oh, that we *knew* God better—put Him to the test! He delights in faith, and invites us to trust Him. Mark, Ezra and his little band *prayed and fasted*. The two go together. It is a principle that runs throughout Scripture. When the disciples were powerless to act in the presence of evil, the Lord mildly rebuked them, saying, “This kind goeth not forth but by *prayer and fasting*.” As it has been well put, *prayer* is bringing God in, and *fasting* is shutting man out.

And it is just in proportion as these two things are present with us, that we have power to go on with God, superior to the broken reeds in which men trust, which, after all, are but broken reeds, which in the end pierce the hand of him who leans on them.

May God give us simple childlike knowledge of Himself, that we may be kept walking morally superior to the world, its maxims, its resources, and its aims.

A. J. P.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BRADFORD.—1 Samuel ii. 11–18; iii. 1. We presume that Samuel, when a child, “ministered before the Lord” by serving, according to his capacity, in things connected with the Lord’s house. Let us remember that in the Jewish ritual there were many things that might be done without the least reference to the inward state of the individual who did them. Secondly, when we are told that “Samuel did not

yet know the Lord," we are not at liberty to clothe those words with the same meaning as would be attached to them to-day. At least, we understand them to signify that the child Samuel had, in those early days of his life, no personal knowledge of the Lord as One who spake to men in visions or dreams; nor had there been revealed to him, up to that time, any distinct word or message from the Lord. Hence, when he heard the voice, he mistook it for Eli's. Thirdly, *we* can minister to the Lord now in a thousand different ways, for to minister simply means to serve. But to serve Him we must first know Him as He is revealed in the gospel—a just God and a Saviour, just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

S. B.—“Divine quickening” and being “born again” are simply different terms for expressing the same essential act, without which no one sees or enters into God’s kingdom, according to John iii. You ask “whether all who are the subjects of this, will ultimately be in glory.” We answer that, as far as the present dispensation goes, they most assuredly will, for whom God calls He justifies, and whom He justifies He also glorifies. As to “seeing” and “entering” the kingdom, it may mean that, apart from the new birth, no man can see the kingdom of God in its moral features; no one can see in what that kingdom consists, or have any part in it. The meaning of the terms may indeed expand and embrace the actual seeing and entering into the kingdom in glory. If any use them thus we shall be very far from raising the least objection.

O. D. Y.—We thank you for your sweet lines on “Peace.” Your thoughts are clear and scriptural, but the poem requires to pass through the hands of one able to correct poetry for the press. We confess that such work is beyond us. Plain prose we might manage, but we have never yet dared to amend any poetical contribution. Our hand is too coarse and heavy for such a delicate undertaking.

ENQUIRER.—1 Corinthians vii. 20-24. We must leave it to others to argue from this passage that no one should leave the situation he held, or the office he filled, at the time of his conversion. We believe the words lend no support to such an argument. No doubt there was an unhealthy anxiety about such matters among some of the Corinthian converts, and this led them to write and ask the apostle’s judgment upon it and other points. In reply, he tells them that circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing. Why, then, make much of either? And if the convert were a slave, let him care not for it. Slave though he be, he is the Lord’s free man. But if he could be made free, well and good. Let the freedom be used for his Master’s glory, for every convert, being free, was Christ’s bond-slave. After all, these were minor matters. Let every man take care that he abide in his calling *with God*. That was the important thing. Such, we conceive, to be the gist of the passage.

A. T. S.—Your MS. is to hand. Nice though it be, it is hardly up to the standard. Many thanks for sending it to us.

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## LOVE OF THE BRETHREN.

**D**EEP down in the heart of every true Christian there is love to all other Christians on the face of the earth, no matter what the colour of their skin or the denominational badge they wear. It is true a thousand things may hinder its manifestation, but that does not alter the fact. "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another," said Paul to the Thessalonian saints; while John tells us that "every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." If, then, we ourselves are born of God, we surely love everyone else who is likewise born of Him.

But this in no way places the Christian beyond the need of exhortation to love the brethren. For Love should not be suppressed, shut up, put in the stocks, chained, manacled, as she sometimes is. Nor, if things are not quite so bad as that, should she be forbidden to show herself, unless dressed in some outrageous garb which makes it almost impossible for anyone to believe that it can be Love at all. Encouragement and exhortation are needed, and we have them in abundance. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. . .

XIII.

L



Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God." (1 John iii. 18; iv. 7.)

Love to one another was to be the distinguishing mark of the disciples of the Lord. Clad in this robe, most beautiful, most heavenly, they should be known by all men as followers of Him in whom love was perfectly displayed. "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John iii. 16, R.V.) His love to us should be the measure of our love to each other.

And who are "*the brethren*" whom we ought to be ready to serve, even to the laying down of our lives? Are they only those who see eye to eye with us in everything, and with whom we walk in unbroken fellowship? Were this the case, few indeed would "*the brethren*" be, and narrow the circle in which Love could serve. Thank God, it is not so. No doubt we know these best; but the heart that beats in unison with Christ's will refuse to separate itself in thought and affection from the whole family of God. "*The brethren*," whom we are exhorted to love with a pure heart fervently, is a term which embraces every Christian, of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, on earth. At least, so we judge.

I know, reader, that we are living in a day when everything ecclesiastical is shattered, and speaks of ruin. I know that in view of this we

are exhorted, in 2 Timothy ii., to purge ourselves from evil men who, concerning the truth, have erred—vessels to dishonour, as they are styled. I know that we are to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But what I plead for is that, when all this is done with the most scrupulous care, there should be no chilling of that charity which flows, and ought to flow, out toward all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Dark indeed was the day when Ahab reigned and Jezebel was queen, and the prophets of Baal waxed fat under the very shadow of the throne. Broken and divided was the kingdom which, under David and Solomon, was but one. But even in that cloudy day Elijah, on Mount Carmel, built his altar of *twelve* stones. In his eyes Israel and Judah were one and indivisible.

It need hardly be said that *fellowship* is a much narrower thing than love. In heaven it will not be so, but on earth it surely is. Fellowship with our fellow-Christians in all those things to which so many of them, alas! set their hand is, indeed, impossible if we would be faithful to the Lord, and obedient to His word. *Christian* fellowship must have truth for its basis, and fellowship having any other foundation is not the expression of divine love. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.” (1 John v. 2.) A

weighty word, which we shall do well to bear in mind!

But we must be careful not to err on the other side, lest, under the plea of being faithful, we do things unlovely and un-Christlike. How many brethren who are, as we believe, in a wrong position, have been alienated for ever by a display of intemperate zeal on our part, which has palmed itself off as faithfulness to the Lord, and care for His honour! Granted that they are in a path where we dare not follow, shall we on that account show them henceforth no charity, no matter what the opportunity? Shall we not, in so doing, be confounding love with fellowship, thinking that because there is little of the latter there must be no show of the former?

