

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.



PEACE BY JESUS CHRIST.

“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ.”—ACTS x. 36.

ONE of the most momentous questions which can be put to a human being is this, “*Have you peace with God?*” It is a question of the deepest solemnity, and it claims a direct and an immediate answer from every heart. We venture to put it to the reader at the beginning of this new year.

There is no reason why any truly anxious soul should continue for one hour without settled peace with God. Christ has made peace through the blood of His Cross (Col. i. 20). God is preaching peace by Jesus Christ. Here we have the solid foundation on which the believer’s peace rests.

The reason why so many are in a state of miserable uncertainty is because they do not rest on God’s foundation. They are occupied with themselves, instead of building exclusively on Christ. They are looking to experience, and not to a risen Saviour. Frames, feelings, and attainments engage them, instead of Christ. They are vainly hoping to find some sort of improvement in themselves, and not finding it to their satisfaction—for what

honest soul ever does?—they are filled with gloomy doubts and fears, and kept in a condition of spiritual darkness and bondage. To all such we would earnestly say, that neither in our inward frames and experiences, nor in our outward religious exercises, have we the true ground of peace in the divine presence. God did not send to the children of Israel, nor does He now send to us Gentiles, preaching peace by spiritual experiences or by religious exercises, but simply by Jesus Christ.

It may be that some one whose eye scans these lines feels really anxious about this grand question, and would give worlds, if he possessed them, for a full, clear, and satisfactory answer. Such a one may feel disposed to ask, "What is the ground of this peace, and how may I have it for myself?" Two deeply important questions, most surely. Let us seek to answer them.

And first, as to the real ground of the soul's peace. If the reader will turn to the last verse of Romans iv. he will find it set forth in two brief but weighty sentences. In this passage the inspired apostle, in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, declares that "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

Here we have the solid and imperishable foundation of the sinner's peace—the divine ground on which God can preach peace.

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Jesus Christ was delivered for our offences. Let this be carefully noted. Let us mark particularly who was delivered ; who delivered Him ; and for what He was delivered. All these are essential to our enjoyment of peace.

Who then was delivered ? The Holy One, the Lamb, the Christ, the Son of God, that blessed One who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, the object of the Father's supreme delight from everlasting, the Eternal Son. The One who was born in Bethlehem, baptized in Jordan, tempted in the wilderness, transfigured on the Mount, bowed in the garden, nailed to a tree, buried in the grave, raised from the dead, and who is now seated on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

This is He who was "delivered." He stood charged with our offences. He represented us on the Cross. He stood in our stead, and received from the hand of Eternal Justice all that we deserved. There was a regular transfer of all our guilt, all our offences to Him who knew no sin, who had no more to do with sin than we had to do with righteousness. He died in our stead.

But who delivered Him ? This is a cardinal question. Who delivered Jesus up to the death of the cross ? Isaiah LIII. and 2 Corinthians v. furnish the answer : "It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him." "Jehovah laid on

Him the iniquity of us all." Such is the language of the inspired prophet. And now hear the apostle: "God hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us." God has done it. It will not do to say that "*we* lay our sins on Jesus." We want much more than this. If it were merely a question of our laying our sins on Jesus, we could never have peace with God, seeing that we do not know the extent of our sin, the depth of our guilt, as God knows it. In order to have peace with God, I must know that He is satisfied. God was the offended party, the aggrieved One, and He must be satisfied. Well, blessed be His name, He is satisfied, for He Himself has found the ransom. He has laid our sins, according to His estimate of them, on the head of the divine Sin-bearer. All that was needful, not only to meet our condition, but to satisfy His claims, vindicate His majesty, and glorify His name, He Himself has provided in the atoning death of His own Son. Hence He can preach peace to us—peace by Jesus Christ, who took our place in death and judgment, that we might take His place in life, righteousness, and everlasting glory.

And, now, let us ask—though we have in measure anticipated the question—for what was the precious Saviour delivered? "For our offences." For how many? For all, most surely. When Jesus hung on the Cross, all the

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believer's offences were laid upon Him. Yes, *all*; for though they were future, so far as He is concerned, when Christ bore them on the Cross, yet is there *no* such distinction as past, present, or future with Him who spans eternity as a moment. All our sins were laid on Jesus; He answered for them and put them away for ever, so that they are gone out of God's sight, and instead of our sins, there is nothing before God save the Christ who bore them and blotted them out for ever, and was raised for our justification. Who raised Him? Even the same that delivered Him. And why did He raise Him? Because all had been settled for which He had been delivered. Christ glorified God in the putting away of our sins; and God glorified Christ, by raising Him from the dead and crowning Him with glory and honour. Most marvellous, most precious truth! Christ forsaken on the Cross, because our sins were laid on Him. Christ crowned on the throne, because our sins are put away. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Such is the true, the solid, the everlasting ground of a sinner's peace in the presence of God.

