SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

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

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

"The **Word** of the Lord endureth for ever."—1 PETER I. 25.

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

ATONEMENT.

WE frankly acknowledge that the word *atonement* is not to be found anywhere in the New Testament. In the Old it is often met with, in the New never. Romans v. 11, as it stands in our common Bible, may seem to be an exception. It is not really so. It should be *reconciliation* there and not atonement, as everybody knows, and so it is rendered in the Revised Version. A moment's reflection will show that this is right. *We* do not receive the atonement. It is for our sakes that it is made. Atonement is Godward. *He* receives it and sets His seal to its all-sufficiency. But though the word is not in the New Testament, the thing itself is there, clear as day, and blind indeed is he who, reading his Bible, fails to find it.

But what is meant by The Atonement? Our answer is—that satisfaction rendered to Divine Justice in respect of the sin of man which makes the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens favourable unto us. There may be other aspects of it giving to it greater breadth and fulness and particular application, but

this will suffice for our present need. And let it be well noted that it is altogether of God's grace that atonement should be possible. The gracious thought originated with Him because He is full of compassion and His name is Love. With Him, too, it rests, and not with us, to say what the nature and extent of it should be. You do not doubt this, good reader, do you ? Surely the transgressor has no right to frame the law that deals with his offence, nor is it for him to dictate to the judge as to the sentence it deserves. In like manner, if sin at the first was a daring assertion of our own will in opposition to the known will of God, a deliberate revolt against His authority, Who had it in His heart to do us nothing but good, then to God alone belonged the right to determine what would meet the exigencies of the case. To visit the sinner with the due reward of his deeds were an easy matter. For God to pardon the offender, to bring him into His favour, to enrich him with blessings such as man in innocence never had, to do all this without violating the fundamental laws of His government, this was the problem to be solved. The atonement is the solution of it.

Death was the penalty of sin. " In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die " (Gen. II. 17). Yet not physical death only. There is spiritual death—the soul's separation from God. From the day that

Cain was born this is the condition of all men—dead in trespasses and sins. Out of this condition we are only brought by the quickening power of God. Physical death is but the door into the larger penalty. And so it is written, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* the judgment" (Heb. IX. 27). The atonement, whatever it be, must bear some relation to the penalty of sin under which we lie—death, separation from God, the hiding of His face Whose name is Holy.

The Christian doctrine is that the Son of God came forth from heaven, His dwelling-place, to deal with this great and solemn question. It was the will of God that He should do so. In the volume of the Book it was written of Him—the Book of Eternal Counsel—"Lo, I come to do Thy will." Nor did He fail in this momentous undertaking. He set His face as a flint till the last tittle of that Will was accomplished, though the pathway of obedience lay through Gethsemane and Calvary. By man sin had entered into the world and death by sin, so by Man should sin be overthrown and death ultimately destroyed. But this was serious business. It meant the facing of God's holy and righteous—not vindictive—wrath, it meant the endurance of sin's penalty after such a measure as should demonstrate once for all the awfulness of sin. The sufferings which human hands meted out

to Him were great indeed, and all the greater as coming from those for whom He had nothing but love. But there were other sorrows immeasurably more profound. "*It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him and to put Him to grief.*" Who shall tell of those inward sufferings which His spirit felt when this took place and when all God's waves and billows went over Him? Alone, forsaken, in that dread hour! Here human thought and speech break down and can go no further. Here we stand, so to speak, on the shore of a dark and stormy sea on which the Son of Man sets sail. We watch the boat with its lonely Occupant until it passes into the gloom and out of mortal sight, and as we stand and watch, we hear a cry coming across the wild waste of waters: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But what that meant to Him no one can ever tell.

Out of the gloom and darkness of the grave Christ has come. God has raised Him from the dead and given Him glory at His own right hand. And now pardon, peace, and life eternal are preached to men—to all men everywhere, freely, without money and without price. The atonement has brought all this about, and if through sin we have lost an earthly paradise it throws wide open the gates of the paradise of God, and bids the banished enter in.

And if any ask—Why could not the result have been attained in some other way? If God be eternally and everywhere supreme, and if there be no Will higher than His, could He not have remitted the penalty of sin without any atonement at all? If God can do everything, could He not do that?—in answering let us distinguish between things that differ. In the material and physical sphere there is indeed nothing that the Almighty God cannot do. The sun and moon and rolling stars proclaim His greatness and His glorious power. With Him Who built the spacious universe, with its myriads of wonders which excite our astonishment and inspire us with awe, with Him, I say, nothing is impossible. But when we enter the moral sphere all is changed. There are difficulties, yea, impossibilities with God. It is impossible that God should lie. He cannot deny Himself. He must be ever true to His name and character. Just and holy is He. Who would wish it otherwise? It is this that makes atonement necessary if anything but wrath is to be our fate. And He Who saw the need has met it. "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job XXXIII. 24). Christ is that Ransom, and the ransom price is the Atonement which He has made.

ARE YOU GROWING IN GRACE?

GROWTH is one of the surest signs of healthy life. It is so whether in the vegetable or animal kingdom, nor is it otherwise in the realm of grace. Growth, therefore, we expect to see in every Christian. In Nature, at a certain point, growth stops and decay sets in, but with the believer it should continue all his earthly days.

No sensible person expects the convert of yesterday to be anything but a babe. But we do not expect him to remain a babe. With a keen appetite for wholesome spiritual food, a good digestion, plenty of Heaven's fresh air and exercise he is bound to grow. And the scripture "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter III. 18), applies to every one of us.

WHAT IS GROWTH?

Growth has no direct connection with age.—A man may be white with years, and have passed many a milestone since his conversion, and yet be spiritually a stunted child. Some of the Hebrew believers were like this. They were stumbling over the Christian alphabet when they should have been teachers, and needing milk when they should have been fit for strong meat (see Heb. V. 12–14).

Growth is not necessarily connected with what

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we do.—There may be much earnestness and activity, yet no growth. The Ephesian Christians sadly exemplified this in their later years. When the apostle Paul wrote his epistle to them, they were like a tree planted by rivers of waters, green and vigorous; but when the Lord Jesus addressed them through His servant John, though recognizing their *works*, *labour*, and *patience*, He had to say, "Thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence *thou art fallen*." The top shoot of the fair young tree had been nipped by frost and growth was stopped (see Rev. II. 1–7).

Growth does not even depend upon what we know.—Our mental development may far outstrip our spiritual. An "infant prodigy," whatever he may be in musical or educational circles, is a pitiable object in the Christian sphere, and comes to a bad end. The novice, if capable of seizing abstractions, may speedily grasp much truth in the letter, but let him not assume that he has *therefore* become a giant and able to instruct his grandfather.

Under this delusion some of the Corinthian believers fell. They were enriched in "all knowledge" (I Cor. I. 5), they assumed to be wise (III. 18), they all attempted to be teachers (XIV. 26), they even began to let their minds run riot with the cardinal truth of resurrection (XV. 12, 35). As a matter of fact they

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were ignorant (VI. 2, 3, 9, 15, 19; VIII. 2; X. 1; XII. 1; XIV. 38; XV. 36), fleshly and but babes (III. 1–3). They used their "knowledge" to the damage of some of their brethren (VIII. 11). Such knowledge only puffs up. Love builds up (VIII. 1).

Growth therefore is altogether a question of what we are.—The very epistle that exhorts us to "grow in grace" opens with a fine statement of what it really is. It runs thus:—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (or *love*) (2 Peter I. 5–7).

With faith we all have started. But to it virtue (or courage) must be added, if it is to count for much. Courage needs to be controlled by knowledge. Knowledge to be tempered with moderation. Moderation to develop into patience (or endurance). Endurance begets godliness. Godliness produces and develops brotherly kindness. Love, *Divine Love*, crowns the whole and welds all together, in the heart of the believer.

These things, notice, are to be "*in us* and abound" (*v.* 8). They are not to be put on as a man puts on a coat, but to be produced inwardly in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that they become part and parcel of ourselves.

The apostle Peter was really desiring that the features of the beautiful life of Christ should be reproduced in these believers.

Growth, then, is a question of character. As we grow we are moulded more and more into conformity to CHRIST.

ARE YOU GROWING?

Ask yourself, then: "Is this kind of thing going on with me? Is there beneath my Christian activity and increase of Bible knowledge a sturdy development of Christian character?" Having asked, answer with candour and great care.

In thus doing, however, a danger lurks. While nothing is so helpful as honest self-judgment before God, nothing is more harmful than allowing this necessary inspection to degenerate into self-occupation.

Beware of getting your thoughts morbidly centred upon yourself.

Three children, let us suppose, have little gardens prettily marked out in their father's grounds. How very different they look! In this one the weeds grow rank and long, the flowers few and feeble. No traces of trowel and rake and watering-pot! In the second all is tidy, the weeds kept well down and the flowers, if not high-class, are healthy; while the third shows marks of much labour. Indeed, it is almost painfully tidy, but every flower is

either drooping or dead. How easy it is from the state of the gardens to divine the character of the children! And if the careless, go-as-you-please style of number one is to be deplored, the feverish anxiety which led number three to continually pull up one and another of the plants to see how the roots were getting on is almost as disastrous from a practical point of view.

Avoid both extremes. May the good Lord deliver you from that careless and easy-going kind of religion which never allows you to honestly ask yourself the question, "*Am I really growing in grace?*" for fear of being disturbed; and also from the morbid self-occupation which leads you to be always asking yourself that question and everlastingly tugging up everything in your poor heart by the roots in the endeavour to answer it.

Hit the happy mean by facing the question with the heart in the sunshine of the love of Jesus, and if driven to the conclusion that your growth is but small, let it spur you cheerfully on to know more of Christ.

IN WHAT DO WE GROW?

It is important to remember that as believers we stand in the grace (or favour) of God (see Rom. v. 2), and hence it is we are told by the apostle Peter to "grow *in grace*."

Grace, then, is the soil in which the believer

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is planted. Not *the world*, though if one judged by the ways of some Christians one might almost think so. Though all believers stand in grace, many so surround themselves with a worldly atmosphere that all progress is stopped.

It is very easy for us to abjure the world in the abstract, whilst heavily indulging in its pleasures in detail.

To illustrate this. Some time ago a prayer-meeting was being held. Considerable fervour was manifested in the meeting. A man commenced to call upon God. In earnest tones he cried, " Lord, save us from the world ! "

" Amen ! Amen ! " rose in loud chorus from all parts of the building.

A moment's pause, then :—

" Lord, save us from the tobacco ! "

Dead and ominous silence. It seemed to kill the meeting !

You may not approve of praying in this fashion, but it shows how easy it is to pray to be preserved from the world in the abstract and to cherish it in detail.

Solomon's vines, remember, were nipped and spoiled by the " little foxes " (Song of Sol. II. 15). There were plenty of them, and being small they crept in without attracting much attention.

Many Christians, too, suffer from living in an atmosphere of *law*. They live and move,

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read and pray, serve and worship, by rule. No one can expect to grow if encased in cast iron !

How sweet is the liberty that grace gives ! *Liberty*, I say, and not licence. For the grace that brings salvation also *teaches* " that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world " (Titus II. 12).

Let us strike our roots deep down into grace. Let us bask in its sunshine. Oh ! the humbling, soul-subduing effect of knowing that, in spite of all we find in ourselves, the sweet and perfect favour of God rests upon us because of Christ, and nothing can separate us " from the love of God which is *in* "—*not* ourselves but—" Christ Jesus our Lord " (Rom. VIII. 39).

HOW DO WE GROW?

Of late, a good deal has been said in public about the poor physique of thousands of children attending school. The practical question is, What is to be done ? Will the case be met by giving them plenty to do in the way of exercise and activity ? No, they have not the stamina or vigour for much of that. Shall we include some health instruction in the school studies, and teach them how the human body grows, adding cell to cell and tissue to tissue, the value of different kinds of food, and the laws governing the process of digestion ?

Six years of such studies will not add as many inches to their stature as a six-months'

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course of good feeding—substantial meals of suitable food, four times a day and seven days a week!

If you would grow, then, select good spiritual food. *Good food*, remember. Not novels, light literature, or other worldly rubbish. And *digest* it. Take time to meditate and turn things over in your mind. And if they cut, welcome them still. When the ox chews the cud it generally lies down. In the same way spiritual digestion is greatly favoured by a little quiet, with the knees bent in prayer.

The food of the Christian is in one word—CHRIST—"increasing in (or '*by*,' see margin R.V.) the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10)—and since it is in Christ that God is known to us, Peter puts it, "Grow in grace and in *the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

It is good to know *about* Him, and everything that helps us in this direction is profitable, but the point of supreme importance is to know the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; to enjoy that holy intimacy which is the fruit of daily living and walking in His presence. Even here upon earth to be

"Close to His trusted side
In fellowship divine."

Then bit by bit we shall discover His many-sided glories, and appreciate the various characters in which He stands related to us. In our next number we shall hope to suggest a few of them.

F. B. H.

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THE SOZOMENOI AND THE SESOSMENOI: WHO ARE THEY?

"I ADMIT that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ may know that they are forgiven and justified, but I do not see that any of us are warranted in saying that we *are saved* in the same absolute way." So said a Christian friend to me the other day.

I ventured to express my surprise at his words. Did he not remember, I asked him, the day when he, a poor sinner, was *saved* through faith in Christ, saved from the awful peril to which his many sins had exposed him, saved from his terrible position as a traveller on the broad way that leads to eternal ruin?

"Oh, yes, I know what you mean," he replied. "But I do not speak of salvation in that way. I do not think it is scriptural."

"Not scriptural!" I exclaimed, in my astonishment. "Whatever do you mean?"

"Well," said he, "I think *salvation* has reference to things around us—worldly influences, the snares of the wilderness, and so forth. None of us are completely saved from such things, nor shall we be until the Lord comes. We are *being saved* from day to day, but it would be wrong to say that we *are saved*."

"But," I replied, "are you not jumping to a very illogical conclusion? Because there is such a thing as the day-to-day salvation of which you speak, must we conclude that there is no such thing as a complete, eternal salvation, to be known and enjoyed by the believer now? Because we are *being saved*, does it follow that there is no sense in which we *are saved?*"

Let me pursue this matter a little further. Undoubtedly there are a thousand things from which the Christian needs salvation. There are corrupting influences, plausible temptations, the power of earthly things, sinful habits, baneful companionships, and many other things that belong to "this present evil world." Salvation from all such things lies for the believer in his submission to Christ. We confess Him as Lord, we keep His word, we are subject to His authority, and He shields us from the snares that the enemy sets for our feet. His present service for us on high, and the presence of the Holy Spirit with us on earth, both make this day-to-day salvation possible and available for us.

It *may* be that the familiar words in 1 Corinthians 1. 18—"us who are saved"—have reference to this aspect of salvation. A ritualistic clergyman once explained those words to me thus.

"The verse speaks," said he, "of the

Sozomenoi, that is, of those who are *being saved.*"

Now I grant at once that the Greek participle, Sozomenoi, *may* be translated thus. It is so rendered in the Revised Version. And Christians are in very truth the Sozomenoi—those who are being saved, being brought to the glory that awaits them, and for which they have been perfectly fitted by the precious blood of Christ.

But I wish to point out that there is another Greek participle used to describe Christians, in Eph. II. 5 and 8. They are not only spoken of as Sozomenoi—people who are being saved, but also as Sesosmenoi—those who *have been saved.* If the Revised Version be quoted in I Cor. I. 18, it is only fair to quote it also in Eph. II., where it reads, "By grace have ye been saved."

It has been pleaded that in Eph. II. the apostle is merely stating the means by which salvation is brought about, saying, "By grace ye are saved," as we might say, "By food you are nourished," or "By medicine you are cured," and that the statement does not necessarily imply that those addressed were actually saved. But this is just what the word employed *does* imply. The apostle's language means that the believers to whom he wrote had been actually saved, and were Sesosmenoi —the people who *are saved.*

A note by the translator on the last page of the New Translation (unabridged edition) emphasizes this.

"Ephesians II. 5, 8, 'saved.' The perfect tense, σεσωσμένοι, *not* the principle on which, but *the actual fact, what has been done* and so abides."

Other passages of Scripture might be referred to. Look at 2 Timothy I. 9, and Titus III. 5. Read them in the Revised Version if you will. In each case we are told that God *saved us*. Mark the words: not "is saving us," or "will save us," but *saved us*.

Is not this enough? With such blessed words before our eyes may we not say emphatically, "We *are saved*, because *He* has saved us"?

If it is a comfort to know that we are *Sozomenoi*—people who are being saved all along the homeward way, is it not also an unspeakable joy and comfort to be able to speak of ourselves further as *Sesosmenoi*—people who *have been saved*, once for all, by God Himself, saved with an everlasting salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? H. P. B.

"BE out and out for Christ, nail your colours to the mast; labour for God, and live for eternity."

RUTS, AND THE WAY OUT OF THEM.

FANCY yourself in some old-world village, and in an out-of-the way lane in a remote corner of it. A track is worn in the green road, and deep down the track, along which go carts and wagons, are ruts, made by the wheels. The furrow, in which the horses move, is only less deep ; and on each side are thick hedges and overhanging trees. If you were driving down such a lane and wanted to turn off the track, you might find considerable difficulty in forcing the wheels out of these deep ruts.

Now, we all know what ruts of another kind are, and how likely we are to find ourselves in one or another of them. There are ruts formed by habits, study, pleasure, music, sport, and there are political, dramatic, and even religious ruts. Daily custom makes a rut of considerable depth ; and we have all heard the story of the old mill horse, who, after years of faithful service, was given his liberty, and who spent the rest of his days in walking round and round a new circle which he made for himself, in the field where he was turned out to grass.

We are apt to be occupied with the present, and the present alone ; the wheels of the mind are deep down in a rut, along which we

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move heavily, and we lose sight of the future with its far-reaching consequences.

The talk of many young men is of little else but pleasure in the especial form most attractive to themselves. In the winter, hours and minutes are counted till evening editions of newspapers appear containing the latest football results. In the summer, cricket and other games occupy the thoughts, and furnish themes for conversation; "test matches," and the cricket records of various counties are continually discussed. With youths of different temperament, other kinds of pleasure are in vogue; and these are not necessarily wrong in themselves (for I am not speaking now of immorality or gross sin), but they are apt to form a rut so deep that to extricate oneself from it is not a little difficult. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccles. XI. 9).

Habit, as we saw in the case of the mill horse, is apt to make a rut for itself. A creature of habit becomes a sort of animated machine. He is called at the same hour, descends at the same moment to eat the daily rasher, or drink the cup and a half of tea; he catches the same omnibus or train; he is supplied with

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the same newspaper ; he sits, year by year, on the same stool, in the same office ; he returns home at the same hour, to dine on the same fare, and to retire at a stated time to bed—only to recommence the old round on the next day. All well and good ! But does life furnish nothing else beyond this monotony ? Is there not a heaven to seek, or a hell to avoid ? "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. XIV. 12).

Money and its accumulation form ruts for very many. There are different ways in which money injuriously affects men. First, there is the love of it, for what it brings the possessor. He can go where he likes, and, in these days of motors, almost as quickly as he likes ; he can live in a neighbourhood or a house which he likes ; he can often marry whom he likes. And all this ministering to self has, of course, its charm. But let it be remembered that *there is a hereafter*. Then, money is often loved for the position which it gives in the world, especially in these days of much pretension and little refinement. A man delights to be known as a millionaire, to be toadied and worshipped, and to carry things with a high hand. And he is apt to forget the uncompromising words of the apostle James, "God is no respecter of persons."

In some strange cases, the actual possession

of money subjugates the possessor. He cannot spend it; he will even deny himself the necessities of life; he is dominated and enslaved; money is his god, and a god who will, unless he escapes from the dominion, sink him into the nethermost hell. "Thou fool," was the word to the rich man, in the parable, "this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then, whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (Luke XII. 20).

It would be easy to tell of the ruts into which the lover of music, or any other art, or the cultivated man is apt to fall who devotes his *whole time* to the mere accumulation of such knowledge as God classes with the lusts of the *flesh* in Eph. II. 3. These men neglect the knowledge which alone is worth having—the knowledge of God.

But the deepest rut of all, and that which is most difficult to leave, is the *religious* rut. Once sink deep into that rut and only the mighty power of God can relieve the captive. A concrete example of such a case is given by the apostle Paul. He says of himself that he was, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." No flaw could be found in his character or practices; all the requirements of his religion were scrupulously performed by him; no ceremonious observance was omitted. And there are to-day some whose very dress and manner betoken the

religious rut in which they are. You might set your clock by the minute at which they pass your house on the way to church; their dress and demeanour are exact and irreproachable; and as they walk up the centre aisle to their accustomed pew, one can imagine them saying within their heart, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are."

Now, there are three things which pulled the apostle Paul out of the rut in which he moved. First, he "*saw* a *light* from heaven (Acts XXVI. 13) above the brightness of the sun." The light was from an unknown luminary—from the scene where true light is to be found. The light has entered the dark scene of our mortal life; Christ said of Himself, "I am the light of the world." But "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John III. 19), and the light is now removed from this scene, except as it is seen (and should be clearly seen) reflected in the saints. Has that light shone upon you, dear reader? If not, you are dark indeed.

Now the effect of the light seen by the apostle was to bring him to the earth. Down came all that in which he had trusted and on which he had built; down came his boasted religion; he was prostrate under the searching light of God—"the chief of sinners."

And now happened the second of the three things of which we have spoken. The apostle

heard a voice speaking his name, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Has God ever spoken to you, not with audible voice, but by His Holy Word? Has no scripture ever searched your conscience through and through? Has no sermon seemed addressed to you, personally? Has no message from a friend, no word from a parent, come in burning power to your soul? *You know that this has been the case.* Then, God has spoken to you, and His desire is to draw you out of the rut of mere profession into appreciation and enjoyment of His love.

And now comes a third thing connected with the conversion of the apostle, and that is the *revelation of a personal Christ in heaven.* The voice said, "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest"—the same Jesus Whose name Saul was seeking to destroy from off the earth. But mark this well, there was no word of anger, no reproach, no threat of vengeance—only that pathetic "Why?" Why, indeed, did Saul persecute? The tender, loving, heart-stirring words reached the persecutor's very soul; and out of the deep religious rut, Saul, the Pharisee, came forth to be Paul the bond-slave of the Saviour—Paul, "who was ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Friend, are you in any of the ruts which I have named? If so, may God give you grace

to reflect whither they lead, and to remember that the longer you are in them the more difficult it is to leave them. Wake up to the consideration that there is before you a life to be lived throughout Eternity. The things of time will soon be over; will it be well with you then, or will you be rudely snatched from your rut into the dark place where broods despair? May God have mercy upon you, and bring you to Himself, for time and for eternity, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

E. C—p.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. E. B.—Your letter seems to imply that forgiveness of sins should only be preached to the repentant and to those who turn to God. But Scripture does not put the matter in that way. The gospel has no such limitations, it is preached to every creature under heaven—to the honest man and the thief, to the industrious and the idle, to the diligent doer of his duty and the good-for-nothing, to the impoverished beggar in a Salvation Army shelter and the millionaire in his marbel palace. For all alike are sinners, all alike are guilty, all alike are lost, and to all and every one of them is the gospel preached. And if the glad tidings of the grace of God, the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*, even the chief—if this gospel be believed, then the one who believes does indeed repent and turn to God. Impossible that it should be otherwise.

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This condition of soul and its changed attitude toward God is *the effect* of faith. It follows as certainly as day follows night. Your remark, therefore, that "A thief is not forgiven whilst in the act of stealing, is he?" is based on a misconception. The gospel is sent even to that man in the very act of pursuing his thievish practices: let him believe it and he is arrested on his downward career, he ceases to be a thief. "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. 11). Nor is it otherwise with the upright, honest, and highly respectable member of society. He, too, in common with all the rest, is on the downward road. To him the same gospel is preached, and if *he* believes it, he, too, will repent and turn to God. It is in every case the inevitable result of the gospel being received in faith.

Neither is the full and absolute forgiveness of the believer's sins to be doubted because, in some cases, the consequences of his sins abide. If a man whose health is hopelessly shattered by long years of dissipation hears and believes the gospel and is forgiven and saved, it does not follow that he will get his health back again. Physical feebleness and suffering may be his lot all his earthly days. But God is able to make even this, the fruit of his sin, to bring forth blessing to his soul, though He works no miracle to take it away. What a man sows, that shall he also reap, is an unchangeable principle with God, both on the side of the evil and the good (Gal. VI. 7, 8). We reserve your remaining queries till next month.

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H. N.—Much might be said in answer to your question, "*How to study the Scriptures?*" We shall say but little lest in laying down rules we should lead any away from the guidance, help, and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

It will greatly facilitate our understanding of the Scriptures if we see the unique place the Church holds in the Sacred Writings. You remember the phrase in 1 Corinthians x. 32, "The Jews . . . the Gentiles . . . the Church of God," the last of the three being distinct from the other two. This is often overlooked, and the glowing prophecies relating to Israel are then interpreted as having their fulfilment in the Church. Thus the understanding is darkened, and Scripture misunderstood and misapplied. Let it be clearly seen that the Church had its birth on the day of Pentecost, not before, that its calling, hopes, and destiny are heavenly. The clear apprehension of this will help much in studying the Holy Scriptures.

As touching the Epistles we believe it a helpful practice to read the one that is to be studied right through, from beginning to end, at one sitting. Then read it again in the same way for the second and the third time. The scope of the epistle will thus be seen, its salient features discerned, as also the special object for which it was written. We cannot press this point too strongly.

But that is not everything. A helpful knowledge of the letter of the Word may thus be gained, but the inward man will not be renewed unless we read in a prayerful spirit. If we do so read, it will lead us to our knees in thanksgiving, in prayer that God would continue to teach us, and with

much earnest entreaty that the truth may be built into our own soul. By so doing we shall become truly humble, for the greatness of the things revealed will make us feel increasingly our own littleness. There is a knowledge that puffs up. Beware of it. Shun it as you would a viper. It leads to pride and other hateful things.

We may profitably read in reference to particular subjects such as—What is the Church? What flows from the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth? The coming of the Lord. When and how will the promises given to Israel be fulfilled? The believer's justification and acceptance before God. Sanctification, what is it? and so on. Passages dealing with these great subjects should be examined and compared, but always with a heart prayerfully inclined.

S. C.—Rom. VIII. 29 reveals the gracious purpose of God concerning those whom He now calls and justifies—they are to be conformed to the image of His Son. Such is their high destiny, and nothing can overthrow it, for "the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm XXXIII. 11). Remark, our verse does not say that we are predestined to be saved and to go to heaven when we die, for, if God so pleased, all that might be true without our being conformed to the image of His Son. He might have marked us out for an angel's place and state. But, no, we are destined, through His grace, to something better. We are to be like Christ. He will be surrounded in glory by the many brethren, each conformed to His image, and He the firstborn of them all.

W. B. H.—Unless it be believed that in a country professedly Christian, as distinguished from heathen lands, baptism has no place, we think that any one desirous of Christian baptism should be baptized on the first opportunity. By immersion undoubtedly was the ancient mode and it was an outward and visible sign of the Christian faith having been embraced. It is not, perhaps, a matter of much moment whether it takes place in the presence of many or few. Cases differ and circumstances have to be considered.

CASTDOWN. — It is a suggestive fact that in none of the apostolic epistles are we directed to pray for the Holy Spirit. Is not this because the Holy Spirit—a Divine Person and not a mere influence—came down at Pentecost to abide with us *for ever* as John XIV. 16 distinctly states. And every believer receives that great Gift. It is true we are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit, but we do not understand that to mean a second or larger gift.

(ii) "Forgetting those things which are behind" is the language of one who runs a race and is anxious to reach the winning post. He allows nothing to detain him—things behind are lost sight of and forgotten in his zeal to reach the goal. As to past failures and sins, these our God has cast behind His back, and if assured of His forgiveness, as the believer well might be, then behind our back they ought to be also. Christ and His love furnishes a happier subject for thought than our own shortcomings.

STEPS IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.*

THE beginning of our acquaintance with Jesus is as

SAVIOUR. TO DELIVER.

To the anxious sinner, burdened with guilt, groaning under sin, and trembling before death and judgment, Jesus stands forth as Saviour. He has grappled with sin, He has died and is risen again. How perfect and attractive He is! No wonder that the newly pardoned sinner cares for no one and nothing else.

Can you look back to a moment when you tasted the joy of salvation, as Israel did when on the further shore of the Red Sea's judgment flood they sang, saying, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously . . . and He is become my salvation"? (Exod. xv. 1, 2). Or as it was with Israel centuries later, when David met Goliath of Gath, and in the name of Jehovah wrought deliverance? Then the awful tension and suspense was ended. A mighty thrill ran through the watching hosts, "and the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted" (1 Sam. xvii. 52).

* This is a sequel to "*Are you Growing in Grace?*" in our last issue. Both papers, under the former title, will be published together in booklet form. Price 1d.

It was so with us. We have been delivered. Our days of mourning and suspense are over. The victory is won, and Jesus lives! And though perhaps years have rolled away since first we knew Him thus, the thrill of that moment is in our hearts to-day.

We do not advance far before we see the same Jesus in another character. He is

LORD. TO COMMAND.

The gospel, of course, presents Him to us as Lord (2 Cor. IV. 5). We not only believe with the heart unto righteousness, but also confess Him as Lord with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. X. 9, 10). But some little time passes ere we realize what this means.

Jesus is in the place of authority. It is His to command, ours to gladly obey, and that means *the surrender of our wills to His.*

The conversion of the Apostle Paul was an ideal one. He reached the point of surrender very speedily (see Acts IX. 5, 6). While in the dust of the road to Damascus he acknowledged Jesus as his Lord, and his whole life was transformed. Most of us lag far behind him. Still, to that point all of us have to come.

We were talking to a Christian young man the other day, and during our conversation he referred several times to " the old days," when he was a worldly, easy-going believer, having just a languid interest in the things of God. He said, " I really believed on the Lord Jesus

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Christ for the forgiveness of my sins, and had I died I am sure I should have gone to heaven."

Still, they were " the old days," for a new day had dawned with the discovery that Jesus was his Lord, a Master to live for and to serve. Passing under this new management a great alteration took place. He was a different man.

Has this new day dawned in *your* history ? If not, may it speedily come ! It lies at the very beginning of Christian growth.

One of the first results of a hearty acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ is that the convert gets plunged into a good bit of trouble and soul exercise, since his very efforts to do the will of his newly found Master bring him into conflict with his own will.

Three things at least have to be learned.

First, the true character of the flesh (i.e. the old evil nature still within us), hopelessly bad. " I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing " (Rom. VII. 18). If " *no good thing*," then not even a *good* desire is to be found there. Yet how long it takes most of us to abandon all expectation of good or even improvement from within.

Second, the terrible power of the flesh. Such power that even the fact of being born again, and therefore possessing a new nature, does not *of itself* enable us to overcome. We find a man saying, " The good that I would I do

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not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do " (Rom. VII. 19). He desired the good, proving the existence of the new nature within him ; yet such was the power of the old that it overpowered the new, bringing him into captivity (*v.* 23), and making him a thoroughly wretched man (*v.* 24).

Have you never started out to live, as you supposed, a valiant Christian life for the Lord, only to find yourself defeated, not by giant foes without, but by the traitor " flesh " within ?

This, then, is the lesson *you* are learning.

Thirdly, what God has done as regards the flesh in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. " God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. VIII. 3). What a relief it is to know this ! God now treats the flesh as a condemned thing, and has done with it. It just remains for us to fall into line with God, and in our turn to treat it as a condemned thing, to be done with. This we *can* do, inasmuch as having believed in Jesus we have received the Holy Spirit, the new power, and He is more than a match for the power of the flesh.

Led by the Holy Spirit we lift our eyes to heaven, and Jesus now becomes to us

AN OBJECT. TO CONTROL.

And this is the real secret of the believer's practical deliverance from the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

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Satan, the wily adversary and accuser, busies himself in attacking the *faith* of the saints (see 2 Cor. XI. 3 ; 1 Thess. III. 5 ; 1 Peter V. 9), and hence to meet him the shield of faith is needed (Eph. VI. 16).

The flesh supplies us with all those baser desires, which each of us knows too well, as also with every other desire not in accordance with the will of God.

The world—the gigantic system around us, which Satan and man have engineered between them in the vain hope of making the latter happy and contented without God—like Bunyan's great "Vanity Fair," contains within itself attractions suitable to every taste and temperament, and all appealing to the lusts of the flesh within.

Though volumes could well be written as to the believer's deliverance from this threefold enemy, and the way of it, that deliverance itself is simply and sweetly enjoyed by those who, having learnt enough of the world and self to be sick of both, turn to Jesus and find in Him

> "... the Object bright and fair
> To fill and satisfy the heart."

Is Jesus *this* to your soul—an Object to love and live for? Paul said, "The law" (or control) "of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law" (or control) "of sin and death" (Rom. VIII. 2).

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A striking illustration of the power of an object to control has just occurred. The military air-ship has made a trial trip round London, and during the brief hour that it hovered over the Metropolis it became the object of a million pair of eyes. Everything else was forgotten. The latest fashions lost their attraction, shops were deserted, dinners left to get cold. The man of business dropped his pen and the student his books. Everybody stopped and gazed at this new object in the sky, and for the moment got clean delivered from their ordinary life.

It was the novelty of the thing that attracted, however. Not so with Jesus. He who has loved Him longest and known Him best most feels His blessed and permanent attractions. Summed up in one word it all is centred in His mighty and eternal LOVE. Just as a powerful magnet will extricate a needle from a heap of sawdust, the magnetic love of Jesus will deliver a soul from any amount of worldly and fleshly rubbish. May God bring both readers and writer under its power increasingly.

If all this is to be kept up, we shall know and appreciate the Lord Jesus in another character, viz. as

HIGH PRIEST. TO SUSTAIN.

There are a good many Christians about who want to be more devoted, or to live "the higher life." But though their desires are good, their

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circumstances are trying, and their performance poor. Are you one of them ?

Possibly you are acquainted with the Epistle to the Hebrews, and therefore know well that Jesus *is* your great High Priest in heaven (IV. IX.), but the question is, Do you really and practically know Him *as* your great High Priest who sustains your soul day by day, amidst the many trials and difficulties of life ?

Only those whose faces are set in the right direction need expect the help of the Priest. To help a man on the *wrong* road is no real help at all. Hence the careless, worldly-minded believer will not get the help of the Priest ; he needs the services of Jesus as Advocate to touch his conscience and put him right. The earnest-minded believer who heartily acknowledges Jesus as Lord, and loves Him as Object, will both need it and get it, the result being not only that he is carried safely on to heaven by and by, but also carried into the holiest (i.e. the consciously realized presence of God) *now* (Heb. X. 19–22).

Nothing that can be said on the subject, however, will give such a sense of the grace and power of Jesus as our High Priest, as a little practical experience, gained in turning to Him in moments of difficulty and need. So take good heed to the exhortation : " Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,

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that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. IV. 16).

All this will teach us to look joyfully up to the Lord Jesus as

THE HEAD. TO DIRECT.

Christ is the Head of the Church, even as the husband is the head of the wife (Eph. V. 23).

From Him, too, as Head all nourishment and supply for His body comes (Eph. IV. 15, 16).

Wisdom, direction, and nourishment are everyday needs, and the supply of them is not in ourselves, but in Him. As Head He is the overflowing source of all. To "hold the Head" (Col. II. 19) is to appreciate and cleave to Him as such, and thus to really find in Him that which makes us happily independent of man's wisdom in the way of rationalism (*v.* 8), and his religion in the way of ritualism (*vv.* 20–23).

Christ *is* everything, and thus He becomes everything to the believer's heart. We look outside Him for nothing.

One word of warning. Do not think that each one of these steps in the knowledge of Christ stands alone. They are closely connected and often merge into one another in the believer's history. The great end is that we may be thoroughly established; no longer children, but men, Christ being everything, and filling the whole field of the vision of our souls.

F. B. H.

THE BLOOD.

IF you cut across a piece of rope, you can know at once whether or not it chances to belong to the King. For running through every rope which is the property of the Sovereign there is a red strand.

From the beginning to the end of God's written Word there runs a red strand. That red strand represents the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you could remove that from the Bible, you would remove with it all the good which, here or hereafter, can come to man.

Of this truth Satan is well aware, and his insidious attack is directed against that which is fundamental in the religion of Christ. If the foundation be shaken, all is insecure; the mere superstructure is of no consequence if it is built on an unstable base.

The attack of the enemy was first directed against the Church, but when she failed, as a united testimony, and when her members were scattered abroad by his devices, he turned his attention to the Word of God, and to the work of Christ. If he could succeed in shaking confidence in these, the whole foundation of the Christian religion would be undermined. To a great extent the Satanic attempt has proved successful, and now it is often held that a lack of refinement characterizes all

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reference to the blood of Christ. That which God calls " precious " has been designated as the doctrine of the shambles !

Now, first of all, I will endeavour to clear up some misunderstanding about the meaning of that phrase, " the blood." In Leviticus XVII. 11 we read, " For the life of the flesh is in the blood ; *and I have given it to you* upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls ; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." " The life . . . is in the blood " ! Then *blood poured out* means *life given,* and in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ it means your life forfeited, for the " wages of sin is death." Through sin we have incurred death ; and the life of Christ was given up to God upon the altar, of His own free will, to carry out the Divine will. Long centuries before the altar of Calvary was set up God pictured, in type and figure, the work which His Son would carry out for His glory.

Let us look at some of the blessings which God associates in His Word with the blood of Christ, and then let me ask you whether they are blessings with which any of us can possibly dispense. And may our hearts bound with joy as we enter, to some extent at least, into the knowledge which this theme gives us of the great love of God.

First, we read in Exodus XII. 13 : " The blood shall be to you for a token upon the

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houses where ye are ; and when I see the blood I will pass over you." God is here presented as a Judge, Whose judgment is about to fall on all alike. But He provides a remedy, and that remedy is blood, which is to be sprinkled on the door, and which signifies *that death has already been there*, and that judgment has fallen upon a divinely appointed substitute. Nothing but the sprinkled blood could keep back the sword ; nothing else could stay the hand of the destroying angel. And nothing but the emphatic, spoken word of God, " When I see the blood I will pass over," could give assurance to those who placed themselves under the appointed shelter.

In Matthew XXVI. 28 we read of " the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, *for the remission of sins*." The death of Christ is, so to speak, a platform from which God proclaims, far and wide, the forgiveness of sins to all who believe. " Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Be assured, my reader, that there is no other ground upon which forgiveness can reach your guilty soul but that of the precious blood of Christ.

Next, we read in Romans v. 9 the words : " Justified by His blood." Justification is a step further and a step higher than forgiveness. It involves reinstatement in favour. It means not only that the believer is

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placed before God absolutely free from all charges, but even that he is accounted righteous, just as Abraham of old was regarded as righteous when he believed God.

Here, then, are three blessings dependent on the blood-shedding and death of Christ—*shelter from judgment, forgiveness of sins,* and *justification.*

We often hear of men making "their peace with God," and this peace-making is spoken of as something which each one should or ought to do for himself. But any man attempting to make peace with God is too late by nineteen hundred years.

PEACE IS MADE. "Having made peace by the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20), God is "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." The terms of the peace were settled in the Divine counsels before the world was. In the blessed Evangel of Peace the Lord Christ tells us that He has carried out the terms, that He has done the work. God has signified His acceptance of the work, and now you have only to believe the glad tidings of peace. Far and wide is borne that message of perfect peace.

"Yes, Peace, since every claim is met,
Lord Jesus, by Thy blood,
And Thou, our Peace, art risen, and set
On high, by God."

Let us turn to Ephesians i. 7, and read, "In

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Whom we have redemption through His blood." When redemption is complete it will include redemption of the body. Pain and sickness, weakness and suffering, often characterize the condition of those yet in the body; but the prospect is before us of transformation into Christ's likeness bodily (as we should already be transformed morally). We shall be "conformed to the image of God's Son." The Children of Israel were instructed to cut down one sheaf of the harvest to be gathered in, and the priest took it, and waved it before God, as a sample of what was yet to be. *So Christ, the firstfruits,* has entered the presence of God, a true sample of that which, through abounding grace, we are to be. For "when we see Him, we shall be like Him," and then we shall own that but for His blood-shedding that conformity could never have come to pass.