“Brethren, let us love one another: for love is of God.” Let us think of those eternal ties that unite us to every saint—ties which no failure of ours or theirs can ever break. Let us look at God’s people from the tops of the rocks, and in the vision of the Almighty. Let us speak of them still as brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, even though we have to tell them, with sorrow of heart, that we cannot go with them in the path where they have strayed. For they are our brethren, part of that Church that Christ loved and loves; children in the same family; and we shall soon be with them in the presence of the Lord for ever. By all means let us main-

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tain our ground with firmness, if the ground be right, nor give occasion to any to suppose that we view with indifference the divisions that rend God's Church, or the departures from the truth that gave rise to them. Narrow will be our path, if God and His word have their place with us; but in the narrow path let our hearts be large, and full of love to all saints.

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“WE TESTIFY THAT WE HAVE  
SEEN.”

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—It has occurred to me that the following extracts from a paper, which appeared in *Flood for the Flock* (1875), might be helpful to those of your readers who are engaged in the work of Evangelizing, as emphasizing the importance (on our hearers' account) of letting the whole truth of God concerning Christ—His present place in glory and interests here—have its place in our hearts.

Yours in the bonds of His blessed service,

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“**W**HAT kind of gospel do you preach?”  
or, as many who read our question do not preach publicly, “How do you evangelize?” All God's people should in some way or other be evangelizing, therefore the question is of moment. The character of the crop we raise depends upon the sort of seed we sow, and the character of conversions God grants us

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largely depends upon the kind of gospel we preach. Indeed, we may go further—"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"—the sort of gospel we preach depends upon the sort of acquaintance we have with Christ ourselves.

"But," says someone, "the soil has to be considered as well as the seed sown: the state of the hearers must be borne in mind, and you cannot get people to hearken to high truth." True; yet we have, by evangelizing, not only to meet a need—we have to create one. See the zealous, devoted man, who, possessed with the belief of heaven and hell, preaches what he believes; he speaks of realities, and in a way that makes men bow to his convictions. What is the result? The Spirit of God uses his words to awaken in the sinner an uncontrollable desire to escape hell and to reach heaven. Thank God for his intense words. Or look at him whose very being is filled with God's grace in forgiving the sinner; he pours out of the abundance of his heart the God-given words, and God the Spirit graciously grants to the hearing sinner the longing for and the knowledge of forgiveness of sins. No doubt each servant has his special service, as every bird his peculiar note; and we cannot give out one whit more than what, by God's work, is really within our souls.

If we know forgiveness we can, by God's grace,

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proclaim it; if peace, then we can in His power publish it; but there is more than forgiveness and peace to tell. Surely the apostle Paul preached forgiveness and peace in divinely-given energy, but he did more. He had seen Christ in the glory; his soul was laden with Christ there; hence, he preached for the believer here, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” He was not satisfied that converts should be saved from hell and safe for heaven, but he travailed for them that Christ should be formed in them. He laboured—he strove according to God’s working, which worked in him mightily—that they might know the riches of the glory of the mystery, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” He longed that souls saved should be freed from the law and from the earth, and be free for Christ and Christ only. In his deep desires for Christ’s glory, and his sympathy for souls and their progress, he had great conflict—even for converts he had not seen—that “all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery,” might be theirs.

Does our preaching so bring Christ Himself, as He is, before our converts, that they long to “know Him”? We see as the fruit of our words, made powerful by the Holy Spirit, the sinner—or shall we say the quickened soul?—longing after peace with God, or peace for his conscience; but do we see the soul, who has obtained the peace

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for which he longed, thirsting after Christ Himself? The joy of having peace does not carry souls very far out of the world. It fails, in very many instances, even to separate them from their old habits of religious thought. In some strange manner they go on with the law as a rule of life, and with teachings contradictory of peace. Would this be morally possible if Christ were in them, the hope of glory? Could they then tolerate law or contradictory teachings? Is there not often a quiet kind of worldliness allowed, while peace—in the sense of no longer doubting the fact of being saved—is known in the soul? We must own that these things are so. Let us ask, then, whether the realities of Christ being in the glory for us, and of His being the hope of glory in us, are as forcible in our souls as the facts of His blood having been shed upon this earth for sinners, and of present forgiveness of sins for all who believe on Him. "He preached *Christ* unto them" is said of Philip the evangelist. It is easier to preach what Christ has *done* than who Christ *is*, and it is utterly impossible to preach Christ as He is unless the heart be filled with Himself by the Spirit. The evangelist, or evangelizer, has a noble mission; he is freighted with divine compassion to a perishing world, he is burdened with blessings for sinners, and his heart is fitted by God to yearn over the Christless souls dying around him. But his words are formative;

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by his knowledge of Christ his hearers learn Christ; he is not a mere trumpeter, who blows his blast and goes quietly home. Alas! that any with the power of carrying the gospel of God to men, should have for their ambition the number, instead of the constancy of their converts.

Ah! ye lovers of souls, where are the souls ye love? “But,” say some, “the evangelist’s work ceases at conversion: he leaves to others the care of his converts.” But who has drawn the line where his work and love should cease? If the father cares not for his children, who shall do so? If he who presents Christ to sinners does not long to present the sinner God has saved, by his poor means, to Christ, who shall? The true evangelist is a nurse to his converts — gentle, affectionate, filled with love for them; willing to impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but his own soul, because they are dear to him.

He who knows that he is safe for heaven, preaches safety; he who knows God’s grace in forgiving his sins, preaches forgiveness; he who rejoices in peace, preaches peace; and he who has Christ dwelling in his heart by faith — Christ as He is, Christ the hope of glory — preaches safety, forgiveness, peace, but all coloured by his own personal acquaintance with *Christ*. The less does not include the greater, but the greater does take in the less.



## WHY SO OFT WITH JESUS?

### QUESTION.

**W**HY so oft with Jesus, Christian?  
Why so oft, as though in prayer,  
Sitting at the feet of Jesus?  
Tell me, why so often there?

### ANSWER.

Just to see His smile upon me,  
There to listen to His voice ;  
Just to learn how much He loves me,  
There to make His heart rejoice ;  
Just to tell Him every sorrow,  
And to whisper every care,  
Oh ! how patiently He listens,  
Glad, so glad my griefs to bear.  
  
Sitting at the feet of Jesus,  
Looking up with open face,  
Gazing at His matchless glory,  
Wond'ring at His boundless grace.  
Filled with rapture at His beauty,  
Spell-bound, ling'ring at His feet :  
Sitting at this place of blessing,  
Ah ! no place to me so sweet.  
  