And now one word as to how the sinner can have this peace for himself. The answer is as simple as God can make it. What is it? Has the sinner to do aught? Has he to be anything but what he is—a poor, lost, worthless, guilty

creature? No. He has simply to believe God's word—to receive into his *heart*, not merely into his *head*, the blessed message which God sends to him—to rest in Christ—to be satisfied with that which satisfies God. God is satisfied with Christ, without anything else whatever. Is the reader satisfied? or is he waiting for something more—something of his own—his vows and resolutions—his frames, feelings, and experiences? If so, he cannot have peace. *To be satisfied with Christ is to have peace with God.*

“Not what I am, O Lord, but what Thou art!
 That, that alone can be my soul's true rest;
 Thy love, not mine, bids fear and doubt depart,
 And stills the tempest of my tossing breast.”

T. N. O.

BE WHAT YOU ARE.

ORIGINALITY, it has been truly said, should mark every servant of God. There is work for every one, and every one has his work.

Direction in service must be sought from our Master in heaven. We must be no mere copyists of our fellow-servants. Borrowed phrases, words, tones are to be avoided, or we shall be mere sounding brass. Servants are

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needed who go forth from the *sanctuary* to serve in spiritual power. They need not be great orators. Some of the poorest speakers have accomplished amazing results. Excellence of speech is not always in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Let us value the oral and written ministry of others, but let it become part and parcel of our spiritual being. It will then take our individual mould, and our ministry will not be mere parrot-like repetition of sentences culled from others, but will glow with living power.

Be simple, be sincere, copy no one, wait on God, and above all be yourself, and do not crave to possess what God has been pleased to withhold. Serve the Lord with a single eye, and you shall earn His "Well done" in a coming day. The man who used the five talents received his master's "Well done" just as much as the one who had used ten. There is a niche for all, and every one has his work. Find out what yours is, and then seek to fill the niche assigned to you, however humble and insignificant in the eyes of men. Let Christ's interests command you, then Christ's approval will reward you in a coming day.

"Oh to be nothing, nothing !
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel
For the Master's use made meet."

H. N.

THE WAYS OF GOD IN GRACE AND GOVERNMENT.

THE wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years formed no part of God's purpose concerning them. Those eventful years came within the range of His foreknowledge, as all things do, but they were not appointed by His immutable decree. When God made His purpose known to Moses there was no mention of the wilderness, but only the divine intention to bring the people out of Egypt and into "a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8). Nor did they doubt that God would fulfil His promise when they sang their triumphant song on the banks of the Red Sea. They supposed, so we may believe, that He would lead them by a straight line to take possession of the land. "The people shall hear, and be afraid : sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed ; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them ; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them ; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone ; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and

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plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Exod. xv.). Such was their song and such their expectation. Why then were they led about for the space of forty years? Why did they wander from place to place till all the men that came out of Egypt with Moses—every one over twenty—had fallen in the wilderness and found a grave there? The reason is given in Numbers XIV.—an evil heart of unbelief, *that* was the cause.

The spies had gone up to search out the land. Forty days had been spent in that fateful task. And when the people heard of the giants and cities walled up to heaven, their hearts melted within them and they cried, "Would God we had died in this wilderness!" And their murmurings against God were heard, and by the mouth of Moses He sent this solemn word to them: "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do unto you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and

Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised " (Num. XIV. 28-31). These words plainly show the reason of their wanderings in the pathless desert all those forty years.

In this we have an illustration of the holy government of God among His people—chosen, redeemed and called to Canaan. And we do well to remember that we, too, are under the same government. True, He is " the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus " (1 Peter v. 10). True, we are His children, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ, but those who are the subjects of such amazing favour are, none the less, under His rule, which, though tempered with mercy, is not feeble and infirm. For those forty years the Israelites had to bear their iniquities (Num. XIV. 34)—that is, the consequences of them. God was gracious unto them: " In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them : in His love and in His pity He redeemed them ; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old " (Isa. LXIII. 9). All true, but still they were led about till every one of that " evil congregation " had been swept away by the relentless hand of death. " Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap "—an undeviating principle, wrought out in our

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individual history and in that of the Church at large.

But it was not to dwell upon this sorrowful though salutary side of the story that we took up our pen to write. There is another phase of it which is full of strength and encouragement. If the journey which they began that day was to go on for forty years God would go with them and not forsake them—the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night should never be taken away till their pilgrim days were done. This was grace indeed! Moreover, He would be their guide, He would choose their resting-places and determine for them the length of their stay. They had but to follow the pillar, to tarry when it tarried, and to move when it moved, whether it were by day or by night. “Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way whercin they should go” (Neh. ix. 19). Such was Nehemiah’s confession, such his witness to the gracious faithfulness of God towards His erring people.

Nor was that all. He would not fail to give them, day by day, bread from heaven and they should eat “angels’ food,” and He would give them water for their thirst. They should lack nothing. All through those forty

years their clothes should not wax old, neither should their feet swell with their weary marches across the heated desert sands (Neh. ix. 20-21). Moreover He would make their varying experiences—the ups and downs of their daily life—to be the means of teaching them many a lesson of untold value—

“ In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found,
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound.”