Once more, we read in Hebrews XIII. 12: "Jesus also, that He might sanctify" (separate) "the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." From what are the redeemed people to be separate? From all that which falsely professes to be for God upon earth, but upon which the sure judgment of God is about to fall. Truth must be told on this matter, even at the expense of seeming hard and severe. The apostasy, which will later be attended with the setting up of Anti-

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christ, has already begun. And when inevitable judgment comes upon all that blasphemes and rejects, and upon all that ignores or minimizes the Son of God, what shelter will there be for you, my believing friend, *except the blood of Christ?* That precious stream separates for ever the mere professor from the happy possessor of life in Christ Jesus.

By the value of that crimson tide the believer is brought near to God. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ" (Eph. II. 13). *In Christ Jesus*—mark the words—we are brought to God. Our nearness is not due to the fact of any worthiness of our own; we are "accepted in the Beloved." *In* that Beloved Son, the object of the Father's never-ceasing love and delight, we are before God. Well may we be called upon to "remember" this, and it is only possible through the blood.

There is one other point to be mentioned, and that will be found in Revelation XII. 11: "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb." Here is victory all along the line; here is refuge against the attacks of Satan; here is assurance, conquering doubts and fears; here is answer to all that troubles us in ourselves. All claims have been met; every hindrance has been removed; no power of men or of Satan can prevent our ultimate triumph, for the precious blood has secured the victory for us.

Let us go over this choice list of blessings dependent on the death of Christ :—

(i) Shelter from judgment ; (ii) Forgiveness of sins ; (iii) Justification ; (iv) Peace with God ; (v) Redemption ; (vi) Separation from judgment, reserved for mere professors ; (vii) Nearness to God ; (viii) Victory all along the line.

Now I ask you, can you afford to forego these blessings ? Will you risk them just for the sake of being in the current of modern passing thought ? Oh, build upon a sure foundation, which will endure when the storm comes. We read of the scarlet thread which waved from Rahab's window in Jericho, and we know that " Joshua saved Rahab alive, and her father's household, and all that she had." So let the scarlet thread, which represents the blood of Christ, be the token of your safety from dangers more terrible than those which befell the city of Jericho.

I do not ask to what place of worship you go, or whose preaching you hear. But I warn you, if necessity for blood-shedding is not taught by those who address you, to listen to their preaching no more. If after you had been in heaven any number of millions of years the blood of Christ could lose its value, all there would have to leave the glorious courts. That which gives stability to our tenure of heaven is *the blood of Christ, and His blood alone.*

E. C—P.

JUSTIFIED BY WORKS.

THERE are two propositions which do not come within the scope of this paper. First, that by works alone no man can be justified in the sight of God. Second, that neither can any one be justified by a mixture of faith and works. It is taken for granted that the reader is so far acquainted with the gospel as to know that no works of his, whether alone or combined with faith, can either secure, or help to secure, his acceptance with God. One verse of Scripture is enough to establish this elementary truth: "*To him that worketh not,* but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. IV. 5).

But that "works" have a large place in connection with Christianity no careful reader of the New Testament would deny. Its opening chapters contain the exhortation: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may *see your good works.*" And upon its closing pages the command is inscribed: "Repent, and *do the first works.*"

To the Epistle of James we naturally turn for light upon this subject, for it is there that we read about being "justified by works."

"Oh!" exclaims some reader, "we know all about that. James deals with our justifi-

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cation *before men*, and, of course, that can only be by works, for *they* cannot see our faith."

Not quite so fast, friend. It is true that our fellow-men often remain unconvinced when we *tell* them that we are justified and saved. They are not disposed to attach much value to mere words. Nor can we blame them. Men have a right to expect more than words from us Christians. A consistent life will be more eloquent than the mere utterances of our lips. Works weigh more than words in the esteem of most men. And if they see us backing up our profession by deeds of charity and self-denial, they will conclude that there is reality in our faith. An illustration of the principle is given in James II. 15, 16. If we profess to be desirous that some destitute brother or sister should be "warmed and filled," how can we prove the genuineness of our desire? By giving them "those things which are needful to the body."

But is this all that can be said on the subject of justification by works, as presented in James II.? No. A further fact has to be taken into account, for the two great examples given of justifying works are works that men would not call "good works" at all! Abraham's work has been called "barbarous," and Rahab's action has been stigmatized as "unpatriotic and treacherous." Such works as these certainly have not the evidential

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value in the eyes of men that deeds of mercy and charity have; yet it was on account of these very things that both Abraham and Rahab are declared to have been "justified by works."

Here let me guard my words. Let no reader imagine that I am pleading for a place for works in connection with justification in the ordinary sense of the word. The justification of an ungodly sinner before God is entirely by grace, through faith. It is based upon the merits of Christ's precious blood, and is wholly apart from works. No student of the early chapters of Romans can fail to perceive the truth of this.

But James speaks of another thing altogether. We should be mistaken, however, if we were to interpret James as referring merely to the works by which a Christian can gain the recognition of his sincerity from his fellow-men.

As a matter of actual fact, deeds of benevolence and philanthropy such as are commonly called "good works" may have *no evidential value whatever*. They may be, and often are, performed by those who are only Christians in name. If a person is kind to the poor, ready to respond to the call of need, generous in helping others, it does not follow that he is a true believer in Christ. Such works do not in themselves afford a proof of faith.

But the works referred to in James II. 21–6 *do* afford such proof. They are the direct out-

come of the faith of those who performed them. They had an evidential value *in the eyes of God.* He Who could always read the heart, and knew the faith that was there, was yet pleased to approve the expression of that faith by works. The works were the proof, acceptable to God, of the faith that was within. They were not performed in order to substantiate a profession of faith in the eyes of *men,* but as a witness before *God* of the reality of faith.

Examine these two instances of " justification by works " in detail.

Isaac was the chosen channel through which God's promises to Abraham were to be fulfilled. Yet Abraham's faith did not centre upon his son. It rose higher, and fixed itself upon *God.* Even if Isaac died, *God* would secure the accomplishment of His promises. In His own appointed way, too, He would do it, for could He not raise up Isaac from the dead ? All this was sure to Abraham's faith. So when the call to sacrifice his son came, Abraham rose, in the strength of his faith, and proved it in a way of which God alone could estimate the value. He was " justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar."

Men may exclaim against the deed. They may call it " cruel," " barbarous," " inhuman," " unnatural." But it was not to justify himself before *men* that Abraham built the altar and prepared to slay his son. Such a " work "

as that would not justify him before men. It would rather result in his condemnation. But *before God* Abraham, who years previously has been "justified by faith," was that day justified by works. He performed a work that afforded evidence upon which God's eye could rest with pleasure of the reality of his faith.

Take the case of Rahab. Her faith had grasped the fact that the God of the whole earth was about to take possession of the land she lived in, that He might inherit it through His people. She therefore "received the messengers" of the invading host, and helped them in their endeavours to compass the destruction of her king and country.

A storm of reprobation has fallen upon the name of Rahab from infidel quarters on account of her conduct. Her action in sheltering the enemies of her country has been denounced as the act of a traitor. Certainly her "justification by works" has not been in the sight of men! Rather has she won their scorn and condemnation. But God's thoughts are not as ours. In His eyes Rahab's act was the declaration that she dissociated herself from the wicked city against which God had pronounced sentence of doom, and that she desired to be linked with His people. That her "work" was the outcome of faith is clear from Hebrews XI. 31. But it was a work quite contrary to the good opinion of men. To

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God's ear, however, it spoke eloquently of the faith that was in her soul, and *He* has pronounced her "justified by works."

Other instances may be found in the Bible of "good works" of the sort referred to.

Who would have thought that it was a good work that the woman of Bethany performed in the house of Simon the leper? (see Matt. xxvi. 6–13). Her action aroused the indignation of even good men. The disciples stigmatized it as "waste." They suggested that a much better use of the "very precious ointment" would have been to sell it for the benefit of the poor. There was only one person in all that company who endorsed that woman's action, and *He* spoke of it as "a good work" indeed. He looked at the underlying motive, and He saw that it was love to Himself that prompted the gift. "She hath wrought a good work upon Me," He said. In *His* sight, if in no one else's, she was "justified by works."

Take one other example, from Jeremiah xxxii. Judea was being overrun by the Chaldeans, and Jerusalem was given into their hand. But God had promised that the day of darkness and captivity should have an end, and that after seventy years of exile the people should be restored to their land. The promise, however, was not believed. "There shall be heard in this place, which *ye say* shall

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be desolate, without man and without beast . . . the voice of joy and the voice of gladness" (XXXIII. 10, 11). Jeremiah himself did not share the unbelief of his fellow-countrymen. To his faith the promises of God were sure. So in the land that was so soon to fall into the power of the enemy he bought a field, and paid seventeen shekels of silver for it.

People probably thought him a fool. Did it not seem that he was throwing his money away? Would not the Chaldean occupation of Judea render his title null and void? His purchase, then, would not have much evidential value in the eyes of men. If anything, it would prove him to be foolish and lacking in common sense. But before God that act of Jeremiah's was of great value. He could read therein the reality of Jeremiah's faith. May we not say, then, that in buying that field in the teeth of the Chaldean invasion Jeremiah was "justified by works"?

We are too apt to think of "works" solely with reference to men, and to forget what value *God* puts upon them, if they really witness to the faith that is in our souls. And we are in danger of adopting a human criterion as to what good works really are.

"Good works" before God may be defined as *faith expressing itself in action.* If we believe that Christ is rejected in this world, but that He is coming again to be glorified, we shall

not care to mix up with its politics and pursuits. And our standing aloof, though criticized and condemned by men, will be a "good work" in the sight of God. If we believe that God desires the *salvation* of all, we shall not be content with schemes for the mere amelioration and social improvement of men, and we shall labour for their *eternal salvation*. Men may deem us unpatriotic and unphilanthropic. Be it so. Our aims will be higher; we shall be labouring for eternity, not for time, and thus shall we be "justified by works" before God.

Let us always bear in mind that all true "works" have their origin in God Himself. Faith itself is His gift, and it is He Who works in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure (Phil. II. 13). Our "works" are all part of God's vast plan of blessing, and He has created us in Christ Jesus that we may walk in the good works which He has before prepared. *He* has prepared the works; *we* have to walk in them. It is His will that we should be "zealous of good works," and it has to be constantly affirmed "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus II. 14; III. 8).

And one great help towards being zealous of good works is to see how complete our eternal justification before God is, altogether *without works*, but solely by His grace, and by the blood of Christ, through faith. H. P. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. E. B.—Many priceless lessons have been learned in the school of affliction, and in suffering the Christian character is often mellowed and enriched; but no sufferings endured by us, however great their gain, can make us more fit for heaven, for the holy presence of God, than we already are—if indeed we have believed on the Lord Jesus to life everlasting. Colossians I. 12 is conclusive on this point. "Giving thanks unto the Father, Who *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." "How can that be," says one, "seeing so much evil remains in us?" The answer is that the Christian is a new creation in Christ, and in respect of his sins they have been put out of God's sight for ever by the precious blood of the Saviour. In this blessedness there are no degrees. On the broad platform of Christ's redemption all believers stand, and there are no higher or lower seats. The most matured saint and the convert of yesterday are exactly alike. Both have been loosed from their sins by the atoning work of Christ, both have been created anew in Him, and both have been made meet for the heavenly inheritance. There is no difference. "But what of sanctification?" you ask. If you mean progressive sanctification, we freely admit that in this there are differences, and there should be advancement. But this is not to be confounded with our fitness to stand before God in heavenly glory. The sanctifying operations of the Holy

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Spirit in the believer are most precious, but they are in no way our standing ground. It is *in Christ* that we are complete (Col. II. 10), and *in the Beloved* we have been taken into divine favour (Eph. I. 6). This is true of the youngest born in the family of God.

You speak of suffering as fitting us for high places in the coming kingdom. They shall be given by the Lord, the righteous Judge, to those for whom they are prepared of His Father (Matt. XX. 23). But one thing is certain, if we covet places of distinction in the kingdom *as it now is* the Lord shows the road that leads to them. Would you be great? Be the servant of all. Would you be chief? Be the slave of all. Now the Lord Himself is Leader in that path of humble, self-denying service. And so it is quite possible that distinguished seats in the coming kingdom will be appointed to those who never thought or sought to get them, but who in lowliness of mind have closely followed Him Who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. And as on earth so in heaven. They served here, they shall be pre-eminent in service there, according to the rule of that holy, happy place. Of course, the Lord will be chief in this as in all else, for it is said of Him in relation to His watching servants that " He shall gird Himself and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them " (Luke XII. 37). If this be so, then those who have high places *there* shall be like Christ in this, they shall serve others with still greater humility of mind, as the Lord Himself shall serve.

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X. X. X.—1 Corinthians XIV.—Tongues were among the sign gifts (*v.* 22), and there is no promise either of their continuance or of their return. The gifts that abide are those named in Ephesians IV. 11. "Tongues" were first seen at Pentecost, when strangers from many lands heard, each in his own dialect, the wonderful works of God. But they were forbidden to be used in the Corinthian assembly unless any one present could interpret what was said (*v.* 28). There was nothing in them to edify others if not understood. It was speaking into the air (*v.* 9). The apostle avows that, though he spake with tongues more than they all, yet he would rather speak five words to edification than ten thousand in a tongue (*v.* 19). The feverish anxiety displayed in some quarters to see a return of this "sign" betrays the childishness that marked the Corinthian state (*v.* 20). We believe the looking for "tongues" will generally be found associated with defective, if not erroneous, views touching the Holy Spirit.

M. M.—1 Corinthians X. 21.—The table of the Lord is in contrast with the table of demons at which the Corinthian Christians had been wont to eat at their religious but idolatrous festivals. Now they were privileged to partake of the Lord's Table, the food of which was the simple elements that constitute the Lord's Supper—bread and wine. It was a moral impossibility to unite these two tables. The Corinthians were evidently not keeping clear of idol accessories. They knew that an idol was nothing in itself, but idolatry was demon-worship. How,

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then, could they go to its feasts, and indulge in its excesses ? If identified with the table of the Lord, they were bound to keep aloof from the other. Christ and Belial could not go on together. For a reply to your other questions, please read " Justified by Works," in our present issue.

X. X.—In answering our correspondent we sought to distinguish as clearly as we could between the new birth, the cleansing from sin by the precious blood of Christ, and the moral cleansing by the water of the Word, which we all constantly need. We despair of making it clearer. If your friend cannot see the difference, we invite him to read our remarks again and search and see whether they agree with the teaching of Holy Scripture. The new birth is something wrought *in us* by the Holy Spirit. Surely that is not what puts away our sins from before God. It is the atoning work of Christ, and not the work of the Spirit, that has put them away for ever. But we walk through a defiled scene, and easily contract defilement, from which we need to be cleansed. This is effected, not by a re-application of the blood of Jesus, though His atonement is the basis of everything, but by the cleansing water of the Word, according to John XIII. 10. Have patience with your friend. Young converts do not see everything at once, and what they find hard to understand to-day may be as plain as A B C to-morrow.

R. M.—A person under *law*, if in earnest, is always trying to make his life and himself better, in hope of securing the favour and blessing of God.

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But he never succeeds, and his want of success makes him most miserable. He is like a man in a bog, the more he struggles and tries to get out, the deeper he sinks. If he is to win life by keeping the law, he must *keep* it, trying to keep it won't do. "This *do*, and thou shalt live." But he must *do* it, not do his best to do it. Now *grace* comes to a man that is a sinner, a ruined sinner, a lost sinner; it comes to one who has no righteousness to plead, and who cries out in his distress, "Woe is me! I am unclean, I am undone!" Grace comes to such, and eyes him with kindness, speaks to him with tenderness, tells him that notwithstanding his many sins God views him with infinite compassion, loves him, and gave His only-begotten Son that he might be saved and have eternal life. Grace bids him cease from his own doings, and to rest only and wholly on the finished work of Christ, on the glorious atonement which He has wrought. Grace thus pours in oil and wine, and binds up the sinner's gaping wounds, as the good Samaritan did for the dying traveller. Grace then encourages him to read in the Word of the Lord, and shows him that every believing soul is justified from all things from which the law could never deliver (Acts XIII. 39). Grace points him to John V. 24, and to the closing verses of Romans VIII., and shows him that nothing present or future shall ever be able to separate him from the love of God. Grace does all this. Law does nothing of the kind, but, like the priest and Levite of the gospel story, it passes by on the other side (Luke X. 25–37). Truly there is a great difference between law and grace.

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.

ARE THEY FRIENDS OR FOES?

AN ADDRESS GIVEN TO YOUNG MEN AT EDINBURGH, DEC., 1907.

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding . . . oppositions of science, falsely so called."
—1 TIM. VI. 20.

WHAT a name to conjure with is "science"! With many it has become a positive fetish, before which everything else must bow and cringe. "Thus saith science" is to them an end of all controversy, and no one must say a word after she has spoken.

But what is this thing that so imperiously insists on our submission? Is it infallible? Does it never contradict itself and never throw its followers into confusion? And why speak of it in connection with the Bible? Why raise the question as to whether it is a friend or foe?

In answering, let it be said that science simply means "knowledge," more especially the knowledge of things in nature. As generally employed the term denotes the sum of human learning and discovery in the great realm of God's material creation.

But, not content with *facts*, the "science" of to-day deals largely in theories, speculations, and inferences. These are often found

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to be erroneous, and have to be abandoned. Others take their place, and in their turn are discredited and disproved, and cast into the limbo of exploded theories.

Now amongst those who claim to speak in the name of "science," there are some who say that their conclusions clash with the statements of the Bible, and they demand that a "Thus saith science" shall have precedence over a "Thus saith the Lord." Thus the question is raised as to whether, in point of fact, the Bible and science are at variance. And it is of no avail for the believer in the Holy Scriptures to shirk the issue, and to refuse to look facts in the face.

Here let me say that the Scriptures are not to be regarded as a literary storehouse from which men may derive knowledge of the facts of nature. If they are God-given and God-inspired writings, as we most assuredly believe them to be, we shall certainly not find in them anything that contradicts what nature teaches. But the Bible treats of far higher and more important subjects. Its theme belongs to eternity, and it reveals that which no human intellect could ever discover. It brings to us the knowledge of God Himself, as revealed in Christ, for the unspeakable blessing of those who receive that revelation.

All this is, however, called in question nowadays. It is asserted that we cannot give full

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credence to the Bible because its statements do not tally with the pronouncements of modern science. But the reader shall judge for himself as to the nature of the "science" which the Bible contradicts, whether it is *true* science—that is, true and accurate *knowledge* —or "science falsely so called."

I.

Sir Charles Lyell, the famous geologist, studying the mud-deposits at the mouth of the Nile, reckoned that it must have taken millions of years for such an accumulation to have formed. Digging into these deep beds of hardened mud, he found at a great depth a piece of pottery. Here was a discovery indeed! If deposits covering that piece of pottery had taken millions of years to accumulate, then the man who made it must have lived millions of years ago! That is *quite* clear, is it not? Yet the Bible teaches that man has only existed on the earth for about six thousand years or so. Here then was a plain contradiction between "science" and the Scriptures, and, of course, the Scriptures were pronounced wrong, because this precious piece of pottery and Sir Charles Lyell's calculations had now *proved* that man had existed for thousands of centuries!

This wonderful discovery naturally enough aroused much interest until the fragment of

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pottery was recognized by an expert as a specimen of rather modern *Roman* workmanship, and therefore only a few hundred years old at most!

It is not with this kind of "science" that the Bible agrees.

II.

"Evolution," as taught by Darwin, is largely answerable for placing "science" in antagonism to the Scriptures. This famous doctrine, however, is largely losing its hold upon the scientific world of to-day. It was at first supposed that facts would be brought to light that would support the theories spun by Darwin and others. But the facts have not been forthcoming, and the theories are being fast thrown to the dogs.

Not altogether, though, for some of our pulpit orators still wear the old discarded clothes of the scientists. *They* hold, tenaciously enough, to the effete speculations which so flatly deny the account of the creation in Genesis. Many ministers and clergymen yet believe that man has gradually advanced from a primitive ape-like ancestor to his present more perfect condition. And if one asks the advocates of this degrading theory for something in the nature of *proof*, they give the old, well-worn reply, "*The coccyx!*"

This coccyx, be it known, is a small bony appendage to the human spine. They say it

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serves no useful purpose, but is only a rudimentary relic of the time when man was an ape.

There is one fact, however, which militates against this very naïve supposition. If our ancestors were primitive ape-like men, we should expect that in ancient fossilized human skeletons, such as have been found in various parts of Europe, this rudimentary feature would be much more developed than it is in the present generation. *But such is not the case.* Besides all that, the coccyx is by no means a useless part of the human body, but, as every anatomist knows, gives firm attachment to certain ligaments and muscles.

A further disproof of the doctrine of the gradual evolution and improvement of the human race is found in the ancient skeletons already referred to, and which are evidently the remains of men who lived before the Deluge. Describing one of these, Sir J. W. Dawson says :—

"The skull proper, or brain-case, is very long—more so than in ordinary modern skulls—and this length is accompanied with a great breadth ; so that *the brain was of greater size than in average modern men*, and the frontal region was largely and well developed."

Thus the "science" that set itself against the accuracy of the Scriptures, and which numbered its votaries by tens of thousands,

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has been proved to be no true science at all. Teachers of religion may cling to it, but we Christians can thank God for the way that science itself has, in this matter, now come into line with the inspired Word.

III.

The representatives of modern science have yet to explain how it is that Holy Scripture is abreast of the most recent discoveries in physics, in geology, in astronomy, and in other branches of knowledge. The language of other ancient books is hopelessly out of date. One searches them in vain for a single statement, the truth of which is confirmed by the discoveries of the past fifty years. But with the Bible it is not so. It contains statements which have in bygone days been ridiculed as "unscientific" and "antiquated," but which are *now* seen to be perfectly true.

Let us consider some instances of this.

Genesis I. has been contradicted because it states that while the sun was formed on the fourth day, light was called into existence on the first. "Science," on the contrary, has taught that "the sun is the source of *all* light," and that there could be none apart from it (see *The Heavens*, by Guillemin, edited by Prof. Lockyer, F.R.A.S.). But *later* science is not so bold. It is now known that *motion* can be translated into light. This is thoroughly

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in accordance with Genesis I. 2, 3. "The Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." The Spirit of God caused light to break forth at His word when He had *moved* upon the waters, and this in a way quite in harmony with science in its most recent findings.

IV.

It is amusing to read, in old books on astronomy, the various computations as to the number of the stars. Each observer of the stellar heavens had his own idea on the subject, and figures are given of the approximate estimate by one and another. With improved instruments hosts of fresh stars have become visible. The "thousands" of ancient astronomers have become "millions" to-day. But with the application of photography to astronomical science the stars are seen to be what the Bible twenty-five centuries ago declared to be the case—absolutely innumerable! No one in the scientific world guessed the truth as to this, but there it stands on the inspired page: "the host of heaven *cannot be numbered*" (Jer. XXXIII. 22). Who could have put that there? It is a fact which scientists could not and did not discover until they had in their hands the most perfect modern instruments. Yet all the while the fact was in the Bible! Who put it there?

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V.

In Job XXVI. 7 we read: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place."

For many a long year scientists have railed at this passage. Sceptical astronomers swept the northern skies with their telescopes and found no "empty space." They declared that "Job knew nothing about the geography of the heavens" when he uttered these words. Theologians could offer nothing in the shape of a reply, save a futile suggestion that "Job evidently referred to the north pole"! And "science" mocked.

But recently, Professor Loomis, of Yale University, has thrown some light on the matter, and the Scriptures, as usual, are fully vindicated. Dr. Munhall quotes him as saying, in the course of a conversation :—

"By the use of the largest telescope in the northern hemisphere, in the Naval Observatory at Washington, a great vacuum, corresponding to the empty space of which Job wrote, has been discovered in the depths of the northern heavens."

And science, falsely so called, has had again to eat its own words, and to yield the palm for accuracy to the Scriptures.

VI.

We are most of us familiar with the ancient theory as to rain. It was taught that the

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evaporated water accumulated in great clouds, till they became too heavy to hold up any longer, and fell, by sheer force of gravitation, as rain upon the earth. An improvement upon this theory was that the vaporous masses were attracted by mountain ranges and condensed by contact with them into water.

That great master of electrical science, the late Lord Kelvin, has, however, taught us differently. He ascertained that rain falls as the result of electrical action in the air. The explanation of this would be too technical for a paper of this sort. But it is interesting to observe that the Bible was first in the field with this statement. Psalm cxxxv. 7 tells us "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; *He maketh lightnings for the rain.*"

It was only the other day that Lord Kelvin taught his class at Glasgow University that lightning produced rain, but that fact was recorded hundreds of years ago in the Bible. I ask, *by whom,* if not by the God of truth Himself?

VII.

This paper would hardly be complete if no reference were made to the two great stock objections on the part of "science" to the accuracy of the Scriptures. Of course, I refer to Jonah being swallowed by the whale, and the

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sun "standing still" at the command of Joshua.

It is objected that Jonah could not possibly have been swallowed by a whale, for the whale's gullet is too small to allow of a man passing through it. Theologians used to meet this argument by pointing out, truly enough, that the Bible does not positively assert that it was a *whale.* In the book of Jonah we read that "the Lord prepared *a great fish*"; and in Matthew XII., where the Lord Jesus Himself authenticates the narrative, the word translated "whale" might just as well be rendered "sea-monster."

But, after all, it is highly probable that the great sea-monster which swallowed the prophet was a whale. There are, however, more kinds of whales than one. No less than sixty species have been counted, and of these, *only one kind,* the Greenland whale, is incapable of giving passage to the body of a man through its throat. "Scientists," being more familiar with the Greenland whale than with any other, argued from their knowledge of *it!* They were really arguing from the exception rather than the rule.

The sperm whale, for instance, has a gullet of very different capacity. Cuvier, in his *Règne Animal,* describes this kind of whale as frequenting the Mediterranean Sea—the very sea upon which Jonah embarked upon

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his voyage. And Beale, a surgeon who wrote a book on the natural history of the whale, states that it has a throat quite capacious enough to allow of its swallowing a man.

The following testimony will be still more convincing. Frank Bullen, in his well-known book *The Cruise of the Cachalot*, describes the capture of one of these huge sperm whales. He says that they have a habit when dying of ejecting the contents of the stomach. In the case of the captured whale, he observed these ejected masses of partially digested food floating about. They were of enormous size, and on measuring one of them he found it to be two feet longer than a tall man, and equal in breadth and depth to the bodies of several men rolled into one! What kind of "science," then, must that be which affirms the impossibility of a whale swallowing a man?

In stating these facts I have no wish to cast doubt upon the miraculous element in the story. If it was no miracle for the whale to swallow Jonah, it was a miracle that kept him alive for so long in its belly. This is no difficulty at all to the man who believes in the *Almighty God*. The incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Christ are the greatest of all miracles. If we believe *these* it is easy to believe in the wonderful preservation and deliverance of Jonah.

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VIII.

The question of the sun standing still remains to be considered. And here I quote from an able book, *The Scripture of Truth*, by Sidney Collett, page 265 :—

"*How* this long day of Joshua's really was accomplished, God only knows ; but it must have been accomplished somehow, for astronomy demands that something of the kind must have happened, while history declares that it actually took place.

Professor Totten, of America, has studied this subject from an astronomical point of view, and has published the result in an elaborate mathematical calculation, with the following remarkable conclusion, that by taking the equinoxes, eclipses, and transits, and working from the present time backwards to the winter solstice of Joshua's day, it is found to fall on a *Wednesday ;* whereas, by calculating from the prime date of creation onwards to the winter solstice of Joshua's day it is found to fall on a *Tuesday ;* and he argues that by no possible mathematics can you avoid the conclusion that *a whole day of exactly twenty-four hours* has been inserted into the world's history. . . .

The statement, too, in Joshua x. 14 that ' there was no day like that before it or after it ' is equally accurate ; for there is no room mathematically in the world's history for another such long day. Professor Totten affirms that ' not before nor since . . . has there been a date which will harmonize with the required relative positions of the sun, moon, and earth, as conditioned in the sacred record.' "

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On page 267 it is further stated :—

"Herodotus, the father of history, who lived 480 B.C., himself a Greek, tells us that the priests of Egypt showed him the record of a long day; while the Chinese writings state that there was a long day in the reign of their emperor Yeo, *who was a contemporary of Joshua.*

Quite recently, also, Rear-Admiral Palmer, when at Mexico, discovered that the Mexicans had a record that the sun stood still for one entire day in the year known to them as 'Seven Rabbits,' *which corresponds to the exact year in which Joshua was conquering Palestine!*"

Thus both modern science and history and traditions current in places so far apart as China and Mexico, unite to confirm the truth of the wonderful narrative in Scripture. To doubt it nowadays is really to brand oneself as unscientific and unhistorical. Yet, alas, even Christians have wavered in their allegiance to the truth of divine inspiration with regard to this passage and have spoken of it as a mere poetic figure of speech.

Our task is ended. It has not been one of the highest kind; but it is *necessary* sometimes to expose the fallacies of "science, falsely so called," which sets itself against the Scriptures, and finds unholy pleasure in undermining the faith of weak and unestablished souls. We may be sure that no *true* knowledge, no *real* science, will lift up its voice in

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opposition to any statement in the Bible. Let us then be true and loyal to this God-given book. Let us read it diligently, believe it whole-heartedly, obey it implicitly. Instead of criticizing it, let it criticize us. And may its holy pages be the means of deepening the communion of our souls with God. H. P. B.

ARE YOU FORGIVEN?

"THIS is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." *

Reader, are you a sinner? For Jesus the Saviour says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." † Pardon is for the guilty.‡ Forgiveness is for sinners.§ Salvation is for the lost.|| Justification is for the ungodly.¶ Blessed news!

Dear friend, are you forgiven? Are you happy?

There was a man, over eighty years of age, living in a country place in the north of England, who, being taken ill, began to be anxious about his soul. His sins came up before him like a cloud, and he was unhappy. As he became increasingly so his wife and friends thought his mind was affected. She advised him to put his head out of the chamber

* 1 Tim. I. 15. † Mark II. 17. ‡ Jer. XXXIII. 8.
§ Luke VII. 37, 47. || Luke XIX. 10. ¶ Rom. IV. 5.

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window and open his mouth wide, that he might get the air, for she said it was air he wanted. He did so, but was no better. Then she said she would take him round the garden to get the air, and this was tried without effect. His misery increased. His soul was weighed down with the burden of his sins. He felt himself a sinner in the presence of God. But he remembered being told in his youth that it was written in the Bible that if we confessed our sins to God, we should be forgiven. And in his distress, with honest simplicity, he knelt down in his room and said, "O God, I cannot read, and my wife cannot read, but I am a great sinner, and I have been a great sinner, and I have been told that it says in Thy book that if we confess our sins to Thee we shall be forgiven,* and so I have come to be forgiven." And peace flowed into his soul. He was happy in the sense of forgiveness of his sins.

A few days afterwards he said to his wife, "Wife, God has forgiven me my sins, and I should like to forgive everybody, if thou dost not mind." She agreed. Now they kept a huckster's shop, and mantelpiece and doors were marked in chalk with crosses and strokes, indicating sums of money owing to them by customers. So the wife took a wet dish-cloth and wiped out all the marks. And the old man said, "I am so happy now, since God

* 1 John 1. 9.

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has forgiven me, and I have forgiven everybody."

Dear friend, allow me to ask you again in all affection, Are you forgiven ? Are you happy ? What about your sins ? For God says, " There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." * God cannot accept your thoughts about yourself. You must accept His. But He is able, He is ready. He is willing to forgive you if (needy, guilty, helpless as you are) you trust His blessed Son,† Whose precious blood cleanses from all sin the one who believes on Him. " 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." ‡

Jesus died !

What for ?

Sin.§

Where is He now ?

At the right hand of God in heaven. ‖

And where are the sins which He bare in His own body on the tree ? ¶

Gone for ever ! ** So that God can say of those who believe on Him, " Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." ††

After the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead He said to His disciples, " Thus it is

* Eccles. VII. 20. † 1 John I. 7. ‡ John III. 16.
§ 1 Cor. XV. 3. ‖ Mark XVI. 19. ¶ 1 Peter II. 24.
** Heb. IX. 26. †† Heb. X. 17.

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written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." * And since He has ascended up into heaven, the Holy Ghost has come down and testified by His servant Paul.

"THROUGH THIS MAN IS PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; AND BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS." †

J. G.

AN ANSWER TO SOME CRITICISMS.

THE Bible Reading on Hebrews VI. in our December issue has called forth some kindly criticisms. We do not object to them. Quite the contrary. All of us are learners, none are infallible, and a little further discussion may, with God's blessing, help some of us to understand the passage better.

One of our kind critics strongly objects to our saying that the falling away of verse 6 cannot apply to a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He supports his objection by remarking—very justly—that to fall away implies some place from which to fall; and the unbeliever, so he says, has no such place. Secondly, he pleads that "repentance is not denied in the Word of

* Luke XXIV. 46, 47. † Acts XIII. 38, 39.

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God to an unbeliever." To this last we say, Perhaps not, but the passage clearly states that if any do fall, "it is *impossible* to renew them again to repentance." Words cannot be plainer. Are we, then, to suppose that a true believer may thus fall away, never to be led to repentance again? If so, his ultimate salvation has an element of uncertainty in it that necessarily deprives him of perfect peace.

But is it true *universally* that the unbeliever has no place of privilege from which he may fall and become a hopeless apostate? Certainly not. It is true of the heathen, but it was not true of those to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, nor of any like them. Even before they embraced the Christian faith they stood within an enclosure where great privileges were found which were not enjoyed outside of it. "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" asks Paul in Romans III. And he answers his own questions thus: "Much every way; chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." In Romans IX. he enumerates other gains that were theirs. 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." And, mark, he is not speaking of Jews that were pious and God-fearing, but of the Jew as such. He had advantages and

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things that yielded profit simply because he was of the Israelitish nation. And when he came into the Christian circle, in its broad sense, did he not become partner in privileges greater than any he had known before? Undoubtedly. But "they are not all Israel which are of Israel," says the same apostle in Romans IX. 6, nor are they all true Christians who stand on Christian ground. To be a Christian indeed, a true believer, there must be a vital link with Christ, but the Christian circle may be entered without it, and its advantages enjoyed. This *may* have been the case with some of these Hebrews. They were Christians by profession, and possibly in reality, though they showed marks of incipient declension that made their condition doubtful, and called for solemn warnings.

And what were the advantages which these Hebrews had found in the broad fields of Christianity? They are plainly indicated in verses 4, 5. Now the difficulty with many lies here, they are unable to see how a person may be enlightened and be a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and yet come short of what is vital and eternal. It is the latter point that is especially hard to understand. That a person may be enlightened, and yet be nothing, is not beyond belief, but how could he be a partaker of the Holy Spirit and be so? That's the crucial question. We proceed to answer it.

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The Holy Spirit, as we know, is here on earth. He indwells all believers. But not only so. There is a sense in which the Holy Spirit is present quite distinct from His indwelling. This is what many fail to see. They limit the presence of the Spirit too much. When, as stated in Acts IV. 31, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together," that shaking of the building was not caused by the Spirit's presence *in* the assembled saints, was it? The truth is, the Holy Spirit not only dwells in the body of the believer, but also in the Christian sphere. It was in their coming into this that men became partakers of the Holy Spirit *in the sense of Hebrews vi.* They shared in common with all who stood in the same circumference the privileges that were found there. The presence of the Holy Spirit was one of them.

Now if a Hebrew—and the epistle was written first of all to these—if a Hebrew, I say, having professed the faith of Christ, having been baptized and brought into this privileged place, eventually gives it all up, and returns to Judaism again, he, in so doing, quits the Christian circle, and is no longer a partaker of the Holy Spirit. He pronounces Christianity to be a blasphemous fable, and declares its Divine Founder to have been worthy of the cross of shame to which He was condemned for not denying that He was the Son of God. Is

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he simply an unbeliever? Is he simply a backslider? *Nay, he is an apostate.* The seal and sign of hopeless reprobation is upon him. It is impossible to renew him to repentance. He has crucified for himself the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. The man's doom is sealed. His acts are evidence of a state so hard that nothing can touch it more. He shared in the external privileges of Christianity, but it did not lead him to unfeigned faith in Christ, and he is likened by the apostle to sterile ground, drinking in the rain that comes oft upon it, but only bearing thorns and briers. This, then, gives the answer to the objection of our critic, and shows, we trust, sufficiently clearly what it is to fall away, and what one falls from.

Here let me ask, Can a true believer thus fall away and become an apostate? Impossible! The Good Shepherd says of His sheep that "they shall never perish." None shall ever pluck them out of His hand (John x. 28). They are "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Peter i. 5). The Christ Who has died for them, Who has also been raised up, Who is also at the right hand of God, also intercedes for them (Rom. viii. 34). He will not suffer the embers of faith, which God's own Spirit has kindled on the hearth of the believer's heart, ever to be extinguished. That we need to be kept is most true. The

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more we feel the need of it the better; but along with the consciousness of it goes that simple, confiding trust in the One Who lives to keep us even to the end (Heb. VII. 25).

We have only to add a word about the house of God. Here, too, our critics take too narrow a view. They confine their thoughts to that which is built by a divine hand alone. Needless to say that Christ builds only with good material, and the spiritual house of which we read in 1 Peter II. 5 is built only of living stones who come to him Who is the Living Stone. Nothing of a spurious or worthless nature enters into it. In other words, it is formed of those between whose souls and Christ there is a living link, and of none else. But is this the only aspect of the house of God? We believe there is another. It will be found amply unfolded in 1 Corinthians III. There the Apostle Paul speaks of himself as a wise architect who had laid the foundation. *Paul* had laid it, mark you. It was indeed a good foundation, well and wisely laid, but other workmen built thereon. Let each be careful how he built, and with what material. Gold, silver, precious stones cannot be fitly framed together with wood, hay, stubble. But the latter may be built in by unwise as also by corrupting workmen, whose end shall be according to their works (*v.* 17). But if the house be built of this mixed material, it is nevertheless "God's

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Building" and "God's Temple," just as the Temple in Jerusalem was called by the Lord "My Father's house," though men had made it "a den of thieves." Now at the first the house in both these aspects was composed of good material—living stones—but as time grew, the house as built by responsible workmen outgrew the other. Stones were added that, it is to be feared, were not living stones. But still the structure bore Christ's name, and was "God's Building." It is precisely on this line that the Churches of Revelation II., III. are addressed. No intelligent student of the Word will suppose that the threatened judgments, embracing the final and utter rejection of Laodicea, are addressed to the Church, either as the Body of Christ or as the house built by Him of living stones. No, it is the Church, "the temple of God," "God's Building"—use whichever phrase you will—viewed on its responsible side, and embracing the whole Christian profession—it is in apprehending these important distinctions that the true bearing of Hebrews VI. and kindred passages will be seen.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. T. G. R.—If an angel from heaven were to bring you a word of pardon and peace straight from the eternal throne it would profit you nothing unless you believed it. It is true your sin is great, but God's forgiving grace is greater, and the blood of

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Jesus cleanses *us* from *all* sin. Hearken to His gracious words: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." And to encourage you still further He adds: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). Precious assurance to which your stricken heart may cling. Humble yourself, then, before Him. Take the place of the very worst, but dare also to believe that His grace pardons even *your* sin.

H. W.—In the face of the untold evils that flow from the excessive use of strong drink the follower of Christ may well ask himself whether he ought to touch it. "All things are lawful unto me, but *all things are not expedient.*" So wrote Paul, and we do well to heed his words. Many a thing a Christian might do with an undefiled conscience were it only a question between his own soul and God. But he is bound to consider others, and take care lest he bring reproach upon the Holy Name he bears. True charity would lead us to think of our neighbour and to be on our guard lest our example should induce any to enter a path that might end in their ruin.

A. E. S. and C. A. H. are invited to read "An Answer to some Criticisms" in our present issue.

X.—Matthew xxv.—The ten virgins represent, as we believe, all those who constitute heaven's kingdom upon earth. In other words they stand for all who profess the Christian religion, both really and nominally. The wise or prudent

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virgins are those who have been born again, and, through faith in Christ, have received forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit; while the foolish denote those who bear the Christian name and nothing more. At first, that in which they were deficient was not seen, but subsequent events showed they lacked the thing they needed most. "Our lamps are gone, or are going out," was their unhappy cry; that is, they had nothing to sustain the profession they had made. *There was no oil.* So they went not in with the Bridegroom to the marriage, nor did they ever enter. "I know you not," are the emphatic words in which they are disowned. Could such terms be ever used of any who really and truly belong to Christ? John x. 14 shall give the answer. If the prudent represent all true believers, as we most assuredly think, then *all of them* will go in with the Bridegroom when the Bridegroom comes.