What have I to do with idols ?  
Can they give me joy like this ?  
Can they fill my soul with rapture ?  
Can they give eternal bliss ?  
Nay ! the sweet they give is bitter ;  
Earth's delights but live to fade ;  
All its pleasures lose their glitter,  
All its lights are dimmed with shade.  
  
Sitting at the feet of Jesus,  
Here alone my soul is blest ;  
All around is grief and sadness,  
Here alone is perfect rest. *Communicated.*

## REDEMPTION, NEW BIRTH, AND THE LIVING STONE.

1 PETER i. 17-25; ii. 1-9.

PETER, in both of his epistles, speaks of the government of God. In the first, of that government on behalf of the righteous, and in the second, as against the wicked: "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

As regards the saints, the government is the Father's discipline, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." The fact of our relationship with God in grace brings us immediately under the chastening and correcting hand of God. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

If we call on the Father who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, we are to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. All these dealings of God with us are based upon accomplished and eternal redemption, and we fear because we know that we are redeemed.

“Forasmuch as ye *know* that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Redemption being thus introduced, we have it and the new birth opened out to us. These are the two great foundations of our relationship with God in grace. Apart from these, none, Jew or Gentile, can be blessed.

Sin has placed all, through the just judgment of God, under the power of death, and the Jews were under a system of legal observances which fastened death upon them. From this they needed to be redeemed. Gentiles also must be redeemed, as “death passed upon *all* men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. v. 12.)

Redemption could not be purchased with corruptible things, such as silver and gold. It must be by blood, and that not the blood of lambs, goats, and bulls, but “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” He was set apart for this from before the foundation of the world, and in these last times He has been manifested. By His death He has made expiation for sin, and in resurrection He has broken the power of death. The whole work has been finished, and finished by Him alone. It was completed 1800 years ago, outside

of and apart from us altogether. We had no part in it but our sins, which had made it needful that our Saviour should suffer and die. Thus every hindrance is removed on God's side to the full carrying out of His will and purposes of grace.

By Christ we now believe in God, not only as Creator, or as Jehovah, who redeemed Israel out of Egypt, but as the One who raised up Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory. God has thus shown His satisfaction with Jesus, and with what Jesus has done. There is nothing left for us to do ; we are redeemed by blood, and brought to God, who has raised up and glorified Jesus, so that our faith and hope might be in God. We know and trust Him, and our expectations are from Him.

But another question besides guilt had to be settled. By sin we had fallen into a corrupt and ruined state. Our will was turned against God, our hearts were filled with distrust of Him. The flesh was sinful, and nothing could change its nature. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?" God knew us perfectly, and expected nothing from us. Therefore, if He is pleased to bring man into relationship with Himself, He must make a new beginning *in* us ; man *must* be born anew. This He does by His word, which is the instrument of the operation of the Holy Spirit. We are born of

water and of the Spirit, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. God works in us, not by what He finds, but by what He brings to us by His word.

The moment the word of God reaches the soul of man in spiritual power, there is that formed in him which God can own, and with which His Spirit is connected: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 6.) The word of God—the means of His work of grace in man—is preached unto him by the gospel, those glad tidings in which God makes known His grace, and in which He sets forth what Jesus has done.

How perfect and blessed are the ways of God! No wonder, when Jonah had learned his lesson, he was ready to exclaim, "Salvation is of the Lord!"

This, however, is only the beginning. The Lord will lead us on, and direct us into the whole will and purpose of God. Only we must remember that the flesh is unchanged. It can only bring forth evil things, which, unless laid aside, hinder our spiritual growth. We are exhorted to turn from all these, and, like new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. The delight of a new-born babe is to receive the suited nourishment God has provided for it; and as it receives, it grows.

So with us; as we turn to the word of God, not for head-knowledge, but for soul-satisfaction, we grow in the knowledge of God, and of that salvation we have received.

We have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and we can always turn to Him. He is so considerate of our weakness, and so ready to help and lead us on. Moreover, He holds all the blessing in His hand, and will dispense just what is needed to encourage and strengthen our faith. Like Boaz, He will direct His servants to let fall handfuls on purpose, when, like Ruth, we are gleaning in His field.

Good and wonderful as all this is, we see, as we are led on, that there is better still to follow. The Lord will teach us that there is much more in Him than what He is as our Saviour. We know Him as the One who came to seek and save the lost, but He desires to lead us into the enjoyment of the whole purpose of God concerning Himself, and this is the end for which He has saved us.

The One who is our Saviour is also the Son of God. This title brings before us what He is in relation to God His Father. Peter had known much about Jesus before the Father revealed to him that Jesus was the Son of the Living God (Matt. xvi.). In that Person, risen and victorious over death, God has secured all that is for His own glory in the display of His grace.

As sinners, we came to the Lord as Saviour; as saints, we come to Him as the Living Stone; and thus, as living stones also, participating in what He is, we "are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Two figures are here employed to set forth what we are in relation to God and His Son—a building and a priesthood. We are the house of God, over which Christ is set as Son. We are also a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

In this we are brought into what is really life, and that in the power of the Spirit.

We have to do with the *Living* God. Christ is the *Living* Stone, we also are *living* stones; the house is a *spiritual* one, the sacrifices are *spiritual*; all is *living*, and all is pervaded by the *Spirit*. How blessed! And yet, alas! how feebly we enter into it. It is not by occupation with ourselves we know and enjoy this. But coming to Him, the Living Stone, we apprehend what He is, and what He is for God, and not as merely meeting our need. There is a wonderful power in the knowledge and confession of Christ as the Son of God, which gives us victory over the world, and all the power of evil. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 5.) We can then, as sustained by His power, though

the winds and waves are rough, walk on the water to go to Jesus; we can join and be with Him who is above it all.

There is another great gain we enjoy as we come to Him as the Living Stone. We understand that He is rejected here, and we share this rejection with Him. As a Living Stone, He "is disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." We may know that we are saved from hell, and that our sins are pardoned, and yet go on with the world and its religion; but if we are coming to Him as the Living Stone, and are learning our place in the spiritual house and holy priesthood, we cannot go on with these things. We do not suit them, and they do not suit us. God's precious Corner Stone had no value in the eyes of the Jewish builders. He did not correspond with their plans. It is the same to-day. How happy to be so thoroughly identified with the Living Stone, that the world does not want us, because we do not answer to its ways! The preciousness of this Stone is to us who believe, while it is a Stone of stumbling, and will be the destruction of those who refuse it. Ere long it will fall upon and grind them to powder. (Matt. xxi. 44.)