“ On to Canaan’s rest still wending,
E’en thy wants and woes shall bring
Suited grace from high descending,
Thou shalt taste of mercy’s spring.”

They should learn that man doth not live by bread alone, and that God, in humbling them and proving them, had it always in His heart to do them good (Deut. viii.).

And finally, when their journeyings were coming to a close, and Balak, King of Moab, hired Balaam to come and curse the people, God caused Balaam to utter the most beautiful things concerning Israel (Num. xxiii.—xxiv.). Instead of cursing, he had to bless them altogether. They should not be reckoned among the nations, said he, for they were Jehovah’s peculiar treasure. “ He had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither had He seen perverseness in Israel.” In His sight they were clothed with all the beauty of the spreading valleys and gardens by the river-side, and as

cedar trees beside the waters. And out of Jacob should arise a Star and a Sceptre—One that should have dominion. Such were the glowing words God put into Balaam's mouth. He Himself might chasten them as a father does his son, but He would not suffer the enemy to curse or to hinder the accomplishment of His designs.

These are the ways of God in government and grace. How admirable they are ! If on the one hand they impart seriousness to the soul as we behold the inflexible principles of His rule, on the other they encourage, and inspire with undying hope the heart that trusts in Him. However low the Church has fallen and become an unfaithful witness to her Lord, however much she may have brought upon herself the chastening hand of God, let it be confessed in sorrow and abasement, and let us look up to Him with unwavering trust. If at times His hand is against us, because of our folly and sin, His heart never is, nor will He allow His counsels to be frustrated by the failures of His poor people. All that He has predestined for them shall surely be theirs, for what He has purposed He is able to perform.

“ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come ” (1 Cor. IX. 11).

THE ADVENT OF THE SAVIOUR.

LUKE II.

THAT in this chapter we have laid before us one of the most wonderful facts in the history of this world is a statement that cannot be questioned. The eternal Son of God, He who is before all things and by whom all things consist, taking upon Him the form of a human babe, born into this world in a stable in Bethlehem, is a fact too stupendous for mortal mind to comprehend. Yet to whom is this wondrous event announced, and who are the first to receive the intimation of its occurrence? Herod, and the heads of the political system? The priests, and heads of the religious system? The great, the learned, the mighty in the eyes of this world? No, "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." There they were, humble, ignorant, poor, obscure, unknown probably outside the village in which they lived. Yet it is to these comes the angelic message, to these comes the news of the advent of the Saviour.

Does not this correspond to the attitude of the saints to-day, as they await their absent Lord? At the close of John's Gospel, almost the last words he records as spoken by the Good Shepherd upon this earth are, "Feed

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My sheep.” In Acts xx., when Paul takes leave of the elders of Ephesus, we find among his final injunctions: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” Truly the night is dark, just now it is very, very dark, and many a wolf roams through this field of earth, “not sparing the flock.” Many a soul needs the tender care of one whose heart goes out to the flock which “He hath purchased with His own blood.” May the Lord, who is Himself the Great, the Good, and the Chief Shepherd, so teach us of Himself that we may be found as “shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over the flock by night.” And then some day as we are thus occupied upon this service, the Lord *Himself* will come upon us and the glory of the Lord shine round about us, bringing us, not fear indeed, but glad tidings of great joy, that unto us is come a Saviour—Christ the Lord! Then shall we see the glorious time of “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men”; while we are found like the shepherds “glorifying and praising God.” We hear no more of the shepherds. Christ comes in and

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fills the scene. The last we see of them is "glorifying and praising God," and we never hear that they left off. So will it be with us. Ours will it be eternally to praise Him, and be, to the praise of His glory, filled with His fullness, lost, so to speak, in all that He is, while He fills all in all.

And Simeon : "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel." His whole heart, his whole affections, had been centred by the Holy Spirit upon that blessed One whose coming he awaited. And mark the effect upon his life, the effect that should be seen in us, who have this hope within us—"just and devout." As his heart went out to the Lord, longing for His presence, he lived in the light of his hope, labouring, that, whether present or absent, he might be acceptable unto Him.

Finally, Anna, the widow. What a picture of the Bride in the absence of her heavenly Bridegroom ! Yet if, like Anna, we be found day and night in the temple, we may yet enjoy the presence, real though not actual, of Him upon whom our affections rest. In the assembly collectively, in private individually, we may look upon Him whom we love, we may worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness and the light of the sanctuary. "Serving night and day with fastings and prayers." In the sanctuary we are lifted out of this scene into an entirely

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new scene where Christ fills all ; a scene in which we cannot have our conscious part unless we are morally freed from this scene below. The death of Christ has shut us off from all things here ; and unless there is the practical application of that death, unless our feet are washed, we have no part in the scene opened up by His life. It is from the temple that Anna goes forth to speak of Christ to those whose sympathies were one with hers. In the sanctuary we look upon the things unseen, we bask in all the glorious light, the effulgent glory of a glorified Christ ; and as we look upon that face, radiant in its expression of divine love, we, like Moses of old, reflect that glory ; so that from us in turn shines forth "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" as we go forth to speak of Him to "those who look for redemption in Israel."