In reply to your remaining question, the onus of proof rests with the one who makes the affirmation. If it be taught that Satan is forced to tempt people against his will as his punishment, we have only to ask, Where, in all the Bible, is there any warrant for such a thought? The novelist you name likes to treat of religious subjects, for which cause her books are the more to be dreaded and shunned. On such themes she is fatally wrong, and gives killing doses of poison in pots full of honey.

F. H. B.—If your reading gives you no distaste for the quiet study of the Holy Scriptures, nor encroaches on time that should be devoted to

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better purposes, then there is no reason why it should cease. But cases differ, and there is a class of literature which fascinates and enslaves those who addict themselves to it. Not a few young Christians of fervid imagination and emotional temperament are bound hand and foot with novel reading. As a consequence they largely live in a world full of doubtful adventures, of wild schemes and plots, suggestive of anything but good. This is harmful to a degree, and so long as the habit lasts, so long will there be no progress in their spiritual life. We cannot warn young Christians too seriously against this great evil. Oh, how different is it when the things of God are the things in which we live, and when Christ and His glory fill the vision of the soul and become the spring of continual and growing delight. The first Psalm gives a lovely picture of what we mean.

C. E. W. W.—John XVII. 4.—From the standpoint of this wondrous chapter it appears to us as if the Lord were, in thought and word, beyond the cross, and just waiting to go into that glory with the Father which had been His before the world was. Verse 5 seems to show this. If it be so, then the finished work of verse 4 would include the atonement, which historically remained yet to be made.

N. Z.—We are in hearty agreement with what is stated in Dr. Glenny's tract, *On an Increase of Love in Christ's Assembly*. A meeting of brothers only is not an assembly meeting, and can decide nothing that shall formally bind others, either locally or elsewhere. A person under the disci-

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pline of the assembly is one who has been "put away" for wicked conduct, or for holding or teaching doctrines so subversive of the truth as to call for such serious action. A brother, requested by his brethren for sufficient reasons not to take part in the meetings, can hardly be said to be under the discipline of the assembly, seeing that his right to be at the Lord's Supper is unquestioned. The term is too strong, and, moreover, it is not the assembly as such who have requested him to be silent, but certain brothers only.

E. M.—Revelation XXII. 19, III. 5.—"The book of life" is an allusion to the register of the living. We may speak of a book in which are inscribed the names of those entitled to vote. But on scrutiny some are found that have no right to be there. These are blotted out. The book of life is, generally speaking, the book of profession, but in our thoughts of it we must leave room for those whose names have been written there from the foundation of the world (Rev. XIII. 8). These God has written, and they shall surely stand.

E. B.—Ephesians I. 5.—"Having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself" is how it is rendered in the New Translation of J. N. D. The word "children" is omitted, though adoption implies sonship. But we should know that "adoption" in modern English does not convey all that it meant in ancient Roman law. Adoption in our day is to take one who is not a child and treat him as one. Such is not its meaning here. In the apostle's day it meant the introduction of the son by his

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father into a position and into privileges that were not his before, though he were a child. So God, in the greatness of His grace, marked us out beforehand for adoption. It is according to His purpose that we should have this place of exceeding dignity and of nearness to Himself.

M. M.—John II.—The marriage in Cana of Galilee follows Nathanael's confession of Christ as King of Israel. It prefigures the hour of blessing—still future—when Israel shall own their once rejected Messiah to be their true King. It was on the *third* day, for it is a *risen* Christ Who shall accomplish this, and be the Bridegroom of His ancient people. Then the water of purification shall be turned into the wine of gladness. Israel shall bud and blossom as the rose. The Lord's answer to His mother—figure of the Jewish nation—implies that His relations with Israel will be established on new grounds when her day shall come. Want of space obliges us to answer your several questions thus briefly.

MUCH PUZZLED.—We hope to have something to say ere long on the subject about which you write.

F. S.—We know of no specific scripture giving plain directions on the point you name. Act as you believe God would have you, and do not go before your faith, nor lag behind your conscience. We are apt to attach importance to what is external. But that is only the shell, the spiritual import is the great matter.

Other answers must be postponed till our next issue for want of space.

PEACE WITH GOD.

THE enjoyment of peace with God is a great blessing. Though it is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit to lead us into it, yet neither the work of the Spirit nor His indwelling is the basis of peace. The finished work of Christ alone is that.

Peace with God is the result of the *outward look of faith to Christ.* The Spirit ever encourages the soul to look away to the One Who made peace, and Who is at God's right hand in heaven. "He is our peace."

The Spirit never leads the anxious soul to look within for something to give assurance. There is absolutely no ground for peace in aught that may be found in the believer's heart. There is often much to lead to despair.

There are three things we would seek to make plain :—

1. How peace was made.
2. The grand evidence of it.
3. How that peace is obtained.

1. *How peace was made.*—"After the storm a calm," is a common saying. A storm, if we may so speak, raged centuries ago around Mount Sinai. Amidst thunderings and light-

nings the holy law of God was given. So terrible was the sight that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Stringent prohibitions fenced the mount round about. The people were warned to keep far off, and not even a beast was allowed to touch it without being put to death.

Behold the God of Sinai again at Calvary! If Sinai tells us in unmistakable tones that sin to Him is intolerable, Calvary, with its Holy Victim, repeats it with greater emphasis. If the Cross is the greatest proof of God's boundless compassion for sinners it is also the strongest proof of His hatred of sin.

God is indeed of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and He cannot look upon sin. Sinai and the cross of Christ alike bear witness to this, only the latter in a more solemn way.

And if no sinner can stand before Him in his sins, if exclusion from His presence, which is untold misery, be sin's desert, the wonder is that God has approached man in grace in the Person of His own Son, that He might open up a way for him to be cleansed from his sins and made fit to stand before Him without fear. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. How this could be is beyond the mind of man to fathom. But such was the astounding fact. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for

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our sins" (1 John IV. 10). Here, then, is the only possible ground of peace with God.

The death of Christ as a sacrifice for sins is the fullest manifestation of God's nature and character. It has been the occasion of bringing them into harmonious display. Both righteousness and love met here, and as the grand and glorious result, *peace has been made,* not by the setting aside of God's just and holy claims, but by upholding and vindicating them. Christ alone was competent to do this, and what great glory it has brought to Him! The mighty work of redeeming sinners serves to establish the greatness of His Person as the Son. To Him be glory for ever and ever.

2. *The grand evidence of it.*—The abiding witness that all God's righteous claims have been met is seen in His having raised Christ from amongst the dead. The resurrection of Christ is a vital truth. In one sense the whole of Christianity hangs upon it. So much so that Paul says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. XV. 14).

To unbelieving Thomas the risen Saviour said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John XX. 27). What a rebuke to present-day unbelief! How overpowered must Thomas have been when out of a believing,

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reverent, worshipping heart he exclaimed, "MY LORD and MY GOD!"

In Hebrews XIII. 20 God is called "*the God of peace.*" Why is this? Because peace had been made by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, brought again from the dead. Peace is now eternally assured.

3. *How peace is obtained.*—It is in believing the word or testimony of God that light enters the soul. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." God's love, known and believed, shines into the distressed, peace-seeking soul, and casts out all tormenting fear. Peace is then the inevitable result.

When pointing out to anxious ones the simplicity of the Gospel we have often heard them say nervously, yet joyously, "*Thank God, I see it all now! I am saved! I am saved!*" What did they see? Simply what was true before it was seen—the love of God in Christ set forth in meeting their deepest need! Straightway their tears of sorrow ceased and tormenting dread gave place to perfect peace. Then were they able to go forth boldly in the confession of Jesus as Lord, and say, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. V. 1).

But we have known some to lapse back again into further soul trouble after the first flush of real joy. All seemed to go on well until

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the eye was taken off Christ and fixed on self. What a miserable thing self-occupation is!

Evil thoughts sometimes plague the soul. They force themselves upon the unestablished to such a degree as to make them more distressed than ever. It is not the past that troubles them, but the present uprising of sin in the flesh, and the more they try to subdue it the more they learn its evil, and how utterly powerless they are.

When this is so the soul wants further light to set it free. It needs to learn that our old man is crucified with Christ (Rom. VI. 6). If crucified with Christ it has been put out of God's sight. And faith sees as God sees. Still, it is needful to bear in mind that though our old man is crucified with Christ, yet the old Adam life is still in us, and will be till our history here on earth ends. Now if we are troubled with evil thoughts we should not get depressed because of them. Let us be the more in prayer that we may walk in the Spirit, and be so looking at the beauty and perfection of Christ as to receive power to resist every suggestion of the flesh.

If the *desire of my heart* rises up to God against the flesh, that is in itself prayer, though no words be uttered. *He* reads the desire of the heart. When we pray thus we get the sympathy and support of Christ, and are saved from the power of the flesh by

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His priestly grace. Besides, the deep exercise we pass through is needed to teach us *Humility*, the greatest and hardest of all lessons. It is a most—if not the most—beautiful Christian virtue, and requires to be worked in us as the pearl is produced in the oyster, by the constant exercise from the grit of the sand it dislikes so much. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. VII. 25).

Even if we do fail, we ought not to be discouraged, though we should be deeply humbled. Only One has been wholly perfect. Our failure draws forth the grace of Christ. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 John II. 1). As our Advocate He takes up our cause before the Father against the accuser of the brethren, who ever seeks to hinder our access to God or our testimony for Him. If the accuser accuses, He stands for us as the Righteous One, against Whom no charge can ever be brought, and Who is our constant subsisting righteousness before God.

He stands for us, charged as much to save right through to the end of life's journey as He stood for us on the Cross to redeem us from all iniquity and bring us back to God. Knowing this we may well say—What a Saviour!

P. W.

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THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL.

HOW MAY YOU HELP?

"I WOULD very much like to help in the work of the Gospel, but I don't know how."

These words, spoken by a young believer, probably voice the desires and exercises of hundreds.

Let me give you a few brief hints that may help you to find an answer to the question.

I. *Seek to realize your great responsibility.*

"Yours must be a very responsible position," said a traveller to a man who had charge of the switches at a railway junction where five lines meet.

"Yes," was the reply; "but it is as nothing compared with yours as a Christian."

True and weighty words! Pause, and consider them. *You,* a believer in Christ; *you,* into whose soul the light of the Gospel has shone; *you,* who have a knowledge of the way of salvation; *you* have a great responsibility towards those around you who are still in darkness.

Let the thought of this bring you to your knees. Be not among the number who echo Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Own your obligation before God, and pray

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earnestly for grace to enable you to fulfil it. You may not need grace to cross the seas, endure great privations, and eventually die a martyr's death. But whatever be the way you are led to set about meeting your responsibility, you will need help and grace from on high. Be much in prayer then, as to your great obligation to help in the spread of the Gospel.

II. *Begin with yourself.*

In these matters it is permissible, nay, it is absolutely necessary, to begin with number one.

David Dodge, a servant of Christ, was in conversation with a fellow-believer who, like himself, was eager to see the work of the Gospel prosper. They talked together of the fallen state of the Church, the strange dulness and apathy of Christians. They agreed as to the need of more zeal and enthusiasm, more prayer and consecration. Finally, one of them broke in with—

"Friend Dodge, suppose thou and I make a beginning."

That is it. Let those who long to be of service make a beginning themselves. Let them give themselves to prayer and fasting in holy and fervent desire for the blessing of others. With purpose of heart and in true self-judgment let there be an earnest waiting upon God. Only thus can vessels be made meet for the Master's use.

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III. *Do not neglect simple, humble ways of service.*

A nurse had lately settled in a home in Edinburgh, and placed a card announcing some meetings in the frame of a picture in her room. After it had remained there for two or three days, the landlady asked her what it referred to. The nurse replied that it was an invitation to some Gospel services, and as she could not attend them herself she had placed it where others could see it who might be able to go. She asked the landlady if she intended going.

"Oh!" was the reply. "I cannot even get to church because of the children."

The nurse offered to look after the little ones if the mother would go. Thanking her cordially, the landlady agreed. She went, and was converted. The change wrought in her induced her husband also to go, and he came home a converted man. Later on, a son and a daughter, influenced by the change in their parents, went to the meetings and found joy and peace in believing. These four were brought to the Lord through the inquiry caused by the little card.

Do not, then, let us overlook the importance of *little* acts of service like this.

IV. *Do not leave the work of spreading the Gospel to preachers.*

Sometimes people who are left unmoved by

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the most fervent preaching are reached by a word fitly spoken by a friend.

In a certain place in America, when the winter ice on the river was breaking up at the approach of spring, a farmer got into a boat to cross to the other side. Hardly had he loosed from the bank before his boat was struck by a floating mass of ice and carried by it out into the swift-running current. A neighbour, seeing his danger, rode with all speed to a town several miles further down the river. Some of the townspeople secured a good many stout ropes and went out to the bridge that spanned the river. Here they spread themselves out in a line from side to side of the river, each man holding a rope over the parapet of the bridge. They could not tell at just what point the boat with the farmer would pass under, so they put a rope down every two or three feet all the way across.

By and by the farmer was seen, wet and cold, standing in the boat, drifting helplessly along with the current. He saw the ropes dangling from the bridge; he seized the nearest one, was drawn up, and saved.

One rope might not have answered the purpose. But with many ropes, each held by a different hand, there was almost sure to be one that he could grasp.

The preachers of the Gospel hang out a rope, as it were, from the platform and the desk.

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But some sinners do not seem able to lay hold of it. If business men, fathers and mothers of families, young men and young women, Christian friends and neighbours, would *all* hold out ropes many sinners would certainly be saved.

See to it that *you* are holding out a rope from the place where God has set you.

V. *Think of children's souls as well as of those of older people.*

It may be that you can gain the ear of some dear young ones where you find it difficult to speak to their elders. Savonarola, the Italian reformer, used to say: "We must fish with nets that have meshes small enough to catch the smallest fish."

Are you a teacher in a Sunday-school? Regard your work as that of a winner of souls. Meet your class, from time to time, not merely to instruct them, but to aim at their eternal salvation. Name them again and again in prayer to God, and seek from Him grace, not only to teach them, but to win them for Christ.

Let each reader make a point of definitely inquiring in the presence of God as to how he or she may best endeavour to fulfil the great obligation that lies upon every Christian to spread the Gospel.

"David inquired at the Lord. . . . And He answered him" (1 Sam. xxx. 8).

H. P. B.

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THAT SAME JESUS.

THE treatment which we receive from others generally determines our thoughts of them and behaviour towards them.

But He, Who came out from God, and went to God, knew humanity well, and His attitude towards man is not affected by the treatment which He received upon earth. In the central heaven He is still *that same Jesus* that He was in the days of His flesh—eternally the same.

We are all more or less familiar with the tender grace, the considerate love, the thoughtfulness and pity, which characterized the Saviour during His earthly ministry. Let us, then, trace some of His actions when He was risen from the borrowed tomb, after suffering the death of a malefactor.

First, let us note His dealing with Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils—in other words, the full, or sevenfold, power of the Evil One. Mary loved the Lord, not only for all that He had done for her, but also for all that He was in Himself. She remained at the sepulchre when others had left, and there she wept out her heart in unutterable sorrow.

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The first word from the lips of the risen Christ is spoken to the mourning woman; it is her own name, "Mary." And that word dries her tears for ever.

To Mary the Lord delivers the most wonderful message ever carried by a human being. It is sent at once; for the loving heart of the divine Saviour would not keep His disciples ignorant of the new and blessed relationship brought about by His death and resurrection. "Go, tell *My brethren*," He says, "that I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John XX. 17).

Next, let us trace the risen Lord's dealing with Peter—poor, impetuous, loving, erring, outspoken, and lovable Peter. The last which we saw of that apostle—before the angel's message: "Go tell His disciples *and Peter*"—was after his thrice-repeated denial, when "the Lord turned and looked upon him." In Luke XXIV. 34 we read: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon." In that secret interview all distance between the apostle and his Lord was removed. The details of the meeting have been withheld, and the silence of the evangelists speaks forcibly of the loving consideration which refuses to drag all human failings into the light. The charge, "Feed My sheep; feed My lambs," afterwards given to Peter, shows how complete was the apostle's restoration.

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Then we see *this same Jesus* joining two disconsolate ones on their way to Emmaus, and instructing them in the things concerning Himself as related in Moses and all the Prophets. The hearts of these disciples burned within them as they listened, and they cried out, as our own hearts must often cry, " Abide with us." The Lord went in to tarry with the disciples (Luke XXIV. 29). And " as He sat at meat, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them."

There was something in the action of the Christ as He brake the bread that opened the eyes of the disciples. *They knew Him;* and He vanished out of their sight.

They knew Him. Oh, the transcendent joy of that knowledge ! May you, reader, learn to know Him too,and the power of His resurrection.

Full of that joy which transfigured all their life, the disciples hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the eleven of their strange and blessed interview with " this same Jesus."

Into the midst of the disciples, gathered together, comes the Lord to speak the words of blessing, " Peace be unto you," and to show His hands and His side. He had made peace through the blood of His cross—a peace unknown before. In the known and enjoyed power of that peace the Christ sent forth His servants : " As My Father sent Me, even so send I you."

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Thomas was not present with the other disciples, and so Thomas must be helped and established. No doubt or uncertainty must mark Christianity, but Assurance and Power! Again our Lord reveals Himself when Thomas is with the disciples; and making plain the interest which He takes in each one individual, He bids the doubting apostle, who had declared that sight of the wound-prints in the sacred body would alone convince him, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John xx. 27). No wonder that full assurance comes to Thomas, and that he exclaims, "My Lord and my God."

Again, we see the risen Lord upon the seashore, where, hungry, tired, and depressed, seven of the brethren were returning after a night of fruitless toil in fishing. He bids the disciples "cast the net on the right side of the ship," and then they "were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes." The "disciple whom Jesus loved" recognized his Lord; and the impetuous Peter, unable to wait till the boat reached the shore, threw himself into the sea, the sooner to reach the Master. A "fire of coals with fish laid thereon, and bread," awaited the weary fishermen. He Who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," supplied the needs of His own. Then came the

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public restoration of Peter, and the loving command to care for the young and old of the flock of Christ.

There were other appearances of the risen Lord ; He was seen by James and others, and by five hundred brethren, at once. But the last occasion upon earth on which He gave evidence of His changeless love was when He led His disciples out as far as Bethany, and " lifted up His hands, and blessed them."

Those hands are still raised in blessing ; they never grow weary, as the uplifted hands of Moses became in days of old.

Benediction is the perpetual attitude of *this same Jesus*.

On his way to Damascus Paul sees and hears the Saviour ; and the divine word, revealing the unchanging heart, and showing close identification with His people, is " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me?* " All wrong done to His own is wrong done to Christ, for He and they are one.

On a future day *this same Jesus* will reveal Himself as the true Melchisedec, King and Priest, to institute the righteous reign of the Millennium. Ah, day of joy for the whole earth —day of triumph for " this same Jesus " ! We look, too, for a new heaven and a new earth, where sin has never been and can never come. Fulness of blessing will be ours when we are " with Him where He is." E. C—P.

THE SUPERFICIAL INFIDEL.

I LEAVE our Christian apologists to deal with the learned and philosophical unbeliever. I wish to speak of the superficial infidel—a character that every Christian worker at the present time should understand and know how to treat. This kind of infidel is common in our cities, and not unknown in our country villages. He is not an earnest inquirer, troubled by much thinking about the difficulties that encompass religious truth. In fact, he thinks too little to have any intellectual troubles. But if he thinks little, he speaks a great deal. Dr. Johnson exactly describes this character when, speaking of his youth, he says, "I was then a lax talker against religion, for I did not think much against it." While I have met many careless, unthinking, Godless men, and here and there a loose talker against the Bible, I have not, in the course of years, seen one thinking infidel. I hear and read much about a deeper kind of infidelity that troubles the age in which we live; but I never meet, and I begin to think I never shall meet, any other kind of infidel than the superficial infidel of the lip.

Long observation leads me to write down

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nine-tenths of his loud talk, and monstrous assertions, to the merest love of display. He utters not what his heart believes, but what he thinks will astonish you. If you express abhorrence, he is evidently flattered, and goes on to say something worse. Be indifferent, treat his utterances lightly, and you silence him at once. He is a man of little thought and many words, who talks infidelity, or anything monstrous, as a child makes a noise, merely to call attention to himself. An English author relates that, when a boy, with the boyish desire to make a sensation, he went one day to his father and said that he had doubts, that, in fact, he was rather inclined to disbelieve the Bible. The worthy man understood the case: he saw that it was merely a fit of vanity; and he laid hold, not of an argument, but of a stout birch rod, and promptly whipped the affectation of unbelief out of the lad. Had the boy been encouraged to display his second-hand objections and the shreds and tatters of false knowledge—which, no doubt, he had picked up from the lips or books of ignorant scoffers—had he been treated with argument instead of chastisement, his self-conceit would have grown, and his juvenile folly might have been nursed into something formidable.

The conversion of the superficial infidel is not brought about by arguments, however true and forcible, but by his conscience being

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pierced by the conviction of his guilt, like any common sinner, and led to the Lord Jesus in child-like faith. I once witnessed an instance of this. A poor man, who had been a church member and a teacher in the Sunday-school, had fallen first into bad living, and from that into lax views, and at last into professed atheism. On his death-bed he was visited by great horror of mind. No one who saw him can ever forget his terror-stricken aspect, his continual groans, his despairing cries. The very bed shook under his trembling frame. I had studied infidelity in books, but I had never seen it in the life before. I now saw it breaking like a frail reed under the pressure of a soul's agony. When I asked the poor man the cause of his terrible distress, he replied, "My sins—my many sins." Unable to speak any fitting words of my own, I kept repeating some of those great Bible texts which have been the stay of sinking souls in all ages. One of these texts was 1 Timothy 1. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The man caught the text, or rather the text laid hold of him; he requested me to repeat it, which I did; he asked me whether it was true, and I assured him that it was indubitably true—the Word of God Who cannot lie. He believed it. The effect was instantaneous—literally in a single

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moment the expression of horror on his countenance was changed into a smile of peace. It was like a miracle. Never before or since have I seen anything so wonderful. The poor man remained quietly resting on this word, often repeating it to those around him, till he died, two days after, as I trust, in the Lord.

The superficial infidelity, which like a leprosy taints our periodical literature and corrupts our youth, can be overcome only by deep and living Christianity. The main cause, I believe, of the existence of shallow infidelity is the prevalence of surface Christianity. A superficial Christian who is not quite a believer and not quite a disbeliever, but in the language of Scripture an *un*believer, like a paralytic on a battlefield, is powerless against the enemy. The prevailing weak inoperative faith in God which most men have is ruinous. The possession of it only blinds a man to his need of a better faith.

In the great battle with unbelief I rely not so much on the might of argument as on the power of Christian testimony. In personal dealing with the infidel I have found it expedient, as far as possible, to keep clear of controversy. The man has an itch for argument, he has replies and objections at his finger ends, and he will drag you into debate if he can. The great matter is to lift him out of the region of words in which he lives into the presence of

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great realities, which he tries to forget. This cannot be done by controversy. The best means I know—a means which by God's blessing has been often successful—is a bold uncompromising testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus. To the profane boldness of infidel assertion let us oppose the holy boldness of Christian conviction. Let us bear witness to Christ. The apostles, the reformers, the great evangelists of the eighteenth century, Wesley and Whitfield, were not cold demonstrators of the anatomy of Christian truth, but—and in this lies the secret of their personal influence—they bore witness to the Gospel which they believed, and loved, and lived. There is a power in such witness-bearing. Infidelity cannot stand before it. *Abridged.*

THE GRAVITY OF SIN.

A FAULTY conception of what sin is, is the source of much of the superficial and erroneous theology of the day. What is sin? It is "lawlessness." Now that is clearly a serious thing when God is in question.

To be lawless means that I disregard authority; that I assert my own will and trample under foot the commands of my Superior.

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Sin is disobedience to the will of God ; it is rebellion against His throne.

In some cases His will may not be known ; there may be lands in spiritual darkness where the light of His Word has never shone. In such a case the stripes may be few. But sin is ever lawlessness, and God must maintain, though in much patience and long-suffering, the supreme authority of His throne.

How serious, then, is sin, which, entering the world by one man, has brought every one of the race under its sway. We have inherited, as a fatal heirloom, that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, nor can be !

It may express itself in a thousand different ways, from a mere thought of foolishness or a proud look to crimes of deepest dye ; from eating the forbidden fruit in Eden, to crucifying the Lord of Glory; but the evil thing is there, in the hearts of all. Hence, said Paul, " in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

Now the statement of this may be rejected, and God's revelation of it utterly refused by the very heart which sin has rendered deceitful ; but the fact remains, and finds abundant proof on all hands. What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh, and sin, self-will, enmity against God, is the underlying principle of our fallen nature. We are both sinful and guilty.

If, then, sin is so sinful, and its demerit so infinite, a sacrifice of infinite value is needed to make atonement, if, indeed, atonement is to be made at all, or sinners redeemed from their lost condition. What then has happened? Let me quote a wonderful passage of Scripture: "God, our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 3–6).

Here we find, first, the desire of God for our blessing; and, secondly, the ransom furnished in the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as such. It is by the blood of the cross of *Him in Whom all fulness was pleased to dwell* that the subsequent work of reconciliation should be fully accomplished.

Three things are thus established:—

1. The infinite demerit of sin.
2. The infinite glory of the Redeemer.
3. The infinite value of His atonement.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, could cleanse from sin; but, thank God, sin—all sin—is cleansed by that blood. It meets every claim of the eternal throne, and calms the conscience of the poor troubled sinner who confides in it.

Ah! but what of those who reject it or who

tread under foot the Son of God? Here we have another infinitude, a "sorer punishment" than "death without mercy" awaits them. That, for the lawbreaker, was bad indeed; this, for the despiser of grace, is worse! It is "eternal judgment."

J. W. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. J.—You will find in Ezekiel XLI. a detailed description of the Temple which will be built for the service and worship of God by Israel when brought back to their own land. Their restoration and final blessing is narrated in the latter part of Ezekiel XXXIX., followed by a description of the city and temple. In that day the great religious centre shall be there and all nations shall flow to it, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. II. 3). Read also Jeremiah XXXI. Methuselah means, so it is said, "a man of offspring."

J. H.—James I. 27, V. 20.—Do not be afraid of the word "religion." Here it evidently means godliness, or real piety of life—a very precious thing. And one of the forms in which it shows itself is this: the fatherless and widows are visited in their affliction, and the individual keeps himself unspotted from the world. What a lovely sight to see!—a simple Christian under the influence of the love of Christ, keeping free from worldly

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entanglements, and finding happy occupation in visiting the homes of sorrow. This is religion pure and undefiled, and of great price in the sight of God and our Father. Oh that there were more of it! The "sinner" of chapter v. 20 is the one who sins. "If any *of you* do err from the truth." It may be one who professed it, or any belonging to the twelve tribes to whom the epistle was addressed, and who still erred from the truth of Christianity.

A READER.—1 Corinthians xi. 3.—"*The head of every man is Christ.*" These words are not intended to teach the universal supremacy of Christ our Lord. From other passages we learn that He is "the Head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10); "Head over all things" (Eph. i. 22); "Head of the body the Church" (Col. i. 18); "Head of the corner" (1 Peter ii. 7); and Head, too, of the redeemed family, as fallen Adam was head of a family fallen in him (Rom. v. 12–21). But this is not the subject here. The apostle is showing the relative place of the man and the woman—a thing these Corinthian saints especially needed to know. He therefore insists that the head of the woman is the man, while the Head of every man is the Christ. But carefully observe that the word "*man*" is not that which denotes the whole race of mankind, regardless of sex. *It is man as distinguished from woman,* and in the New Testament it is translated "*husband*" not less than fifty times. The head of the woman, then, is not here said to be the Christ. The man is that. He is the head of the woman, and the

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Head of the man is the Christ. In the Christian assembly, and in other spheres, this relative place had to be observed. The woman was not to usurp authority over the man (1 Tim. II.). *Viewed as "in Christ," these distinctions of sex have no place* (Gal. III. 28). But we are not exclusively so viewed even when gathered together in assembly. Women keep silence there, and they do not teach and the *men* pray (1 Tim. II. 8).

H. J. W.—If the One Whose glory is so sublimely declared in the first chapter of Hebrews became a man that He might make atonement for sins, we may justly infer that no less a sacrifice than His would meet the exigencies of the case. No created being, of however high an order, could have sustained the judgment necessary to open the floodgates of pardoning mercy to rebellious men. But the Son came—He Who alone could adequately measure sin's deserts and the just claims of the Eternal Throne—came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Do I believe in Jesus? Have I fled to Him for refuge? Do I believe in God Who justifies the ungodly and Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? Then are my sins forgiven and I am justified from all things (Acts XIII. 38, 39). You ask, How did the Lord Jesus bear our sins? By coming under the consequences of them on the Cross. Thus they have been put out of God's sight for ever. And the resurrection is the proof that His atonement was all-sufficient. More than that, not only have our sins been blotted out, but such glory has been brought to God that He Who made the atonement

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has been glorified at His right hand. His exaltation to that glorious place was the only adequate expression of God's appreciation of all that Christ had done. Think of this, and may God give you understanding.

P. A.—Matthew XXII. 1–14.—You must not suppose "the kingdom of the heavens" to be heaven itself, the dwelling-place of God and of the redeemed. Such is not its meaning. It is Heaven's kingdom here on earth, the present sphere of privilege and responsibility. And our parable deals with one aspect of it. Its bearing on the Jewish nation is clear enough. They were the first to be bidden to the wedding, and they refused to come. A second invitation followed. The feast had been prepared, everything was ready, the guests alone were wanting. "Come unto the marriage" was the urgent call. This answers to the ministry of the early chapters of the Acts. Then follows the wider invitation. Our attention is now arrested by the king's entrance—he comes in to see the guests. Among them is one who had not on the wedding garment. How came he in? He could not plead that he was too poor to buy, for the wedding garment was the king's gift. But in hardness and pride of heart he slighted the king's provision, and thought his own raiment good enough. Here we may quote Romans X. 3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." This is exactly the teaching of the parable. For such there is no place at the marriage

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of the King's son. Many, indeed, are called, but the chosen ones are they who have the garment suited to the wedding feast.

X. X.—Romans VIII. 23–25.—The redemption of the soul from all the liabilities under which we lay is already an accomplished fact (Eph. I. 7), but for the redemption of the body we still wait. This will take place at the coming of the Lord; then our body of humiliation shall be conformed to the body of His glory. Of this blessed change we read in Philippians III. 21 and 1 Corinthians XV. 51–8. Accordingly the passage in Romans VIII. about which you write speaks of our having been saved by or rather "in hope." In hope of what? The redemption of the body, of course. Then the glorious work of the Saviour will be complete.

E. M.—Ephesians VI. 14, 17.—"*The breastplate of righteousness*" is that practical righteousness in everyday life which keeps the conscience clear and without reproach. It is not having Christ as my righteousness—a blessed truth indeed—but the practice of what is right in our pathway here. If my conscience condemns me for unrighteous conduct, how can I with boldness engage in conflict and face the foe? Impossible. "*The helmet of salvation,*" enables us to hold up the head with confidence, and in the assurance that salvation is ours—known, possessed, enjoyed. Uncertainty as to this would make us quake. Thank God, we know there is no uncertainty. "By grace are ye saved" is the language both of Scripture and of faith.

THE BIBLE AND RECENT DISCOVERIES.

ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN; EDINBURGH, DEC., 1907.

(Read Jeremiah XXXVI. 14–25.)

MY object on this occasion is to deal with the way the Scriptures have been criticized and attacked on the one hand, and gloriously vindicated on the other. But I shall be sorry if our talk has no further result than to remove doubts and difficulties from your minds. That in itself is a great thing, but something more is to be desired. For a man may believe the Bible from the first word to the last, without necessarily being a true believer in Christ. No one can reach a place by clinging to the finger-post which indicates the right road to it. One may talk about a finger-post, and be willing to defend it with the last drop of one's blood. But the object of the finger-post is not attained unless the man who seeks direction from it *treads the road to which it points.*

The Bible is like a finger-post. We may have to defend the accuracy of its statements, and contend for the truth of the revelation that it brings to us, but let us see that we not only admire it and cling to it, but follow its directions, and turn to the blessed Saviour to Whom it bears witness from beginning to end. Unless our faith in the Scriptures leads us to

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living faith in Him Who is their theme and topic our belief will have been in vain.

II.

We are not now concerned to combat the infidel notions of the Paines, Voltaires, Ingersolls, and Bradlaughs. Views such as are commonly associated with their names do not prevail to-day to nearly so great an extent as they did fifty years ago. Their arguments may still appeal to a certain set of foolish and ignorant people, but, on the whole, those who read and think do not need to be warned against the blatant and blasphemous assertions of rank atheism.

On the other hand, attacks upon the Bible, and upon Christianity itself, are to be found not only in the secular press, but in religious journals and in the writings of "reverend" professors and divines. Pulpits, once the strongholds of orthodoxy, are now the high places of an antichristian propaganda. Their occupants (wolves in sheep's clothing) are doing far more to undermine the faith of men than all the wild talk of the Paines and Ingersolls.

King Jehoiakim, of whom we have read, may be called the leading "higher critic" of his day. There was much that was distasteful to him in the roll that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, so, seizing the document,

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he cut it to pieces with his knife, and finally flung it into the flames. There were not found wanting men who besought the king to treat the Word of God with more reverence. Let us mention their names with respect: Elnathan, Delaiah, Gemariah; but their entreaties were of no avail.

There are many Jehoiakims in our day, who cut and slash at the Scriptures. It is not difficult to discern the reason. The Bible is like a mirror. In it the portrait of men is seen, drawn by an unerring hand. It shows them the blackness of their hearts, and tells them plainly what is going to become of them if they do not turn to God in repentance. This is more than they can tolerate, so they cry, "Impugn it! Criticize it! Deny its accuracy! Affirm that it is only the work of erring men! Anything to get rid of its unpalatable statements!" Depend upon it, there is a *moral* reason for the persistent efforts to detract from the force and value of the Scriptures.

III.

Sometimes it is asked: "Why may we not treat the Bible as we treat any other book? It comes to us just as Homer, or Virgil, or Shakespeare, or any other classic, ancient or modern, comes to us, with certain claims as to its authorship, etc. Why not subject the Bible to the same canon of criticism? Why not

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make it run the gauntlet of competent investigation as other books have to do ? "

I do not think we could object to that, however sorry we might feel for those who sit down to criticize the Word of God instead of letting it criticize them.* But let us ask the critics their own question. Why do they *not* treat the Bible as they do other books ? Why vent their venom upon it so persistently ? Why judge the Bible by a different criterion ? The usual principles of literary and historical research are fair enough. Why, then, should they not conduct their examination of the Scriptures in accordance therewith ?

IV.

There are three parts of the Bible which more than any others have been made the subject of desperate and repeated attack. They are the Pentateuch (i.e. the first five books), Daniel, and Jonah. In former days the New Testament came in for its share of opposition, but on the principle of " once bitten twice shy," it is now comparatively unassailed. Having burnt their fingers severely, the critics leave it well alone. The gospels, epistles, etc., have been shown to stand upon a foundation, as to their genuineness and their authorship, that cannot be overthrown. So in recent years

* In Heb. IV. 12 we read that the Word of God is a *critic* (κριτικός) of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That is the best kind of criticism ! Let *it* criticize *us* !

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it is the Old Testament that has become the battle-ground, and my desire is now to show how wonderfully the spade of the excavator and the discoveries of the explorer have come to our help. The critics have been beaten on their own ground, their sophistry and ignorance have been exposed, and the testimony of Scripture has been confirmed in an altogether unexpected way. To God be the praise!

It is worthy of remark that these discoveries have been made *just at the right time.* Why were not the tablets and cylinders, the sculptures and inscriptions, which have done such valiant service in the cause of truth, brought to light long years ago? Why were they not unearthed in the eighteenth century, or the seventeenth? Why did not men discover them hundreds of years back, when those eastern lands were nearer the centre of civilization, and therefore more accessible to the explorer than they are to-day?

We may surely trace the hand of God in this. For it is only during the last century that the school of criticism has arisen, basing its inferences and deductions upon imaginary history. The archæological relics of bygone times in Babylonia and Assyria would have been mere subjects of academic interest if they had been discovered two hundred years ago. But now they are *weapons,* mightily effectual to the pulling down of the strong-

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holds of rationalism and unbelief. Is it not wonderful that God, in His providence, should keep all this invaluable evidence buried beneath the surface of the ground, and cause it to have a marvellous resurrection *just at the time when it can be of most use?*

V.

There is another very noteworthy fact. The three parts of the Old Testament most bitterly assailed are the three parts most emphatically confirmed and authenticated by Christ Himself in the gospels!

Take the writings of Moses, the books known to us as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is sometimes asked: "After all, what does it matter whether Moses wrote these books or not? Suppose that some scribe wrote them a thousand years after Moses had died, what difference does it make? The books are in our hands, and they bring us their message all the same, whoever wrote them. Why make all this fuss about their authorship?"

There is a very grave reason, however, for laying stress on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of Moses, distinctly said, "*He* wrote of Me" (John v. 46). If Moses did not write the books ascribed to him, then the omniscience and deity of Christ are at once impugned.

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Of course, the force of this argument has been felt. To weaken it men have invented the blasphemous doctrine of what they call the *Kenosis*.* They say that the Lord voluntarily curtailed His knowledge and spoke from the standpoint of an ignorant Galilean peasant, often saying that which was incorrect and untrue. See to what lengths the theories of "higher criticism" lead! You cannot give them a place in your mind without derogating from the glory and majesty of the Person of Christ.

The book of Jonah also is authenticated by the Lord Himself. Sceptics ask: "How could Jonah be in the whale's belly for three days and nights? Impossible!" But the Lord Jesus emphatically says: "*Jonas was* three days and three nights in the whale's belly" (Matt. XII. 40). Who are these men who dare to discredit what is so distinctly affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ?

So, too, with Daniel. None can call that book in question without casting a slur upon Christ. For *He* calls him "Daniel the prophet," and quotes from the book that bears his name, stamping it as the genuine writing of that selfsame Daniel (Matt. XXIV. 15).

* The term is derived from the word ἐκένωσε (Phil. II. 7), translated "made [himself] of no reputation," or "emptied [himself]." But this refers to the Lord's divesting Himself of the outward majesty of the Godhead, and appearing in humility as Man. It affords no basis for the profane assumption that He laid aside any of His inherent qualities such as omniscience.

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VI.

Now we come to the subject of the recent discoveries in the East, and the way they confirm the accuracy of the Scripture records.

Upon what do the adversaries of the Bible base their assertion that the Pentateuch was not and could not have been written by Moses ?

To put their reply in a nutshell, it is this: At that early stage of the world's history when Moses lived, fifteen hundred years before Christ, the art of writing had not been invented, or, at all events, had not attained such perfection as would make the writing of the Pentateuch possible. The Israelites of that day, they tell us, were a mere horde of illiterate nomads, and could neither read nor write. And if there were no writers and no readers, it is clear that Moses could not have written the books that bear his name. They must have been the production of some scribe hundreds of years later.

When all this was affirmed, as if it were established fact, believers in Christ and in the Scriptures hardly knew what to say. They knew it was all wrong. They would rather believe the Lord Jesus Christ when He said that Moses wrote these books than all the learned professors of the day. But they could not say people *could* read and write fifteen hundred years B.C.

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Ah! but we can say so now. Recent discoveries have brought to light a world of scribes and readers, of books, libraries, and schools, which stretches away into a past that was already remote in the days of Abraham. The world into which Moses was born has proved to be one of high literary culture, and the wonder would be not that he should have known how to write, but that any one in his position should not have been able to do so.

M. de Sarzec, a French excavator, has discovered at Tel-loh, in Southern Chaldea, a whole library of tablets, more than thirty thousand in number. This library dates back hundreds of years before Moses. The inscriptions upon these tablets are in the most ancient language known to men, and they show conclusively that even in the remote past almost everybody could write and read. There are letters written by soldiers and merchants. Others were written by women. Even boys and girls could write; they went to school and had clay "copy-books."

In the light of all this, what becomes of the assertion that writing was the invention of a much later age?