If we know our place inside the sanctuary, as a holy priesthood with God, we shall be able, outside in this dark world, to fulfil the functions of a royal priesthood; we show forth the virtues



of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. What a wonderful place the grace of God has given His people! To be inside where the Son of God is, to be *with* Him there, and to be outside where He is not, to be *for* Him here.

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips *confessing His name*. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (Heb. xiii. 15, 16.)

F. W. G.

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### THE OPENED LIPS.

○ JESUS, Lord, to Thee I lift my voice,  
And, grateful, own Thou art my heart's  
fix'd choice.

Rule Thou alone within ; o'er me rejoice,  
Lord, now and evermore.

Gladly I yield ; O Lord, have Thou Thy way ;  
To Thee I now would live from day to day :  
In very truth be Thou my joy, my stay,  
Lord, now and evermore.

Let, Lord, Thy living Word abide in me,  
And may it be my joy to feed on Thee,  
To find my all in all in Thee to be,  
Lord, now and evermore.

T. G.

## THE GREAT WOMAN OF SHUNEM.

THE Shunammite woman, whose short but graphic history is found in 2 Kings iv., was great in faith, in dependence, in obedience, and in affection. She was consequently greatly honoured in spite of her sorrows and difficulties. It seems impossible to read the story prayerfully, and not feel that it furnishes some valuable lessons for the Lord's people to-day. We will briefly touch upon a few of its leading characteristics.

The thoughts and sympathies of this woman were clearly in the circle of God's interests when she showed frequent kindness to His servant, the prophet Elisha. In process of time her heart enlarged, and, in conjunction with her husband, she made further provision for God's prophet. The little chamber, with its bed, table, stool, and candlestick, was set apart to be occupied by him in due course. When there is room, whether little or much, in our hearts for the Lord, we may always rest assured that He loses no time in occupying it! In His grace He gives His people opportunities to make room for Him, but does not force Himself upon them. He counts upon the affection of our hearts, and places Himself within our reach to be invited, and then gives us credit for inviting Him. For example, when

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Jesus and two of His disciples reached the village of Emmaus, "He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them." We know the blessing that followed.

The Shunammite woman had three distinct *calls*, and she obeyed them all. God is no man's debtor, even to a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple. After the woman of Shunem had shown her interest in this holy man of God, Elisha said to his servant,

(1st) "CALL THIS SHUNAMMITE." "Behold, thou hast been careful for *us* with all this care," said he; "what is to be done for *thee*? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, *I dwell among mine own people!*" She stood the test against the world. She wanted nothing that earth could give her, though some time afterwards she got—even through the king—seven years of special earthly blessing, with compound interest, after Elisha had provided for her in seven years of famine. (See chap. viii. 1–6.) Her heart was set upon God's interests. "According to your faith be it unto you." The secret of what she desired came out afterwards.

(2nd) "CALL HER," said Elisha to Gehazi, and she came and stood in the door. "And he said, About this season, according to the time of life,

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thou shalt embrace a son." And so it came to pass by almighty power.

But she had to receive the child through death and resurrection, as all gifts from God have to be received, to be of true value to us. So the child died, but she went through all her sorrow, from first to last, with God. She took the dead child up to the chamber, and laid him on the bed of the holy man of God. Her faith sees the other side of the dark cloud, and in spite of the husband's coldness and unbelief she said to him, "It shall be well"!

"Faith can sing through days of sorrow,  
All, all is well!"

She goes in *haste* to Carmel, but the man of God *saw her afar off*, and said to his servant, "Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: *run* now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with *thee*? is it well with thy *husband*? is it well with the *child*? And she answered, IT IS WELL!" When she reached God's prophet, she would not leave him till he had blessed her. She evidently had no confidence in the prophet's staff being laid upon the child's face, but said, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave *thee*. And he arose, and followed her." Elisha was, as it were, compelled to follow her faith to where the trouble lay.

Faith is the gift of God, and when it is in exercise God, so to speak, is obliged to follow that faith, because it lays hold upon *Himself*.

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Faith always gets the blessing, and is never turned away empty. However much we may be taken up with the Lord's interests, He is infinitely more occupied with ours. Elisha alone could meet this woman's case; so "he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm . . . and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes." Then Elisha said to his servant,

(3rd) "CALL THIS SHUNAMMITE. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and *fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground*, and took up her son, and went out." Thus, when she had all made good to her in resurrection life, she could WORSHIP! And is it not the same with us, only in a higher sense? Life for us is on the resurrection side of the cross of Christ, and we worship the One who said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Finally, we desire exceedingly that what marked the great woman of Shunem may be true of every reader of these lines. May we be great in *faith, dependence, obedience, and affection*, to the glory of our risen, ascended, and exalted Lord, to the praise of His ever worthy name!

J. N.

## SHINE YE.

THIS is a difficult day for the believer who would go on with the Lord, but it is "a grand day for faith." The more difficult it is, the greater the privilege to stand for God in it. Enoch lived in a dark day, similar in many respects to our own. The world then was fast ripening for the flood as it now is for judgment. But the darkness which surrounded him only made him shine the brighter, as do the stars in the midnight sky.

The words of the blessed Lord, "Ye are the light of the world," indicate clearly what the world is. We do not light our lamps at noon, but at night. We need them to displace the darkness. If, then, He has set us as lights in the world, it characterizes the world as a world of darkness. It is here, where we are dwelling "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," that the apostle bids us "shine as lights in the world." (Phil. ii. 15.)

It is precious to note that this is not the privilege of a few only; it is the privilege of all, even the youngest, to shine for Jesus. Gift, valuable as it is, is not necessary to this end. What is needed to make a lamp shine? A well-cleaned lamp filled with good oil—that is all.

Let the oil represent the Spirit. How needful to "be filled with the Spirit"! It is true that every believer has the Spirit dwelling in him, but we need to "*be filled with the Spirit.*" Beloved, do you desire this above every other treasure? You can have no greater, and He longs to fill you. He is jealous of any intruder having a place in your heart. He wants to fill you wholly. *Will you let Him?* But it is necessary to give heed to our ways. The vessel must be clean. There are many things to hinder. Where sin is allowed, or the world comes in, and we give it place; where anything in our walk or conversation contrary to the mind of the blessed Lord is not judged, our lamps will cloud. There will not be that transparency which is needful for the display of Christ. Given the right conditions, and the light will shine brightly.

But a lamp is a silent messenger. It does not even try to shine. It does not itself know that it does shine. It simply shines because it cannot help it. What a lesson for the believer.