May the Lord lead both reader and writer along the path of His will, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

W. J. P.

"I have only one precious word to say to you : keep close to Jesus, you know you will find there joy, strength, and that consciousness of His love which sustains everywhere and makes everything else become nothing ; there is our life and happiness." J. N. D.

DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES.

IN Scripture, whether in the Old Testament or the New, a name or title, when used of God, or the Son of God, is not to be separated from all that the Person is—His name is Himself.

Many passages might be quoted in proof of this, such as, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name” (Matt. xviii. 20). “Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto the Lord thy God . . . in the place which the Lord shall choose to place His name there” (Deut. xvi. 2). “Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth . . . and go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place His name there” (Deut. xxvi. 2). “They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee” (Ps. ix. 10). “The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Prov. xviii. 10). “The man of wisdom shall see Thy name” (Micah vi. 9).

And so of the divine titles of our gracious Lord and Saviour. They are just so many rays of His glory—each one distinct, and yet when one is mentioned, we are conscious at once of who and what He is, so that it is not that particular name or title only that engages us, but Himself, the supremely glorious and

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blessed One of whom the heart delights to say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). In John i. there are some thirteen or fourteen names or titles of our blessed Lord—thirteen or fourteen rays of His glory! And as we gaze first at one and then at another, the heart bows before Him, whose glories are there displayed, in wonder, love and praise.

An old writer has well said, "The names in the Bible are descriptive, not arbitrary; they have a sense as well as sound; this is true especially concerning the appellations of the Godhead; He is what they describe. Among the creatures they and their names are two different things; but respecting the blessed God, Himself is His name and His name is Himself."

"We are accustomed through the poverty of human language and conception to distinguish between God and His attributes. But God and His attributes are one. We speak of the wisdom, holiness, justice, love, and power of God, but God is not a being *endowed* with these perfections only, He *is* the perfections themselves—God, and whatever is predicable of His divine nature, is entirely one."

H. H. F.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

A SHORT time ago one of our readers wrote to inquire whether we thought that the opening verses of the first chapter of Ephesians—from the third to the twelfth verses inclusive—were specifically concerning Jewish Christians, and he went on to ask whether, in the thirteenth verse, the apostle did not turn to the Gentile believers to let them know that all the blessings of which he had spoken in the preceding verses were theirs also. We replied saying that in our judgment this distinction was not warranted, though we believed the “*we*” of verse twelve did refer to the elect remnant of Israel who had pre-trusted in Christ, and the “*ye*” of verse thirteen to the Ephesian believers who were Gentiles like ourselves. Our answer did not carry conviction with it, so we submitted the point to one whose well-known initials are at the foot. This is what he says :

Referring to your answer to H. M. on the first chapter of Ephesians, a further consideration of the truth will only confirm what you say as it appears to me. When the Spirit of God has the Remnant of Israel before Him we are not left in any uncertainty as to this being so. For instance, in the address of Peter’s Epistles and in Paul’s argument in Romans IX.—XI.

inclusive, we plainly see that believers out of Israel are in view. There can be no doubt about it.

Turning now to Ephesians I., no such thought seems warranted by the context as that "the blessings secured in Christ and bestowed upon the elect of Israel" gave rise to the worship (v. 3) in which the heart of the apostle finds relief before he can communicate the thoughts of God that follow. Its scope excludes such specializing of the objects of blessing. To enter into the wonderful thoughts of God we must put ourselves at the standpoint of them in the eternal counsels of His heart. From *before the foundation of the world*—before ever it was formed for man's habitation by the six days' work of Genesis I.—before man's history ever opened in it, God saw the saints before Him, *in Christ*, the Man of His purpose. He saw them in Him in all that was suited to His own nature—holy and without blame—and in the relationship of sons to Himself, according to the counsels of His love (vv. 3, 4). To bring in any thought of Jew or Gentile, or distinction in the race of the first man, that only came in by sin, would be to lose the sense of what the position is, as set at the full height of what God counselled for Himself in the Man of His own heart from before earth's history began. And that is true, both as to "His calling," in verses 4 to 7 in what is above us, and as to the

inheritance in what is below us, that, as it were, lies at our feet, i.e. the whole ordered scene of the universe when it is headed up in Christ, according to the mystery never revealed before.