Moses did not, of course, live in Chaldea, but in Egypt. The Egyptians did not write on baked clay like the Chaldeans, but on papyrus, a much more perishable material. In spite of this, however, certain very ancient

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Egyptian writings have been discovered. One of them is a treatise on mathematics dating from the age of Abraham ; there is also a collection of model letters, and a description of a traveller's adventures in Palestine, written in the time of Moses !

Yet learned professors, who ought to be ashamed ever to show their faces again, have sought to shake the faith of believers in the Holy Scriptures because, forsooth, nobody could write or read so long ago as the days when Moses lived ! Recent discoveries have amply and finally refuted such wild statements. But what of those who have been robbed of their confidence in the Word of God thereby ?

VII.

What have the Jehoiakims of to-day, the gentlemen who cut and slash, to say about the book of Daniel ?

They tell us, first of all, that it could not possibly have been written by Daniel. It may have been written by almost anybody else that you like, and at any later date that you please, but it could not have been written in Daniel's day.

When we ask why they make these assertions, they give us several reasons which *seem* to be very convincing. But the violence of their hostility makes us suspect that Daniel is particularly obnoxious to the critics.

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And such is, indeed, the case. The reason is not far to seek. Of all the books of the Bible, Daniel contains the most detailed and minute prophecies, not only of times yet future, but of events which were near at hand when the book was written. These latter prophecies in due time were fulfilled to the letter. So evident is this that Porphyry, an anti-Christian writer of the third century (A.D.), declared that Daniel was history and not prophecy ; that is, that it must have been written after the events prophesied of had happened. Certainly the prophecies and the subsequent history fit into one another like a hand into a glove.

" Oh," cry the critics, " nobody could foretell things in such a marvellous way. It would be a miracle ! " Now, miracles these learned gentlemen will by no means believe in. Nor do they credit such a thing as inspired prophecy. How, then, can they account for the wonderful accuracy of the predictions in Daniel, save by assuming that the book was written at a date subsequent to the events referred to ? So they fixed its date at about 160 B.C.—that is, about two hundred years after Malachi, the last of the prophets. Thus they eliminate prophecy and have history in its place.

Unfortunately for these fine theories, they do not square with certain well-established facts. The reader probably knows that, unlike most other books in the Bible, the book of

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Daniel was written in two languages. Broadly speaking, half of it is in Hebrew, the sacred language of the Jews; the other half is in Aramaic (otherwise known as Syriac, or Chaldee). There are spiritual lessons to be learned from this fact. But it is with the fact itself that we are now concerned, as affording a very clear refutation of the theory that would date the book about 160 B.C.

We have scriptural proof that *prior to their captivity* in Babylon the Jews did not understand the Aramaic language. For when Rabshakeh shouted out his abusive words in Hebrew, in the ears of the people on the wall, he was requested to desist, and to speak in Aramaic (or Syriac), which certain nobles could understand, but which was unintelligible to the people generally (2 Kings XVIII. 26).

Scripture also shows that *after their captivity* in Babylon the Jews had lost to a large extent their own language, Hebrew, and for the most part only understood Aramaic. When Ezra read the law in the hearing of the assembled people, certain Levites had to interpret it. The sacred Hebrew had become a dead language to many of the Jews who had returned from Babylon (Neh. VIII. 7).

Now, the book of Daniel, though full of instruction for us, was written primarily for the comfort and encouragement of God's people who lived in his day. If it had been

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written, as the critics affirm, about 160 years B.C., then it would have been written at a time when about half of it would be quite unintelligible to many who were intended to profit by it. The only date in the whole of Jewish history when the book of Daniel could be read in its entirety by the Jewish people was the period of their captivity before they had lost their own language, and after they had begun to speak the language of their conquerors. Thus the fact of the two languages being used proves the book to have been written during the Captivity ; that is, *at the time when Daniel lived.*

VIII.

The two chief objections to Daniel on the part of the " higher critics " are in connection with what they call (1) the Belshazzar, and (2) the musical instrument difficulty. Modern discoveries, however, have utterly overthrown and discomfited the objectors.

The " Belshazzar difficulty," briefly, is as follows : The Bible states that on the night when Babylon fell, its king, Belshazzar, was slain (Dan. v. 30). " But," say the critics, " we know Babylonian history well enough to say that no king named Belshazzar ever reigned over Babylon. The fall of the city is a historic event, but when it took place the reigning king was Nabonidus, not Belshazzar. Moreover, he was hundreds of miles away

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from Babylon and we read of him afterwards a prisoner in the hands of the Persian conqueror." Here was a clear case of conflict! Christians knew not what to say. They could only wait. Nor have they waited in vain.

In 1854 Sir H. Rawlinson discovered in the ruins of the ancient city, Ur of the Chaldees, some terra-cotta cylinders containing an inscription by that very King Nabonidus, who was reigning at the time when Babylon fell. In this inscription he speaks of "Belshazzar, my eldest son." This proves two things:

(1) There was a royal person named Belshazzar.

(2) He was son of Nabonidus,* and therefore lived at the very time that Daniel says he did.

In 1876 Sir H. Rawlinson discovered more than two thousand tablets upon the site of Babylon itself. One of these contained an account by the Persian King Cyrus of the invasion and capture of Babylon. Nabonidus is mentioned as having fled and been made prisoner. Mention is also made of *a certain night when "the king" died.*

It appears, then, that there were actually two persons who at the same time were kings

* He is called in Scripture the son (or grandson) of Nebuchadnezzar. There is ground for believing that Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. In that case Belshazzar would be rightly spoken of as son, or grandson, of Nebuchadnezzar, though actually the son of Nabonidus.

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of Babylon. Nabonidus, the supreme monarch, was absent from his capital city, and it seems that he had left his eldest son, Belshazzar, in Babylon as a deputy king or regent during his absence. So that in very truth Belshazzar was "the king," *the only king* that could possibly have been slain on that terrible night of Babylon's capture.

This fact throws light on a statement in the Bible which otherwise is somewhat difficult of explanation. It was not uncommon in ancient times for signal services to be rewarded by exaltation of the man who rendered them to a place in the kingdom second only to the king himself. Thus Joseph was rewarded by Pharaoh, Mordecai by Ahasuerus, Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar. But in Daniel v. 29 Belshazzar commands that Daniel should be, not the *second*, but the *third*, ruler in the kingdom. Why the third? Sir H. Rawlinson's discoveries enable us to answer this question. Belshazzar himself, though king in Babylon, was only the second ruler, Nabonidus his father being the first. Hence the highest place that he could offer Daniel was that of *third* ruler.

How accurate, then, is the language of Scripture! How the attacks of the critics recoil upon themselves! How the book of Daniel comes unscathed and triumphant out of the ordeal to which it has been subjected! May God give repentance and self-judgment to the

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men who have set themselves to discredit and belittle His Word.

IX.

There yet remains the question of the musical instruments, upon which the critics have laid great stress.

When Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image in the plain of Dura all kinds of musical instruments are said to have been employed (Dan. III. 5). "But," say the critics, "four of these instruments—the harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer — were of *Greek* origin, and could not have been in use in Babylon at such an early date. This shows that the book of Daniel is the production of a much later age." So reason Dean Farrar and others of the rationalistic school.

Unfortunately for their theories, Strabo, a geographical writer who lived at the beginning of the Christian era, distinctly states that two of these instruments, the harp and sackbut (*κίθαρις* and *σαμβύκη*), were not Greek, but Asiatic in origin. The pages of Strabo were as accessible to Dean Farrar as to any one. He could read Greek with facility. What excuse had he for remaining in such ignorance of the subject upon which he wrote?

But what about the other two instruments, the psaltery and dulcimer? They are very possibly Greek in origin, as is asserted. But about fifty years before the time of Daniel, the

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great Assyrian monarch, Assur-bani-pal, built a huge and splendid palace for himself. This palace, with the sculptures upon its walls, has been laid bare by the spade of the excavator. In one of the designs there has been found a representation of one of those very Greek instruments which we are told could not possibly have been known in Babylon until five hundred years later!

The fact is, it is conclusively proved that a brisk trade was carried on between Greece and Babylon long before Daniel's time, and opportunities were abundant for instruments of music to find their way from one country to the other.

So, once again, the critics are convicted of bearing false testimony; and the Scriptures are cleared of the aspersions which have been cast upon them.

It is impossible to acquit the "higher critics" of the charge of showing bias and prejudice in their handling of the sacred writings. Their methods deserve the sternest condemnation. Nor are they to be commended who condone their conduct by remaining in church fellowship with them.

The path of the Christian, who desires to be loyal to Christ and the Scriptures, is clear. He is not to bid God-speed to any who bring not the doctrine of Christ. He is to have no manner of fellowship with such, and is not

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even to receive them into his house (2 John 10, 11).

My earnest counsel to you is never to sanction by your presence the preaching of any "higher critic," no matter how great his name. Retain no link with congregations who tolerate them in the pulpit. Contribute to no societies which accept their patronage. Be clear, at all costs, of this great evil. You may find yourself in a small minority. Never mind. Better to be few in number and loyal in heart than to march shoulder to shoulder with traitors in the ranks of the majority.

To any reader that has fallen under the influence of anti-scriptural theories let me say a word in closing. Do not believe that the critics have a monopoly of learning. Men as learned as they have considered their theories and have deliberately cast them aside, not only as unscriptural, but as unhistorical and unphilosophical. Men of the greatest scholarship have been and are devout and enthusiastic believers in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. If *they* find no difficulty in this, why should you or I ?

"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken : lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord ; and what wisdom is in them ? " (Jer. VIII. 9).

H. P. B.

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REPENTANCE.

"God commandeth all men everywhere to repent."
ACTS XVII. 30.

SO said the Apostle Paul when standing on Mars' Hill, in Athens. He spoke of past times—times of ignorance, at which God had winked. But now, when all that God is, in grace, has been fully manifested in Christ, and we hear, so to speak, the very throbbings of the eternal Heart of Love, those are without excuse who remain hardened and impenitent. A day of judgment is coming, and the Judge is appointed; if there is no repentance there can be no salvation, and judgment must follow.

Repentance does not consist in sorrow for that which is entailed upon me by my acts. I may be sorry, on account of what must follow, for some bad action of mine, if detected. But this is not "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance, not to be repented of," but rather "the sorrow of the world, which worketh death." The apostle pointed out to Athenians, on Mars' Hill, that the "unknown God," Whom they ignorantly worshipped, was now knowable, in the light of manifestation, by Christ. God is revealed as Love. In view of this fact the answering love

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and devotion of repentant hearts are God's by right.

We must remember, then, that true repentance is *Godward*, and while God commands it, it is His goodness which calls it forth (Romans II. 4). God has proved His love to men by the gift of His Son. There was nothing in us to draw out this love—nothing but sin, self-will, and self-sufficiency. While we were yet sinners He loved us. "O, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

When a sense of God's goodness comes into the soul a man is led to judge himself; then, as he realizes that he has sinned against his best Friend, a change of mind about God produces a change of mind about self. To judge oneself, apart from a sense of God's goodness, may induce remorse, but that is not Godward repentance, and can only lead to despair.

Long ago the writer of these lines, an unconverted, self-willed young man, was constantly rude to an officer in a regiment of volunteers to which he belonged. There was no real reason for the dislike which prompted the rudeness; it was merely the outcome of an unreasoning whim. The writer was at that time thinking of emigrating to British Columbia; and one day, as he was seated in his surgery, there came a knock at the door, and this very officer presented himself. "What brings you down here?" was the curt greet-

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ing received by the new-comer. The answer came slowly and quietly: "I heard that you were going to British Columbia, and, having some interest out there, I thought that I would run down and see if I could help you."

There was a moment's surprised silence; then a burst of self-reproach, "What! *you* have done this—*you*, to whom I have behaved so rudely—*you* have taken the trouble, and incurred the expense, of coming here to help me?" An utter revulsion of feeling followed. The goodness of his friend caused repentance and a hearty sorrow for previous wrongdoing.

And so it is with God. Once have a sight of His purpose of love concerning us, and the cost at which that purpose has been carried out, and we condemn ourselves, in sorrow and self-abasement, for our ingratitude towards our best Friend.

We have seen, then, that *God commands*, and that His *goodness produces* repentance. Now, let us look at a passage in one of St. Peter's epistles, and we shall find that the long-suffering of God has waited for that repentance on our part. "The Lord is not slack," we read, "concerning His promise" (that of the coming of Christ, to bring in truth and righteousness), "as some men count slackness, but longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all should come to repentance*."

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Think of this, friends. God is waiting; Christ is waiting; the saints of God are waiting. For what do they wait? That *all* should come to repentance. Judgment is God's strange work. Only through the Saviour-God can the Infinite Heart of Love be known; and the carrying out in power of all His purposes is held back, lest any should perish and fail to come to repentance. "Perish" is, indeed, a terrible term as it speaks to us, letter by letter. Those letters are initial letters of the solemn words, "Passing, Eternally, Ruined, Into, Sinners, Hell."

If unrepentant, God has waited for you till this moment. Trifle no longer. He is not slack concerning His promise; any moment His patience may come to an end. When the day of grace has run out, and the day of judgment commences, repentance WILL BE TOO LATE.

Look this matter straight in the face. God has provided infinite happiness for you in spite of all that you are and all that you have done. In infinite grace He has borne with your indifference. Once more He offers you salvation, but He tells you that one day the offer will be closed, and the appointed Judge will execute the judgment which He is unwilling to inflict. In view of all this, *Repent, Repent, Repent.*

In Luke XV. we have a wonderful revelation

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of the joy of God over a repentant sinner. We read here of a lost sheep, a lost piece of silver, and, finally, of a lost son; and each parable depicts a different phase of truth. But, in each case, neighbours and friends are called together *to rejoice over one sinner that repenteth.* Oh, how men keep back the flood of love from the heart of God! The work of Christ opened the way for the sinner, and repentance removes every hindrance, so that God can find His joy in blessing. Think of the beauty of the picture, for the painting of which no poor words of mine are adequate—a repentant sinner; a rejoicing God!

This, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter.

God commands repentance, in view of judgment.

God's goodness leads to repentance.

God waits for repentance.

God's heart is rejoiced when it takes place.

We talk of the wonders of the world, and some speakers grow eloquent or excited in their rehearsal. But can any theme be more wonderful, more sublime, than that of the ways of God, in commanding, producing, waiting for, and rejoicing over, Repentance? On the repentant one He lavishes all the riches of grace which are in the Infinite Heart of Love to bestow.

E. C—p.

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"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY."

I TAKE THY Promise, LORD, in all its length,
And depth of fulness, as my daily strength :
Into life's future, fearless I may gaze,
For, JESUS, THOU art with me "all the days."

Days may be coming fraught with loss or change,
New scenes surround my life and faces strange :
I thank THEE that no day can ever break,
Saviour, when THOU wilt leave me or forsake.

There will be days of weakness or distress,
When sin has power to tempt, and cares to press :
Yet on the darkest day I will not fear,
For 'midst the shadows THOU wilt still be near !

Days there will be of joy and deep delight,
When earth seems fairest, and her skies most bright :
Then draw me closer to THEE, lest I rest
Elsewhere, my Saviour, than upon THY Breast.

And all the other days that make my life,
Marked by no special joy, or grief, or strife :
Days filled with quiet duties, trivial care :
Burdens too small for other hearts to share,

Spend THOU these days with me, all shall be THINE:
So shall the darkest hours with glory shine !
Then when the earthly years have passed away,
Let me be with THEE in the Perfect Day !

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R.—Philippians III. 18, 19.—The persons of whom the apostle here speaks were not true Christians, though they bore the Christian name. "*Whose end is destruction*" could scarcely be said of a child of God. But these, standing in the Christian circle, caused the apostle many tears by their worldly ways. They were "*enemies of the cross of Christ,*" inasmuch as the Cross had made a great and an impassable gulf between the Christian and the world. In the Cross the apostle gloried. By it the world was crucified to him and he to the world, as he carefully tells us in Galatians VI. To walk, then, in the world's ways, to ride in her chariot, and to be a partner in her pleasures and her projects, is to be practically an enemy of the cross of Christ. That is what is meant by minding "*earthly things.*" The apostle himself had one all-absorbing, all-controlling Object—Christ in glory. Everything that militated against the knowledge of Him was, in his judgment, worse than loss. He was the glorious Prize, and the apostle, like a runner in the race, pressed forward in eager haste to reach the goal. His citizenship was in heaven, as ours is. Christ was there, and Paul was a stranger and a pilgrim here. Whatever was inconsistent with this high calling was an "*earthly thing.*" Needless to say, we have to prosecute with diligence our daily duties and to glorify God in them. These are not the "*earthly things*" to be shunned if we would be true to Christ. Indeed, to neglect them under pretence of superior sanctity would be a

sure sign that we had fallen under some great delusion.

G. R.—Has it ever occurred to you that the phrase "*The righteousness of Christ*" is nowhere to be found in Holy Scripture? You will search for it in vain from Genesis to the Book of the Revelation. Do we mean that He was not righteous? God forbid!

Again, the obedience of our Lord on earth cannot be reduced to His keeping the law of Moses. The Ten Commandments—holy, just, and good as they surely were—did not give the measure of His obedience. For which of those Commandments called upon Him to lay down His life for His foes? Yet He did this, and in doing so carried out the will of God. The obedience of Christ, then, while fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law, went very far beyond them.

Your theory is that Christ kept the law for us to make amends for our non-fulfilment of it, and that His legal obedience is the righteousness in which His saints stand. He died, you say, for sins actually committed, but kept the law during His life, so that His law-keeping might be imputed to us who have failed to keep it. This clearly makes a difference between sins of commission and sins of omission—the former atoned for by Christ's death, the latter, you say, compensated for by Christ's life of law-keeping. But is this distinction just? If a man steals from me a hundred pounds, that is undoubtedly a sin, but if another owes me a hundred pounds and fails to pay it, is that no sin?

Let me ask you, What is the meaning of Gala-

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tians II. 21 ? " If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." How do you explain those words ? Observe, if righteousness come by the law—no matter whether I fulfil the law myself or another fulfil it for me, if it come on that principle—*Christ is dead in vain.* What is the meaning of that ? It surely means that if Christ's law-keeping is a set-off against my law-breaking, then His death was not needed at all. Your doctrine obliges you to take your stand there. Is that where you are prepared to stand ?

Have you never noticed the contrast drawn between the righteousness of the law and that of faith in Romans X. ? Why are they contrasted if the righteousness of the law is the only righteousness Scripture speaks of, as you allege ? And in Philippians III. Paul places in opposition his own righteousness, which is of the law, and the righteousness which is of God, by faith. The former he flung away as worthless, in the latter he made his loud and joyous boast. Was the apostle making a distinction without a difference ?

Our remarks thus far only show that your theory breaks down under examination. We have yet to see what that righteousness is in which the believer stands, and of which Christ *risen* is the measure. In Romans III. 21 it is called " *the righteousness of God,*" and said to be " *without the law* "—that is, apart from the law altogether. Our fitness to be in the presence of God is not by the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, Whose blood has been sprinkled on the mercy seat, and in virtue of which God is now revealed as just, and the justifier of him who believes in

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Jesus. He clears from every charge of sin—whether of omission or of commission—the one who believes. In this His justice is fully maintained by the Blood of the Great Sacrifice. He is righteous in reckoning to be righteous the soul that believes in Jesus (*v.* 26).

If it be urged that there must be a moral fitness to stand before God as well as a judicial fitness, we fully acknowledge it. But this is found in the blessed truth that the believer is a new creation in Christ. All that he was, morally speaking, as a ruined child of Adam, has come to an end in the cross and death of Jesus. Our old man has been crucified with Him, and we have died with Christ (Rom. VI.). Thus the old order is for ever ended, and we are, in Christ, a new creation ; old things are passed away, all things are become new. And all things are of God (2 Cor. V.). We trust our remarks, though brief, may be of use in placing the subject in a somewhat clearer light.

X.—1 Corinthians v. 8.—The allusion here is to the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, of which we may read in Exodus XII. Redemption by blood is always to be accompanied by holiness of life. This the Corinthians needed to remember. The " old leaven "—those evil deeds which characterized them before they received the gospel—had to be purged out and the feast kept in holiness, and with no leaven of malice or wickedness of any kind. They were " unleavened " in Christ, let them be so in practice. " The feast," we presume, points to the supper of the Lord, of which the Passover was a partial figure. Yes, leaven is always a type of what is evil.

OLD TRUTHS AND NEW.

A Word to Preachers and Teachers.

"IT is of no use to tell people what they know already; we must try to tell them something they do *not* know."

So said a dear Christian friend to me, only yesterday, as we walked together, conversing on the subjects that were uppermost in our hearts.

And, with certain reservations, I assented. For, generally speaking, people do not know as much as we give them credit for, and it is by no means a difficult task for a preacher to tell his hearers something of which the majority are ignorant.

To-day, however, sitting by my friend's bookshelf, I reached down a volume and opened it. The first paragraph that caught my eye made me repent of having so hastily assented to his proposition yesterday.

For the sake of preachers and teachers who read these lines, I quote the paragraph in full:—

"It was said by Coleridge that our greatest mission is to rescue admitted truths from the neglect caused by their universal admission. There is much force in this. When a truth is fighting for existence, it compels men, whether they love it or not, to consider it. But when its position is secured, it becomes like a well-

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used coin, or the familiar text which hangs unnoticed on the wall. It is a great mission to rescue such truths from neglect; to flash upon them the strong light which arrests attention; to play the part of Old Mortality, who, chisel in hand, was wont to clear the mould of neglect from the gravestones of the Covenanters, so that the legend might stand out clear-cut."

These words are worth weighing. Do you ever sigh, dear fellow-worker in the Master's vineyard, because you cannot vie with those who bring forth treasures new and fresh from the inexhaustible storehouse of truth? Take courage; yours may be an even greater mission, if by the grace of God you are enabled to rescue a well-known truth from neglect, and to make it stand out clearly and forcibly before your hearers.

It has been well said that "it is a greater triumph to teach the deaf and dumb to correctly pronounce the five vowel letters A, E, I, O, U, than it is to teach an ordinary schoolboy the whole of Webster's celebrated speech in reply to Senator Hayne." In the same way, it may be a greater service, demanding a greater measure of God-given ability, to teach the fundamental truths of Christianity to the ignorant than to expound elaborate details to the initiated. If, by constant prayer and earnest dependence upon God you are enabled

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to set forth that which is generally acknowledged to be true, in such a way that it shall become *true indeed* to your hearers, and stand out before their minds with sharp, clear-cut outline; if by the help of God you can make such truths appear before the eyes of men instinct with life and weighted with importance, then you may thank God for having given you the opportunity of rendering a real and necessary service to the souls of others.

Finally, let us ever remember what John Bunyan was never tired of saying: "Old truths are always new to us if they come with the smell of heaven on them." H. P. B.

"How to get them to stand."—The Christian, like a sack being filled with good well-bolted corn, if filled with the good seed of the Word of God, and thereby filled with Christ, stands in the power of what he receives; whereas the hearer who is filled with the chaff of men's thoughts and opinions on God's truth, however quickly he may be filled to the dimensions of the other, will never be able to stand alone. There must be the solidity of the truth in Christ to ensure stability.

If the preaching we are hearing does not so fill us with the heavy grain of God's Word that we stand by the weight of it without a lean, we had better take heed *what* we hear and also *how* we hear.

GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING.

(1 Tim. iv. 13.)

THIS little word of instruction, given by the Apostle Paul to Timothy—his "own son in the faith," was never more needed than now. It is a matter of surprise that large numbers of those whose conversion to God we do not doubt, are unable to resist and repel the attacks of the enemy against the truth. And the truth *is* being attacked as it never was before. In seeking to find out the cause of such apparent weakness, it has been noticed that many Christians fail to profit by the reading of Holy Scripture through having no well-arranged plan to work upon.

Very many have but little time to read the Scriptures at all. The rush of the present day does not allow of consecutive hours to be spent in the quiet study of the Word. This has led to a haphazard style of reading "just where the Book opens," which, though feeding the soul to some extent, does not lead to steady growth and deepening knowledge of the things of God.

Often some such remark as this is heard: "When I have a few minutes to spare I do not read the Bible, because I don't know where to begin." And so the precious moments are

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lost and given to some passing thing of no profit to the soul whatever.

It is true that there is a divine principle in the words "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (Exod. xvi. 18). But this surely cannot apply unless there is an intelligent carrying out of the apostolic admonition, "Give attendance to reading."

Some have tried the plan of starting at Genesis and going steadily on through the whole of the Bible. By this method a very long time necessarily elapses before the New Testament is reached. The general scope of Scripture is thus largely missed, which is a serious loss. The Old and the New Testament go together—the one hangs on the other. We need both and cannot do without either. The New is enfolded in the Old—the Old is unfolded in the New. This is no new saying, but it bears repeating.

There is another plan which can be strongly commended. Those who have tried it gladly acknowledge that it has brought the greatest possible profit to the soul. It is briefly as follows :—

There are six days in the week not counting Sunday. Divide the whole of the Bible into six portions, as follows :—

I. Genesis to Deuteronomy. (The Pentateuch.)

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II. Joshua to Esther. (Historical.)

III. Job to Song of Solomon. (Poetical and experimental.)

IV. Isaiah to Malachi. (Prophetical.)

V. Matthew to John. (Gospels—Christ on earth.)

VI. Acts to Revelation. (Epistles, etc. Christ in heaven.)

On Monday start with Genesis and read on according to the time to spare. Let Tuesday have its portion from Joshua—part two ; and so on, day by day. There will be no wasted time and no indecision. Each day will have its distinctive part to be read, and great profit will accrue.

If this plan is followed carefully and prayerfully, the results will be surprising. The whole scope of Scripture will come into view—the interest in the Word will be intensely deepened, and, moreover, wonderful treasures of truth will be discovered. The Lord's own words will be fulfilled : " Therefore every scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder who bringeth forth OUT OF HIS TREASURES things new and old " (Matt. XIII. 52). Job's words will be understood when he said : " I have esteemed the words of His mouth *more than my necessary food* " (Job XXIII. 12).

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Many of us are terribly lean in soul through having so little spiritual food day by day. It is all very well to go to Bible readings and addresses, but there *must be personal appropriation of the precious truth* if we are to get on.

Instead of giving "attendance to reading" it has been found, alas, that many spend their spare moments—in the train, tram, or elsewhere—over the newspaper, or a "light," interesting book. This is not said in the spirit of fault-finding, but rather with the yearning desire that such would try the experiment suggested above. If so, they will want less and less of the newspaper, and more of the Word. *The deep, deep joy of a growing knowledge of God and His Christ by His Spirit, will fill the soul, to His praise and glory.* How He longs to be better known and trusted! How readily would the Holy Spirit bless such reading, and make revelations of *truth* to the soul!

Another word or two. It is not mere intellectual reading that is required. The head may be filled with knowledge, but *God wants the heart.* Therefore read on dependently, earnestly—and, above all, PRAYERFULLY. Let the heart respond to what God says with a ready obedience to His Word, and the blessing obtained will be beyond the telling.

The gracious Lord help each and all to "give attendance to reading" *till HE come.*

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The following questions may possibly be asked :—

Why no portion for Sunday ?

Because it is assumed that the Lord's day will have its own special portions for the soul in communion.

Would you mark the Word as you read ?

Yes. Each scripture that specially appeals to the reader, if marked, will be ready for reference during the day or at some other time.

When any one part is completed, what should be done ?

Start to read that part again, and so on continually.

Should books be read to get the meaning of the scriptures day by day ?

If time allows, yes. This will surely help if done in dependence on the Lord. A most encouraging plan, however, is to ask God by His Spirit to teach you. Then compare with some trusted writings of His servants. This will be found interesting and profitable.

Would you miss a day's reading ?

Not if it can possibly be avoided. Make no burden of the reading. Do it to the Lord. If unavoidably hindered, this need not distress the soul. "Chew the cud." This plan of reading should not clash with family and other special readings, or the study of special subjects.

H. S. H.

BEARERS.

(Read LUKE v. 17–25; VII. 11–16.)

YOU will notice that in each of these portions of Scripture bearers are mentioned. In the one case there were, as we learn from the parallel passage in Mark, four of them; in the other case the number is not mentioned. The object the bearers had in view differs in the two cases. Here they seek to bear a sick man to the great Healer; there they carry a dead man to burial.

Very beautiful was the activity shown by the bearers in the first case; they desired to bring a sick friend where "the power of the Lord was present, to heal." Would it not be well if there were more of this earnest longing, more sanctified energy, to bring sick souls to the healing power of the Gospel?

There were four bearers who went upon the house-top and let down the man sick of the palsy "into the midst, before Jesus." There are different ways in which Faith can find a field of action in the cause of the Gospel. If four Christians are agreed as to their dealing with a certain person, cannot they, for instance, call four times separately on that person, upon the Lord's day, and invite him to hear the Gospel preached? "Ah," says one, "I could not speak to any one." That may be true;

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for even the bravest of us are cowards in our work for Christ. But perhaps you could give a little book, or deliver an invitation to a meeting, and so do your part. "No," you still answer. At least, then, cannot you pray? Are souls of no value? Is heaven a place of bliss? Is hell a reality? If you cannot employ yourself actively, then take care to live the Gospel, and so attract others to it. "You ask me to go to the preaching," said a man to his wife one day. "Well, when I see its effect on your conduct, I may believe in its power, and then, perhaps, I will come."

For the man sick of the palsy there seemed no room in the presence of Jesus. But mark the energy which overcame hindrances; the bearers *made room* for him. So we must *make room* for the sick of soul. In the mode of the sick man's conveyance to the Saviour there was probably noise, dust, much that might be pronounced a nuisance. But I am bold to say that the Lord of Life rejoiced in the zeal of the bearers; God never disappoints faith.

The words of the Healer, to whom the sick of the palsy was brought, were remarkable: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." These were strange words to address to one who came seeking cure from palsy—could they affect his case? Yes, for sin is the root of all the disease and death that are in the world. Man was made by God to live—not to die—

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but sin brought in death and its attendant evils.

Having pronounced the promise of forgiveness, Christ, in spite of the Pharisees, who knew not the glory and the power of the teacher in their midst, commands, in all the majesty of His divinity, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house."

"Immediately he rose up, before them all, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God." The Gospel not only brings forgiveness of sins to all who accept it, it gives a new power, through the Holy Ghost; and the believer is rendered superior to all that is of this world, so that he carries that which before had carried him.

Now turn to the other case. Here the bearers carried to burial a young man, the only son of a widow of Nain. Perhaps no one cared for the soul of the widow's son; it may even be that some of the bearers had helped to bring about his condition. Had they previously been bearing him to death, by bad example, by immoral conduct, by strong drink, by pernicious literature? We cannot tell. But now, at least, the young man was beyond human aid.

The Lord Jesus had compassion. He arrests the bearers; He is able and willing to help when all seems hopeless. Look at Him; hear Him; admire Him; trust Him; worship Him.

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"Young man," says the voice of authority, "I say unto thee, Arise."

The result was immediate. "He that was dead sat up and began to speak." And the heart of the glorified Jesus is the same as when He arrested the young men on the way to burial. Still He has power to deliver from death and judgment. May the voice of power arrest you on your way to burial, and free you for ever from any who may be bearing you thither by the force of evil example.

Let us note that we are all, in one way or another, bearers of others. We influence, to some extent, all who come into our company. What effect has our company on those around? Are we striving, by all possible means, to bear them to Jesus? Have we the sure confidence which marked the four bearers of the palsied man? They never doubted that blessing would come to him for whom it was sought.

Oh, how do our lives act upon others? Does the man who sits at the desk next yours know that you are a Christian? Is your travelling companion, whom you meet daily, helped or hindered by you? Are you helping your fellow-men to life, or bearing them to burial? To which class of bearers do you belong?

E. C—p.

"MY FATHER'S BUSINESS."

THE first recorded words of the Lord in each of the gospels furnish an index to its character. For example :—

In Matthew III. 15, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," we see the King, Who will rule His kingdom with equity and truth, Himself marking out the way of righteousness for all His subjects.

In Mark I. 15, "The time is fulfilled," etc., we see the great servant prophet making known the testimony of God to His people.

In John I. 38, 39, "What seek ye?"—"Come and see," we behold "the only-begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father," inviting others to share His rich inheritance ; and this is Christianity.

And in Luke II. 49, "Wist ye not that I must be about *My Father's business ?*" we find even more strikingly still that which governed and altogether characterized the Lord in His lovely pathway, as we may see it all through Luke's gospel.

In the gospel of John the words and works of Jesus called forth the bitter enmity of the leaders of the Jews, for these words and works were the evidence of who He was Whom the Father had sent to declare Himself.

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But in Luke's gospel they find another reason for their hatred and contempt—*He went after sinners!* In chapter v. 30 they complain that He *ate with sinners.*

In chapter VII. 34 they say, He is "a friend of sinners."

In chapter XV. 2 they murmur, "This Man receiveth sinners."

In chapter XIX. 7 they murmur again, saying, "He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner."

But this of which they so constantly complained, and for which He was despised and reproached, was "His Father's business."

The very first words of His public ministry fully confirm this, for when He had opened THE BOOK, He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord was upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (IV. 18, 19).

And amongst the last words that fell from His blessed lips ere He returned to His Father were: "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (XXIV. 47).

Never for an instant did He allow Himself to

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be turned aside from this blessed mission. The taunts and revilings of His foes did but serve to give it emphasis. So that when they murmur in chapter v., He replies, "I came to call sinners to repentance."

In chapter vii. He answers by drawing the sinner of the city after Him, and when Simon despised Him for this, He propounds the lovely parable of the creditor who found his great delight in pardoning even a five-hundred-pence debtor.

So also in chapter xv., when they complain that He receives sinners, He replies by telling them of the Father who runs and kisses the returning prodigal, and fills the whole house with merriment because he was safe and sound. It is as though He said, "Yes, I receive sinners, but the reason is because God receives them, I am but manifesting amongst you the grace that is His!"

But not in the activities of life only was the Lord controlled by this one "business." Even amid the unspeakable sorrows of the cross He blessed and gladdened a dying malefactor, which only Luke records. There seems to be a special ring of triumph in the words, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," for in that is demonstrated the fact that His mission had not been in vain. He had come from heaven to gather gems out of the sin and sorrow of this sad world, and the converted thief of

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Calvary was a sample of these—the earnest of the countless multitude that shall fill heaven to its utmost. Such will be the blessed result of the Father's business having been so perfectly accomplished by Jesus our Lord on earth.

Now every chapter in this precious gospel is stamped by the same thing. The miracles and parables all exhibit most strikingly the grace of God which Jesus brought down to sinners. And not only so, but He Himself was the very embodiment of that which His works and words expressed.

We delight to admire, but we are also called upon to imitate, for in this gospel alone the words occur, "*Go thou and do likewise.*" His business has become ours, and that which controlled Him has now to govern His disciples.

We may enter with Him into the joys of the Father's bosom in the gospel of John, but it is equally our privilege and responsibility to come out for Him in the midst of sinners, and be His witnesses there, as in Luke. But in order to do this we shall need to sit at His feet as did Mary (Luke x.), and have hearts and eyes that can weep for sinners as did His (Luke xix.). May we have grace to tread this blessed pathway, and be about our Father's business, in the power of the same anointing which He received (Luke xxiv. 49).

J. T. M.

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GOD DOES HEAR PRAYER.

IN the March number of *Simple Testimony*, 1906, two answers to prayer were given to show how God both hears and cares for His people in time of need. In each case the answer came through Christian men. In those I am about to relate we may see that God can supply our needs through the most unlikely channels. Who would have expected Him to use a raven as His messenger to bring food to Elijah? Yet morning and evening, as you may read in 1 Kings xvii. 6, the prophet's breakfast and supper were regularly provided, and this, too, at a time when famine raged. For a whole year afterwards a widow, her son, and the man of God were fed by God's hand. The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, during the whole time the need lasted.

Our God is the same God to-day. Our requests are to be made known to Him. He has His own way of answering. When the famine raged in Egypt Joseph's treasure-houses were opened. Jesus is the true Joseph. It is from His treasure-house our needs are supplied. Paul assures us that "My God"—that God Whom he had known and proved—"shall supply all your need according to His *riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

A Christian man had become security for a supposed friend, who proved to be a designing knave. In result all that our Christian friend possessed had to go to meet the liabilities. His wife was slowly dying of consumption. His business gone, no employment to be found, a winter of unusual severity, little wonder that the needs of his wife and family weighed heavily upon him. He daily and hourly turned to God, but long weary weeks passed and no succour came.

Returning home after a day of fruitless toil, he found that the last coals would be used that night, and the last candle burnt. When he left in the morning to go again in search of employment his little daughter said, "Father, how shall we take care of dear mother to-night?" The question pierced him to the very quick. He pictured his wife in a comfortless sick-room, without fire or light, and what the effect upon her mind would be when she knew the straits to which they were reduced. He knelt down, and in an agony supplicated help from God. Forgetting all other wants, he again and again asked for "*coal and candles.*" He rose from his knees fully assured that his prayer was heard. The peace of God garrisoned his heart and mind. He sallied forth feeling sure of finding some employment that would enable him to supply these needs. The day passed in fruitless search, and with gloomy

spirits he turned towards home. He had forgotten that " it may not be your way, and it may not be my way, but in SOME WAY or other the Lord will provide."

As he entered the gate he was surprised to see a large pile of coals. Little Johnny opened the door, and, clapping his hands, shouted out, " Father, we've got some coals and candles."

To what instrumentality were they indebted for this relief ? The father could not tell. He had not mentioned the need to any human being, and yet, in some mysterious way, it was supplied.

Shall I tell you how ? In that very town was a rich brewer who cordially disliked our friend, because he was a Christian, and because his labours in the Gospel had brought about a great change in the drunken and brutal sailors who frequented the low parts of the town.

On the very morning that our friend Mr. P—— was praying, and exactly at the same hour, this rich brewer was deeply impressed that Mr. P—— was in need. To use his own words, " As I was busy, a voice suddenly seemed to say, ' Send some coals to Mr. P—— ; he is in want.' I was astonished. I knew nothing of his circumstances, and could not believe he needed coals. Beside, I could not send to *him* of all others ! I tried to banish the thought, and devoted myself more earnestly

to my work; but the voice—it seemed within me—said again, with painful distinctness, 'Send some coals to Mr. P——; he is in want!' I scouted the idea as weak and silly—a mere phantasy of the brain; but it was no use; I had to succumb. The more I ridiculed and fought it, the more irresistible was the impression, until, to purchase peace, and in some awe, I must confess, I ordered John to load his team and leave the coals at his door.

"For a moment I was at rest, but only for a moment. An imperative voice came, 'Send some candles!' I said to myself, 'This is too absurd! I will not gratify this whim.' But again I was so beset with the mandate, and so distressed and baffled in repelling it, that, as an easy way to get out of torment, I handed John a package of candles also." Such an answer to prayer is indeed the doing of Him Who is wonderful in working!

Another instance is that of a working-man in Wales. His cottage was among the mountains between Abergavenny and Hereford. One severe winter the snow fell so heavily, and the frost was so severe, that for some time it was impossible to get to his work. They had very little food, and no shop for seven miles, and the road was impassable. At last their stock ran out. Not a thing remained in the house. It looked like starvation for wife and children. Before going to bed

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he knelt down, told God his Father all about the matter, and asked Him to supply their need.

He felt perfectly calm and peaceful when he rose from his knees, and retired in assurance that God had heard his cry, and in *some way or other* his need would be met.

Early in the morning they were aroused by a knock at the door. On opening it they found a man on horseback inquiring if a man named Caleb lived there. On hearing that this was the very man, he handed him packages containing bread, meat, and luxuries as well as necessaries. The man refused to say from whom he came, and after depositing the parcels, turned his horse's head and rode away. This food was sufficient to last them until the weather changed and the roads were again passable. It was now a time for thanksgiving, and Caleb did not forget to thank God that his prayer had been heard and answered.

Who was the instrument God used? Two years afterwards some one who knew Caleb was visiting the house of a doctor in Hereford. The doctor's wife was a Christian, but he was a professed infidel. In the course of conversation the Christian visitor sought to illustrate the reality of a God by the way He heard and answered prayer. One of the instances he gave was this. On mentioning the name the doctor inquired if he lived in Wales, and

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the sort of man he was. After hearing certain particulars he told the following story.