Now that is what this dark world needs. "What can I do for the Lord?" asks some humble believer. Well, you can shine. Shine in the home, in the store, in the office, in the workshop, on the farm: "*Let your light shine.*" There is many a benighted soul on this life's sea. Many a weary eye is straining through the darkness of the storm to catch the glimmer of some

friendly light to guide him to the haven. What if a ray from you should guide such a one safely to glory? Would it not be worth many a world *in that day*? The lighthouse-keeper little knows the ships that pass in the night; but they see his light, and are thankful for it. So, beloved, you may 'not know what purpose you are serving in this world. But shine on! The day is difficult. Keep on shining. The darkness is deepening. Shine the more brightly. Look to the supply of oil. Keep the lamp bright and clean. Like the passing ships, souls will run athwart your path, and you will help them. You may not know it. You may be ignorant of the hearts you are cheering. You may seldom get a word to encourage; never mind. Keep bright just for the Lord's sake. The eternal shore will soon be reached, and then you will find many a soul whose life was brightened, and whose path was cheered through that light of yours. H. G.

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## SPIRITUALISM.

**S**PIRITUALISM is not new. It has had a place among all nations for ages, and though in the nineteenth century it may have come more to the front, yet it is the same deadly thing as was practised by the Egyptians when the children of Israel sojourned in their land, and by Balaam, "who loved the wages of unrighteousness."



The Bible is clear on the subject, and to its unerring teaching we refer any enquirer who desires light upon this awful system.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2.)

Spiritualism professes to be a link between the seen and the unseen, to enlighten us on the mysteries of the spirit-world, and to give us communications from the departed dead.

“Surely, then, it must be a good thing,” says some simpleton, and, delighted with his new-found wonder, he rushes headlong into its deadly arms.

Can that be of God against which God directly sets His face? “*Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them.*” (Lev. xix. 31.) “*And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.*” (Chap. xx. 6.)

Can God countenance that which is in direct opposition to His holy word? Assuredly not; and all who practise this abomination, whether in table-turning, rappings, slate-writing, or any other form, run counter to the living God, and against all such He will set His face.

What, then, is to be our guide in the dark

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days of spiritualism and infidelity? That which has stood the test of ages, which bears upon every page the proofs of its divine origin, and calls upon us neither to trifle with its sacred contents, nor disregard its solemn warnings—  
THE WORD OF GOD.

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or that useth divination*, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, *or a consulter with familiar spirits*, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord.” (Deut. xviii. 10–12.)

Reader, if this subtle, soul-destroying bait has been held out to you, we beseech you, by the value of your never-dying soul, to let it alone—shun it as you would a deadly serpent.

E. E. N.

## ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

E. H. D. (1 Peter iii. 18, 20).—“Carefully observe that Peter does not say that Christ went to prison and preached to the spirits there. No such words are used, nor is this what he means. The spirits are characterized as in prison. They are waiting there for the day of judgment. God may have judged them in this world, but this is not all. He is going to judge them in the next world. There may have been *a* judgment, but this is not *the* judgment. So He says these very spirits, which are spoken of, were

'disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved through water.'

"This is not a description of all that died in unbelief, but of a generation favoured with a special testimony, and smitten by a particular stroke of judgment. The preaching was in the days of Noah. It was just before that judgment fell on them; and this because they despised the testimony of Christ through Noah. Just as the Spirit of Christ prophesied in the prophets, so the Spirit of Christ preached by Noah. There is no difficulty that I see about it. There is nothing at all in the verse that warrants a web of doctrine strange to the rest of the Bible. Nothing is said of preaching in prison, but to the imprisoned spirits (not when they were there). He is speaking about the people that heard Noah, and despised the word of the Lord then. It was not Noah's own spirit that preached; it was the Spirit of Christ.

"It may be well to point out that the Spirit is used particularly in connection with Noah, as we find in Genesis vi.: 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.' There was a term of patience assigned: 'Yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.' That is, the Spirit went on striving in testimony to men all that time. Then the flood came and took them all away; but their spirits are now kept in prison, waiting for that judgment which has no end."

These words are not our own; but we quote them as answering your question better than any words of ours.

## A PLEA FOR THE OLD GOSPEL.

PERHAPS there is no subject that so many have taken in hand to speak upon, or by their showing have been raised up to declare, as the Gospel of the grace of God. From the Archbishop of Canterbury down to the Salvation Army lassie standing nightly at the street corner, all are professedly seeking to set it forth. Yet, notwithstanding the number of its exponents, there is no subject that has been so inadequately dealt with, or to which so much injustice has been done.

This, no doubt, arises from at least two causes.

First, that what so many of the preachers themselves know and believe, is not the gospel as it is written in the Scriptures. Secondly, that no man, however gifted, is able to present it in all its greatness, grandeur, and marvellous simplicity. Even Paul had to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

It has been said recently, by a great name, that "the central doctrine of the Gospel is the Incarnation." But it is a fact that many give prominence to the incarnation of the Son of God who deny His *atoning* sufferings. Now any person

might hold the truth of the incarnation, and yet be damned at last.

Do we, then, make little of the incarnation? God forbid! It is one of the most stupendous facts in all the Bible. No one could be a Christian, in the true sense of the word, and deny it. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world." (1 John iv. 3.) While giving all due weight to the incarnation of the Son of God, we are bold to say that, apart from the death and resurrection of the One who became incarnate, all mankind must have been lost for ever.

Many pulpits which in former days were filled by faithful men who preached salvation through the atoning work of Christ, are now occupied by those who deny the value of His blood, by which alone our peace is made. (Col. i. 20.) Such men preach the mercy of God, the love of God; and, what they are pleased to call, "the universal fatherhood of God." But they overlook His holiness and the claims of His righteous throne.

They deny that man is lost by the fall, and that he is dead in trespasses and in sins. They say his environments have greatly helped to make him what he is. Therefore we must seek to improve his surroundings and place him in a

better social position. Then he will be found not so bad after all. Such is man's verdict of man. Such is man's gospel!

If men like Whitfield and Wesley were to come back and visit many of the churches in England to-day, and see how men are seeking to set forth *another* gospel, would they not stand aghast? Would not their spirits be stirred within them to denounce such preaching as "strange fire" on God's altar?

"Ah!" but you say, "they were old-fashioned preachers. No doubt they were very earnest, and lived and spoke like men who believed what they preached; but things are changed now. There were no "higher critics" in their days to clear away the rubbish and cobwebs about the Bible, and to set things in their true light, or their ardour would have cooled considerably. We have made great advances since then."

So the devil laughs, and souls are deluded and led blindly down to the flames of a never-ending hell.

"Hold your tongue about hell, man; that theory has been exploded long ago. Hasn't it been proved conclusively that there is no hell; that hell only means the grave; that eternal only means age-lasting? and we are content to have it so."