But then it may be asked, Why does the apostle, at verse 12, introduce those "who first trusted in Christ," which would especially mark out those of Israel who had believed? And why, in verse 13, does he speak of the "ye" of the Gentiles, accounting for much that follows as to both looked at individually later in the epistle? The answer is that just at this point the apostle turns from the revelation of eternal counsel—complete as far as the individual position of the saints was concerned in the preceding verses—to glance at the historical circumstances at Ephesus. In that Gentile city, a company of disciples (Acts XIX.) had been formed who had believed, under John the Baptist's exclusive testimony to the Jews, in a Christ to come after him. These, when they heard the gospel from Paul, had trusted in Him as having come, before the day of His manifested glory, and had received the Spirit. So also had the other Ephesian saints who, having heard the word of truth, the glad tidings of their salvation, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of all that was before them in the glory of the inheritance. This would have its special bearing upon the Gentiles. But both alike

could now enter, by the Holy Ghost, into their wonderful place in Christ, hitherto only revealed as in the counsels of eternity.

In the prayer that is founded upon the great preceding truths of the calling and the inheritance, he brings in their wonderful corporate position as the Assembly, to whom Christ had been given to be Head over all things—His body, looked at in its completeness in God's counsels, embracing all who are Christ's from Pentecost till He comes, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." No room for distinction of Jew or Gentile here.

But the moment we are on the ground of God's work in time (in chap. II.) to make good His counsels, then we find again the "ye" of the Gentile saints (v. 2) and the "we" of the Jew (v. 3). To this is added the work of divine power that wrought in a scene where all was death, first to raise up the Head, and then to take up a people out of both Jew and Gentile, alike dead in sins, and set them where all such distinctions should be lost, "quickened together (Jew and Gentile) with Christ, raised up together (Jew and Gentile), and made to sit together (Jew and Gentile) in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus."

All will be clear if we distinguish between the counsels of eternity and the actual facts of God's work of grace in time by the Holy Ghost.

J. A. T.

DEVOTED HEARTS.

OUTWARD testimony may go on, but *that* is not what the Lord most values ; though value it He does, as far as it is simple, genuine, and faithful. Still, He cannot but prize *most of all* hearts devoted to Himself, the fruit of His own personal, self-sacrificing, perfect love. He has a spouse upon earth, whom He desires to see with no object but Himself, kept pure for Him from the world and its ways. God has called us to *this* ; not only for salvation and for a witness to Himself in godliness, though this is most true and important, but beyond *all* for Christ—a bride for His Son ! Surely this should be our first and last and constant and dearest thought ; for we are affianced to Christ, and He at least has proved the fullness and faithfulness of His love to us ! But what of ours ?

The effect of thus looking at Christ is that the Christian is kept in the dust, and yet always rejoicing in Him. *Extracted.*

“ Earnest and constant occupation with Christ is the true secret of all practical Christianity. It is not rules and regulations that will ever make us Christ-like in our spirit, manner and ways. We must drink into His spirit, walk in His footsteps, dwell more upon His moral glories, and then we shall, of blessed necessity, be conformed to His image.”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N. H. F.—1 Corinthians XIV. 34-5 is very explicit. In "the assemblies"—such is the better word for "churches"—women are to keep silence. It is quite possible that the state of things at Corinth made such a peremptory word very necessary. Women, forgetting the modesty of their sex, possibly came forward, unveiled (contrary to the habit of their country) to address the assembly. Such a procedure is expressly forbidden. In this offence married women seem to have been the transgressors. Presuming on their years and on their being in the married state, they assumed the right to speak—a right which their unmarried sisters did not claim, and which the apostle in no wise allows. They are bidden to be silent in the assembly, and should they wish to be informed on any point, they were to inquire of their husbands at home. It is highly probable that this same tendency led the apostle, when writing to Timothy, to state that he "suffered not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. II. 12). But the first clause of this sentence is not to be construed literally, or it would preclude women from teaching in Sunday schools or even a mother her children. Such an interpretation is untenable on the face of it. The passage must be taken as a whole, the second clause having some influence over the first. The bearing of it is then easily seen. Women may receive some high order of spiritual gift, and indeed the daughters of Philip the Evangelist were thus gifted

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(Acts XXI. 8, 9). But doubtless their gift was exercised in its own proper sphere and with due regard to the place which had been assigned to women in the perfect wisdom of God.

And now with reference to your particular questions. Similar circumstances to those of which you speak frequently arise in the mission fields of heathen lands. A lady addresses herself to women and children, and presently some men get attracted and listen as she seeks to show them the way of salvation. Is she to stop her work or request these men-stragglers not to come? Should she shrink from doing so would she be transgressing the will of God as expressed in 1 Corinthians XIV. and 1 Timothy II.? We dare not take it upon ourselves either to bid her cease or convict her of being a transgressor. In this, as elsewhere, "the letter killeth." The drift of Scripture is plain enough, let us act in the spirit of it, and not insist, in a legal way, on the punctilious observance of the very letter.

INQUIRER.—Rom VIII. 13.—Is not the apostle in this verse stating things in an abstract way?—that is, he is showing the inevitable result of following a certain course. If one lives after the flesh, what ensues? *Death*. If through the Spirit one mortifies the deeds of the body, what ensues? *Life*. But what is the force of those words, "death," "life"? In what sense should they be understood? A dyspeptic says: "If I touch a certain sort of food it is *death* to me." Another breathes the mountain air and exclaims: "Oh, this is *life* to me." We understand what they

mean. Is it not the same in the spiritual sphere? The principle is found in Galatians vi. 7, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He sows to the flesh and reaps corruption—death. He sows to the Spirit and reaps life everlasting. And as the sowing is done here, so the reaping follows here. But not here only—it may go on to its full result in the eternal world.