" I often go for long rides among the Welsh hills. One day I noticed a number of people assembled together. Among them was a man who particularly engaged my attention. It turned out to be a religious service. Every reference the preacher made to passages of Scripture he turned up. After the service was over I managed to get into conversation with this man, and was pleased with his intelligent answers. Before leaving him I learnt that his name was Caleb, but where he lived I did not know. The winter afterwards was a very severe one. One night I had gone to bed when a voice seemed to say to me, ' Fill some packages with meat, etc., and send them to Caleb.' I tried to shake off the impression, but at length it grew so powerful that I went to the larder, gathered together all I could find, called my man, told him to saddle the horse, and take the things to a man named Caleb. ' I don't know any more about him than that, so you had better let the horse go his own way.' "

The sequel you already know. Shall not these things encourage us to put our trust in Him at all times ? How they tell us to cast all our care upon God ! " He careth for you " is to be our strong consolation. He may delay the answer, but He is never unmindful of our need. H. N.

CAN WE BELIEVE?

DEUT. XXX. 6; JOHN VII. 17.

WHILST the great mass of men—and perhaps not least in our own country—is content with the conscience-salve, "We do not believe," there are many who plead the sister excuse, "We cannot believe"; but, now here, now there, arises the anxious query, "Can we believe?" The enemy is not slow, moreover, to suggest flaws in the revelation, which, perhaps more than an open denial, leads to that question asked in despair rather than in sincerity, "To whom shall we go?" Well for those who leave the text-books and the strife of men for the company of the One Who has "the words of eternal Life"!

Standing on the threshold of the "promised land," after proof abundant of His love and care, God, through His servant Moses, laid before the people His plan for their blessing in that land, and the regeneration of the nations through them. Before them, to the human mind, lay impossibilities—imp*a*ssabilities; yet God had promised them the land. He had fed them, yet they distrusted Him. He revealed His plan; they rebelled. "How can we believe?" "How can we love?"

Yet just here God lays bare the root of every difficulty in our heart; and with it, as always, the remedy—obedience: not far off, "but

very nigh thee." Such is always His way. We need not ascend to heaven ; not all are called to cross the sea ; the word is very nigh ; obedience first, then faith. The remedy is not in ourselves or in men, but in God ; not in accumulated evidence, but in obedience ; after which, let the evidence do its own work in conviction, " proving the realities not seen." But on the threshold of this problem lies the question of obedience. Let us but see to this, and God has pledged Himself in this covenant to fulfil His part. " How can *we* believe ? " " If *any* man willeth to do His will, he shall know " (prove). " How can we love ? " " The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart . . . to love."

Gathered in Jerusalem were the heads of the Jewish nation ; they were seeking to rid the city of the One Who told them " all the truth " ; already their cry was, " We will not have this Man to reign over us ! " And the Searcher of hearts, greater than Solomon, dropped into their midst a question unanswered in the Bible, " How can ye believe ? " Ye *will* not obey ; ye *cannot* believe.

And does not this very question of obedience lie at the root of all our difficulties ? We have never made over our lives to Jesus Christ as Lord ; though we might shrink from the words, has our heart-cry not often been, " We will not have this Man to *reign* over us " ? Are

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there no plans in our life that we have not shared with Him ? Is there no secret indulgence that we dare not bring into His Presence ? Can He ask us to do some little thing without fear of a dishonest refusal ? Look to it well ! We shall soon be finding we cannot believe, we cannot love. Let us not wait to let Him in until we believe, until we love ; we can do neither apart from Him.

" I seek no more to alter things or mend,
Before the coming of so great a Friend ;
All were at best unseemly, and 'twere ill,
Beyond all else, to keep Him waiting still."

We cannot even say what to give up or what to keep ; what to believe or what to reject ; what to love or what to hate. He asks but one thing : " My son, give Me thine heart," the whole of it, gladly, now. Let that be given, and He has pledged Himself to do the rest. " For it is God that worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure." " The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart . . . to love."

How slow we have been to give Him the reins and let Him drive ! How afraid we were He would spoil this plan or that ! How we feared He would ask us to swallow the gnat and the camel ! Let us just quietly ask ourselves, in the light of Calvary, " Would He ? " —the Christ ; and in the light of the glory, " Could He ? "

" *Trust*, and thy trusting soul shall *prove*
Christ is its light, and Christ its love."

E. P. E.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E.—You will gain no good by going over your past experiences to satisfy yourself as to whether or not you were really converted when young. Those blessed in early years, as a rule, learn more of the evil of the flesh and of the hatefulness of sin as they advance in their Christian life. But let us leave the past and deal with the present. Is Christ your confidence NOW ? Apart from Him what have you ? Can you say : " I am nothing but a poor sinner, but I do believe the Gospel that tells me that Christ died for the ungodly. I do indeed believe in Him, nor have I a single ray of hope outside Christ " ? If your heart goes with these sayings, then be of good cheer. Cling to Christ, look up to Him continually. Believe His word and confide in His love. I often think that if I never trusted Christ before I would trust Him now. Just as I am I would go to Him, assured that He would never cast me out. Look then away to Christ Who died for you, Who is also risen again and at the right hand of God. He will strengthen your heart, and the clear light of His word will drive away the dark clouds of uncertainty. Write again if you think we can help you.

X. X.—Hebrews VI. 1.—" Perfection " here means " full growth "—a full-grown man. So in chapter V. 14, solid food belongs to full-grown men, milk to babes. These Hebrews had been connected with things proper to an infantile stage,

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let them go on to the great truths of the Christian revelation. "Perfect" in Matthew v. 48 is as to the principle of our walk. "Your Father which is in heaven" makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. We too must act on the same perfect principle, blessing and praying for those who use us ill as also for those who love and do us good. "Perfect" in Philippians III. 15 means perfect as to our Object, namely, Christ in glory. In verse 12 "not already perfect" shows that we have not reached the goal. We press towards it. Romans VII. is the experience of many Christians, though not proper Christian experience. But for all that, you never find the apostles claiming that they lived without sin. They did not so deceive themselves. Living without sin is only the dream of those whose standard is but low. For at our best we are but unprofitable servants. No excuse for sin, for His grace is sufficient, but alas! what sins of ignorance all of us commit, and on the side of omission how much we have to confess.

A. J. P—M.—We have often expressed in these columns our whole-hearted fellowship with the work of God among the young. If the object of those who engage in it is to lead the young to Christ, and to store their minds with the great truths of God's Holy Word, then we say, "God bless them, and crown their endeavours with abundant success!" Many of the children come from ungodly homes, and only pass under Christian influence on such occasions. And why should not

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Christian parents allow *their* children to go to these gatherings for the young if so disposed? They may diligently seek to fulfil their parental responsibilities and yet allow their children the privilege of hearing of the Saviour from other lips than their own for one brief hour in the week. As to methods, there will be differences, no doubt, and rightly, but in this the servant is responsible to his Master. As to your second question, we believe there are times when the strongholds of sin should be stormed and carried. See 2 Corinthians x. 5.

K. X.—Your query hardly comes within the scope of our work. It is more a matter for a physician. We are very incredulous as to the whole business. The mind, we know, has great power over the body, but we question whether one can cure another simply by force of will.

W. E. W.—We believe the feet-washing of John XIII. has reference to the cleansing away of anything that would hinder our having part with Christ. It is *moral* cleansing by the *water* of the word, as distinguished from *judicial* cleansing, which is by the Blood of Jesus alone.

ENQUIRER.—We are not sure that we understand your question as to whether the Lord Jesus when on earth maintained the rights of God. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." This hardly looks like the maintenance of rights, does it? If the *rights* of God had been enforced, would it not have been by the strong hand of power and judgment?

SHOULD WE EXPECT ANOTHER PENTECOST?

PROBABLY the question at the head of this paper is not new to the reader. So much is being said upon the subject in certain quarters just now, and such extraordinary powers are claimed by those who profess to have received "*a Pentecostal blessing*," that many Christians are seriously asking what it all means. At conferences and conventions speakers exhort their hearers to pray for "a return of Pentecostal times," and for "a Pentecostal experience." If certain excesses have brought discredit upon the movement, it is none the less true that "the Pentecostal movement" itself is forcing the question upon Christians everywhere: Is it of God? Is it scriptural? *Ought* we to expect, and pray for, another Pentecost?

In pursuing this inquiry, let us first ask,

WHY IS ANOTHER PENTECOST CONSIDERED SO DESIRABLE?

Turning to the second chapter of Acts, we find that four things marked the day of Pentecost, as a result of the coming of the Holy Ghost.

1. *Wonderful unity.*—If the disciples "were

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all with one accord in one place" at the dawn of that never-to-be-forgotten day, they were still more closely united with one another and with all who were added to them from that day forward. "All that believed were together . . . continuing daily with one accord" (*vv.* 44, 46).

2. *Wonderful experience.*—A sudden sound, like mighty wind in motion; an appearance of cloven tongues of fire resting upon each; these were the experiences that accompanied the filling of the disciples with the Holy Ghost (*vv.* 2–4).

3. *Wonderful manifestations.*—It so happened that Jerusalem was a most cosmopolitan city on the day of Pentecost. Men were there from distant Parthia and Media, and from all the outlying parts of the empire. To all this great multitude evidence was offered of the marvellous thing that had happened, by the fact of a company of unlettered Galileans speaking with other tongues, so that "every man heard them speak in his own language" (*vv.* 4–6). Truly an astonishing testimony!

4. *Wonderful power.*—When Peter stood up to preach Christ on that memorable occasion, his hearers were "pricked in their heart." Conviction seized the souls of the people, and not only Peter, but all the other apostles were beset with earnest inquirers, crying, "What shall we do?" Further exhortation followed,

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and no less than three thousand "gladly received his word" (*v.* 41).

Those who are so earnestly praying for another Pentecost would probably tell us that they desire a renewal of these four wonderful things. Instead of the Church being torn by divisions they would like to see a re-establishment of the original unity, when sectional differences were unknown, and brotherly love was the atmosphere breathed by all. They look for a widespread filling of the Holy Spirit with the natural and inevitable result of rich and blessed experiences. They expect that once again evidence should be forthcoming in the shape of supernatural utterances, and lastly, instead of meagre results following much labour, they anticipate the time when Pentecostal power shall again accompany the preaching of the gospel, and sinners be converted, not by ones and twos, nor even by scores, but by thousands.

And is not all this very good, and greatly to be desired ? Perhaps so. But was Pentecost *nothing more* than what is here described ? Was there *nothing beyond* these four things that are now again so ardently longed for ? Let us ascertain

WHAT PENTECOST REALLY WAS.

The important thing to notice about Pentecost is that it witnessed *the inauguration of an entirely new thing upon the earth.*

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For hundreds of years God had been dealing with the nation of Israel. A law had been given and a covenant entered into with that people. Promises had been made, and the oracles of God had been committed to them. Prophets had been raised up from time to time, and a remnant had been brought back from captivity and were now dwelling again in their own land. In the midst of this remnant, the long-promised Messiah had appeared, not, as they expected, in pomp and martial glory, but in lowly guise. Their treatment of Him had been tragic. Instead of welcoming Him as their God-given Deliverer, they had handed Him over to the Roman authorities, who had crucified Him as a common felon.

That awful deed brought about an entire change in the ways of God with men. Israel's rejection of Christ was followed by God's rejection of Israel. Henceforth they were to be "*Lo-ammi*" (i.e. "not My people").

Yet not one word of His free and unconditional promises will fail. The day will yet come when Israel shall acclaim their once-crucified Messiah as "He that cometh in the name of Jehovah." They shall look upon Him Whom they pierced, and mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son (Zech. XII. 10). *Then* God will resume His relationship with the chosen nation. Then again He will say,

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" It is My people," and they shall say, " The Lord is my God " (Zech. XIII. 9).

Meanwhile, there is a great gap, marked by the suspension of God's dealings with and through Israel. This great gap, extending already over nearly twenty centuries, was to be filled up with something new and altogether different from all that had gone before.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth He referred to the coming change and to the new thing that was to be formed, consequent upon His rejection by Israel. Mark the exact words, recorded in Matthew XVI. 18 : " *I will build My Church.*" It is not " I have built," nor even " I am building," but " I *will* build." Christ Himself would be the Builder, and the building should be peculiarly His own, *His* Church, *His* assembly, composed of *living* stones, believing men and women, who should be thus built together in one great structure.

Now the prime thought in connection with the day of Pentecost is that it was

THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING.

The experiences, the manifestations, the wonderful power of Pentecost were all secondary to *that.*

The Lord Jesus, having been raised up from among the dead, and exalted in glory, began to build that which should answer to the

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description He Himself had given: "My Church." So He "shed forth" the Holy Spirit, and by this means also all that believed on Him were united to Himself, their risen Head, and to one another. They were baptized by that one Spirit into *one body* (1 Cor. XII. 13). No longer a mere number of individuals, they were indissolubly bound together by being indwelt by the one Spirit, and were thus constituted fellow-members of one body.

Never had such a thing entered the thoughts of the best and greatest of the saints of previous days. Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah—all knew much of God and had enjoyed close communion with Him, but nothing of this kind had been revealed to them. It was something entirely fresh.

Unless we keep this great fact in the foreground, we shall utterly fail to comprehend the significance of Pentecost.

Another thing is to be noticed. In coming to form the Church, Christ's assembly, the Holy Ghost came, not as a visitor, but to remain. In Old Testament times He repeatedly wrought by special operation in chosen vessels. Thus He came upon, or (as the Hebrew word signifies) *clothed* Amasai (1 Chron. XII. 18) to make him the leader of a great movement in favour of David, God's anointed king. But in contrast to all this

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He came at Pentecost to dwell. Not that He has ceased to work by special operations, and to employ chosen vessels, but what is characteristic of the period inaugurated at Pentecost is that the Holy Ghost *abides* here on earth, dwelling with and in believers, always and under all circumstances. This is a fulfilment of the promise in John XIV. 16 " that He may abide with you *for ever*."

Having thus far cleared the ground, let me put the question to the reader : Can a thing be commenced or inaugurated more than once ? And if the Holy Ghost came here to dwell and to abide, is it possible for Him to come again in the same way ?

Surely these questions admit of only one answer, a negative one. But these two things, the commencement of the new structure by Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit to take up His abode therein, were the prime events of Pentecost. All else was subsidiary and secondary.

An intelligent Christian, then, on listening to a fervent prayer for " another Pentecost " would exclaim : " *Why, they are praying for the commencement of something that has already been commenced, and are asking for the coming of One Who is already here !* "

I shall be told, however, that this is not what is meant by those who pray in this way. What they desire is a renewal of the four

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wonderful things mentioned at the opening of this paper. Let us, then, review them more in detail, and consider if we can rightly pray for and expect a renewal of them.

(1) THE WONDERFUL UNITY.

The oneness that prevailed amongst believers, as already noted, must have been a striking testimony to all outside. For a short period, that for which the Lord Jesus prayed, in John XVII., "that they all may be one," was actually to be seen. The "good and pleasant" thing of Psalm CXXXIII. had come to pass, for brethren were dwelling together in unity. "All that believed were together."

But the unity so manifest at Pentecost was more than a mere *outward* unity. Those who were Christ's were joined together in a unity that no power on earth or in hell could break. *And that unity has not ceased to exist.*

The clouds of trouble soon began to arise in the blue sky of those happy, early days. "There arose a murmuring" (Acts VI. 1). Dissension and strife began, disruption set in, and all through the history of the Church on earth it has been repeated again and again. Christians have fallen out with Christians. Servants of God have striven with their fellow-servants, and have parted asunder with bitter words. Divisions have multiplied, sects and

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parties have arisen, and the Church stands to-day a spectacle to the world! *But the unity that was formed by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost remains.* Believers are still fellow-members of one body; still linked with one another and with Christ by never-to-be-broken bonds. The *one body* is as much a fact to-day as ever it was. Christians may call themselves by various names, and form themselves into parties with conflicting interests, nevertheless they are really and truly *one*, and the unity that exists between them, being divinely formed, can never be broken.

We shall do well to keep this great truth ever in view, and let it colour our thoughts. Let us bear it in mind when we pray. Let us remember it whenever we meet a fellow-Christian. Let it have a large place in our hearts. Let us avoid everything that is a practical denial of it.

In saying this, let no one suppose that I make light of outward and visible unity. The Lord prayed for a unity amongst His own that should lead the world to believe. This outward unity, alas, was lost in the early days of the Church's history, and Scripture holds out no hope of its being regained. Efforts to recover it have not been wanting. "The Reunion of Christendom" has for long been a favourite cry with some. Recent years have witnessed amalgamations between separ-

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ated bodies of Presbyterians and of Methodists. Into such amalgamations, however, the spirit of the world largely enters ; finance and politics seem to hold a large place in the counsels that bring them to pass. The spiritually-minded Christian will attach little importance to such movements.

We are not to look, then, for any reconstitution of the Church on Pentecostal lines, or any recovery of the original, outward unity that marked it in those early days. We welcome any drawing together on the part of those whose hearts are loyal and true ; such should endeavour more and more to walk together, and " follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Such a drawing together, on spiritual lines, apart from any organization or scheme of amalgamation, will possibly be seen, as the end draws nigh. But not in this direction lies

THE TRUE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

If we study the later epistles, those that draw the dark picture of these closing days, we shall not fail to perceive the prominence that is given to *the coming of the Lord.*

1 Timothy brings before us the apostasy of the " latter times." No prospect is held out of improvement or recovery, but Timothy is to " flee these things." He is to " fight the

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good fight of faith," and to keep the charge entrusted to him "*until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (VI. 14).

2 Timothy bears witness that "in the last days perilous times shall come." Not only in the world, but in the professing Church, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." In the midst of it all, the outlook set before the Christian is not a renewal of Pentecostal days, but the day of "His appearing," and "His heavenly kingdom" (IV. 8, 18).

2 Peter draws a picture of the days that were to come, that is dark indeed. "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies." "Many shall follow their pernicious ways." "The way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II. 1, 2). Is there any likelihood of a revival of Pentecostal faith and power? No; we are exhorted to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (III. 12).

1 John is no less emphatic in describing the growth of evil. Even in the apostle's day, "the last time," dark with apostasy, had set in. "Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time" (II. 18). What then is the hope presented to our hearts? Not a return of the brightness of Pentecost, but the fact that "*He* shall appear" (II. 28),

and that " when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is " (III. 2).

Jude speaks of " mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." And in which direction is the Christian's heart to be set? Not backwards, but forwards. " Behold, the Lord cometh " (*v.* 14). " Ye, beloved, . . . looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life " (*vv.* 20, 21).

Is it not clear enough, then, that our watchword is to be, not " Back to Pentecost," but " ON TO GLORY " ?

The letters to the Seven Churches in Asia confirm this. They sketch the course of the Church's history on earth, and the picture they present is one of increasing evil. But again and again *a prospect* is held out, to cheer and sustain the overcomer. What is this prospect? Not the return of bright, primitive days, but *the Lord's return.* " Hold fast till I come," is the word to Thyatira. " Behold, I come quickly," is the promise to Philadelphia.

Dear fellow-believer, look up and on. He Who loves us is coming. Soon we shall hear the home call, we shall be caught up to meet our Saviour in the air (1 Thess. IV. 17).

Why in the air? It is the seat of Satan's power (Eph. II. 2). How fitting, then, that there, in the very teeth of the enemy, should

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be the first demonstration of the coming triumph ! He who has scattered and divided the children of God, and has persecuted them and caused them to stumble, shall see them wearing the likeness of Christ, and all *one*, eternally *one*, in spite of all his efforts. What a victory !

> " No more to view Thy chosen few
> In selfish strife divided ;
> But drink in peace the living grace
> That gave them hearts united."

This, then, the coming of the Lord, is the true hope upon which our hearts are to be set.

(2) THE WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE.

In speaking of this, we must bear in mind that what took place on the day of Pentecost was not a mere experience, but a historical event. The Holy Ghost actually descended, and filled the house where they were and abode in or upon the disciples.

A remarkable prophecy by Joel may here be referred to (II. 28). It was foretold that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and that many should prophesy, and see visions.

To this prophecy Peter refers in his Pentecostal discourse, to show that what the people beheld was not due to new wine, but the result of the Spirit being shed forth. With

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the prophecy of Joel before them they should have perceived the true character of this great wonder.

But we shall make a serious mistake if we imagine that Joel's prophecy found its final fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, or that its accomplishment belongs to Christianity at all.

It is stated in Joel II. that a day is coming when the Lord will do great things for the land and people of Israel. He Himself will be in their midst. The years of their sorrow and suffering will be over, and they shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord. It is *after all this* (see *v.* 28) that the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, and the accompanying signs will be manifested.

To clearly understand this will save us from disappointment. We shall see that if a full accomplishment of this prophecy was not witnessed even at Pentecost, much less is it to be looked for in our day. Its true place belongs to the "afterward." When the Church has been taken to glory, and God's dealings with Israel resumed, the ushering in of the millennial kingdom will be attended by the outpouring of the Spirit in this large way. In that day, not in this, will it take place.

But, meanwhile, may not Christians expect to be filled with the Spirit? Should we not

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pray that the Holy Ghost may thus fill us, according to Ephesians v. 18 ?

Most decidedly. If we may not expect the world-wide outpouring that will take place in another age, we may each one seek to be personally filled with that same blessed Spirit.

Here let me utter a word of caution. It is important to be clear as to the *motives* that actuate us in seeking to be thus filled. Is it in order that *we* may be wonderful people, or perform wonderful exploits ? It is a matter of common observation that

SELF-OCCUPATION

is often characteristic of those whose voices are most frequently heard in connection with this subject. Their prayers, their testimonies, their thoughts seem all to revolve around themselves.

Now the result of being *really* filled with the Spirit is the very opposite. Self is forgotten, and Christ fills the vision of the soul. Observe how this makes itself evident in Peter's case on the day of Pentecost.

The occasion of his address was the necessity of explaining to the multitude the nature of what had happened. But he seizes the opportunity to speak of what is uppermost in his heart—Christ. Verses 14 to 21 are taken up with the preliminary explanation. From verse 22 onward, we have Peter's gospel

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address, the first of the kind ever given. Its theme and topic is not Pentecost, not the Church, not even the Holy Spirit, but JESUS. Pick up the thread of the discourse and it runs thus: "Jesus . . . crucified . . . raised up . . . exalted . . . made both Lord and Christ."

That is what marks a Spirit-filled man. When he opens his lips it is not to testify of himself, or his wonderful experiences, but to speak of Christ. The flesh loves to speak of "I," "me," and "my." The Spirit gives prominence to *Him*.

(3) THE WONDERFUL MANIFESTATIONS.

"Speaking with tongues" is, without doubt, a manifestation of supernatural power. This gift seems to have been much coveted even in New Testament days. The Corinthian Christians laid undue stress upon their possession of this, and similar gifts, and the tendency has more than once recurred in the history of the Church. At the present time the subject is occupying the minds of many, and word has come from Sunderland, Rochester (U.S.A.), Sweden, and other places of some who profess to "speak with tongues," and who expect before long to be able to work miracles, and even to raise the dead.

On examination of these pretensions, their counterfeit character readily appears. It is

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surprising that Christians should be misled by such proceedings. But let us see what we can gather from the Scriptures as to "speaking with tongues."

In 1 Corinthians XII. instruction is given as to the exercise of "spiritual gifts." These exhibit great diversity, and take various forms. Verses 8 to 10 mention some of them. "The word of wisdom" heads the list, then "the word of knowledge," "faith," and so on. Near the end of the list "tongues" are mentioned, not only the "divers kinds," but the "*interpretation.*" This is important to notice. The tongues were capable of interpretation, and could only serve a useful purpose when interpreted.

The point to observe, however, is that all these things were manifestations of *the same* Spirit, all part of His great plan, and not to be separated in their use from the other gifts.

At the close of the chapter "diversities of tongues" are again referred to, and the apostle asks: "Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" Notice again the mention of the *interpreting*.

Chapter XIII. shows the "more excellent way," and speaks of something better than the possession of miraculous powers. For one may be like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, though able to speak with the tongues of men and of angels. "Tongues" are

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amongst the things that have their day, and vanish. "They shall cease" (*v.* 8).

Chapter XIV. returns to the subject of "spiritual gifts," and begins by drawing a contrast between prophesying and speaking with tongues. Prophesying led to edification, speaking with tongues did not. He that prophesied (spoke to edification) was, therefore, greater than he that spoke with tongues. Tongues were for *a sign* to unbelievers (*v.* 22). Prophesying was for the help and comfort of believers.

From all this it may be gathered that "speaking with tongues" was no unusual thing in those early times, especially among the Christians at Corinth. It is evident, also, that this gift was one of those given by God as signs to the unbelieving world. This was His way of calling attention to what He was doing in the inauguration and establishment of Christianity.

Miracles, gifts of healing, tongues, were thus intended to serve very much the same purpose that church bells do, namely, to call attention to that which is going on, or about to begin. When the service starts, the bells cease to ring. And when Christianity was fairly started on its way, the sign-gifts ceased.

But the edification-gifts continue. In Ephesians IV. 11–13 these are mentioned, and it is stated that they will go on "till we

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all come . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Speaking with tongues has no place in this list. Apostles are mentioned first, and prophets. These, it is true, belong to the foundation, or beginning (Eph. II. 20), but "evangelists," "pastors" and "teachers" are the gifts that always serve "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry."

The tendency of the human heart is to set the highest value on what brings *self* into prominence. This the sign-gifts did, more or less. Hence the glorying of the Corinthians in their ability to speak with tongues. But the apostle, writing by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, seeks to correct this tendency, and lays stress on the less showy, but more useful gifts that promote edification and spiritual growth. The case of the Corinthians proved that it was possible for "speaking with tongues" to exist side by side with a loose, worldly, and doctrinally unsound state.

May it be ours to set most store by that which is commended by the Spirit as of greater value than sign-gifts, whether "tongues" or anything else. Is it not clear that it would not be for the blessing of the people of God if "speaking with tongues" were renewed, either of the kind given at Pentecost, or the kind spoken of in Corinthians ? Such sign-gifts, if bestowed to-day, would be no proof

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of the love and care of Christ for His Church. Rather would it be a seal of divine approval upon the confusion, the divisions, the worldliness, the unsound doctrine, the carnal methods that are so prevalent.

This being so, instead of looking for a return of "tongues" and "miracles" the spiritually-minded believer will pray for an increase of the things that tend more directly to edification. Let us in every way seek the true blessing of our fellow-Christians, but let us not delude ourselves and them with the idea that sign-gifts are to be looked for again in these last and evil days.

(4) THE WONDERFUL POWER.

Three thousand souls added in one day! Truly a proof of marvellous power. Shall we ever hear of such a thing again? What toiling and agonizing there often is to-day without any apparent result at all!

But the Holy Ghost is still here! His power is as great as ever. If the prophets' day was "a day of small things," *this* is the day of a great Person. Why, then, do we not see the blessing that was seen at Pentecost?

There is one important respect in which the Holy Ghost's presence on the day of Pentecost differs from His presence on the earth to-day. *Then* His presence was known

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and His operations were carried on mainly in one city alone. *Now* His presence is in every place where Christians are to be found, and His operations are practically world-wide.

Bearing this great difference in mind, consider whether it is not likely that there are *many* days when the numbers of Pentecost are surpassed. Take last Sunday, for instance. Think of the thousands of places where the gospel was faithfully preached. Think of the great cities, the country towns, the scattered villages. Think of England, with a host of preachers proclaiming the good news far and wide. Think of Wales and Scotland. Think of the hundreds who stood up to preach Christ even in priest-ridden Ireland. Think of the Continent of Europe, with its devoted evangelists. Think of what was done amongst the eighty millions of the United States, and in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. Think last, but by no means least, of the multitudes of God's servants who are holding forth the word of life amongst the heathen. Think of the mission fields of India, of China, of Japan, of Korea, of Africa, of Madagascar, of South America, of the far-off islands of the South. Let your mind travel all over the great harvest-field, make allowance for the blinding influence of Satan and the hardness of men's hearts, and say : Is it

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not more than probable that at least three thousand were added to the Lord last Sunday ?

There is certainly no cause for discouragement. Great, indeed, are the triumphs which the gospel has won in these days. It is still the power of God unto salvation. God has wrought and is working mightily amongst the heathen. From all parts comes the story of widespread blessing ; multitudes turning to God from their idols, and finding joy and peace in believing.

At the same time there were never so many heathen in the world as there are to-day. Never did the world look less like being converted than just now. But the Bible does not lead us to expect that the world will ever be converted through the preaching of the gospel, or the efforts of missionaries. On the contrary, God has been, and is, visiting the nations " to take out of them a people for His name " (Acts xv. 14).

Instead of turning to Christ, the world will turn to Antichrist. Nothing but the overwhelming judgment of God, and the removal of all things that offend, will make the world the abode of righteousness and peace.

Meanwhile, there are

FOUR OTHER WONDERFUL THINGS

spoken of in Acts II. in which we Christians should earnestly seek to continue. At the

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close of a paper of this length, we cannot do much more than mention them.

(1) The apostles' doctrine.
(2) The apostles' fellowship.
(3) Breaking of bread.
(4) Prayers.

It becomes us increasingly to take heed to the apostles' doctrine. Evil doctrine abounds, and even Christians sanction it by their presence in the places where it is taught, and by their remaining in church-association with those who teach it. We have the apostles' doctrine in the inspired epistles which they wrote.

The apostles' fellowship is that to which all Christians belonged. Other circles of " fellowship " have been formed since then, claiming the allegiance of saints. It will be our wisdom, in view of these conflicting circles, while sincerely loving all the true children of God who are in them, to cleave to the apostles' fellowship, based as it is upon their doctrine, and broad enough to include " all saints," everywhere.

The breaking of bread is a privilege of which we can avail ourselves even in days like these. It will continue till the Lord comes (1 Cor. xi. 26). Alas, that any Christians should make light of it ! Yet many, who are active enough

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with their propaganda, and have their societies, guilds, leagues, bands, etc., seem to care but little for the request of their Lord and Master: "This do in remembrance of Me." May He make the privilege dearer to our hearts!

Lastly, there was steadfast continuing in prayers. How much we need to give ourselves to this! Never was there a day when prayer was so urgently called for. Besides praying in secret, let us seek others like-minded to pray with. In this way we shall learn the secret of having power with God. We shall learn His mind for His people in these dark and difficult days. And instead of being misled by delusive hopes, and occupied with things which are not according to His will, we shall be kept moving along in the path of His pleasure, and shall have the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and of the Scriptures.

H. P. B.

WATCHER AND WORKER.

"As is his part that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward."

1 SAM. XXX. 24, 25.

THE mother was praying, the child was at play;
The woman was watching, the man was away;
And both were rejoicing at close of the day,
For the lost one was found who had wandered away.

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If men face the foe, then women must keep
Their watch, day and night, while careless ones sleep ;
Till watcher and worker together shall reap
The sheaves of the harvest, the spoils of the deep.

O, the worth of a soul, and the cost of a prayer !
O, the bearing of burdens, the sorrow, and care !
The watching and working ! A word here and there !
A conflict with sin, and a triumph to share !

O, women, who watch, you watch not alone ;
O, men, who are workers, the seed that is sown
Is guarded by God till the harvest be grown,
Till watcher and worker unite at the throne.

And who are the watchers who wait at the gate ?
And who are the workers, so early, so late ?
Those men whom the Master calls blessed, calls great,
Who are willing to work, and to watch, and to wait.

He calls ! And the answer rings out from the din,
" We are *Thine*, Master, help us ! " " Well done ; enter in,"
Comes back, from the Master, to those who, 'mid sin,
Will work, and will watch, will wait, and—*will* win !

E. P. E.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. S.—James v. 14, 16.—Does not an attentive reading of this passage suggest that the sickness was probably the result of some sin or sins? 1 Corinthians xi. 30–2 shows that in His wise and gracious government the Lord sometimes intervenes to correct us when pursuing a wrong course—laying us aside in physical weakness that we may hear His voice and learn the needful lesson. Job xxxiii. 19–30 is another example. The suffering Christian, then, alive to his failure, sends for the elders of the assembly, they, following common usage, anoint him with oil—they do it in the name of the Lord—they pray over him—they pray in faith, and the Lord raises him up, and it is added, "if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." There is nothing here about the gift of healing. That there was such a gift in early days we know, and we see it in exercise so late as Acts xxviii. But it was a "sign" gift, and we are inclined to think its sphere was among the unsaved so that witness might be borne in that way to the message of life and pardon and peace brought to men by God's messengers. The prayer of faith may still accomplish much, but we look for no return of such gifts as that of healing. Gifts that have the blessing of souls in view—such as that of evangelist, teacher, pastor—these do and will abide.

As to Galatians v. 17, it is of believers the

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apostle speaks—those who, having faith in Christ, have received the gift of the Spirit. It shows that in the believer are these two antagonistic forces—flesh and Spirit. It is the nature of the flesh to follow evil, of the Spirit to follow good.

A. W. X.—Acts II. 42–7.—These verses refer to the whole company of believers in Jerusalem, including the apostles. The entire passage is a lovely picture of the grace of God and of divine love working powerfully and without affectation in the hearts of those who were drawn to Christ. It is beautiful to a degree.

H. B.—No rule can be laid down that would apply equally to every case. "Of some have compassion, making a difference," as Jude says. Evil doctrine is more strongly denounced in Scripture than moral breaches. Everybody knows the latter to be wrong, but the former may lead to the overthrow of the faith of some. If such have been "put away" from among those with whom they once associated, it is impossible that these should carry themselves towards the offenders as if nothing had happened. We ought earnestly to desire that the wrongdoer should be led to repentance, and everything should be done, as occasion offers, to bring it about. But in all this we need heavenly wisdom, and God alone can give it.

E. D.—We venture to answer your question in borrowed words. "If I recognize all Christians as members of the Body of Christ, if I love them, and receive them, from an enlarged heart, even to the Lord's Supper, supposing that they are walking in holiness and truth, and calling upon

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the name of the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. II. 19–22; Rev. III. 7), then I am not walking in the spirit of a sect, even though I cannot gather together all the children of God, because I walk according to the principle of this unity of the Body of Christ, and seek practical union amongst the brethren. I join with other brethren to take the Lord's Supper only as a member of the Body of Christ, not as a member of a church, whichever it may be, but verily in the unity of the Body, ready to receive all Christians who are walking in holiness and truth, I am not a member of a sect; I am a member of nothing else but the Body of Christ." These words are from a tract called *What is a Sect?* by J. N. D., to be had from our publisher.

F. W. R.—John XX. 23.—We must connect this verse with those that precede it if we would apprehend its true force. As the Father had sent Jesus, so He sent His disciples. He came as the sent One to make God known to men as He knew Him. So they were sent to make the Saviour known as they knew Him. They were to preach in His name that glorious gospel, the first of whose blessings was the forgiveness of sins (Acts X. 43). And so in due time they preached, authorized, as they were, to announce forgiveness of sins to every one who believed on Him. The Acts is the record of this. And so every servant since. Taking his stand on Holy Scripture he can declare, on divine authority, the remission of sins to every one who believes the gospel, while the sins of him who rejects remain unforgiven. They are retained.

F.H.B.—The numbers are not the same. Possibly May has been sent you instead of June.

THE REGIONS BEYOND.

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation: but as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand."—ROM. XV. 20-21.

HERE is a text which comes before us throbbing, palpitating in every word and syllable of it with the true missionary spirit. It is the utterance of a great evangelist. Paul, it is true, loved the Assembly of God—no one loved it more. It would have been strange if he had not, for he was the chosen vessel to set forth in holy writings her peculiar privileges, her high calling, and heavenly hopes. He watched over her with godly jealousy, agonized that the saints might fully know their portion and their completeness in Christ. For her sake he endured tribulation, and filled up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ . . . for His body's sake, which is the Church." This was one side of his apostleship, a great and blessed side. Let us never forget it, we shall be *great* losers if we do.

But there was another side, of which he

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was not unmindful. The Gospel had been committed unto him—the glad tidings of the grace of God, of a once crucified, but now risen and triumphant Christ, in Whose name forgiveness of sins was to be preached to all men everywhere. Paul was not one of the eleven to whom the risen Saviour said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Nor did he hear Him say, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." His commission he received from Christ in glory. To the nations he was sent, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Me." Such were its terms. Blessed be God! there was not a nation under the broad heavens to which this Gospel was not sent. To every spot where sin and misery and degradation and death had made their way this Gospel had to go. How fully Paul realized the extent and greatness of the charge his own words declare. He owns himself to be "debtor to every man." His call to preach the glad tidings to the nations made him so. Nor would he be free from the solemn

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obligation under which he lay, as an ambassador for Christ, so long as life should last and he have opportunity to proclaim the Gospel where the sound of it had been never heard. "Woe is unto me," he cried, "if I preach it not."

Not in beaten paths trod down by the feet of other evangelists did this pattern servant run. Not in waters swept by other fishers of men did he let down his net. Not on a foundation which other hands had laid did he essay to build. "I strived," said he, "to preach the Gospel not where Christ was named," and he ever acted in the spirit of those written words. "To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand."

And when writing this letter to the brethren at Rome he had his eye fixed on the fields of Spain (chap. xv. 24). Thither he hoped to go. But let us mark the circuit in which this indefatigable labourer had already "fully preached the Gospel of Christ." From "Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum," he had carried his Master's message. And what relation do these places bear to each other, good reader? Anything like that of London to Edinburgh on the north, or that of London to Plymouth on the south-west? Open your Bible and turn to the map which describes the great missionary journeys of the apostle. Find out Jerusalem on the right, and then search and

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see where Illyricum stands, its shores washed by the waters of the Adriatic. Look at the countries that lie between, and over which waved the black flag of heathenism, with its temples and its shrines. Into all these went this devoted man. "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. xi. 26). All this he patiently endured, daunted by nothing, counting not even his life dear unto himself, if only he might be the means of shedding abroad in the darkness of the heathen world the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

In all this Paul sets us a fine example. True, all cannot be evangelists after his order. We have neither his call nor his gifts. Ours is a narrower sphere and a humbler service. But the very least of us may desire to be animated by the same warm and loving spirit and to have large and lofty views of the Gospel and its mission.

And Paul's aim must ever be that of every real evangelist. He will see the regions beyond beckoning him onward to their help,

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and his heart will be mightily moved as he thinks of the millions still without the knowledge of Christ. But evangelists of Paul's stamp are not made in schools and colleges, they are gifts from the ascended Christ. Oh, for more of them ! The need is great. " Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Thus the disciples of the Lord Jesus were enjoined. How much more reason is there that we should pray after that fashion to-day. *Do we ever do so ?*

Let us lift up our eyes and look on the harvest fields. All around us are multitudes ignorant of the Gospel. They possibly care nothing for it, they are inclined to believe in nothing ; but if the Gospel of God does not reach and save them, what can ? Then take a wider survey. Look on heathen lands—India, China, Japan, Thibet, and various parts of Africa, to say nothing of the great republics of South America. For every loyal-hearted servant of Christ labouring in those broad fields we unfeignedly bless God. But what are they among so many ?

Were there more devotedness to Christ, many gifts would be brought to light that are now buried, so to speak, in the earth. What greater privilege could any have than to be the Lord's messenger to perishing men, to tell the guilty of pardon, the dead of life, the

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poor of the unsearchable riches of Christ? It is a mission that angels might covet. And what do we not owe to Him Who came to earth to make God known, and to be Himself the bearer of our sins upon the cross of Calvary? Through His atoning work the gates of glory have been thrown wide open, that all might enter in. *And He would have them know it.* "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice." Who are the "other sheep" and where are they to be found? "The flock of My pasture are men . . . saith the Lord God" (Ezek. XXXIV. 31). Who will go and help gather them in? Who will say, "Here am I, *send* me"?

"Use me, God, in Thy great harvest field,
Which stretcheth far and wide like a wide sea;
The gatherers are so few, I fear the precious yield
Will suffer loss. Oh, find a place for me.

"A place where best the strength I have will tell,
It may be one the other toilers shun;
Be it a wide or narrow place, 'tis well,
So that the work it holds be only done."

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. IX. 36-38).

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THE TALE OF A TRACT.

IT is related of Dr. Coke, that while journeying in America he attempted to ford a river, but his horse lost his foothold and was carried down the stream. The Doctor narrowly escaped drowning by clinging to a bough which overhung the riverside. A lady, residing in the vicinity, entertained him in his distress, sent messengers after his horse, and showed him much kindness. When he left the lady's house he gave her a *tract.* For five years the Doctor toiled on in the cause of God in England and America. Whether the tract had been destroyed or had pierced a sinner's heart he knew not—in fact, he had forgotten the gift.