Ah! but He who spake as never man spake, for the simple reason that He was more than

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man, says thrice over, when speaking of the final doom of the impenitent, "*Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.*" He also spake of some who would be beaten with "many stripes," and of others who would receive "GREATER damnation."

And for my part I prefer to stick by the old Book, with all its antiquated ideas, and to follow Paul and Peter and John, who received the gospel directly from God's own mouth. Every generation has its own ideas, and we know not but the next generation may deny *in toto* what the present generation teaches; and, therefore, in following them we have no solid ground to rest upon. And even some of the present would-be theologians and thinkers may change their views as they grow older, and where, then, is a poor ignorant person to get a sure resting-place for his faith?

First of all, then, let us hear what Paul says with regard to the gospel he preached, and let us see whether he merely taught the incarnation of the Son of God apart from the necessity of atonement.

We will quote Romans iii. 24, 25, 26: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be a propitiation through faith in His blood*, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the

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forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Also Rom. iv. 25: "Who was delivered *for our offences*, and was raised again for our justification." Also 1 Cor. xv. 1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Peter in his first epistle, chap. ii. 24, says: "Who His own self *bare our sins* in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: *by whose stripes ye were healed.*" Again: "For Christ also hath once *suffered for sins*, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (Chap. iii. 18.)

John is just as explicit in his first epistle, chap. iv. 10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, *and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*" We might easily multiply references to prove that the apostles preached the death of Christ as that which alone could give a holy God a righteous ground to



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justify a guilty sinner. Paul, indeed, boasted that he was not ashamed of the gospel: for it was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: for therein is the righteousness of God revealed. (Rom. i. 16, 17.)

The two grand central doctrines of the gospel are: The death of Christ for our sins as that which met the claims of God, and His resurrection as the testimony to God's perfect and everlasting satisfaction with that work. So much indeed hangs on the truth of the resurrection, that Paul boldly declares in 1 Cor. xv.: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . ye are yet in your sins." (*vv.* 14-17.)

In writing to the Galatians, Paul tells us what he had preached to them, and what they had believed ere they were bewitched and led astray by the false teachers who had come into their midst after Paul's departure. "Who gave Himself *for our sins*," the object being, "that He might deliver us *from* (or out of) this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." And in chap. i. 8 he fearlessly adds, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, **LET HIM BE ACCURSED.**"

In the face of such plain speaking and such scathing denunciatory language, is it not rather strange that there should be men who wear the

garb of Christian ministers, and profess to take the Bible as the revealed will of God, who seek to undermine and destroy, if possible, the foundation on which all our blessing rests, both for time and eternity?

By all means let Christ's holy, devoted life be held up to those who have received the gospel. He left *us* (believers) an example that we should follow His steps. But if you affirm that He was the best man that ever lived, and unmatched as a guide and teacher of moral truths, and yet deny His deity, or His true manhood, or His substitutionary work for those who believe in Him, or His glorious resurrection, you take away that on which the whole superstructure of Christianity rests.

One of the simplest definitions of the gospel I ever heard was from a friend who had known the joy and comfort of it for 35 years. At the time of which we speak he was evidently nearing his end. Returning home from the city by tram, a gentleman, observing his weakness, kindly offered his seat (the tram being full up), which he accepted with gratitude. Having sat down, he said to the gentleman, "That is just what Christ has done for me; He took my place, and now has given me His."

How very simple! And yet how grand! My place He took, and He bore all the judgment my sins should have brought upon guilty me. *He,*

who knew no sin, *was made sin for us*. He was forsaken of God that we might never be forsaken. "There is therefore *now no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Every believer is now one with Christ. Nothing can be plainer than His own words: Go tell My brethren, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." (John xx. 17.) "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are all of one*: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*." (Heb. ii. 11.) "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 48.) This is true of both the youngest and the most advanced believer, though all may not have entered into or enjoyed it. How marvellous! And we wait to be displayed in power and glory when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. Then the world shall know that the Father loves us even as He loves the Son. We know it *now*, thank God! "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 5.) "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Rom. v. 11.)

P. W.

## THE SAINTS' INHERITANCE.

EPHESIANS i.

WHEN an emigrant first receives the title-deeds of the broad lands made over to him in the far West, he has no conception, as he descends the steps of the Government office and passes into the crowd, of all that has been conveyed to him in the gift of the parchment. And, though acres vast enough to make an English county are in his possession, rich and loamy soil, or stored with mines of ore, yet he is not sensibly the richer. For long days he travels towards his inheritance, and presently pitches his flimsy shanty upon its borders. But even though he has reached it, several years must pass before he can understand its value, or compel it to minister, with all its products, to his need.

Oh child of God! Thy estate has been procured at the cost of blood and tears; but thou didst not buy it. Its broad acres have been made over to thee by deed of gift. They became thine in the council chamber of eternity. And they became thine in fact, as soon as thou didst open thine eyes to behold the crucified Lord. Then didst thou all unconsciously become heir to the lengths and breadths, and depths and heights of God!

No sooner has the emigrant reached his estate, than he commences to *prospect* it. He makes a

circuit of its bounds; he ascends its loftiest hills; he crosses and recrosses it that he may know all that has come into his ownership. And this is God's message to thee, oh Christian soul! Look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all this land is given to thee! Precious things of the sun and of the moon, for God is light; of the ancient mountains of His faithfulness, and the everlasting hills of His truth; of the fountains and brooks of His love, that gush spontaneously forth to satisfy and enrich.

But next to this, the emigrant encloses some small part of his inheritance, placing around it a tentative fence or partition, and on this he begins to expend toil and skill. The giant trees are cut down, and their roots burnt out or extracted by a team of horses. The unaccustomed soil is brought beneath the yoke of the plough. The grass-land yields pasture to the cattle, and there is not a square inch of the enclosed territory that does not minister to the needs of the new proprietor. But not content with this, in the following year he pushes his fences back further into the depth of prairie or forest, and again renews his efforts to compel the land to yield him her secret stores. Year after year the process is repeated, until, perhaps when twenty years have come and gone, the fences are needed no longer, because the extent of occupation is commensurate with the extent of the original purchase.

Let every reader mark this, that supposing two men obtained a grant of an equal number of acres, if other things were equal, their wealth would be in exact proportion to the amount of use which each had made of his special acres. If one had learnt a swifter art of appropriating the wealth that lay open to his hand, he would be actually, though perhaps not potentially, richer than his neighbour. All which is a parable.

The difference that obtains between Christians is not one of grace, but of the use we make of grace. That there are diversities of gift is manifest, and there always will be a vast difference between those who have five talents and those who have two, in the amount of work done for the kingdom of God. But as far as our inheritance is concerned, there are no preferences, no step-children's portions, no arbitrary distinctions. It is not as under the laws of primogeniture, that one child takes all, while the younger children are dismissed with meagre allowances. God gives Himself to each. He cannot give more; He will not give less than Himself.