X. Z.—Genesis xxvi. 5.—These varied terms suggest that the obedience of Abraham responded to every claim that was made upon it, no matter what form it took. Whether it was God's voice, charge, commandment, statute, law, Abraham obeyed. And in the life of Abraham we may find examples of all these things. The *voice* of God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, the rite of circumcision was a *statute* and *law* ever to be observed, the offering up of Isaac a *commandment*, the sending away of Ishmael a *charge*. It is in that light we read this verse.

E. E. W.—You will have learned our opinion of "*Millennial Dawn*" pamphlets and books from an answer in the December issue of this magazine. We earnestly advised our correspondent to burn them, and we counsel you to do the same. And we beg you not to suffer yourself to be shaken in mind by their prediction of terrible events that are shortly to happen. We have always found that those who fix dates are invariably wrong. Besides, if terrible events do happen, our business is to go on serving the living and true God and waiting for His Son from heaven who is our Deliverer from coming wrath. Let us do this and

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trust in One above who is able to keep us in *perfect peace*. Read Psalm XLVI. and be of good courage: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." "The Lord is thy keeper." If that be so, our hearts may well be at rest, come what will.

W. G.—Heb. II. 12.—This quotation from Psalm XXII. is the language of the Lord Jesus when He had been saved from "the lion's mouth" and "heard from the horns of the unicorns." It is as raised from the dead, the sorrows and sufferings of Calvary over, that He declares God's name unto His brethren—it is as Father that He makes Him known. But not only so; we are taken to a point immeasurably farther and sweeter—"My Father, and *your* Father; My God, and *your* God." Mine and yours. We thus stand with Christ in His place of acceptance and relationship, the Sanctifier and the sanctified are "all of one." As such He is *now* the Leader of His people's praises. Would we join in the song He sings as the Risen Man, the Firstborn among many brethren? We can only do so as we know His Father to be our Father and His God our God. He has borne our sins away—the judgment and wrath are behind, and now, risen from the dead, He associates us with Himself in His most blessed manner. The praises, then, of which He is Leader take their tone and character from all this—and a lower note would be a jarring one. We can, through grace, join in these praises *now* even as we shall, in louder and sweeter strains, by and by.

THE TWO CLEANSINGS.

A CHRISTIAN gentleman—a friend of mine—with whom I was speaking the other day, told me that so far as his own observation went there were but few Christians who seemed to know anything about the place “*the water*” had in the teaching of Holy Scripture. He was not referring to the water of baptism. He had in view that significant passage in John XIX. in which we are told that from the pierced side of the crucified Saviour “there came out blood and water”—and that in Ephesians V. 26, which tells us that “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word”—and that in John XIII. 10, where our Lord says, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” These are the passages which were in his mind when he said what he did.

And he further remarked that he did not believe the true value of “*the blood*” was clearly seen, inasmuch as it is an article in the creed of Evangelical Christendom that the believer, as often as he fails, should go back to the precious blood of Christ to be re-washed, re-cleansed. Hence, failing Christians—and who

does not fail?—are continually exhorted to seek a fresh application of “*the blood*” which cleanses from all sin. My friend believed this to be a profound mistake which a proper understanding of Hebrews x. would correct once for all.

I propose in this short paper to examine briefly certain passages of Scripture and see whether these things be so. The Bereans did this when Paul preached unto them, and they were warmly commended for so doing (Acts xvii. 11). We shall not go wrong in following their example.

Let us begin with Romans v. 8. Here we are told that “Christ died for us,” and in the following verse it is said that we are now “justified by His blood.” It is God who justifies, of course, but the shed blood—the sure sign of life laid down—is the ground of our justification before God. It is the meritorious cause of it. The blood of atonement satisfies all the demands of divine righteousness and enables God—the Supreme Judge—to absolve the believing soul from every charge of sin. *And He does so absolve him.* This is a fact of the first magnitude, and glorious enough to set the bells of the universe a-ringing! Henceforth no one can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect—no one can bring an accusation against them. “It is God who justifies,” says the apostle, and then in triumphant tones he

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asks, "Who is he that condemns?" To that loud challenge there is no answer—every voice is silent (Rom. VIII. 33-4).

"Though the restless foe accuses,
Sins recounting like a flood;
Every charge our God refuses:
Christ has answered with His blood."

Blessed be God for that!