However, one day, being on his way to a conference, a young man approached him and requested the favour of a brief conversation. "Do you remember, sir, being nearly drowned in —— river some five years ago?" "I remember it quite well!" said the Doctor.

"Do you recollect the widow lady at whose house you were entertained after escaping from the river?"

"I do, and never shall I forget the kindness she showed me."

"And do you also remember giving her a tract when you bade her farewell?"

"I do not, but it is very possible I did so."

"Yes, sir, you did leave a tract. That lady read it and was converted. She lent it to her neighbours, and many of them were converted too.

"Several of her children were also saved. A society was formed which flourishes to this day."

This statement moved the Doctor to tears. The young man, after a brief pause, continued, saying—

"I have not quite told you all; I am her son. That tract led me to Christ. And now, sir, I am on my way to conference to seek admission as a travelling preacher."

Thus did Dr. Coke find his arrow shot at a venture in an unexpected hour; and thus will our shafts come back to us all in due season. Courage, therefore, drooping, disappointed tract distributor! Weep not over any apparent want of success! You have learned to labour, seek now grace that you may learn to *wait*. Only see to it that you toil on in faith and wait in hope, looking to the Lord of the harvest for His blessing in His own time and way.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccles. xi. 6).

LESSONS FROM ZIKLAG.

"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul."—1 SAM. XXVII. 1.

AND this after the marvellous escapes narrated in the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th chapters! So is it oftentimes with us. Circumstances occupy us instead of God, Who delivered us heretofore. None had more experience of delivering grace than David; nevertheless all is forgotten now. Present dangers obliterate the remembrance of past escapes. He sees only the hand against him, and not the hand for him. His eye is averted *from God, unbelief deprives him of communion*, and, forgetful of divine strength, he puts forth his own.

And what a scene is now before us! He who was an example for us becomes a warning. He who in former difficulties cried unto God most High now turns for help to the Philistines. "He arose and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men," etc. How are the mighty fallen! But so it is ever. Unbelief plunges us into sin—is that sin which in itself includes all others.

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His back is turned upon God as was the prodigal's upon his father's house ; and the journey into the far country, the riotous living, and the unhallowed associations, were but the consequences of the first false step.

David in communion would have scorned a refuge in Gath, or shelter from a Philistine. Now he stoops still lower. In verse 5 David said unto Achish, " If now I have found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there : for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee ? " Out of communion David was wearied of the pilgrim's life. Time was when the mountain sides, the cleft of the rock, or some lone desert place and fellowship with God had more charms for him than the king's palace. Time was when his soul rejoiced in danger, for the joy of deliverance at the hand of his God. " When he was brought low He helped him." Now he longs for a place, some settled abode, where he might *rest*, such a rest as unbelief longs for.

God permitted his request to be granted, and " Achish gave him Ziklag ; and the time that he dwelt there was a full year and four months." In verses 8 and 12 we glance at his service from this place. Zeal against old enemies is manifested, conquests are achieved —yet there is no communion. And what, after all, is service worth without the mind of

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God in it? Oftentimes the child of God, in a false position, may be very zealous in the Lord's service, go beyond even those who are in the narrow path. But David's service was unsanctified service, cruel in its character and selfish in its ends—dishonest in the manner of it, and needing falsehood to conceal its aim. He dissimulates to Achish his career, and by bold untruth retains his favour.

But to pass on to the history in chapter XXIX. How sad the story! The Philistines gather all their armies to Aphek. The enemies of God prepare to fight against the people called by His name; and amongst these foes of His people are assembled David and the Hebrews with him. Who would have looked for David, the conqueror of Goliath, numbered with the enemies of Israel, seeking alliance with them against his own nation? Alas! when dependence upon God, the living God, ceases, when unbelief is fully at work, there are no bounds to declension, save in the sovereign grace of God.

He had marked the ways of David, and now uses his enemies to forbid the alliance which David, out of communion, was degraded enough to solicit. "The lords of the Philistines said unto Achish, Make this fellow return," etc. (*v.* 4); and (*v.* 11), "David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines."

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Thus far we have followed David in his downward career. We have traced his actions to the state of his heart. "He said in his heart he should one day perish by the hand of Saul." His path is before us. The consequences of his unbelief become more glaring in every after-step. But he is a child of God, and a chosen one too. He should learn himself and his own heart in the light of the sanctuary. His weakness, and the cause of it, should be left upon record for us, and is recorded for our admonition (Rom. xv. 3). "And it came to pass when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives *that were therein: they slew not any, either* great or small, but carried them away, and went on their ways. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed."

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for

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whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." And surely David had experience of his folly now. In his self-will he had carved out his path and pursued it. He thought there was nothing better for him to do than to speedily escape into the land of the Philistines, and he did so. Then he desired a place to dwell in. In this, also, his wishes are accomplished. But the end of his contrivances is before him. "There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. XIV. 12).

He was greatly distressed. He had said in his heart he should one day perish by the hand of Saul. He distrusted God, and now where is he? His companions "spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters." Alas, the miseries which unbelief entails upon us! Not only was David distressed, but his fellow-brethren in exile are hurried into affliction and trial. It is not his grief or his loss alone; his example draws others along with him. The bitterness of death in his own soul was hard to be borne; but he was surrounded by others, the victims of his folly and unbelief. "And they spake of stoning him." Surely he had kindled a fire and compassed himself about with sparks;

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and his lot was to lie down in sorrow (Isa. L. 11). What instruction for the children of God is here afforded! How simple the narrative! How full of warning! He had distrusted God in his heart. Had "forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to himself broken cisterns which could hold no water."

And such must be the consequence of unbelief—present discomfort, unsanctified service, and the end bitter disappointment. Whatever is relied upon apart from God, must and will fail us. And in the days in which we live, when the world itself is wearied with its contrivances, and the Church of God torn asunder by divisions, there is but one remedy, and that returning to God. "Where two or three are gathered together" in the name of the Lord, His presence is assured. "His Spirit remaineth with us always." And the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Truth, and the truth secures holy discipline, for the Spirit of Truth is a Spirit of Holiness.

The Lord in His mercy did awaken a portion of His people to the ruined condition of the visible Church around, and led hearts which were broken in sorrow before Him to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. He revealed in His grace the position of His saints as risen with Christ and made to sit together in Him in heavenly places; and with this their position also as being indwelt

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by the Spirit, and having His presence to rule and guide in their midst. They saw in the Word that believers were builded together a habitation for God through the Spirit, and His presence amongst them secured their harmony and love. We read of the early Christians, " Great grace was upon them all " (Acts II.), not because they were preceptively taught their duties, but the presence of God the Holy Ghost ensured it, even as Paul, writing to the Thessalonians (IV. 9), says, " Ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." And this simple truth became the rallying-point of many. The word of God was accredited, His presence was realized, and much blessing the consequence. But, alas! notwithstanding this revival, as heretofore in the history of God's people, *so now* unbelief enters, and the presence of the Holy Ghost is practically denied. The doctrines and traditions of men are admitted. Unhallowed questions about the person of the Son of God have arisen; and this would alone convict us of our failure, for the work of the Holy Ghost is to glorify Jesus. Added to this, our present contentions, the jarring and strife, the restlessness manifested by some, the openly-avowed hostility of others, all prove our grievous declension. And surely many are saying as David did, " There is nothing better for me to

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do than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." But let us ponder the path of our feet (Prov. IV. 26). Whither shall we go for rest? What hope have we from the efforts of men in the past that we should rely upon them as guides in the exigencies of the present? Alas, is this a time for going into ceiled houses, and the habitation of God lying waste? Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things else shall be added unto it. So seek first the presence of God, and the chaos will be reduced to order, and contention to harmony.

Yet whilst we have warning in the history of David in Ziklag, so also we have wonderful encouragement. For, when all was lost that he had relied upon, the Philistines reject him, Ziklag is destroyed, their wives and little ones taken captive, and the people spake of stoning him; then, *even then*, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." And the Lord was gracious unto him, and heard him, and counselled him, and he recovered all. Surely this is written for us. What though we have so grievously fallen as to say in our hearts, "We shall one day perish"; what though some have sought refuge in worldliness, excusing their own sin by dwelling on the failing of others, and many are crying out for a place to dwell in, forgetful in present trial of the past gracious dealings of our God? What

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though many are "so troubled that they cannot speak"? Yet here, also, David gives us instructions, for when thus brought low, in Psalm LXXVII., his soul was restored by "considering the days of old." "His spirit made diligent search." "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? And I said, This is my infirmity." And it is our infirmity. Let us remember the works of the Lord, let us talk of His doings, and though "the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. III. 17). Let us take with us words, and turn to the Lord; say unto Him, "Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously" (Hos. XIV. 2). Let us comfort ourselves with the words in 1 John I. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But let us not add to all our other sins continuance in unbelief. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

The Present Testimony, 1849.

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THINGS GOD KNOWS.

THINGS HE WISHES US TO KNOW.

WE live in an age when knowledge is highly esteemed. The latest discoveries of science arouse keen interest; and when—as in the case of electrical telegraphy, or the advance in chemical research—they can be turned to practical account, they result in great pecuniary advantage to the fortunate discoverers.

But amid all the workings and the strivings of the mind of man, there is one kind of knowledge which is at a discount; and yet it is the only kind which is of true and lasting value, and which tends to the growth of the soul—and that is the *knowledge of God.*

I want to speak of three things known to the all-knowing, the omniscient God. In their consideration we shall find a display of the divine character. In John II. 24–25 we read—

"Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man."

All the innermost recesses of the heart, all that which you and I conceal from others—in order, perhaps, to make a fair show in the

flesh—all our imaginations, which are only evil continually, are *known to Him.*

Look back over your past life—would you like the whole scene to become clear to others? Nay, more, if I could take a photograph of all that has passed through your mind during even the past week, would you show it to your family, as a good likeness is shown? Surely not. For "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within" (Mark VIII. 21–23).

"All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." God knows—Jesus knows—*all that is in man,* and I ask, is the thought of this pleasant? is it something over which you love to ponder? Or do you put it away from you, ignore it, or refuse to believe it?

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things which should come upon Him" (John XVIII. 4).

All things which should come upon Him! All the agony of Gethsemane, all the shame and mockery, all the three dark hours upon the cross, the contact with sin and consequent judgment of God.

Jesus not only *knew* what humanity was, but He *knew,* too, what must come upon Him

in consequence of what we are. The cross was no surprise to Him. Redemption was no after-thought, due to divine compassion. No, the "Lamb was slain" in the divine counsels, "before the foundation of the world." "I know their sorrows," was the cry of the Infinite Love (Exod. III. 7), and, realizing our misery, our sin, our wretchedness and helplessness, realizing, too, *the cost of our redemption,* He wrought out salvation for us.

How often we hear men exclaim, who have taken up some work without counting the cost, "If I had only known all that such and such a matter involved, I should never have undertaken it." Jesus *knew,* and, NEVERTHELESS, He undertook. Well may the apostle give utterance to his noble paradox, when he prays that his Ephesian converts may "know the love of Christ *which passeth knowledge.*" To Him be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end.

Now let us turn to John XIX. 28. The words run thus—

"Jesus therefore, knowing that all things were now accomplished" . . .

All things accomplished! Oh, the joy of the divine heart in that accomplishment!

Who does not know, in some measure at least, the triumphant gladness of finishing a trying and difficult task? the feeling of rest

and relief? the looking forward to reaping the fruit of the labour? And so, *for the joy set before Him*, the dear Lord endured the cross, despising the shame. All the sin-bearing and the suffering, all the distance and darkness were over now. The work was done, and done for ever. "By one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified."

Remember the words, "JESUS . . . *knowing* . . ." The matter is not what you or I know or think, but what *God knows*. Jesus knew exactly what was required, and His testimony is that *all things* are accomplished. All which a holy God required was done, and done to His eternal glory.

We turn now to *three things which God wants us to know*.

In the first sermon, preached after the Ascension, are these remarkable words—

"Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts II. 36).

There is knowledge for us—assured knowledge! Let all the house of Israel know *assuredly*. Here is an expression of God's thought concerning the One Who did the work of which we have been speaking—a vindication by the Father of the blessed Son.

What a difference in man's estimate and God's estimate of Christ! Man could find no

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room for Him in the inn and in the world; God proclaimed Him the beloved Son, in Whom the Father was well pleased. At the judgment hall man shouted, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him"; God has "highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." Man chose Barabbas, and refused Jesus; God "hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ." All power in heaven and earth is in the hands of the Man Who hung on the cross of Calvary. It is no longer a humbled, suffering Saviour in Whom we are asked to trust, but an exalted, glory-crowned Prince and Saviour.

The second thing which God would have us know, when we have learned of this "same Jesus" as "Lord and Christ," is set forth in the sermon in Acts XIII.

"Be it known unto you . . . that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

"Be it known unto you!" Listen to God's proclamation! In an advertisement the advertiser draws attention to what he wishes to make known—the worth or usefulness of some article of which he desires to dispose. Now, God would have something known. He declares that through Jesus there is forgiveness for all, justification for all, and forgiveness and justification *from all things.*

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How wide—how all-embracing are the glad tidings set forth in the divinely inspired sermon. Note the repeated use of the word "*all.*" *All* that believe . . . justified from *all* things! This justification is a present joy; it has not to be waited for, in the future, in anxious doubt and uncertainty. If you have put your trust in the Son of God, then God desires you to *know* that you are *now* forgiven, and now "justified from all things." God's message of forgiveness is sent to the world, in which His Son was put to death, and to men and women with hearts exactly like those of the Jews, who did the terrible deed.

"These things," says John, "I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life."

When we get to God we touch bed rock; we have to do with eternal verities, and no longer with uncertainties and questionings. Life, in the true meaning of the word, is that which, coming from the Eternal, endures as long as God Himself, and which every one possesses. But God would have us to *know* that *Eternal Life*—quite a different thing—is ours, not only because He says so, though that is enough, but because the marks or characteristics of that life are enjoyed by us. In the power of the Spirit we who receive

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it are to live before the Father in Christ, in the same life and blessing which the Son Himself enjoys. We are "accepted in the Beloved," and that should not be a mere statement of fact, but a truth which brings with it a taste of heaven here before the day when we shall be translated into that scene of bliss. It is surely a wonderful and a soul-stirring fact that the Holy Spirit so takes possession of us here that our spirits rise into fellowship with Him Who is the true God and Eternal Life.

May the knowledge of Christ concerning us, and of all that was necessary for our salvation, so impress us, that, looking away from self, and the things of self, we may listen to that which God would teach us and have us to know.

May we never forget the three things which we have just considered—

1st. God has made Jesus Lord and Christ.

2nd. Every believer is forgiven and justified from all things.

3rd. All who believe on His name should have the conscious knowledge and enjoyment of eternal life in Him.

That the blessedness which these truths involve may be the portion of each dear reader of this paper is the earnest desire and prayer of the writer. E. C——P.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W.B.—We have long believed that a Christian ought to be an ardent politician. But the politics in which he should engage are those of the country to which he belongs. On earth he is a stranger and a pilgrim (1 Peter II. 11); its politics therefore are no concern of his. His citizenship is in heaven (Phil. III. 20), from whence also he looks for the Saviour to come when his pilgrim days will end. But if a Christian does not see that he is called with a heavenly calling (Heb. III. 1), and that he is not of the world even as his Saviour was not of it (John XVII. 14), he will doubtless think it his duty to take part in the politics of the hour. It seems to us that in doing so he practically denies his stranger and pilgrim character. But you will never convince him of inconsistency unless he first sees that a Christian is heavenly as to his spiritual origin and heavenly in his calling and hopes. When this is seen, and the soul is under the power of these truths, then what is out of harmony with them will drop off like withered leaves.

S. B. CREWE.—Jude 1, 2.—You will observe that "twice dead" is one of the many terms used to describe "certain men crept in unawares" (*v.* 4) among the people of God. They were not mere professors, skeletons covered with the cloaks of the living, they were far worse. Sunken rocks they were on which many a goodly ship might founder.

They were "twice dead"—dead by nature, as all are, and then dead in their lifeless profession. Doubly dead, hopelessly, everlastingly dead. The solemn emphasis with which the apostle speaks is very striking. It is like peals of thunder that warn of the approaching storm.

B. W., Canada.—Many passages of Scripture ascribe the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses. The Lord Jesus Himself declared that Moses wrote of Him. This settles the question for every loyal Christian. The belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, under divine inspiration, does not, however, preclude the belief that certain additions were made by a later hand—possibly by that of Joshua—such, for instance, as the account of Moses' death. As for evolution, no one, so far as we know, asserts that the world has been in existence for a few thousand years only. Immense geological ages may well have supervened after the initial creative act of Genesis 1. 1. Verse 2 shows us the state into which the earth had got during these geological eras—this does not look like evolution! Then in verse 3 commences the account of the Creator's six days' work in making and forming the heavens and the earth as we know them to-day. The creation of man came on the sixth day, and no geological or historical *fact* has been adduced and *substantiated* to prove that this took place earlier than six thousand years ago. The *Bible* dates are scientifically correct, but this does not mean that the dates given in the *margins* of the Bible are to be regarded as always accurate. In reply to your very positive assertion that "we

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can prove conclusively that evolution is the system which God has always adopted," we can only say that many scientific minds are beginning to see that the conclusive evidence is to the contrary. Man had degenerated, physically and morally, instead of evolving upwards. Primeval religious ideas in Chaldea, amongst the Shumir-Accadians and others, retained traces of an earlier revelation of God, but gradually grew more and more polytheistic. If evolution were true as applied to religious ideas, we should see monotheism displacing polytheism. But it has been the other way round. Reference may be made to Professor Dennert's work, *At the Deathbed of Darwinism*, published in English at Burlington, Iowa, U.S.A. Also to Professor Townsend's *Collapse of Evolution*, published at Boston, Mass., U.S.A., not to mention many scholarly works published in England, showing how Darwinism and evolution are losing their hold upon the scientists of to-day. In conclusion we can but express our profound thankfulness at your recovery from the dark and dreary domain of agnosticism to the simple, heartfelt confession of the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. Cling to Him with a simple, childlike faith, and may He lead you to see and acknowledge the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. Be assured of it, God is greater than man and infinitely wiser than the wisest.

J. H.—Romans v. 19, 21.—Is not the truth stated in these verses in an abstract way without reference to particular cases ? The apostle shows that God's grace superabounds over the creature's

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sin. The reign of sin has death as its objective, the reign of grace, eternal life. Such seems to be the argument. As to the Christian living "a victorious life through the power of a risen Christ," we certainly believe that sin is not to have dominion over him. Nor will it. The sixth chapter shows the way of holiness. Let me point out three things. First, there is something *we know:* "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him" (*v.* 6). Second, there is something *we reckon:* "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (*v.* 11). Third, there is something we are *to yield:* "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (*v.* 13). The epistle to the Philippians, in its entirety, gives us a fine exhibition of Christian life, a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit.

J. E. A.—"If I could only realize that I was one of God's children I should be happy." Well, the *first* step on the road to realize anything is to believe it. Your wish is to realize in order that you may believe. This is to put the cart before the horse. Look at that cup of tea. Would you realize its refreshing qualities? You must first drink it. Are you hungry? Behold that dish of nourishing food. Would you realize its power to satisfy your hunger? You must eat it and then you will realize. So with any blessed truth of the Gospel. Read it, read it again, and then simply believe it, for it is God's word, and to doubt it would be sin. Then the realization begins. There is no other way.

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FORGIVENESS OF SINS. CAN WE KNOW IT?

IS it possible for anyone to have upon earth the absolute certainty that his sins are forgiven and that he will never be called into judgment about them? Many tell us it is not. They regard it as a piece of unwarrantable presumption for anyone to say otherwise. They think it a mark of spiritual pride—a morsel of overweening conceit from which they devoutly hope to be delivered. Others do not go so far. They admit that some may know their sins to be forgiven, though *they* do not, and sometimes they wish they did. I wonder what *your* thoughts are on this important subject. Well, let us turn to the Bible—the Word of God—and see what that says about it.

I suppose that none of us have any doubt as to our need of forgiveness. To be ignorant of this is to be in darkness indeed. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" is the divine verdict (Rom. III. 23). And "all" means all. True, some have sinned more than others—sinned against light, against conscience, and against many a warning voice; but all *have* sinned and all "*are* guilty before God"

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(Rom. III. 19). Many will own this in general terms who feel no concern about it. But all such carelessness passes away when our eyes are opened and we begin to see ourselves as God sees us. Then we cry with Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone" (chap. VI.); or with the poor tax-gatherer, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke XVIII. 13).

First of all, then, let it be noticed that forgiveness of sins is preached to men. This is a great and glorious fact. The Lord Jesus, after His resurrection, bade His apostles preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations (Luke XXIV. 47). In the Acts we find many a record of such preaching. This shows that God is not only ready to forgive, but that He would have us know that He is. None can dispute it in the face of Acts XIII. 38. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." We have no need, therefore, to ask whether God is willing to forgive. He declares His willingness at the very start; it is a part of the gospel sent to every creature of Adam's fallen race. Do you see this? Sinner you are, you cannot deny it, nor would you. Let this gracious fact sink into your soul—*God is ready to forgive.* As yet you may not have received forgiveness nor hardly know how it is to be obtained, but you need have no doubt

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about God's willingness. He would have all men everywhere to know it, even the very worst of human kind.

And on what ground is forgiveness of sins preached? We go again to our Lord's commission to His apostles after He was risen. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Here we have the ground of it—the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ. If any were to be forgiven He must suffer. Could we not have been forgiven without it? Impossible. This is a mystery to some. It ceases to be so when the true nature of sin is seen. What is sin? It is lawlessness, insubjection to the sovereign rule of God and a denial of His supremacy. That is why sins are called "offences" (Rom. IV. 25). They are acts of treason against the throne of the Eternal. How seldom is sin seen in that light. We easily perceive it if our sins injure our fellow-men and invade their rights. They are bad enough then, but they are ten thousand times worse when viewed in their relation to the rights and to the throne of God.

What a story is that of Calvary! It is there that Christ once suffered for sins. Many sorrows were in His cup. Betrayed by one of His followers, condemned by the leaders of His own nation, His death warrant signed by the Roman governor who knew that He was

innocent, mocked and made sport of by the brutal soldiery, crucified as unfit to live, in the company of malefactors who in their dying agonies railed on Him—these were some of the bitter drops in His cup of woe. But that was not all;—the hours of darkness came, the outward shadow of that great inward eclipse resulting from the hiding of God's face. Never had there been darkness like unto that. What it was to our suffering Saviour none can tell. But the reality of the forsaking His own lips declared when out of the gloom came the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). Why was He forsaken? To make atonement for our sins.

And now the once-forsaken Saviour is at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, to Him has been given the highest place in heaven—at God's right hand. It was His due. And so because He thus suffered and is risen again, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in His name to every creature under heaven. It is preached to *you*. Would you receive this great favour? Would you have your sins blotted out of God's book? If so, hearken to the way as shown in Acts x. 43. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name *whosoever* believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Mark that word *whosoever*. It means *you*. Mark those words, "Whoso-

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ever *believeth in Him.* That is the way forgiveness is obtained. There is no other way. Not by reformation of life, not by becoming religious, not by having your name inscribed on the roll of church membership, not by being confirmed and receiving the Sacrament—none of these things, nor all of them put together can bring forgiveness to your guilty soul. But faith in Christ can. Flee then to Him as the man-slayer fled to the city of refuge. There is salvation in none other, but there is abundant salvation in Him, even for the chiefest of sinners.

Do you ask how you will know when you are forgiven, and whether there will be any inward or outward sign? There is something surer and better than signs. What is it? *You will have the Word of God to rest on.* Is not that better than supernatural signs, or dreams, or visions, or extraordinary experiences? Heaven and earth shall pass away, the whole fabric of nature be dissolved, but His Word shall endure to endless generations. Would you have something definite? Here it is. "Whosoever believeth in Him *shall* receive remission of sins." There is no doubt about it. His Word gives certainty. It will give certainty to you, if you believe it. What firmer foundation for your faith could there be than an "It is written," or a "Thus saith the Lord"? It is just here that so many make a mistake.

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They are not content to rest on the Word of God alone, but want something else.

There is a story told of an eminent Scotch divine who wrote to a relative of his—a lady often troubled with doubts. He bade her, whenever she came across some assuring passage of Holy Scripture, to read it over again and then to pause and say "How true that is! *How true that is!*" It was good counsel. You follow it. Read Acts XIII. 38–39 in that way: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Read John V. 24 in that way: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

As you read each text let your heart exclaim, "How true that is!" Yes, it is true, every word of it. Believe it, then, as a little child believes the word of his mother, and, in believing, you will have joy and peace.

"THY words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jer. XV. 16.)

THE LORD'S COMING.

THERE is one subject which is spoken of in Holy Scripture more frequently than any other. The Love of God is, we believe, mentioned twenty-eight times ; in the number twenty-eight are four sevens ; and seven is the number which signifies perfection, while four signifies full display. But we have been told that the subject, of which we now desire to speak—the coming of the Lord—is mentioned three hundred and forty-five times in the Old Testament, and three hundred and eighty-five times in the New. In the whole Bible, therefore, there are seven hundred and thirty references to the subject ; and in some of the epistles these are to be found in every chapter.

Surely, the matter is of importance in God's eyes, since He tells us seven hundred and thirty times in Scripture—

"MY SON IS COMING."

The first question in the Old Testament is "*Where art thou ?*" The first question in the New Testament is "*Where is He ?*"—where is He, Who is born King of the Jews—born a Prince and a Saviour ? Man has to learn his position and his condition ; and the "Where art thou ?" of Scripture is a searching question. Man has, in other words, to learn

"where he is" before God. And when in the Old Testament his condition is demonstrated, God draws attention to the only remedy for him—the coming of Christ.

All through the Old Testament God pointed, in constant picture, sacrifice, and prophecy, to the coming One. Now, these frequent references to the coming of Christ are not simply reiteration of the same fact, but a presentation of that fact in various and contrasted aspects.

We will look at some of the references in Scripture. First, let us turn to 1 Thessalonians I. In Acts XVII. we find the apostle at Thessalonica reasoning, for three sabbath days, in a synagogue of the Jews, "opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." The Thessalonians received the apostle's word as the Word of God, and they believed it, and knew that by *Jesus* they were delivered from the wrath to come. Now they waited, in earnest hope, to see the face of their Deliverer.

You may say that the position of the Thessalonians was very elementary, but are you sure that you have advanced as far as they? *Do you know* that there is no judgment for you?—that the Lord Jesus has borne it all? And does this divine Love so warm your heart that you have turned from all your idols with the

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longing desire to see God's Son from heaven? It was so with these Thessalonians. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even Jesus*, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. I. 9, 10).

In Colossians III. 4 are the words: "*When Christ*, who is our life, shall appear (be manifested), then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Christians are not always to be the despised, downtrodden company, which they often are, in this world. It ought to be seen by others that we have that which they have not; and *that* can only be shown by our ways. Apart from this, we have nothing to show. Faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost, realizes much; but that cannot be shown to others. But the day of the manifestation of Christ's glory draws on apace; and when that day of glory comes we shall appear with Him in glory. *The Christ of God* is spoken of here, rather than the man Jesus, who bore the judgment. Lord, hasten the day of Thy appearing!

Another view of the subject is presented in Philippians III. 20–1; and there notice that Christ is given His full title, the *Lord Jesus Christ*. We read: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body" (the body of our humilia-

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tion), " that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The reason why the apostle writes here of the Saviour as the " *Lord* Jesus Christ," is evident; he desires to lay stress on the *power* which is needed to deal with the body. We lay our loved ones in the grave, and they see corruption. Some are cremated; and it has been foolishly thought that the bodies thus destroyed can never be seen again. Those who thus argue forget that matter, in its constituent elements, can never be lost. The ashes of martyrs have been cast to the four winds, but they are safe in the divine keeping. What is required is transcendent Power, and that we have in the " *Lord* Jesus Christ." He will change these bodies of our humiliation, and fashion them like unto His own body of glory. Wonderful prospect for the believer!—when in bodies of glory, like unto His own, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. For those who fear to meet Him, the day will be terrible; but meet Him they must. " All who are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth!"

In Matthew xxv. 14–30, we have quite another aspect of the Lord's coming. Here is set forth the responsibility of the servants during the absence of their Lord. All are Christ's servants who profess His name;

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and each one has his work assigned (Mark XIII. 34). The Lord is coming to reckon (*v.* 19) with all professedly engaged in His service. Have we, individually, recognized our responsibility? Are we occupied in our Master's work? There may be much activity without any real service. Service means the doing of the Lord's will; and knowledge of that will must be sought from the Master Himself. To Him our record of work must be given; from Him our reward, or the pronouncement of our loss must come. But be certain of this–

HE IS COMING TO RECKON.

And if you know not yet what He would have you to do, see to it that you learn His will concerning you while there is yet time. Your task may be nothing apparently great; there may not be any going out to the heathen, or preaching the gospel, or any public ministry of any kind. Perhaps there may be a letter to write to some one sick; perhaps an overburdened mother would prize your help; or, perhaps, you might read the Word to the blind. Something there is for you to do. And when He comes to weigh our work, may we, to our inexpressible joy, hear His sentence of approval: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The account given by Luke of the reckoning with the Lord's servants differs from that by Matthew. In Luke XII. 35–38 we have an

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insight into the hearts of those who wait and watch. We suppose that all professors of Christianity are, more or less, avowedly waiting for the Lord, for the cry: "Behold the Bridegroom!" has gone out far and wide. But we may take the position of waiting for some one, and go quietly off to sleep. Not so the interested watcher; his heart is engaged; he is on the tip-toe of expectation; his hand ready at the first sound of a well-known step to fling the door wide open. Then the bright light of the house will show how longingly, and with what anxious care, the return of the loved one has been awaited. The vigil has, perchance, been long, and the watcher is worn and weary. But all weariness is forgotten when he hears the blessed words which tell that His Lord has noted all the pain and trouble, now over for ever. He is made to sit down to a feast; and his Lord "shall gird Himself and come forth and serve him." The service thus begun shall never end, for He, Who is the blessed, glorious, and wondrous Master, yet remains a servant ever (Exodus XXI.).

On Christ's first coming in the flesh all our hopes—to be consummated at His second advent—depend. Let us recall some of the aspects which we have considered.

THE LORD IS COMING

As "Jesus," who bore our judgment.
As "Christ," to be displayed in glory.

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As "the Lord Jesus Christ," to change the bodies of our humiliation.

As Lord of His servants.

As One *who serves* the true watchers.

And now, in Hebrews IX. 28, we read of the Lord's coming "unto salvation." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

He comes "without sin." He will never take up the question again; on the cross He cried, "It is finished." "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God." When He comes the second time, He will bring in salvation *in its completeness*. We are told in 2 Timothy I. 9 that *we have been* saved, in Romans V. 10 that we *are being* saved, and in our passage (Hebrews IX. 28) that we *shall be* saved. When salvation is complete, it will include salvation from sin, from the attacks of Satan, and from the world in which we live. Our bodies will be conformed to Christ's glorious body, when our Lord comes the second time, "without sin unto salvation."

We will look at one other aspect of the second coming, and then leave our readers to gather up for themselves some of the many other presentations of that supreme event.

In 1 Thessalonians IV. 16–17, we find a

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prophecy of the Lord's coming, in the clouds, unseen by the world, to take up His own, to be with Him for ever. The world will afterwards go on ; but *all real Christians* will have been removed from it, and the Holy Ghost will have left the scene. Satan's power will then be exerted to the full ; and all the terrible catastrophes, spoken of (for instance, in the Book of Revelation) will come to pass. The day of grace will be over ; and Scripture speaks of nothing but the day of judgment for those who have heard and have rejected the gospel. That this event is imminent, and may come before the writer has finished this line, is a very serious fact for the unsaved. How shall they escape, if they neglect so great salvation ? Turn, then, to the gracious Saviour ere He comes. " Him that cometh " Christ " will in no wise cast out." And you, too, will then watch and wait, and look for Him, Who, as the man, *Jesus*, bore the judgment for you ; Who as the *Christ*, will manifest you, with Him, in glory ; Who, as the *Lord Jesus Christ*, will change your body ; Who, as the *Master*, will serve His own for ever ; Who comes " unto salvation," and for His own.

May Christ's great love, known increasingly in our hearts, produce in us an ardent desire to see His face, for His own name's sake.

E. C—P.

THE SERVICE OF WOMEN.

IT is often asked, "What can women do to serve the Lord?" Scripture is our safe guide in this, as in everything else. If married, their first sphere of service is the *home circle* (Titus II.). They are to love their husbands, love their children, be discreet and chaste, good housekeepers, and obedient to their own husbands. Then 1 Timothy V. indicates they are to lodge strangers, do lowly service to others. They are to relieve the afflicted and diligently follow every good work. If widows, they are to trust in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day. This is what might be termed indoor service.

In the gospels we read of those who followed the Lord and ministered to Him of their substance. Clearly these had some means. Then in Philippians IV. Paul speaks of those "women who laboured with him in the Gospel." Priscilla, as well as Aquila, was linked up with Paul in his labours. Phœbe was a servant of the Church which was at Cenchrea. Mary bestowed much labour on Paul and his fellow-workers (Romans XVI.).

Now all this indicates very blessed lines of service. But if Paul spoke of "women who laboured with him in the Gospel," we get no record of their preaching publicly, and no hint

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that such was their service. If Phœbe served the Church, it is clear that she did not teach the saints. 1 Corinthians XIV. 34 settles that. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak." And again, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man." But if, as is suitable and becoming, there is no public preaching or teaching enjoined upon them, there are many and varied ways in which they can serve the Lord; such as visiting the sick, caring for the poor, seeking to get people to come to the preaching of the Gospel, holding Bible-classes for women or children, sewing meetings, tract distributing, and many other ways which fervent love to souls will suggest.

Women, as well as men, are to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. XV. 58). They can often find access to homes from which men are excluded. Especially was this the case in countries where Paul lived and laboured. Indeed, to this day, if women did not carry the Gospel into the women's apartments in Eastern lands, humanly speaking, it would never reach them.

A servant of Christ inquired of a Christian lady whether she had ever been the means, directly or indirectly, of leading any to Christ? She could not recollect one, and yet she had

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been a Christian for over fifty years ! Indeed, she seemed very much surprised at the question, for she thought that sort of work belonged exclusively to preachers. I wonder if you agree with her ? Let us hope she served the Lord in some other way that was equally important in its place.

It certainly is not necessary for you to be a preacher to lead souls to Christ.

In the same locality lived another lady. Among her other labours she taught some children on Sundays. One Sunday they did not come, so she visited their home, and found the mother had died during the past week. She was told that the children had carried home the texts learned, and repeated the things they had heard to their dying mother. They had proved a great comfort to her in her last hours.

The father was seated by the fire, so she asked him if he would come to hear the Gospel preached. He declined on the ground that he was very deaf. She promised, if he would come, to place him near the preacher and ask him to speak loudly. He promised, but failed to come. She again sought him out, and offered to supply him with an ear-trumpet. The man caught at the idea. He said to himself, " If I had the trumpet I could hear other things beside the Gospel." He got the trumpet, came to the preaching, and the words he

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heard not only reached his outward ear, but travelled into his soul. He believed with his heart unto righteousness, and soon made confession with his mouth unto salvation. Not long afterwards he identified himself with God's people, and died a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. All four children were converted, and lived consistent Christian lives. One of the boys became a preacher of the Gospel.

But perhaps my reader is young. You feel your inability to do anything because you are so nervous and fearful. Now let me suggest two things the most timid, nervous girl can do. *You can pray.* You can fix upon one or more individuals whose names you can bring before God. Will you try this regularly and persistently? Supplicate with the certainty that God is more willing to give than you are to ask.

Then you can post a gospel book to some one. Do not forget to pray to God about it. Let me tell you some results of doing this. A Gospel book, with the title *Prepare to Meet Thy God,* was sent by post to a gentleman well known for his ungodly life and reckless conduct. He was in his study when it reached him. As he read the title he said, "What cant! Who has had the impudence to send me this?" With an imprecation on his unknown correspondent he walked to the fire to burn it. "No, I won't do that, I'll send

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it to my friend B——. It will be a good joke to hear what he'll say about it."

He enclosed the tract in a fresh envelope, addressed it in a feigned hand, and posted it to his boon companion.

Mr. B—— received it, as his friend had done, with an oath at the Methodistical humbug. His first impulse was to tear it to pieces, but instead of doing so he again looked at the title. *Prepare to Meet Thy God.* His attention was arrested. Conviction seized his conscience. He read on. The result was he was converted there and then. He passed from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.

Almost his first thought was for his ungodly associates. "Have I received such blessed light and truth, and shall I not strive to communicate it to others?" He folded up the tract, enclosed it in an envelope, and addressed it to one of his companions in sin. The little arrow hit the mark. His friend read. He also was convicted and converted. It was their joy in after life to walk and serve together that same blessed Saviour Who had thus reached them on their mad journey to the Lake of Fire.

Shall not these instances encourage us not to be weary in well-doing, and indicate a way in which even you can serve the Lord?

H. N.

TWO ROADS AND THEIR TERMINATIONS.

WHOEVER we may be it is well that we should remember that we are travelling on to a sure and certain goal. Our conduct on the way proves whose we are and whither we are bound.

Now there are two classes in the world to-day; they are journeying on different roads; their lives proclaim their moral state, and they ultimately reach different destinations.

In Romans II. 1–11 we have what God says of the two classes, their moral characteristics and the end of their respective roads. Let us hear what is said about them both.

First. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility, eternal life."

Second. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God."

The ground of our justification and accept-

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ance with God is not given in these verses. That comes out later on in the epistle. But what characterises these two classes in their state of responsibility is set before us and what their portion when God "will render to every man according to his deeds."

The first class *sought* for glory, honour, and incorruptibility. Their eye and heart were on another scene than this, though on the way thither there was plenty to test the reality of their faith. But with patient continuance in well doing they pressed on in the often thorny way, and set their faces steadfastly toward the blessed goal.

And what was held out to them as the prize to be obtained ?

Eternal life !

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility ; *eternal life.*"

In John's writings eternal life is said to be our present portion, to be enjoyed by faith and in the power of the Spirit of God. We have it in the Son, as John III. 14–16, 36 ; IV. 14 ; V. 24 ; VI. 47–54 ; X. 27–30 ; 1 John V. 9–13, abundantly proves ; but with the apostle Paul it is held out to us as the end of our course here.

God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life before the world began, and therefore provided it for us. But inasmuch as it will not be fully

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possessed until we reach our home in heaven our calling is "*In hope* of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 1; Titus i. 2).

That "eternal life which was with the Father" has been manifested in the person of Jesus in this world in such a way that the apostle could say, "Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 1–3).

Jesus incarnate was the Word of life; that is, the expression of it before the eyes of men; but, alas! so blinded by sin was man that he could not see the life that was manifested. Those who were taught of the Father, and whose eyes were opened through his grace, saw it, and bore witness.

The Lord in the days of His flesh on earth lived a life of communion with the Father, the effect of which was to place Him in moral separation from the world. He lived a life of love, holiness, tenderness, meekness, truth, gentleness, lowliness—all that which would be seen in a perfect man, a man walking in unbroken communion with God His Father and in obedience to His will. Therefore the

Father found His satisfaction in Him, and Jesus could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John IV. 34).

By His death He annulled death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel. As the fruit of the cross the future of God's people is unveiled—"life and incorruptibility are brought to light." The glory of that resurrection state, into which we shall enter at the coming of our Lord, is placed before our eyes.

What a prospect for the people of God! And as we realize it how the spirit is braced up, and we press forward in the path that leads to that scene of life above!

Eternal life is now revealed in glory in Him who is said to be "the true God and eternal life" (1 John V. 20).

Jesus exalted and glorified above is the pattern of the heavenly family. It is God's purpose that we should be like Him, conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. VIII. 29).

If we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly One, as we read in 1 Corinthians XV. 46–49.

However much we may enter into and enjoy eternal life—and Christ is the eternal life—on our way home, it is not until we reach home and are in that blessed state and place

which God has purposed and promised for us before the world was that we shall fully enjoy it. Heaven is the home of eternal life. It sojourned here for awhile in the person of Jesus, like an exotic away from its proper clime and country ; it is now revealed in the same blessed Person as a glorified Man, in heaven.