If then you would know why it is that some of God's children live lives so much fuller and richer than others, you must seek it in the differences of their appropriation. Some have learnt the happy art of receiving and utilising every square inch (if we may use the expression) of that knowledge of God which has been

revealed to them. They have laid all God's revealed character under contribution. They have raised harvests of bread out of the Incarnation; and vintages of blood-red grapes from the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary; and pomegranates and all manner of fruit out of the mysteries of the Ascension and the gift of the Holy Ghost. In hours of weakness they draw on God's power; in those of suffering, on His patience; in those of misunderstanding and hatred, on His vindication; in those of apparent defeat and despair, on the promises that gleam over the smoke of the battle.

Begin to make more of God. Do not be content to pray to Him, but make use of Him. His precious things await appropriation. Learn what it is to lift your heart in every moment of need, and to inhale by a deep spiritual inspiration just that quality in Him which is appropriate to your need; and when claimed, dare to believe it is yours, though you have no other evidence than His word.

The analogy that we have quoted, however, fails us utterly in its final working out. The emigrant at last covers his estate; its mines become exhausted, its forests levelled, its soil impoverished; but when a million years have passed, the riches and the love of Christ—which passeth knowledge—will lie before us unexplored and unexhausted.—*Adapted.*

## “GIVING ALL DILIGENCE.”

2 PETER i. 5.

THE frequency with which Peter enjoins diligence in his second epistle might be said to furnish one of its distinguishing marks. No doubt the Spirit of God specially directed him in thus earnestly insisting on diligence in the pursuit of the things of God. But, in scripture, there is often a direct connection between the subject that is being treated of, and the previous relations in which the inspired writer has already been presented. For example, Paul's ministry of a glorified Christ, and John's of the life the believer possesses, are distinctly traceable to the relations in which they each had individually stood to the Lord. Paul was, as we know, converted by the instantaneous vision of a glorified Man, who was none other than Jesus; while John was ever in the place of nearness and intimacy with the Lord. In like manner Peter's insisting on diligence seems to spring out of that which had already taken place in his own history with the Lord.

Peter was privileged to be one of the Lord's chosen companions in some of the most remarkable events in that marvellous life. But there was one solemn and eventful occasion on which,



through lack of watchfulness and diligence, he opened the door for the enemy to enter. And he was left to feel the full effect of this in such soul distress as possibly very few have ever known. In addition to that look from the Lord which broke his whole soul down in penitential grief, it must be borne in mind that he had no opportunity for pouring his sorrow into the ever-gracious ear of the Lord up to His death upon the cross. Darkness and distress could only deepen into midnight intensity, as event followed event, until, at the foot of the cross, Peter's gaze rested upon the dead body of his Lord. Yet it was not Judas-like despair. Perhaps those words of Christ rang in his ear, and, in some measure, sustained him: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" ("when once thou hast been restored," new translation).

This solemn passage in Peter's history may furnish a clue to his impassioned action in John xxi. 7. The unmistakable testimony of the presence of the Lord, proved by the net full of fishes, first arrested John himself. And he was the only witness, let it be remembered, of Peter's failure in the judgment hall. "The disciple whom Jesus loved," with instinctive spiritual delicacy, gained by his intimacy and communion

with the Lord, said unto Peter, "It is the Lord. Now when Simon heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea."

The same divine delicacy has drawn a veil over what took place between the Lord and His failing servant before "the other disciples came . . . dragging the net with fishes." Afterwards, as we know, Peter was probed to the bottom previous to his being finally and fully restored, and then divinely commissioned before them all. It is scarcely wonderful that such an experience of what may flow from lack of diligence should live vividly in Peter's memory, and tinge his ministry with its own peculiar colouring.

Peter's second epistle, it will be noticed, is addressed to "them that have obtained like precious faith." The possession of like precious faith becomes the starting-point. It is here that all soul-history commences for the believer. After the salutation of verse 2 the divine provision for the way is set forth, so that nothing is lacking on the divine side. All divine resources, conducive to "life and godliness," are open to us, but available only by "the knowledge of Him that hath called us by glory and virtue." By "glory," we understand an attractive prospect, and by "virtue," or courage, accompanying energy. With these two things are connected "exceeding great and precious promises." These may be

said to embrace divine communications and undertakings; and as they become spiritually appropriated and have a controlling effect on the life, believers are practically constituted "partakers of the divine nature." They become growingly in practice and conduct what the Word indicates.

Let us note as of exceeding importance that all progress in divine things turns upon "Giving all diligence." Neglect of this has been the fruitful source of failure all along the history of man's relations to God. In the case of many a converted soul it has led to the most deplorable results. Of what avail that "divine power hath given unto us *all things* that pertain unto life and godliness," if the believer, in the consciousness of his own weakness, does not draw diligently from those divine sources, and is not on his guard continually against the dangers and seductions by which he is surrounded?

Lack of diligence is also closely connected with the feebleness with which the things of God are understood and enjoyed. Without taking in detail the things the apostle enumerates, we may remark that when examined it will be seen that they come out as the traits of the new nature, to be developed in the believer by "diligence." They are the means by which the new nature which he possesses expresses itself in his ordinary duties and rela-

tions toward all that he comes in contact with in the world. Thus virtue, courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, are growingly developed by that diligence which ever keeps the prospect of glory before the soul; while it feeds upon those great and precious promises which stand connected with that glory, or with the energy and courage that are required on the way to it.

But while diligence is pressed as the means on the believer's side of progress, the effect of a lack of diligence is also brought before us. "He that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

As blindness in part has happened to Israel (Rom. xi. 25), as the consequence of their failure in diligence and obedience, so the "blindness in part" may happen to the careless believer—dimness overtaking the spiritual vision. Heavenly things then lose their clearness and distinctness. The glory by which we are called fades, and courage consequently ebbs away. In the language of Peter, "He cannot see afar off." The things are there in all their unfading glory, but the vision that once delighted in them is dimmed. It may be even that the once clear assurance and enjoyment of forgiveness of sins may wane through soul negligence. The apostle seems to refer to this in the words, "He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

This sorrowful state of soul is that against which Peter warns, with all the energy of one whose past bitter experience had left its own vivid impression upon his soul. Hence, possibly, the earnestness with which he says, "I will use diligence [new translation], that after my decease ye may be able to have all these things in remembrance." (v. 15.) "I will be careful [new translation] to put you always in mind of these things," possibly nerved by the Lord's own injunction to him before his fall; "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" ("when once thou hast been restored, confirm thy brethren," new translation).