Here it may be helpful to ask a question. Is this justification of the believer a thing that lasts, or has it to be renewed every time he does something which he ought not to do? Will he have to be justified over again? The answer must be in the negative. Though he has failed, he has not ceased to be "*in Christ*." He is still a child of God, though a failing one. What failure involves is the loss of communion with God. Other consequences may follow. But God does not cease to love him any more than an earthly parent ceases to love his child when that child trespasses. The link of communion is easily broken, not so the tie of relationship. And what the erring one now needs is not to be cleansed afresh by the blood, for that can never be repeated. What he needs is the cleansing of the water—the feet-washing of John XIII. But more as to this presently.

In Hebrews X. the atoning work of Christ is very blessedly set forth. Being first addressed to Hebrew Christians it is presented in terms admirably suited to their habits of thought.

But the apostle's reasoning we can easily follow. He tells them that the sacrifices offered on their ancient altar could never take away sins either from before God or from the conscience of the worshippers. Those sacrifices were divinely ordained, they served their purpose, they were a shadow of good things to come, but they could not atone for sins and purify the burdened conscience. But in the sacrifice for sins which Jesus offered there was a complete atonement, the worth of which endures to everlasting days. Therefore it is said in verse 12 that after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, He for ever *sat down* on the right hand of God. On that line of service there remains nothing more to do.

“Done is the work that saves,
Once, and for ever, done.”

Looking back to the cross I see the solemn settlement of the great sin question. It cost the Saviour untold suffering to settle it. All my sins were there, all of them, I say, from cradle to coffin. None of them forgotten, all of them remembered. And in that supreme transaction, the like of which Eternity had never seen nor shall see, I had no part save that which my sins gave me. There were but two engaged in it—God, whose love and righteousness shine out from that cross in all their unclouded majesty, and the One who said, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” On Him

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my sins were laid. He bore the penalty. He paid the ransom price, and met every claim that divine justice made or could make. And the One who did all this is now *for ever* sat down at the right hand of God. The work that saves is indeed for ever done. There remains nothing for us to do. By that one offering the believer has been *for ever* perfected. So says verse fourteen of Hebrews x.

But there is another thing. The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us that this is so. Not only have we the reasoning of the apostle—divinely inspired of course—but we have also the witness of the Holy Ghost. The apostle cites it from Jeremiah xxxi. It is to the effect that God will remember our sins and iniquities no more (*v.* 19). They have been remembered in Calvary's dark and dreadful hour—they shall be remembered *no more*. They have been blotted out as a thick cloud, never, never to come up again. Such is the witness of the Holy Ghost, and a surer witness it is impossible to have.

And if I receive this witness of the Holy Ghost—this testimony that He bears in the Holy Scriptures, to the value of Christ's one offering, what follows? My conscience is perfectly and for ever at rest. God is satisfied, and I might well be!

But we must say a few words about the water. In this very chapter it is spoken of

(Hebrews x. 22). Two things are indispensable if we are to enter into the Holiest with boldness and to be at home there. The evil, that is the guilty, conscience must be taken away—this, as we have seen, is the result of the atoning work of Christ—and the body must be washed with pure water. This should have recalled to the recollection of these Hebrew believers what took place when the Jewish priests were consecrated—they were washed with water. That was the first thing, and, as an act of consecration, it was never repeated (Leviticus viii. 6). What answers to that washing in our case is found in John iii. : “Born of water and of the Spirit.” This is the basis of all moral cleansing—the cleansing of life and ways—*moral* cleansing, I say, as distinguished from *judicial* cleansing which is by the Blood. It is the water of the word by which, when clothed with the power of the Spirit, we are born again. The Apostle Peter’s way of putting it is this : “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (I Peter i. 23). And thus a new life is communicated with a holy nature, and in following the instincts of this new life we find pleasure in obedience and in the things of God. This is the starting-point of all *practical* sanctification. It is the first washing of John xiii. 10, which, as our Lord tells us, is never repeated, for we are

“clean every whit.” There is no such thing as being born again the second time.

Feet-washing is another matter—*that* we often need. This, too, is by the water of the Word. And connected with it is the ceaseless intercession of our advocate on high. “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,” said the Lord to Peter on the eve of his terrible fall. And He who prayed for Peter prays for us. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John II. 1). In result, the believer who has sinned is made to feel his sin, and to confess it to his God and Father. He does not do so as being in the same position as when he first confessed his sin as a rebel brought to repentance. He confesses his sins now as a child of God—not as fearing the judicial penalty, for he knows that has been borne by his Saviour. His confession is deeper, for he has sinned against grace and light. And “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John I. 9). This is *moral* cleansing, the cleansing of our practical ways. It is the feet-washing of John XIII.

Is this clear to the reader? If not let him write to the Editor, whose address is on the cover, and the subject shall be further dealt with in the correspondence columns. We believe it to be of prime importance that we

should distinguish between "*the blood*" and "*the water*" and see the place which Scripture assigns to each.

A DEADLY DELUSION.