We are on our way thither thank God, and live " in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." By His grace we are amongst the class who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility," and to whom is promised " eternal life " (Rom. II. 7).

Of eternal life it has been said, " that out-of-the-world heavenly condition of relationship and being in which eternal life consists." As a human statement of eternal life this is very fine. And we may rest assured of the fact that this " heavenly condition of relationship and being " will exist for ever. It knows no dispensational change or limitation. That which was promised before the world began will be possessed and enjoyed by the redeemed when the world is no more.

If to know the only true God, as Father, and Jesus Christ the sent One, is eternal life, as our Lord says in John XVII. 3, then it is very evident that as eternity, with its un-

ending ages, goes on our knowledge of God the Father and His blessed Son will increase, and therefore our enjoyment of that " out-of-the-world heavenly condition of relationship and being in which eternal life consists " will deepen till our utmost limitations are reached. It is there, when the purpose of God shall have been accomplished as to us, we shall be in the full and everlasting possession and enjoyment of all that eternal life means. We have " justification of life " now; then " we shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ " (Rom. v. 17, 18).

In the place then from whence it came, and to which it has returned, and in which it is now revealed in a glorified Man, shall the redeemed enjoy eternal life. It is the end, the blessed end of their journey here, and the hope that is held out to them.

On the way thither we enjoy it, as our Lord says, " The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life " (John IV. 14). And we are to " lay hold on eternal life " (1 Tim. VI. 12). But not until we have reached the place God has purposed for us, and are in the condition suited to that place, shall we enjoy it *in its fulness and without alloy*. The blessed Lord has " abolished death " (by dying), " and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel " (2 Tim. I. 10). By faith we enjoy the fruits of His death now, but we wait to

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enter that scene of "life and incorruptibility" at His coming. Blessed and glorious hope!

On the other hand, the road the second class are on leads to an entirely different goal, than which nothing can be more awful.

Let the Word of God speak: "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. . . ." For there is no respect of persons with God. . . . "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. II. 5–16).

Thus "life eternal" lies at the end of one road, and "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" at the end of the other.

How important then it is to inquire of ourselves: Which road are we on? And toward which goal are we hastening? To the one or the other we undoubtedly are. Is it "eternal life" in that scene where sin and death can never come; or the "second death, which is the lake of fire," *the state of contrast* to what is enjoyed by the redeemed in that scene of light and love where God is all in all (Rev. XXI. 1–8)?

E. A.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. M.—John xx. 22.—Whatever was bestowed on the assembled disciples on the occasion of which this passage speaks, it must not be confounded with the actual coming of the Holy Spirit which did not take place till Pentecost. The verse suggests a reference to Genesis II. 7. There we read of the man being formed of the dust of the ground and of the Lord God breathing into his of in 1 Corinthians xv. 45, as the last Adam, a nostrils the breath of life. Now Christ is spoken quickening, or life-igving spirit. In resurrection He took the place of Head of a family who partake of His life—life more abundantly, as it is styled in John x. 10. It is on this line, we think, that John xx. 22 runs. The descent of the Holy Spirit later is another thing. Ever since Pentecost the Holy Spirit abides here, dwelling in the assembly and indwelling all believers. Finally, if any of us receive a call to special service, no doubt we shall be suitably equipped for it, but of "a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit" the Scriptures never speak, so far as we know. Carefully read "*Ought we to expect another Pentecost?*" in our issue for July.

C. S. M.—"Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God" (1 Cor. VII. 24). But if a man be converted when following a calling wherein he cannot abide *with God*, then he must give it up. We can hardly see how a Christian could follow the calling of which you speak *with*

God. If not, let him seek another, and maintain a conscience void of offence both towards God and man.

R. W. M.—Genesis VI. 6.—Let us remember that if God condescends to speak to mortal men it must be in the language of men. Had He spoken in the dialect of the angels and in terms suited to their order of thought and being, how should we have understood? Hence if He would express His sorrow and grief to men He necessarily stoops to use their terms. Therefore He speaks of repenting and being grieved at His heart because of the wickedness of men, and for all the ills that it entailed. Do you find fault with this, and do you discover in it an argument against His omniscience and omnipotence? What! Would you have God so high and so far away *from us as to be without sorrow and grief at the* miseries that sin has made? What an infinite loss that would be! Ought we not to be glad that God draws near to us and speaks to us in our own dialect, telling us that He grieves over our wanderings, that He pities us as a father pities his children, and in our distresses comforts us as a mother comforts her child? This is very human, you may say, Yes, but it is the God of the Bible talking to men in the dialect of men. That He foresaw all is certain, and though He purposed to bring in, through Christ our Lord, something far better than all that had been lost by sin, yet this prevented Him not from speaking as He does in Genesis VI. 6.

GRACE ABOUNDING.

LUKE XV.

THE parable of the prodigal son is an old story of rare beauty and undying charm. Long centuries ago it first fell on human ears, told by One Who alone could rightly tell it, and ever since it has held on its way fulfilling its grand and glorious mission. In tones sweeter than the chimes of silver bells, it calls on the wandering sons of men to listen while it tells, in melting accents, of the great love of God, and how His grace, like an ocean flood, rises high above the creature's sin.

The young man's gathering his all together, his leaving home, his journey to the far country, his reckless, dissolute life, his evil companionship, his squandered fortune, his poverty and want, his being found at last by the swine troughs in the field perishing with hunger—all this need not be told. The turning-point is reached when he comes to himself, when the evil spell is broken in which he had long been held, and he escapes like a bird from the snare of the fowler. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against

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heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants." Such is his resolve. It is the language of a soul turning to God. He was converted then.

But from that moment to the hour in which his father saw him a great way off and ran to meet him, his conscience must have been distressed with many a fear. Every step in his downward career—his folly, his sin, his intemperate carousals, his profligate associates—all came back to his memory to fill his heart with anguish and with grief. How he must have wondered, as he trudged along the road that led to home, what sort of welcome he would get. Sometimes hopeful, sometimes tempted to despair, his thoughts, even at their best, never rising higher than a place among the hired servants of his father's house. That was more than he deserved. Would he get even that? So is it with many to-day. Converted, beyond doubt, though they doubt it themselves sometimes, but they know not the riches of God's grace, nor how He delights to bless returning ones. They think of their past life, their many shortcomings, their lack of deep and heartfelt repentance, their want of love to Christ, their wretched experiences—these and a thousand things of a similar nature crowd the vision of their soul, and fill

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them with dismay. And yet they cling to hope, nor would they give it up for worlds. "If I can only get to heaven at last, a place within the door will be good enough for me —a place among the hired servants." So they speak.

Let us follow the story a little further. "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"—covered him with kisses, as the word in the original implies. How astonished he must have been! This was more, far more, than he had ever hoped for. Such a welcome! He could and did confess his sin and his unworthiness, but a servant's place he could not ask for now. *He was a son* and he knew it, welcomed back without reserve and with every expression of parental joy and gladness.

What is all this to you? What thoughts does it suggest? What truth does it teach? Does it not reveal to us the Father's heart? Would He not have you know that such is the manner of His welcome now? He is glad to have you back. He has missed you, so to speak, all the long years of your estrangement. Do you say, "Oh, that I could realize that He loves me like that"? You never can realize it until you believe it. Is not the picture a faithful one? Is the story of the Father's heart, the Father's joy, told in terms

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too glowing to be true? You would not think so, if you only knew that heart as Jesus knows it.

But there is more. "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." He was a son in the father's house, and *made meet to be there.* "The filthy garments," to use the striking language of Zechariah III. 4, were taken away, and he was clothed with change of raiment. And so with us. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 17). The risen Christ is our righteousness (1 Cor. I. 30). In Him we are complete (Col. II. 10), and in Him, the Beloved, we are taken into favour (Eph. I. 6). Let us look up into the opened heavens. Christ is there. By His atoning work our sins have been completely removed, and now we are one with Him in resurrection life and glory. "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John IV. 17). Blessed words! His acceptance is the measure of ours, and the love which rests supremely on Him is the love in which we have our part. His Father is our Father, and His God is our God (John XX. 17).

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In the light of such grace our doubts and fears dissolve like frost before the rising sun. Oh, how good, how gracious God is! As we ponder it we lose sight of our undeservings, yea, self and all its belongings go into the deep sea. God is before our soul—the God of all grace, Who finds His joy in the blessing of His loved ones, and Who answers every carping criticism with these wondrous words, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." This is our God. Who would not make their boast in Him?

"The wanderer no more will roam,
The lost one to the fold hath come,
The prodigal is welcomed home,
O Lamb of God, through Thee!

"Though clothed in rags, by sin defiled,
The Father did embrace His child;
And I am pardon'd, reconciled,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!

"It is the Father's joy to bless;
His love has found for me a dress,
A robe of spotless righteousness,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!

"Yea, in the fulness of His grace,
God put me in the children's place,
Where I may gaze upon His face,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!"

THE ATONEMENT;
OR, JESUS FORSAKEN OF GOD.

PSALM XXII.

THIS scripture is pre-eminently the psalm of One forsaken of God. In this it stands alone. Other psalms there are which refer to that most solemn hour, and to the blessed Person Who here speaks to God; but this psalm above all. It is not merely here that we have the Lord taking His place among men, the trusting One—His trust carried on unbrokenly, looking on through death into resurrection, yea, to glory at God's right hand. Psalm XVI. gives us that.

But here what a contrast! He is abandoned of God, yet cleaves to Him wholly, and vindicates Him absolutely. But He is forsaken of God. Now it is not His enemies that say so, though they too did—it is Himself; and it is to God He says it. No believer had ever been thus forsaken, or can be. "Our fathers trusted in Thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee, and were delivered: they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded" (*vv.* 4–5). Never was there such an hour even for Jesus, never can there be such an hour again. It was atonement. Not that

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this alone appears in the psalm; but Jesus made sin is the first and deepest thought and fact. There was no sorrow that He knew not; there was no shame that He was saved from. Bulls of Bashan were there; shameless dogs compassed Him about; the ravening lion roared. In truth these are but figures; and man was more cruel than all, baser and most deliberate, he alone indeed guilty, led on by a subtler, mightier enemy. But, deepest and most wondrous of all, God was there, and there, first of all, as it could not but be, God as Judge of sin, Who made His Son that knew no sin to be sin for us.

Yes, God was there, not the approver of what was good only, but the Judge of all the evil that was laid upon that blessed head. It was God forsaking the faithful, obedient Servant; yet it was *His* God: this would—could—never be given up. "*My* God, *My* God": yet He has to add now, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was the Son of the Father, but as Son of man necessarily that He so cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then, and then only, did God desert His one unswerving Servant, the man Christ Jesus. Nevertheless we bow before the mystery of mysteries in His Person —God manifested in flesh. Had He not been man, of what avail for us? Had He not been God, all must have failed to give to His suffer-

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ing for sins the infinite worth of Himself. This is atonement.

Here then we have God in His majesty and righteous judgment of evil—God in the display of His moral being dealing with sin in the person of His own Son, made sin for us on the cross. It was the very perfection of His bearing sin that He should not be heard. There was the sharpest pain and anguish and bitterness of rejection; and did He not feel it? Did the glory of His person render Him incapable of suffering? The idea denies His humanity. Rather was His deity that which made Him endure and feel it most, and as none other could. "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed Me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones: they look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture. But be not Thou far from Me, O Jehovah: O My strength, haste Thee to help Me" (*vv.* 14–19).

But what is this that breaks on our ears, when the last drop in the cup is drained? "Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the

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unicorns. I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee," says the Saviour. He says, now He is risen from the dead, " I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." He had declared it : such was His ministry here below, but now on an entirely new ground. Death, but His death alone, could dispose of sin, so that the sinner could bow to God's righteousness about it, and be brought, without sin, into the presence of God. And this is what God Himself declares.

Mark here, too, the consequence of it: " I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." " Thy name "—what name ? When bearing sin He speaks of *God*. When looking on to deliverance, or in enjoyed relationship, the godly Israelite speaks of *Jehovah*. But in the New Testament, while God remains God, and must be ever the Judge of sin, *Father* is the characteristic term of relationship. The Son of God knew that name from eternity, yet He knew it none the less as man, and in a truth and fulness which belonged to Him only. This, in its reality and intimateness, He would give to them as far as it could be, in redemption, as many a soul knows with joy. Jesus could bring it out now. " I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." So He says, " I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." *He had*

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never said so before. He had been declaring the name of the Father during His ministry on earth, but He had never presented it thus; and your particular attention is called to the fact. It supposes not merely love, but love on a foundation of righteousness. So when sin was judged and put away, He gives us to know that His God and His Father is ours. The glory of the Father and the nature of God were now engaged in blessing us with Him. But all was on the footing of righteousness. There was pardon now, and peace; but not these only: there was association with Christ Himself.

Now mark how the declaration of His name comes out. "My God, My God," says Jesus, when and because He was forsaken on the cross, made sin and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. It is the true and simple and strong answer to those who suppose that He had been all His life here below bearing sin. Had this been so, He must have been all through forsaken of God, unless God can shine with complacency while judging sin. It would be the virtual denial of His life in the joy and communion of His Father's love. Son of God here below, He had ever walked in the intimate and perfect acknowledgment of His Father's presence and of His own relationship, and hence so much the more did He feel what it was to be aban-

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doned when on the cross. But now the sin that was charged upon Him is gone by His dying for it; and, as the witness that all was gone, He is raised up from the dead, and then declares that very name, not first "your" Father, nor *our* Father (this were beneath His glory, whatever may be His love), but "My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." Thus what God is as Father to Him rests now on those for whom He died, on those whose sins had been blotted out by the blood of His cross.

But this is not all. The perfect and manifested acceptance of the Man that God made sin is altogether theirs now. Thus it is love not solely in relationship, but in nature. But there is more than this. All that God feels as God, all that pertains to Him belongs by Christ's work to those who rest on that Person and that work. Such is the virtue and fruit of atonement. Nor is it only for *heaven*, for it was brought out by Himself *on earth*. He was going to heaven; but it was for wise and weighty reasons made known here to the souls that needed it most. To His disciples He had shown Himself the pattern of dependence and obedience, of grace and righteousness, of bright and peaceful communion with His Father. But all this of itself could only aggravate their condition, which was so far beneath His. With what force, then, the

blessed truth broke upon their souls! God Himself, the Father of the Lord Jesus, was their Father, even as He was their God; all that is in God as completely in their favour by what He had wrought on the cross as all that is in Him as Father. And, remark, it is not merely "as a father pitieth his children," for there is incomparably more now. He is the Father as the Christ knew Him. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren"—brethren brought, and brought righteously, into the selfsame relation, so that all the satisfaction and delight of God Himself in Christ is shared fully with us because of the acceptance we have in Christ our Lord.

But we have more still to hear. "In the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." It is not merely "I will praise Thee," nor yet "in the congregation," but "In the midst of the congregation." The Apostle Paul quotes this scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and we find its spirit fulfilled in the little company gathered on that day (John xx.), "the assembly." The Lord is at once found in the midst of them, not reproving them for their cowardice, unbelief, and unfaithfulness, to say nothing of lack of love for His Person and suffering for His name. I say not that He had not His dealings with one or another; but He brings them at once into the highest relation and best blessings by His sacrifice. With more

than one of them we know He dealt : but this did not hinder or postpone His grace at all.

" In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." Think for a moment what the praise of Christ was in such an hour, what His feelings must have been, when emerging from the darkness, from the dust of death, from the abandonment of God ! He alone could rightly estimate the immensity of it all, Who having suffered once for sins, now rests in the hard-won victory. Then it was that He bore our sins ; then He Who knew no sin was made sin. Risen from the dead, He is bearing sins no more ; He is praising, and not alone, but " in the midst of the congregation."

Let me add another word. There is a day coming when this earth shall be filled no more with groans, but with hallelujahs ; when every one born shall join in the chorus of blessing, when heaven and earth shall be filled with joy and glory. But never will come a day when such praise will burst forth as that which He began that day. It is not that they who praise with Him, being brought into such association of blessing, will ever lose it—they never will. If it began with Him, then, it will be theirs for ever, but it is theirs only with Him in the midst. The praise of the resurrection day is peculiar, being Christ's praise in the midst of the congregation, that is, of His brethren.

None but He could feel to the uttermost what it was to be forsaken of God and not heard when He cried. But now, heard from the horns of the unicorns, He enters, as the risen Man, into the light and glory of God shining for ever on the accepted sacrifice of Himself; and declares to His brethren the name of His Father and their Father, of His God and their God. There and thus, in the midst of the Church now set free for ever by and in Him, He sings praises. Oh! what praises were Christ's, delivered now at length and from so great a death! But are they not our praises too? And is it not in "our midst" that He sings them? What a character does not this communion imprint on the Church's worship! The praise of Christ, after sin was judged as it never can be again, gives the just and only full idea of what becomes God's assembly.

Are these your thoughts, brethren beloved of the Lord? Is this the standard by which you try your hearts and lips when you present your spiritual sacrifices to your God and Father? Be assured He values none compared with those of the risen Christ, who deigns to be the Leader of such as cleave to Him in this the day of His still-continued rejection, though He be, as we know, glorified on high.

Adapted.

READY.

"At the king's hand."—NEH. XI. 24.
"Ready unto every good work."—TITUS III. 1.

"AT the king's hand," ready, prepared, willing, alert; passive, yet charged with activity!

It was a time of work, of danger; something already accomplished; much remaining to be done. In the hearts of the captives at Babylon lingered the desire to return to the place from whence they had fallen. It was fanned to flame by the proclamation of King Cyrus. (And who shall say what part the secret intercession of Ezra had played in this?) It bore fruit in the return to Jerusalem and in the rebuilding of the city under Nehemiah. There was much building, much ordering, much coming and going, till finally the appointed service was assigned to each man—singing, offering, bearing—from highest to lowest. And one man is set "at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people." A message here, a service there, at all times, for any place—ready! The king, who appointed him, knew his value and use, no mere ornament, no dreamer. A coveted post his, arduous, demanding all loyalty and devotion

to the king, all self-denial, coupled with a knowledge of humanity, commanding the affection and respect of the people ; a channel for good from the king to the people. This man has many would-be imitators, but what are the necessary qualifications for the post ?

First and foremost, a personal knowledge of the King. No mere sentiment will avail here, no sudden enthusiasm, no second-hand knowledge, no mere theory about the King. The man who would fill this coveted post must have enlisted in the King's service ; his eyes must have seen the King, seen Him in His beauty ; the King's will must reign ; His Person must satisfy the heart, and His kingdom fill the vision of the one who is prepared to stand " at the King's hand," " ready unto every good work."

Shall we dare to put our life alongside of this little word ? Let us quietly ask ourselves, Have we made over our life to Him ? We have perhaps trusted Him for our future, but have we known the fulfilment of joy in our life now, that He denied Himself so much to give us ? Have His plans and interests entered into ours, drowning all selfish aims, making good to us " the promise of life in Christ Jesus " ; not our old, empty existence of self-service, but the fulness of life in Himself ? Has the crown of thorns, that He wore, for ever dimmed for us the lustre of the crown

that we sought of the world? Has the crown of glory, that He now wears, brought us down at His feet?—"ready unto every good work"; not the work that we choose, but the work He chooses (and how tenderly, if we but knew it!). As we wake in the morning, is it His bidding we seek for the day? Assuredly, if we are "at the King's hand," "ready." Have we not sometimes feared a too whole-hearted committal of our lives to Him? Have we not feared He would quench and break, according to men's thoughts and ways? Have we not feared we might lose the esteem of some one dear to us? Have we not feared the frown of the Pharisee? How full we have been of fears! Afraid of the One Who loves us more than any human being ever could! Afraid of the One Who proved Himself "ready" to the bitterest end—ready to sacrifice all that He had for us! Is it too much for Him to ask, in the day of His power, that we should be ready? He had a message He wanted delivered by human lips, but we had arranged to do something else; a letter to be written, but we were writing to some one else; a work to do, but we thought we would serve Him some other way. We were not "ready"; He had to seek some one else, and we missed a heart full of joy.

It may mean waiting to know His service,

it assuredly will; it will need nothing less than the patience of Christ if we are to endure. But does not that very expression remind us that He will wait with us, that He asks us to do no more than He Himself is doing? How long He waited for us! How long He has waited for His bride! And if we look back to such moments of waiting, how truly we can confess that "Jesus Himself drew near." Can we say "No" to Him if He asks us to wait on Him? To be near Him, to receive definite commissions, to be the instrument in His hand to carry good—"every good *work*," is this so little?

Again, it is in the spirit of the King we must wait. With what tender power He met men! And how often some one has come to us, but because he did not use our formulæ we have revealed to him, not the beauty of the King, but the darkness of our own heart! We were looking for some great message to carry, and He wanted us to show a common human kindness; He wanted us to give a word of encouragement, and we wanted to lay down the law; He wanted us to let our "yieldingness be known" for His sake, and we insisted on displaying our fancied "zeal for the Lord." In all this we had not "been with Jesus," we were not "ready."

Yet this is open to all; no more is asked, no less accepted; to be used in this hard,

selfish age to carry to our fellow-men ("to the uttermost parts of the earth" were His last words) the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He will accept, from the hands of a lad, an evening meal, using it to feed five thousand, if he be only "ready"; the Greeks will find a Philip, a Saul of Tarsus, an Ananias. "You always seem to say 'Yes,'" said a lady to one who reflected in a marked degree the Master. His philosophy of life was simple. "Every morning I commit my day to Him, asking *Him* to invite me to work or preach, through whomsoever He will. I trust Him to give the call, and I accept whatever He sends. If I find later, in His presence, I have made a mistake, I rectify it, and," he added with deep meaning, "I seldom have to."

Let us just ask Him from to-day to take us entirely as His—body, soul, and spirit—for any service (the *best* work is done in silence), and let us see to it that we stand every moment in this great service, "at the King's hand," "ready."

"His state
Is kingly; thousands, at His bidding, speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and—*wait*."

E. P. E.

SLOW TO JUDGE; QUICK TO SAVE.

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, about the space of half an hour."
REV. VII. 1.

TO what event are we referred in this passage? What was it which arrested the music of heaven, silenced the golden harps, and stilled the song of the redeemed? Judgment had fallen, and was about to fall in increasing force, upon the earth, and the word which announced it silenced the heavenly choir.

Judgment is God's strange work. He finds no delight, but rather sorrow, in its execution. Have you never heard of an earthly judge shedding tears when pronouncing sentence of death? His emotion is visibly stirred, but he knows, nevertheless, that the majesty of the law must be maintained—otherwise the very foundations of government would be overturned. And must the government of God be less strenuous than that of man? Must He—as some would have Him—shrink from the execution of judgment, and weakly delegate to others the sovereignty which belongs to Himself?

Oh, do not let this slowness of judicial action—this sorrow for its necessity—arouse in you the idea that there is no need for any immediate action on your part to secure immunity, when the stroke of judgment falls. The day of grace is running out, and at any moment there may dawn upon a godless world the epoch of which we read as "that day." Already the melodies of heaven may be sinking into silence, for that limited period known as "half an hour." Soon that momentous half-hour will be ended.

We are told, then, that God is "slow to judge." And we are told, too, that He is "quick to save." While considering that divine attribute, let us turn to Isaiah VI. In the previous chapter the prophet, as God's mouthpiece, had pronounced "woes" on various forms of evil on the earth. Man has to learn his need of salvation before the second lesson is taught him, that "salvation is of the Lord."

The chapter opens, "In the year that King Uzziah died." Death is the great leveller. Rich and poor, great and small alike have to obey his call. When death comes to one near or dear to us our hearts are often made more tender, and our ears are more ready to hear the voice of God. It may be that an object of our anxious care, or, on the other hand, one who cared lovingly for

us, is removed. Father, mother, brother, sister, or child has gone from us, never to return. We stand at the graveside, and see the coffin lowered; a great choking sob comes into our throat, and our eyes are scorched and blinded with hot tears. We think—oh, so bitterly and remorsefully—of unkind actions which we would give the world to recall; we think of words of ours which have wounded the heart now still in death. At such a time God often speaks to us. And there is some meaning for us, perhaps, in that touch which connects the death of Uzziah with the vision of Isaiah. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne; before Him the seraphim covered their faces as they cried, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts." This vision of God revealed to the prophet his own condition, and he exclaimed, "Woe is me!"

Before we pass on let me ask you, Has the Light of God shone into your dark soul, and showed you that which was always there, but which you have never faced, or from seeing which the god of this world has blinded your eyes?

In the chapter which we are considering the word "*then*," used four times, speaks volumes to the attentive ear. The first "*then*" we have noticed. The holiness of God, realized in the soul, immediately produces a

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sense of unworthiness and unfitness. And, after the ascription of the seraphim, we find Isaiah "*then*" saying, "Woe is me! for I am undone."

The second "*then*," which immediately follows in the next verse, shows the *ready* and *active* influence of God on behalf of one who pronounces woe on himself. "*Then* flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from *off the altar*." In Leviticus VI. 13 we read: "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out," and the typical reference is to the work of Christ in its never-changing efficacy. The living coal is brought by God's messenger to the needy one, and applied to the "unclean lips." The result of that application is immediate: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and *thine iniquity is taken away*, and thy sin purged."

The word of God came with power to the troubled hearer, and was received as a direct message from the Lord. Now, instead of fear, there is liberty, in that holy presence—the liberty of those who have done with self and self-occupation. There was cleansing power in the coal from off the altar; that cleansing was complete, and it did not depend upon the value attached to it by the recipient, but upon the estimate of the *God Who provided and sent it*. The same thing is true to-day, my

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reader. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." May we take God at His word! Then, resting on His own statement, we shall find that His word concerning the Christ is made living in our souls by the Holy Ghost directly we believe it.

In answer to the question, "Who will go for us?" the prophet proves his faith in the cleansing fire; and we find him giving utterance to another, and a spontaneous "*then*." "*Then* said I (*v.* 8), Here am I; send me."

What a story of grace he had to tell, when divinely sent! His witness was the result of having learned, in the presence of God, his own unclean condition, and of experiencing, upon confession, the quick action of the Lord on his behalf. He knew now—as we all should realize—that preaching is not the mere rehearsal of bare facts. Glow and warmth is given to the recital, when the words spoken convey the speaker's own experience, and when he presents, not only *a* Saviour, but *his own* personal Saviour.

There is more to follow; and in verse 11 we have our fourth "*then*." From the willing servant there is a request for instruction: "*Then* said I, Lord, how long?" A full explanation follows of the character, terms, and meaning of the message to be delivered. It is always best to have instruction straight

from headquarters, so as to preclude likelihood of mistake. And this scripture teaches how ready the Master is to speak to the opened ear of His servant. We find Him *quick to save, and quick to teach.*

Are not our four " thens " worth considering in their proper sequence? Shall we go over them once again?

The presence and the holiness of God were realized by the prophet, and *then* he said, " Woe is me!"

Immediate action follows on the Lord's part, and *then* flew one of the seraphim to the prophet.

The effect of application of the work of Christ (figured by the live coal) is instantaneous, and desire for service is the result. So the prophet *then* says, " Here am I; send me."

Not only is the prophet ready for service; he is anxious for instruction, and we read, "*Then* said I, Lord, how long?"

May the blessed activities of grace be experienced more and more in our souls, so that we may learn that God is slow to judge and quick to save. E. C—P.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. R.—Leviticus XVI. 7, 10.—Are not the two goats a figure of Christ in the double aspect of His sacrifice? The one on which Jehovah's lot fell, whose blood was taken within the veil and sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, speaks of His sacrifice as meeting every claim of God's throne in reference to sin. It is the Godward aspect of Christ's death, and which ever has the first place. This is Romans III. 25. The other goat stood in actual relation to the sins of the people, which were transferred from them to it, and borne away into a land not inhabited. This is Romans IV. 25—Christ our Substitute. There is nothing in the type to suggest the taking away of "*inbred sin*." This, so long as we are on earth, is never taken away, though it has been condemned in the cross of Christ, and the Christian delivered from its authority and rule.

M. S.—Galatians V. 24.—"They that are Christ's." This phrase surely embraces all believers, and of all these it is predicated that they have "crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Romans VI. unfolds this doctrine fully. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. VI. 6). But remark *this is Christian doctrine, not practice.* The practical consequence follows in the same verse, "that henceforth we should not serve sin." Sin's power has been annulled, so that the believer is no longer under its

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rule or reign. We are, therefore, *to reckon* ourselves dead indeed unto sin—as when a slave dies he is no longer in servitude to his old master—but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then follows the exhortation, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body"—a word that would have no force at all if sin were actually and positively gone. This reckoning, though solemnly made once in the soul's history, is to be always maintained.

M. D.—We see no connection between the wind in John III. 8 and that of Acts II. 2. In John III. the wind—the coming and going of which is not under human control—is illustrative of the sovereign action of the Holy Spirit. In Acts II. the sound that betokened the advent of the Holy Spirit was *like unto* a rushing mighty wind—it is a comparison. With reference to the cloven tongues like as of fire—they were "cloven" inasmuch as the testimony of God by His servants was for all peoples and tongues and nations—not for one only. They were "like as of fire" inasmuch as the message of God's grace was founded on righteousness. The gospel is intolerant of evil, and while it announces the forgiveness of all sins, it sanctions none.

J. H.—There is a great difference between "the gospel of the kingdom" and "the gospel of the grace of God." The former was preached by John Baptist and by the Lord Himself (Matt. IV. 23), the latter by the Apostle Paul (Acts XX. 24) and others. The gospel of the kingdom was the

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glad tidings that the kingdom of heaven was at hand—the *rule* of heaven, for such is the simple force of the expression. But it is evident that the kingdom was not established, for the King was rejected—"We will not have this Man to reign over us"—and so the kingdom in power and glory is yet to come, and will be brought in when Christ comes again.

The gospel of the grace of God finds its place after the crucifixion of our Lord. For we can look at the cross as the price of our redemption, and also as the expression of the hatred of the heart of man towards God. Think of it in this latter way. Here was One Who had come down from heaven to make God known in love, and men took Him and crowned Him in derision with a crown of thorns, and put Him to a malefactor's death. He Who had come to bless was nailed by wicked hands to a cross of wood. That immediate judgment should have followed such a deed would have been most natural, but that grace should be shown to such is more than wonderful. So it is called "the gospel of the *grace* of God." For grace it is, pure and unmixed, that proclaims forgiveness for the guilty, and places the believer in association with the risen Saviour—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. If you desire further light on the subject of the kingdom we heartily commend a pamphlet entitled *Various Aspects of the Kingdom*, by J. A. Trench. It is the most helpful book on the subject that we know, and can be had from our publisher, post free, for four penny stamps.

WANTED—AN APOLLOS FOR THE CHILDREN! *

"Being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus."—ACTS XVIII. 25 (R.V.).

NEVER were the qualifications of the ideal Sunday-school servant so closely condensed, or so clearly crystallized, as in this one verse—descriptive of Apollos.

Little is known of Apollos; his life-story is contained in half a dozen verses of Acts XVIII. Of his parentage, his profession, and his age we know nothing. But if the record is meagre, it possesses a rare beauty. Apollos stands before us as the servant who, "being fervent in spirit, spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus."

We are left uninformed as to whether he was personally engaged in the Sunday-school service of his day, but certain it is that he possessed in a consummate degree the qualities the Lord would desire in those who serve Him in this—the most fruitful, as well as the most neglected—corner of the wide gospel field.

* Suggested by an address of the late Dr. Creighton on "Apollos: a model for Sunday-school teachers" (included in his *Thoughts on Education*, Longmans, Green, and Co., 6d. net), to which I am much indebted.—E. W. T.

1. **Apollos was "fervent in spirit."** Like the courier who speeds forward breathlessly on the errand of his king, he forgot himself in the message that he brought. Energized by the deep import and the pressing urgency of his message, he went forth to publish to others "how great things Jesus had done unto him." He waited not to be

"Correctly cold and regularly low,"

but "began to speak boldly in the synagogue," and "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." It must ever be thus. Heart speaks to heart; only as we ourselves are moved shall we be able to move others. Fire alone can kindle fire; and the blessings of the gospel are handed on like the torch from runner to runner in the race of life.

Apollos was "fervent in spirit," but his fervour was no worked-up enthusiasm, no frenzied excitement. It was the "instinct for souls"—a fervour which nothing but the constraining love of Christ can kindle, and nothing but a personal walk in His company can maintain. In the heart of the servant himself, there was a work of God, awakening a response to the dire needs of those around him.

"Oh! can it be that *we* believe the story
Of Him Who came from Heaven His all to give,
And in the cross of Christ profess to glory,
And yet for others do not seek to live?

"Go forth at once, the love of Christ constraining.
Weep, plead, and pray, till precious souls are won.
Then we, with songs of joy and praise returning,
Shall hear the Master say, 'Well done!'"

Fervour of spirit, the yearning compassion towards "the least of these little ones"—it is the first requisite in the labourer amongst the children!

Mere words will be worthless; in speaking to the children, it is a question not of what we know, but of what we *enjoy*, of Christ. Text-books on botany are useful and instructive to the scientific mind; children are apt to prefer a ripe Newtown pippin. We gather the children not to teach them Biblical history, nor yet to indoctrinate them in theology, but to point them to a living, personal Saviour—to Jesus. May He keep us so near to Himself that in this happy and Christ-like service we may be "fervent in spirit"; and as we dwell upon His perfections, the value of His sacrifice, the efficacy of His blood, may we lose sight more and more of ourselves.

Vasari has told us that Michael Angelo, when engaged upon his sculpture, always carried a lighted candle stuck on his forehead in a paste-board cap *to keep his own shadow off his work.* What a lesson! Christ has entrusted to our "prentice hand" a commission, compared with which the evolution of Angelo's masterpiece is child's play. Ours is a grand privilege, weighted

with solemn responsibility. But with what blessing may not the Master be able to crown the work of *our* hands, if the shadow of self be banished by the light of personal devotion to the One we serve !

2. **Apollos "taught carefully."** He realized his responsibility to the Master, and he did not suffer fervour of spirit to displace care in his service. And do not *we* need to be very mindful of this ?

The possibilities of the work are vast, its opportunities are unique ; but for this very reason there is no service which calls for the exercise of greater care, or more constant dependence, than that of the Sunday-school servant. Simple teaching was ever the most difficult ; it is so easy to be cryptic and profound, but not thus are the hearts of Christ's little ones to be reached and won. Like reaches like ; and in seeking to point the children to Jesus we need to be childlike, not childish ; to lay our own souls alongside of theirs ; and to use that simplicity which He used, and which He declared to be essential in all who should enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We must " teach carefully "—the work is *His*, although " they are *only* children."

But the careful teaching of Apollos involves careful personal preparation. " Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in

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the Lord, that thou fulfil it." The preparation we need consists not in preparing sermons, but in preparing *ourselves*. We cannot spend too much time in His presence before we set forth on His errands; we need ever to ask Him for simplicity and directness; we need to look to Him week by week for the message, and for the power to carry it right home to the young hearts. It is not sufficient to be a servant; Christ needs diligent servants, who study to "shew themselves approved unto God"—workmen that "need not to be ashamed."

Apollos "taught carefully." He thought of the possibilities of the work, like Angelo, who was once observed to pause, cap in hand, before a block of common marble, *because there might be an angel in that stone*. Some look askance upon the labour amongst the young as drudgery; we, who are engaged in it, need to view it from the Master's standpoint, and to think of the limitless possibilities for Him in the most careless boy, the most indifferent girl, He has entrusted to our care. To us He has confided the secret of "the angel in that stone," for only as we serve the human soul can we realize the infinite value of that for which the Lord of glory died.

Intrinsically this service, like any other, may appear drudgery; but if *He* be its object, drudgery becomes divine. Only as we ourselves abide in Him, shall we find it possible

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to "be not weary in well-doing"; to cast our bread upon the waters, labouring on in patient dependence until its return after the many days; to "fill the waterpots with water," and leave the miracle to Him. It is for us to go on "teaching carefully," like Apollos, looking for no recognition, deterred by no difficulties, resting in His approval, and ever remembering that whether we plant like Paul, or water like Apollos, "it is *God* which giveth the increase."

That increase must, and will, come, since we have His own sure promise that His word shall not return to Him void. It may be His will that others shall reap in the years to come the harvest that our hands have sown, but if we sow in dependence on Him, we shall have our sufficient reward in the rich lessons that sowing affords. Not to every servant is it granted to join in the glad songs of the reapers; but to be a prayerful sower, this the Lord never yet denied to any man.

"He who works in the field of the world
Must work with a faith sublime;
For the seed he sows must lie in the earth,
And wait for God's good time.

"But, nevertheless, the harvest is sure,
Though the sower the sheaves may not see:
For never a word was spoken for Him,
But will ring for eternity!"

But is there no *present* reward for him who "teaches carefully"? Assuredly there is.

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The Lord is no man's debtor, and there is no lesson richer in its encouragement than the untold blessing we shall reap in our *own* souls, as we continue in this happy service.

The servant whose pound, by diligent trading, gained other ten pounds, was made ruler over ten cities; he whose pound gained five, was appointed over five cities. And it was the Apollos who, still "knowing only the baptism of John," "taught carefully the things concerning Jesus," that Aquila and Priscilla "took unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." We have little doubt as to *Who* commissioned them in this loving service and its unostentatious performance!

Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He has ordered it that every service undertaken with a single eye to His glory shall react upon the instrument. And as we speak to the little ones of His love, and as we spread before them the "unsearchable riches of Christ," we shall discover fresh meanings and unexpected beauties in the simplest and the best-known truths. "By teaching we learn"—the saying is as old as Cicero. Again and again we shall realize that there is no surer way of fixing a divine truth in our *own* souls than by communicating it to others; we shall find our own spiritual understanding broadened and deepened in the very

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effort to impart our knowledge of the Saviour to another; and we shall be thankful to Him for that deeper and clearer insight into "the things that are unseen and eternal" which our service has afforded us. We shall, in short, learn the highest and the happiest of all Christian lessons—that "it is more blessed to give than to receive"!

3. **Apollos taught the "things concerning Jesus."** And the Lord would have us do likewise. "Suffer the little children to come unto *ME*," says Jesus, and it is to Him that we must ever seek to lead them. The little ones are passing through our hands at the most impressionable period of their lives. We have it on the eminent scientific authority of Jacotot that at no period of human lifetime is an impression so lasting in its effect as at the age of ten. What, then, may not be the result of our labours amongst the children in those early years if, like Apollos, we teach "the things concerning Jesus"? The soul of the child is like the sensitized film of photography, in its readiness to receive and reproduce the impressions to which it is exposed. And how shall Christ be reproduced in the heart, if it be not by exposure to the influence of His love?

Christ has entrusted to our care young hearts, which sin has not as yet had time to sully

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with its deepest stains; consciences in which "the still small voice" is loud and clear; minds as yet undistracted by the stern issues of life.

Of all the features of the twentieth century there is none sadder than the rapidly increasing apathy of the teeming millions of our adult populations towards "the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ." In the hearts of men and women, the whirl of business and the blandishments of pleasure are alike stifling the pleadings of the Saviour's love. Now, more than ever, "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word."

Not so with the children! They STILL delight to hear "the old, old story of Jesus and His love"; their young hearts are the good ground, the most fertile (because the most fallow) corner of the gospel field, and here it is that the seed will bring forth its hundredfold. Every year that passes, while it throws into bolder relief the indifference of "the masses" for the gospel, is demonstrating more and more clearly that the Sunday-school is to be the strategical key of the position for Christ. "Those that seek Me EARLY *shall* find Me." We have long confined ourselves to mourning over the barrenness of other portions of the gospel field. May the Lord give us to realize, and rise to, the larger possibilities, the vaster opportunities of the work amongst

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the young. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

But what is to be the grand aim of the labourer? It is not to create in the youthful mind an interest in certain instructive Biblical histories, but to "teach the things concerning Jesus." Our province is not the understanding, but the heart; our duty not to load the memory with facts, but to engage the affections with a Person. Our privilege is, in short, to point the children to Jesus. Actuated by any lower aim, we shall become "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." There is a danger of our preaching the children to Christ; we must preach Christ to the children. The salvation of their souls from sin is His work; the servant's duty is to point them to Him, for "how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

The sum total of our labour will be so to present the glories of His love, the perfections of His Person, that they may desire Him and seek Him. In so doing, we need to tell them all that we know and enjoy of Him; all the riches of the love that "passeth knowledge"; all that we have learnt, and are learning, of Him from His word; all that has been made good in us concerning Him by inward per-

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sonal experience and intimacy—all this will be merged in our message. There is no more precious endowment that we can carry with us to the children than the impress of the love of Christ upon our own souls. We should stand before them as the living embodiment of " the truth as it is in Jesus."