Peter having already referred to the glory, then proceeds to direct attention to the One of whose "power and coming" he could speak, having been, with others, "eye-witnesses of his majesty." The vision of "the Son of man coming in his kingdom" was that which Peter himself saw; while Paul saw the Son of God in heavenly glory. Both present Christ according to the revelation made to them. Peter's exhortation is thus completed by the presentation of Christ as an object in his own person, sufficient to satisfy and control the hearts of those to whom he addresses himself. Prophecy was as "a lamp shining in the obscure place" (new translation); but the full revelation of Christ, and the coming glory, illuminated and gave clearness to that

which had been already foretold. The "Day-star" *had* arisen—was already set in the dark sky as a beacon of hope, and a sure herald of the coming day of glory. One thing alone the apostle was anxious about; namely, that that Day-star should arise *in their hearts*, penetrating the surrounding darkness and gloom with its own distinct and welcome ray of hope.

Thus Christ, set before the heart, furnished a fitting conclusion to the apostle's exhortation to diligence of soul in spiritual things.

As has been often said, we are formed by the object and the interest that most engages us. This holds good most truly in our soul's history; occupation with Christ as the legitimate object of the heart results in the believer becoming morally and spiritually like Him in his practical ways.

In conclusion, let us recall Moses' fitting word of exhortation to Israel, while we bear in mind how much clearer and fuller the revelation of the dispensation in which we live: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life"; and specially where household responsibility rests, "but teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons." (Deut. iv. 9.)

M. C. G.

## THE WANING YEAR.

THE present year has well-nigh run its course. Earth's annual race around its golden centre will ere long be finished, and the final day of 1896 will dawn to fade and die amid the silence and the darkness of the year's last midnight.

Another year—a moral era—also wanes.

“THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD”

will presently pass away for ever. The twilight of salvation's day is deepening, and the world's wild night of doom draws near.

Men mistake compassionate testimony for indifference, and call God's sufferance *slackness*. But though He loves He is not lax. Amazing mercy stays the storm of sorrows hovering over the unsheltered heads of a rebel race. In compassionate kindness He waits, while the first spirit-taught saint can but wonder and worship.

When He executes His “strange” unwilling work of judgment, the despisers of mercy will “wonder and perish.”

Forget not,

FELLOW-CHRISTIAN,

that it is the day of God's “good tidings.” May we not, then, “hold our peace.” Let us be earnest,

and up, and doing the work of evangelists while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work.

An ancient author gives a remarkable and suggestive account of the overthrow and destruction of a certain town. News came to the place, once and again, that the enemy was approaching; but he did not then approach. Hereupon, in anger, the inhabitants enacted a law, that no man, on pain of death, should bring again such rumours as that of an approaching enemy. Not long after the enemy came indeed, besieged, assaulted, and sacked the town, of the ruins of which nothing remained but this proverbial epitaph: "Here once stood a town that was destroyed by silence."

*Destroyed by silence!* Ah, 'tis true, alas! of perished millions. (I speak as a man.) They lived unwept and died unwarned: no man cared for their souls.

Christian, you have lips, a tongue, and breath. Have you any *heart*? If so, redeem the time; be instant in season, out of season. Live for Christ and souls. Multitudes are sinking into hell around you, and the Lord is coming. You are not ignorant of the coming judgment; and you know the Christ-rejector's doom. By life, literature, and lip, let your light shine and your testimony go forth—"Holding forth the word of life." (Phil. ii. 16.)



Your end approaches,

SINNER!

This year you may die.

In the month of February, 1786, a medical student of Halle lay dangerously ill. Sending for a professor named Meyer, he told him that he was certain that he was about to die, as he had been warned in a dream of his approaching end. "I wrote it down," he added, "the morning after it happened, and laid it in a drawer, of which this is the key. When I am gone, read it over." On the 7th of March the student died. After his death, Professor Meyer opened the writing-desk. Here he found and read the student's warning dream. It read as follows: "I thought I was walking in the churchyard of Halle and admiring the number of excellent epitaphs which are cut on the gravestones there. Passing from one to another, I was struck by a plain tombstone, of which I went to read the inscription. With surprise I found upon it my forenames and surname, and that I died on the 4th of March. With progressive anxiety I tried to read the date of the year; but I thought there was moss over the fourth cipher of 178—. I picked up a stone to scrape the figures clean, and just as I began to distinguish a 6, with fearful palpitation I awoke."

*Your* time is coming, unconverted reader. Another New Year you may never see; or if

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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you live to see another year, the Lord may come. Your case will then be hopeless. Left behind, a strong delusion will be sent you, followed by eternal woe. (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.)

How can I sincerely wish you a "Merry Christmas" in your sins, or a "Happy New Year," while you disobey the gospel of God's Son?

Believe that gospel now; fly from coming wrath. "*Prepare to meet thy God!*" Then, indeed, you may have a "Merry Christmas" in the truest sense, and a happier New Year than you have ever known.

C. K.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. B. 1 Corinthians i. 2.—It is a great mistake to suppose that the "sanctification" of this verse is something to which the believer should earnestly endeavour to attain. All saints of this dispensation are "sanctified in Christ Jesus"; and let it be borne in mind that every true Christian is a saint. The great idea in sanctification is *setting apart*—all who have been born again, and come under the shelter of the precious blood of Christ, are set apart in Christ Jesus—set apart *from* all that with which they were once identified, and set apart *to* God, to do His will and to live to His glory. Kindly refer to our January number of *the present year*, and you will find a paper on this very subject, dealing with it at

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greater length, and shewing the different aspects in which it is presented in the Scriptures.

Referring now to your question on 1 Corinthians vii. 14, it is a very grave error indeed to suppose that children who have a Christian parent are free from indwelling sin. The word "holy," as applying to such, does not mean that they are inwardly holy. The teaching of the passage will be plain if you will compare and contrast it with what is found in the last two chapters of Ezra. There you will see that many of the chief men and others among the Israelites had mingled themselves with those that were not of Israel, and had formed marriages with them. Ezra calls upon them to dissolve and disown all such ties, and the issue of them, as being polluted and polluting. But under Christianity it was not so. If a husband or wife were converted, the other was not to be regarded as a Jew would view his heathen partner and their children in Ezra's day. The ties were to be respected; for the unbelieving husband, or wife and children, were looked upon as "holy" in the sense of not being unclean.

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"NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM  
FALLING, AND TO PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS BEFORE  
THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING  
JOY, TO THE ONLY WISE GOD OUR SAVIOUR,  
BE GLORY AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND  
POWER, BOTH NOW AND EVER.  
AMEN."