" The things concerning Jesus " will form the subject of our testimony. Our theme will be the Life of Lives, from Bethlehem to Calvary, and thence to the glory. We must tell them much of His pathway of obedience to God and devotion to man, and of His

> " Love, that on death's dark vale
> Its sweetest odours spread."

We shall seek His help to show them, not merely their need of Him as sinners, but His claims, by right of purchase, upon their affections and their lives.

Times will come when our words will seem to have fallen on deaf ears. Let us then remember the infinite delight afforded to the Father's heart as we seek to speak worthily of Him in Whom He has found all His delight. The little ones may be few or many ; attentive or careless. On *one* unfailing Listener we may ever count—it is the " Father of lights, in Whom is no variableness or shadow of turning."

We have enumerated the three charac-

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teristics of Apollos, and we believe that the Lord looks for these in each of His servants amongst the young. How then are these things to be fitted into *our* souls, and by what machinery shall we become efficient servants, " vessels meet . . . for the Master's use " ?

The answer is simple—*and it is Christ's !* " *Abide in Me,* and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, *except ye abide in Me.* I am the vine, ye are the branches ; *he that abideth in Me,* and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without Me ye can do nothing " (John xv. 4, 5).

Some hold that great and rare gift is necessary for the labour amongst the children, and that the true Sunday-school teacher, like Halley's comet, will be seen once in seventy-six years. The impression is erroneous ; we have mentioned certain qualifications as necessary for those engaged in this work, but which of them shall we *not* secure as we abide in Him ? Only thus, and not by any desperate efforts of our own, shall we be able to " bring forth much fruit." Causes produce effects ; we are too apt in our over-anxiety to secure *effects* to overlook the *causes* which produce them. Not by having their petals constantly fingered do the lilies of the field attain to their fullest glory. " They toil not, neither do they

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spin"; they simply abide in the sunshine, and it is "God which giveth the increase."

"Abide in Me"; —that is all! Who could but be "fervent in spirit" that abode in Him? Who could teach otherwise than "carefully" that walked close to Him? And of what else save "the things concerning Jesus" would he wish to speak, that lived in personal intimacy with Christ?

"Abide in Me"—it is the solution of every difficulty, the answer to every question that distrust can raise. Do we ever feel the need of sympathy, the lack of support? The support of our fellow-Christians is very real, and infinitely precious; but we do not *always* receive it. And so if we are to avoid discouragement, we must abide in Him. His support is not only indispensable, but changeless and assured! His sympathy with the work is as real and as deep *to-day* as on that memorable day,

> "When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus."

"*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye KNOW that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

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GOD'S APPEAL FOR MAN'S CONFIDENCE.

(READ ISAIAH VII. 1–16.)

THIS chapter is the story of the kindness of God to a wicked king and of His condescending attempts to win that king's confidence. Ever since the fall, and particularly since He sent His Son, God has been seeking to win back the trust which man so foolishly transferred to Satan, his own bitterest enemy, and this illustration of His patient grace should be an affecting consideration to all our readers.

Jerusalem was at this time threatened with an attack from the allied forces of Israel and Syria, the purpose of the invasion being to subdue Judah and put another king on the throne. King Ahaz and his people were filled with alarm, and their hearts, as the prophet finely puts it, were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. But Jerusalem was the holy city, and Ahaz, though a worthless, idolatrous monarch, was the inheritor of God's promises to David; and if Ahaz was not true, God would be true to David and to His own word. So He sent

Isaiah the prophet to win the confidence of king and people, and to assure them that the hostile combination should effect nothing.

He first gives the king

A GRACIOUS COUNSEL:

"Take heed and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted." Such words as these were calculated to allay the excitement in all hearts. At this divine "Peace, be still," the rising storm should have subsided. It surely would never have arisen if there had been quiet confidence in the Lord.

Alas, for frightened faithless hearts among the Lord's people both then and now! Let such appropriate these words of divine assurance, as they rightly may: "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

Next, in order to induce calm reliance upon Himself, the Lord gives Ahaz

A STRONG ASSURANCE:

"Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." God had said to David: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever." Could the might or the malice of Rezin and Pekah defeat God's purpose or falsify His word? Here, then, was solid comfort for these trembling souls. Surely they would be won. Surely king and people alike would banish their

fears, and stand unmoved upon the rock of Jehovah's everlasting decree.

Doubting soul, if such there be who reads these lines, quit your fears. Do you not know that God has settled His word and purposes in Christ? He has given thousands of kind assurances to you, but, however many and however great they are, all are established in Christ, not in you. Their fulfilment is dependent upon Christ, not upon your goodness. Ahaz and the people of Judah might have been absolutely certain that the son of Tabeal would never sit upon the throne. But was it because they had proved so faithful? No, but God had made engagements to David and his house, and His covenant He would not break nor alter the thing that was gone out of His lips (Ps. LXXXIX. 34). Even so God has made engagements to Christ, and those unconditional engagements are set forth in His precious word for the establishment of His people, who share in all the favour in which Christ stands, and in all the blessing and glory which the Father has given to Him.

We cannot tell how this strong assurance affected Ahaz and the people, but the Lord further gives

A SOLEMN WARNING

against the doubt and unbelief from which their fears had sprung: "If ye will not be-

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lieve, surely ye shall not be established," which means that unbelief spells disaster. It always does. Are you a timid soul? It is little to your credit. You need not nurse your doubts and fears as if there were some evidence of grace about them. Nothing pleases God but faith stout and resolute; faith that says "Yes" to His every assurance, and gives a hearty "Amen" to His every word. Will He confirm your unbelieving hopes and plans while you discredit His purposes and promises? Do not expect it. Your hope shall be cut off, and your trust shall be a spider's web.

Oh, how hateful is unbelief, parent of all monstrous ills! It eclipses the sun to total darkness. It dams back the rolling river of grace. It commands the heavens that they rain not. And it rudely smites the very Hand that is outstretched in blessing. It is more marvellous than any of its wicked offspring. Christ was not surprised at wickedness, but He marvelled at the unbelief which refused the cure for wickedness and its attendant evils. Honour God by your confidence. Do not expect Him to bless you in your unbelief.

But the Lord does not stop at counsels, assurances, and warnings. So desirous is He to win the confidence of Ahaz and of Judah that He makes

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AN EXTRAORDINARY OFFER.

He proposes that Ahaz should ask a sign to test His faithfulness! He engages to work a miracle among the stars or in the ocean depths, if thereby He may only gain the trust of His people. "Ask a sign of the Lord thy God," says Isaiah, "ask it, either in the depth or in the height above." How touching is this condescending appeal! And what is the king's reply? "I will not ask," he says, "neither will I tempt the Lord." This is, of course, only pious pretence, a piece of rank hypocrisy. But unbelief often veils its hatred of God under such soft and mealy words, as any worker among souls too sadly knows.

And how did God feel at such a reception of His gracious offer? How did He regard this evil heart of unbelief behind a sanctimonious face? Listen to the prophet's reply: "Hear ye now, O house of David, Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" Perhaps Ahaz, like many to-day, thought God was seated in stately impassiveness and lofty indifference far above the little affairs of men. But God is love, and love is tenderly sensitive, and unrequited love grows weary of persistent slights. How touching, then, was God's complaint! We hear it again in the remonstrance of His Son in later days: "O faithless generation, how

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long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you ? " (Mark IX. 19). Let us think of it—God is wearied by man's distrust, wearied with unavailing attempts to win man's confidence.

But here is a truly marvellous thing. Ahaz will not ask for a sign, so the Lord says, " Then I will give you one." Consider, dear reader, the magnificence of this grace. Has not sufficient demonstration been afforded of the kindness of God ? Has not God stooped low enough to conquer this reluctance ? Then He will condescend still further, and crown His grace by

A CONVINCING SIGN,

which was to speak not to Judah and its king alone, but to all people of all ages, and bring myriads who should see it back to hearty confidence in His goodness and His infinite love. " Therefore," says Isaiah, " the Lord Himself shall give you a sign : Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

And now the sign has been shown, the Son has been given, God has been with us. He has stooped to serve and to save, that thus He might at last win man's confidence in Himself. A Saviour has appeared on earth, and now appears in heaven, Who sets forth the power of divine grace and the fulness of divine love. He has defeated mightier foes

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than ever moved the hearts of Jerusalem with fear. In Him is displayed the kindness of God, and that display is the last and invincible proof of it.

The believer asks no other sign of love, since "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Should trouble come—loss, bereavement, disaster—his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord, and he sings, even if in the darkness: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. VIII. 32). Christ is the sign and the certainty of the bestowal of all good, and nothing but good. Christ is God's final argument of love, and the believer is firmly convinced by it.

What more need be said? If counsels, assurances, warnings, and gracious proposals are not sufficient to win man's confidence in God, who can resist this appeal of God in person? All the love and all the might of God are proved to be on the side of man, and prodigious and portentous are the guilt and folly of those who now refuse to be convinced. Does the Immanuel sign convince our reader? Has it led to confidence in God? Then let him never grieve the heart of God again by any distrust, or weary Him by unbelief which turns from Him to other confidences.

J. N. B.

GOODNESS—A RETROSPECT.

PSALMS CV., CVI., CVII.

THESE three Psalms review Israel's journey from three different standpoints. In Psalm CV. the people are seen in the vision of the Almighty. Neither iniquity nor perversity is laid to their charge. Psalm CVI. recounts the *same* journey, but their every step is marked by sin. To read the one Psalm we should infer there was "no bad in them," to read the other there was "no good in them." One is the charming account of sovereign grace, the other the sad story of man's answer to it. One reminds us that God doth not behold iniquity in His people, the other, that what a man sows, *that* shall he also reap.

In Psalm CVII. Israel's responsible history is closed, their dangers over, their sorrows passed, their wilderness journey ended. This Psalm commences the fifth and last book, and shows us a happy, redeemed company, who *have* been *guided,* and are *now gathered* in a land from which Jehovah never withdraws His eyes. From a haven where no storms ever come they recall their stormy journey and celebrate the goodness of God. They recall the darkness and shadow of death, the bands that had bound them, the gates of brass and bars

of iron which had imprisoned them, the times they had been driven to their "wits' end." But all is over now, their troubles ended. No tears dim the eye, no racking pain wears the body. The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne leads them to living fountains; they lie down in green pastures. They sing the song of *enjoyed, conscious redemption.* They are the *redeemed* of the Lord. Sheltered under the bloodstained lintel and feeding on the "Lamb roast with fire," thus their journey started. Pharaoh and his hosts at the bottom of the Red Sea, redemption's song is sung. "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast *redeemed,* Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation."

Now at home in their land faith changes to sight, they remember that *redeeming love* is the key to all their present blessing. It was the pitying love of a Saviour God Who had visited them in their low estate, and had ransomed them from the enemy, and planted them in their inheritance. The day of glory having dawned, "guided and gathered," thanksgiving and praise occupy them. The redeemed celebrate the *goodness* of God. This "goodness" became their hope when they had forfeited everything in the day of the golden calf. In answer to the intercession of Moses God said, "I will make all *My good-*

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ness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew *mercy on whom I will shew mercy*" (Ex. XXXIII. 19).

Out of full hearts they invite the congregation of the people and the "assembly of the elders" to unite in exalting the Lord for His "goodness" and wonderful works to the children of men.

As we contemplate this gathered assembly, this redeemed company, with one heart and voice praising the Lord as they review the past, the last verse of this Psalm reminds us that these things are written for our learning: "Whoso is *wise,* and will *observe these things,* even they shall understand the *lovingkindness* [or goodness] of the Lord."

We also are on a stormy journey. Sickness and suffering, death and darkness on every hand. The soul is melted because of trouble, down in the depths, often at wits' end through sorrows in the family, or adverse circumstances, or the state of the Church. But this precious Psalm is written for our comfort. We are to be among the "wise" to observe how God is ever *for* His people, how His goodness triumphs over all!

"When trouble, like a gloomy cloud,
Has gathered thick, and thundered loud;
He with His Church has always stood;
His *lovingkindness*, oh *how good!*"

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How variously we look at our journey now! We anticipate its difficulties, experience its sorrows, and are in heaviness through manifold temptations. All this often tends to cloud the vision of our souls. At such times let us remember that God is the God of all comfort. He is good and doeth good. We may therefore be encouraged to cry unto the Lord in "our trouble," for Israel's God is ours; and we may as surely count on His intervention for us as for them. He allowed them to go to the lowest ebb. They drew near the "gates of death," and were almost overwhelmed "in the depths." "Gates of brass" shut them in, bars of iron "kept them captive," but when human efforts and hopes failed, then God's goodness shone out and He made a way of escape for them, just as He will for us.

Hear what Paul says when at "death's" door: "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, in so much that we despaired even of life—*but—God delivered us from so great a death,* and doth deliver; in Whom we trust He will yet deliver." He also was "in the depths," troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears, *nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.* The "gates of brass" and "bars of iron" encompassed him. "Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium; at Lystra *what persecutions I endured,* but out

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of them all the *Lord delivered me.*" Nay, more, that Master Whom he served, that Saviour Who had *redeemed* him, remained faithful, stood by him, and strengthened him. Thus encouraged, Paul says, "The Lord *shall* deliver me from every evil work, and will *preserve me* unto His heavenly kingdom: to Whom be glory for ever and ever!" Thus his soul breaks forth in praise.

Here we see a man, just like ourselves, sensitive to the trials of the way, but so sustained by the *goodness* of God that in spirit he antedates the day when wilderness journeyings will be over, and from a Roman dungeon cries, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." And Paul's God is ours.

How far the way will be remembered when we get to our city of habitation we know not, but each recollection will only be a fresh incentive to celebrate the kindness and love of God our Saviour, Who brought us safely to our desired haven. We shall then see that goodness did follow us all the days of our life, and that the most untoward events and the darkest dispensations of divine providence had goodness behind them.

How often on looking back we see that a poignant sorrow, a bitter trial, has been a real blessing in disguise, a fresh occasion for the display of God's "lovingkindness." If that is so now, how much more in the light of

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that day! We shall then rejoice in the goodness which triumphed over everything. This will be the one result of the judgment-seat of Christ. It precedes the day of the kingdom, and will show us how fully God has been *for us*, and how needful every trial and sorrow was, and behind all the storm clouds were His lovingkindnesses.

Nor will our earthly history close the story of goodness. The assembly will be gathered together, the entire company of the redeemed will unitedly in that day of glory celebrate the goodness of the Lord and His wonderful works to the children of men. Praise shall fill every heart and break forth from every lip. Among the varied families who will then swell the loud song, one is singled out as especially the object of "lovingkindness." Ephesians II. 7 tells us that the *exceeding* riches of God's grace will be displayed in His *kindness* toward *us* through Christ Jesus. The Church, above all others, is the vessel of glory in which the goodness of God will be displayed, the excellencies of our God, Who is good and *doeth* good.

"How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful unchangeable Friend:
Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end!"

H. N.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. M. A.—There is no mention of wine in connection with the Passover in the Pentateuch, but the *Mishna*—a collection or digest of Jewish traditions and explanations of Scripture—enjoins that there should never be less than four cups of it provided at the paschal meal even of the poorest Israelite. This may account for the mention of the cup in Luke XXII. 17.

S. B.—Luke XVI. 19–31.—We are inclined to regard the story of the rich man and Lazarus as one of our Lord's *parables*. True, it is not called a parable, neither is the story of the prodigal in chapter XV., so nothing can be based on that. In pictorial language the Lord sets before our eyes some of the tremendous realities of that world which lies beyond the range of mortal sight. Death overtakes the rich man and the beggar at his gate; the one is carried by the angels to the bosom of Abraham—the highest point of felicity to a Jew—the other lifts up his eyes in the place of torment, only to learn that there is no bridge to span the great gulf that separates the lost from the redeemed. It is a tragic story—profoundly impressive. Thank God, the soul that trusts in Christ need never fear the place of torment. His precious blood cleanses from every sin, and glory with Christ above is his sure and endless portion. And if any of us have not yet fled to that gracious Saviour this parable should quicken our steps, lest death summon us away and our doom be for ever sealed.

W. E. W.—Acts VII. 56; Hebrews X. 12.—We see no contradiction between these two passages,

the one representing the Lord Jesus as *standing*, to receive, so to speak, the spirit of the martyr Stephen, and the other as *sat down* at the right hand of God. In the latter the contrast is between the priest, who *stood* daily at his sacrificial work, and the Saviour, Whose atoning work being finished for ever *sat down*. The great thing is to see the mind of the Spirit in each passage. And let us have a wise understanding of the words. Do not interpret "for ever sat down" too literally. Were I to ask, Who sits on the throne of England to-day? your answer would be, H.M. King Edward VII. But do either of us mean that the King is sitting all day long on a piece of furniture called a throne? Bald literality won't do. But it is a blessed reality that Christ is seated at the right hand of God. He has put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, and His sitting down tells us that all is finished and there remains nothing more to be done. Precious, peace-giving fact!

S. S. H.—The subject about which you write is one on which no rigid rule can be laid down. Circumstances alter cases. Broadly speaking, our intercourse with other Christians should always be marked by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, even if they do not walk with us. Sometimes we may have to maintain a measure of reserve if there has been anything in the conduct of the other that calls for it. Then, again, some Christians show a gracious spirit and some a legal one. But if any fail in brotherly love, do not resent it. Let Christ shine out of you even if you are treated with less cordiality than you like.

THE LAST MONTH OF THE YEAR 588 B.C.

DECADE after decade had passed since Jehoiachin, a mere lad of eighteen, ascended the throne of his fathers. Brought up in the ways of wickedness, he followed only too closely in the steps of his predecessor, who had "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood." This, we are told, "the Lord would not pardon," and in three short months Jehoiachin's reign was over, and he was a prisoner of war. Thrown into a dungeon at Babylon, he was left for thirty-seven years to languish in solitude and suffering.

But his captor, the great Nebuchadnezzar, was now no more, and his son, Evil-merodach, reigned in his stead. One of the first acts of the new monarch was to release the wretched captive King of Judah.

In the twelfth month, and the twenty-fifth day thereof, he "lifted up the head of Jehoiachin," and "brought him forth out of prison." Not content with this, he treated him with the greatest consideration and kindness. In this way he becomes a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the beneficent treatment accorded to the wicked and miserable Jehoiachin aptly sets forth the manner in which *we* have been blessed.

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The narrative is to be found in the last chapter of Jeremiah, verses 31 to 34:

"And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, and spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, and changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life."

Notice five things that are stated. First, there was *the release from prison.* We too were prisoners, in dire and terrible bondage. Taking occasion of our sin and hardness of heart, Satan had established his mastery over us. Oh, those years of captivity! Maybe we struggled to get free, sighing over our sad state. But it was all in vain. We were fettered and enslaved.

A day came, however, when the great Deliverer of those in bondage laid His hand upon us. He struck our shackles off, and we were free. Shall we ever forget that day? Out of darkness and captivity we were

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brought; our bondage was ended, and we breathed the sweet atmosphere of liberty and peace.

But there was more to come. Evil-merodach not only set his prisoner free, but *spake kindly unto him,* or, as the margin reads, "spake good things with him." And has not our Saviour spoken good things with us, things that have made our hearts burn within us? He has not only breathed words of forgiveness in our ears, but He has assured us of His *love.* He has given us a place in His bosom. "As the Father hath loved Me, *so have I loved you*" (John XVI. 9). What could surpass this in preciousness? He *loves* us. It is not only that we are objects of His gracious compassion, and that He has intervened in mercy on our behalf. His *heart* is towards us; we are dear to Him, precious in His sight. And His love is an enduring one. No change in us can turn it aside. Whom He loves, He loves to the end. How truly we can say, He has spoken good things with us!

Further, Jehoiachin's prison garments were changed. Suitable apparel was given him, that he might appear in the presence of his benefactor in a befitting way. So it has been with us. Our filthy garments have been taken from us, and we stand arrayed in a robe of spotless righteousness. Christ, the righteousness of God, is Himself our clothing. Through

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His work we are justified from all things, and *in Him* we stand before God in all *His* acceptability. Who can challenge our fitness to be in the presence of God, when it is *in Christ* we are brought nigh? Who can find a flaw in our robe, when Christ Himself is that robe?

But the story is not told yet. There were other kings besides Jehoiachin that had been carried captives to Babylon. These, too, were the recipients of Evil-merodach's beneficence. But a *special* place was given to Jehoiachin. *His throne was set above the throne of the kings that were with him.*

Now, it is not sufficiently understood that others, besides *Christians*, benefit by the death of Christ and are eternally blessed by God. The Old Testament saints, and those who will be saved after the Church's translation to heaven, are the recipients of the grace and kindness of God. But just as Jehoiachin was given a place of honour beyond that of others, so God has provided for *us* (Christians) a better portion than that which others enjoy (Heb. xi. 40). The Church, formed of all the saints between Pentecost and the Rapture, is set in a *special* place of relationship. She is the body and bride of Christ, and consists of a company who are the *sons* of God. No others share the peculiar place which the counsels of God have assigned to the Church. She is in the closest possible way associated with Christ

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Himself in His exaltation ; and to her belongs a wonderful place of close and holy intimacy with the Father and the Son.

Yet one thing further. Jehoiachin had "continual diet" given him, "every day a portion," as long as he lived. A great poet has said :—

> "'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
> *But to support him after.*"

And this, too, is done for us. Blessed with rich and spiritual blessings, we are not left resourceless while on earth. We have ample food provided for our souls, and the Lord Jesus Himself ministers it to us. He feeds us and cares for us. If we sin, there is His advocacy to bring about our restoration. In our infirmities we have His priestly intercession to depend upon, and timely succour is ministered from the throne of grace. We have not only the initial act of His love in giving Himself for our sakes, but we have in Him a *living* Saviour.

Without Him how could we go on for a single day ? With constantly recurring need, we should soon faint and fail. But with the constant supplies of heavenly food with which He nourishes our souls, we are enabled to pursue our way with renewed strength.

Truly this is a story of "grace upon grace," and at the close of another year we do well to meditate thereon. H. P. B.

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THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION.

SOME one said to a friend of ours the other day : " There can be no such thing as the assurance of salvation in this world, for two reasons. *First*, we are all so liable to sin that no one can be perfectly sure he is good enough to say he is saved. *Second*, that such knowledge would do away with the necessity of the Day of Judgment, when God will settle who are worthy and who are not." Our answer to these two objections is this.

First. If the assurance of salvation depended on our goodness, or our holiness of life, then he would be a bold man who dared to say that he was saved. And as to our liability to sin, there is no one on earth who is not liable to it. So if we have to attain to a state of sinlessness before we can be assured of our salvation, we never shall be sure of it, for a sinless state belongs only to heaven.

Such ideas betray a want of understanding. What am I by nature and by practice ? A sinner, *dead* in trespasses and sins (Eph. II. 1), dead to God, dead to everything divine, as the deaf ear is dead to sound and the dumb tongue

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is dead to speech, and the blind eye is dead to sight. Viewed as *alive* in sins, my case is fully described in Romans III. 9–19. Guilty before God am I, my mouth stopped, even as one against whom grave charges have been established beyond denial or disproof.

How can I be saved out of such a condition as that? How can I be saved from the just consequences of my misdeeds? By holiness of life? Certainly not. Will the judge pardon the prisoner because he promises never more to break the law of the land? There is no hope for me in that direction. But the Gospel tells of One Who laid down His life upon the cross of shame to make salvation possible for me. Ungodly I am; but He died for the ungodly. Sinner I am; but He died for sinners (Rom. v. 6, 8). And it was God Himself Who provided such a Saviour. "Deliver him from going down to the pit: *I have found a ransom*" (Job XXXIII. 24).

All that His sufferings and death were to God when He paid the ransom for our deliverance no creature will ever know or can ever tell. But of this we are sure, that in virtue of what He suffered on the cross the forgiveness of sins is now preached to men in the risen Saviour's name (Luke XXIV. 46, 47). Do I believe the Gospel? Do I believe in Him of Whom the Gospel speaks—a Saviour in glory? Then, beyond doubt, my sins are for-

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given—every one of them. Who can read Acts x. 43; xiii. 39; 1 John ii. 12, and deny it? And am I not to know it? Why, those very scriptures are written to give me the actual knowledge that some folks think no one can ever have because he is not good enough to have it!

If any creature, however good he thinks himself to be, rests his hope of salvation on anything he is or has ever done, he is building on the shifting sand. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus iii. 5). So runs the sacred record. And no one has ever been saved on any other ground.

Second. Nor is it reserved to the day of judgment to declare who they are who will be in glory with Christ. Is it the will of God that we should be in a state of uncertainty as to this all our life, and go down to the grave without any sure and certain hope? Far from it. Where is the penitent robber who turned to the Lord in his dying hour? Where is the apostle Paul? Where are all those who have died in the faith of Christ? Are they not now with Christ? Assuredly they are. Theirs is the blessedness of being absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8). That is their present gain. And when the resurrection day dawns and they stand in bodies of glory before the judgment-seat of

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Christ, do they stand there to hear it decided whether they are to live and reign with Christ or be cast into outer darkness? Nothing of the kind. That was settled long, long ago. For whom God calls, them He also justifies, and whom He justifies, them He also glorifies (Rom. VIII. 30). The manifestation of the saints before the judgment-seat is not to determine whether they are to be saved or not. But their life on earth will then pass under review. They will see things clearly then that are dark and mysterious now. Many a wrong thought will be corrected. Deeds done in the body will be appraised at their true value, and every little bit of service, forgotten or remembered, will have its suited recompense. There will be the Pergamos reward, too, given to those who shall receive it—the hidden manna, and the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no one will know saving he that gets it (Rev. II. 17). All this is connected with the judgment-seat of Christ—a very different thing from undergoing a trial which shall decide who are to be eternally with Christ and who not.

What a poor estimate of Christianity must they have who think that it does not even give the knowledge of a present salvation. *It gives infinitely more.* It gives the knowledge of God as revealed in His beloved Son. To know God as made known in Christ is the very highest

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kind of happiness. There is no higher, and this, through grace, is ours though it be but in feeble measure. And He Whom we thus know deigns to call Himself our Father, for His grace has set us in the children's place, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. VIII. 17). His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us (Rom. V. 5), and we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. II. 10). Forgiven, brought nigh to Him in love, He Himself becomes the present portion of our hearts. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. V. 11).

The knowledge of salvation is but the earlier letters of the Christian alphabet—the first elements of the Christian faith—milk for babes. And yet some would have us believe that even this is beyond us! May our readers see that it is but the beginning—the door, so to speak, by which we pass on to the knowledge of God Himself and of His "deep things"—things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. II. 9).

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SOME HELPFUL DISTINCTIONS.

IN any difficulty as to the meaning of things in the Bible your best plan is to lay your finger on the passage, go down on your knees, and pray God to make it clear to you. He may do this either directly by the Holy Spirit, or by means of others. A spoken or written explanation may throw light on the subject. It is thus God graciously permits us to be helpers one of another.

A Christian whom I know is puzzled as to the meaning of the terms: "*new man*"—"*perfect man*"—"*first man*"—"*old man*"—and "*a man in Christ.*" As the difficulty of one is often the difficulty of others, I would seek, in dependence on God, to look very briefly at the meaning of these terms.

"*One new man*" (Eph. II. 15). This term is descriptive of the entire body of believers gathered out from among Jews and Gentiles. God has made of twain "one new man." The Church, or corporate body of Christians, is a company formed by divine power, and every member is included in the term "*one new man.*" A believer from the once highly favoured Jewish nation has no better place,

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or fuller blessing, than one from the Gentiles. Each is in Christ Jesus, and in Him and by His precious blood both are brought nigh to God. In Christ's death all national and religious distinctions were abolished ; the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down. Both are reconciled to God, *in one body*, by the Cross. Out of both the *one new man* is formed.

There is another way in which the " new man " is spoken of. In Ephesians IV. 24 we learn that, individually, we are an absolutely new creation ; as truly created as Adam, but in another order of being. Adam was created in innocence to enjoy earthly blessings. The " new man " is created in righteousness and holiness of truth, to enjoy heavenly blessings. We are exhorted to " put on " the new man, and to be marked by righteousness, holiness, and other virtues.

" *A perfect man* " is *not* a Christian who has attained to a state of sinless perfection. No such state can be reached in this world. " If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." On the other hand, both the apostles Paul and James speak of a perfect man ; and from Ephesians IV. 13 we learn that a perfect man is one who has apprehended the glories of the person of the Son of God. Built up on the great foundation truths of Christianity, rooted and grounded in the faith, he is not moved by

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the conflicting theories, false doctrines, and the glamour of every new theology.

Is not the great need of the day a deeper, fuller acquaintance with the Son of God, and a more intimate knowledge of the great elements of the faith? To this end gifts are given, such as evangelists, pastors, teachers. If any of these depart from the instructions of the great Head of the Church, each individual saint must seek for himself a deepening acquaintance with the truth and with the Son of God. Thus only can he arrive at the state of a perfect man.

The apostle James speaks of a perfect man in another way. He is one who is able to bridle his tongue (James III. 3): *This is a perfection greatly to be desired.* It is a virtue which we all need to cultivate. What sorrows we should save ourselves, as well as others, if we controlled this unruly member!

How excellent the combination when the perfect man of Ephesians IV. and that of James III. are found in a believer! Shall we not seek help from God that both may be true of us?

Let us now consider the meaning of the "*first man*" and the "*old man.*"

The term "first man" is used exclusively of Adam, in contrast to Christ, Who is the second Man, and *last* Adam. The expression is often heard "the first man is gone." The one who coined the expression meant what

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was both right and true ; but many repeat it from a love of imitation. It is more scriptural, however, to say that our *old man* has been crucified with Christ. From under God's eye and in the reckoning of faith he is gone. If we look at the chapters where the terms are used we shall see that they are not interchangeable. For example, we could not substitute " first man " for " old man " in Romans VI. 6.

Adam sinned, the poison of sin permeated his whole moral being : this has been transmitted to all of us. It is this corrupt thing which is called the " *old man.*" It is this which was crucified with Christ (Rom. VI. 6). We look back at the cross, and see how condemnation is written upon everything connected with this evil being. We see him removed in death under God's judgment. We are to reckon our whole state and condition as sinners dealt judicially with on the cross. It is true the old evil nature is still in us, but we are to lay hold of the fact that the " old man " is gone for faith in Christ's death. Henceforth we are not to be known as slaves of sin, but are to put on the beautiful moral traits of the new man. Some of these are found in Colossians III. 10–17. Please read about them.

Faith is to reckon all that is true of Christ in His death as true of us. Risen with Him, we are to look back and see that God's way of

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deliverance is that we should reckon as God reckons and think as He thinks. It is not that the old man is *actually* dead. In practice we have to put him "off" daily, and put on the new man. Doing this, we carry out practically what God has already done judicially on the cross, where "our old man" was judged and set aside.

"*A man in Christ.*" This describes the new state and condition into which the Christian is brought in Christ risen. Every blessing belongs to Christ. In Christ each believer is brought into a new sphere; he is linked up with a new Head; his life, joys, blessings are where Christ is. Take your Bible, note the places where the term "in Christ" occurs, seek to grasp the wealth of blessings Christ possesses. Each epistle has some new unfolding of what is treasured up in Christ. All these blessings you can appropriate as yours, since all believers are "in Christ."

It is only possible thus briefly to notice the differences in each expression, but we hope the meaning of the terms will be clearer to you if you remember that—

The first man is Adam personally.

The second man is Christ personally.

The new man is descriptive of the saints corporately and individually in new creation.

The old man is our corrupt fallen nature.

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A perfect man is one who can rule his tongue, and is rooted and grounded in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

A man in Christ describes the new state and circle of blessing into which we are introduced in Christ risen from the dead. H. N.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

IN the day in which we live Christians are largely seeking just what the world seeks—wealth, power, and influence. These three things are just what the Lord had not. And can I be said to be a stranger where I have power and influence? Certainly not; and if the Lord turns the current against those who have, then they must pass through the furnace. The Church must give up a heavenly Christ and a crucified Christ if it takes the world up in any sense as its portion. The Church of God cannot associate the world and religion without losing its true character. The object of Judaism was to associate religion with this world, with the earth. Thus God proved whether man could be attracted to Himself through earthly things being associated with Him. To this end God gave them a magnificent temple, gorgeous dresses, splendid cere-

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monies, music, and singing, that He might mingle the tastes and feelings of nature with Himself. But all this, mark, needed a priesthood between them and God; for it was not the presence of God, as light, in heaven, and peaceful communion with Himself. These earthly things do but keep the soul at a distance from God. For wherever the world is connected with religion, priesthood must come in, because the moment you get man as he is he cannot stand before God; he cannot stand in the light, and therefore needs a priest. But we are now brought nigh; we can stand in the light as God is in the light. We are priests; and as to our standing in God's presence, there is no need of a priesthood between God and us. Christ suffered without the gate; and the moment the blood of Christ, wherewith we are sanctified, is taken into the holy place, into the presence of God, our association is with heavenly places, and no longer with an earthly city, for there is no holy city now. We are taken *outside* the world altogether, and *inside* the veil with Him. J. N. D.

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.

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AWAKE! ARISE!

IT is remarkable that in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which gives us the richest unfolding of divine truth, we should find such an exhortation as this : " WAKE UP, thou that sleepest, and ARISE UP from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee " (Eph. v. 14, R.V.).

Never was the exhortation more needed than to-day. Every intelligent student of God's Word will acknowledge that the present sorrowful condition of the professing Church is due to its departure from the truth. Things have moved in the downward direction with amazing rapidity the last few years. It is high time a loud and clear trumpet blast was sounded in the hearing of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

What I would plead for is that every child of God should be free from all denominational bias in order to truly ascertain the mind of God as revealed in His Word. The inquiry must be prosecuted with an unprejudiced mind if the will of the Lord is to be known. And surely the knowing and doing of His will is putting " first things first."

Now, there is no truth in the New Testament

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more calculated to bring about purity of heart and life than that of the Lord's second coming. The reason of this is simple. If I am living in the constant expectancy of His return, I shall seek grace to be found in all godly watchfulness and apart from everything contrary to His Word and unworthy of His name. We fear that many of the Lord's dear people have never seen that they are left on earth expressly to care for the interests of Christ. How gladly would angels hasten to the earth to do His will and bidding among the sons of men ! But no, His messengers and servants must be those who have been redeemed to Himself by the precious blood of Christ.

Many of the Lord's people are entirely ignorant of dispensational teaching, without which it is impossible to understand many parts of Scripture. Only a little knowledge of the New Testament will show that the present epoch is one of marked *grace*, in contrast to *law*. It is the dispensation of the Spirit—the time of the gathering out of the Church or Bride of Christ—therefore the most blessed of all the dispensations.

The Church of the living God is essentially a *heavenly* company, saved for heaven and not for earth (Heb. III. 1). The reason why many writers on prophecy have misinterpreted the Scriptures in relation to the Church is by their not seeing that prophecy has reference solely

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to the earth, and the ways of God with men under the sun. It does not treat of the portion and destiny of the Church above the sun. Losing sight of the heavenly character and calling of the Church has also led to lamentable worldliness.

Perplexity and distress of mind mark thousands of the saints of God to-day, because of the frightful and Christ-dishonouring errors that, alas ! have captivated so many.

The Christian that reads his Bible carefully is not greatly alarmed at all this. Paul, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, warns of what would be the unmistakable character of the last days (2 Tim. III. 1–8). The old doctrine of the world being converted through the preaching of the Gospel, should be for ever renounced as being opposed to Scripture. On the contrary, every past epoch of God's dealings has ended in judgment ; so will the present one, as well as others still to come. If any are in doubt as to the present, let them read 2 Thessalonians II. 3–12.

My object in writing is to affectionately appeal to the children of God everywhere to turn to the Lord with purpose of heart, and, like the noble Bereans, to search His Word diligently. Let them ask for light and understanding, and resolve by His grace not to be allied with anything inconsistent with His Word. The children of God are called to be

the living exponents of their absent but coming Lord. Paul said : " *For me to live is Christ* " (Phil. I. 21), as if it were a continuation of the very life of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

Having said this much, I would with all earnestness implore every believer to contend earnestly for *the faith* which was *once* delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

It would seem that all the artillery of the wicked one is ranged against the rock-foundation truths of Christianity—the " Deity of Christ " and the " Word of God "—especially the former. If Christ is not verily the eternal Son of the living God, then there is no salvation for the millions who have trusted in Him, for He would require a Saviour for Himself. Listen to Peter in Acts IV. 12 : " Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is not infidelity outside the Church that we fear, but the devastating infidelity inside the Church. Then, again, Spiritualism, Christadelphianism, and Higher Criticism have carried away numbers by their specious falsehoods.

My soul was awed the other day in reading of an American bishop who in addressing the members of a Y.M.C.A. declared that the Bible was not the Word of God, and that teaching to the contrary was one of the most

prolific sources of unbelief. Another well-known writer and editor in this country has confessed his belief (held in secret for a long time) that human destiny is not fixed at death. Let Luke XVI. refute it. I could add more, but what has been said I trust may suffice to arouse many and to lead them with greater resoluteness of heart to cleave to the Lord and His changeless and ever-abiding Word.

E. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. A. M.—Isaiah LIII. 6.—If we follow the line of strict interpretation the language of this verse is that of believing Israel when the vail which is upon their heart shall be taken away (2 Cor. III. 15). But we believers can adopt the words and make them our very own even now, Frankly, and with penitence, do we confess that like sheep we have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and with adoring hearts we rest in the amazing fact that God hath laid on our Lord Jesus the iniquity of us all. *It is as believers that we thus speak.* For we could not go to unsaved men and tell them that Christ bore all their sins and put them away for ever. Were this true they never could be judged for them, even though they never believed the Gospel at all. But we are fully entitled to say to any sinner, however great, that the death of Christ has opened up the way for his return. Such is the worth of His sacrifice, such its preciousness to God, that if the

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most hardened sinner turns to Him he will be welcomed, pardoned, blessed. It is indeed a most precious fact that the death of Jesus has made it possible for the greatest sinner to be saved without God's justice being compromised in the least degree.

X. X.—Acts VIII.—No, the believers in Samaria did not receive the Holy Spirit when they believed. Assuredly, they did not receive the Gospel apart from the gracious work of the Spirit, but the reception of the Holy Spirit is quite another thing from His work on the souls of men by the preaching of the Word. Generally speaking, the gift of the Holy Spirit follows faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Acts X. 44 is a case in point, and Galatians III. 2 fully confirms it. But the usual order was not followed in Samaria. They believed, and yet did not receive the gift of the Spirit, nor was the Spirit given unto them apart from the laying on of hands by the apostles Peter and John. But there were special reasons for this, and we cannot but recognize the wisdom of God in so ordering it. Let me try to explain. Remember then the great feud that raged between the Jews and Samaritans. They had no dealings with each other, and one of the most contemptuous terms that could be flung at a Jew was to call him "a Samaritan." There was pride and hardness on both sides, and both had a lesson to learn. So far as Christians at Jerusalem were concerned God would have them see and own that His saving grace had extended even to the hated Samaritans. Therefore the apostles Peter and

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John should go down to Samaria and witness with their own eyes what God had wrought—they should lay their hands on their Samaritan brethren and thus identify themselves with them, and in their turn the Samaritans should understand they could not dispense with their Jewish brethren. They should not receive the Spirit apart from the imposition of their hands. How perfect is God's wisdom! These Christians were now members of one body and thus members one of another. All the alienation belonging to their former state was thus to go—they were mutually dependent, and this lesson God would teach them both.

R. P.—Numbers xxxv.—The manslayer who remains in the city of refuge till the death of the high priest, and then is allowed to return to his home and possessions, is a figure of Israel—as the apostle Peter speaks of them in Acts iii. 17—who in their ignorance put Christ to death. *In this sense*, God judges them to be *innocent*, though in another sense *guilty*. It will not be until the priesthood of Christ assumes another form, and its present character ends, that Israel, now in the safe-keeping of God, will return to their inheritance and to the land of their fathers.

The Band.—We shall hope to answer your interesting questions on sanctification, and the trumpets of 1 Cor. xv., 1 Thess iv., and Rev. xi., in our January issue, if God permit.

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