I KNEW an old lady who was possessed at times by a firm belief that she was dead. It did not prevent her taking food and rest, nor did it interfere with the ordinary functions of life, so it occasioned no particular distress to her friends. Such a delusion is harmless. But there are delusions of such a nature that we must combat them with all our energy. They are something like a poisoned stream that is found on a lonely island off the coast of Alaska. A party of fishermen years ago landed on this island. What looked like pure water was impregnated with a quantity of arsenic. They drank, and their whitened bones, found in subsequent years, were the ghastly witness of their fatal mistake.

Yet the delusion against which I warn you involves far more serious consequences—not death to the body, but eternal disaster to the soul.

Widespread and popular, received by multitudes and preached from numberless pulpits, it is but the fulfilment of the Scripture prophecy: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own

lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned UNTO FABLES ” (2 Tim. IV. 3, 4).

The deadly delusion to which I refer is embodied in the popular expression, “ *The Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man.* ” It sounds attractive. It makes no call either for repentance or conversion. It palliates sin, and overlooks the necessity of atonement. Under the influence of such a theory men can go on with their ungodliness and worldliness, whilst the baseless dream of “ the larger hope,” the vision of universal salvation, the chance of regeneration in the next world, if missed in this, deceives them and makes the eyes of their souls heavy with fatal slumber. What a terrible awakening will be theirs !

Of course, if the term “ Fatherhood ” were used merely with reference to God *as Creator* it would be true. Acts XVII. 28 tells us how the Apostle Paul in his famous address at Athens quoted the words of a heathen poet, “ For we are also His offspring.” Luke’s Gospel traces the genealogy of our Lord up to Adam, who, it declares, was “ [the son] of God.” The angels, too, are called God’s sons (Job XXXVIII. 7).

And in the same way the “ Brotherhood of Man ” is a phrase that may be used to denote that all men are born of a common stock,

made, as Scripture says, "of one blood" (Acts xvii. 26). But if pressed in a spiritual sense so as to imply *relationship* the result is mischievous in the extreme, undermining truth of the most vital kind.

That the delusion is wide-spread needs no proof. The New Theology, more truly named *Ancient Error*, teaches it. And recently the highest ecclesiastic in the land recommended for use in the churches a special prayer in which God is addressed as "*the Father of all,*" and which includes a petition that "*by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit a fuller realization of our brotherhood, man with man, in Thee*" might be granted.

Now the test of all this is the inspired Word of God, that sacred volume which allows of no treatment but that which accepts it from cover to cover, or rejects it in its entirety. It is like an arch over a stream—remove one stone and the whole structure under pressure will collapse. Preserve each stone in its place and it will safely bear its appointed weight.

Either we must be prepared to test this theory by the Word of God, or refuse to do so and accept the consequences.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.—The false charity that would embrace under this term the unregenerate sinner, religious or irreligious, and call all men God's children, has no place in Scripture. When the Pharisees

opposed the Lord in His works of grace He did not hesitate to rebuke them with words which give direct denial to this popular delusion, "*Ye are of your father the devil*" (John VIII. 44). Again, the Apostle Paul, writing to the believers at Ephesus, characterizes their former condition as that of "*children of disobedience*" and "*children of wrath*" (Eph. II. 2, 3). Other scriptures might be adduced, but the above are conclusive.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.—The two propositions we are considering hang together. If God is the Father of all it follows that all men are brothers. Hence if one proposition is destroyed by the teaching of Scripture, the other falls to the ground. But Scripture as plainly denies the one as the other. It speaks of *two* families. For instance, "*The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one*" (Matt. XIV. 38). Here two distinct families are indicated, as diverse from each other as light from darkness. Again, hear the positive statement of the Lord Himself: "*They [believers] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*" And on the positive side of truth, we read how we become children of God. "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. III. 26). Has "the man in the street," the drunkard, the libertine, the cheat, the liar, the mere professor of religion,

unconverted and unsaved, "faith in Christ Jesus" ?

Again, "*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother*" (I John III. 10). Here again are two families, having no link whatever with each other spiritually. "NOT OF GOD" is disclaimer enough surely.

The whole tenor of Scripture is dead against this much-lauded error, whose very popularity should arouse suspicion as to its origin. Its aim is to wipe out the line of demarcation between the saved and the unsaved, the believer and the unbeliever, the world and those that are not of it. It blurs all spiritual perspective and destroys every vital distinction Scripture makes. In result it denies the fall, the necessity for the death of Christ and everlasting punishment. It either degrades the Son of God to the level of a mere man, or elevates puny men to the status of God Himself. May the Lord deliver His people from the blight of this terrible delusion and give them grace and backbone to hold no truce therewith. Our truest wisdom is to refuse all compromise with it and hold fast to the positive truth of God.

A Christian was once asked what book he would recommend as establishing the truth of the Bible. The answer given was, "The Bible."

LEGALITY AND LEVITY.

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Surprise was expressed at this answer, and it was suggested that the question had not been understood. It was repeated, and again the Christian wisely and truly replied, "The Bible."

I make bold to say the attentive reading of the Bible itself would have hindered this delusion ever obtaining foothold. One of the most lamentable features of the day is neglect of Bible study. The reading of other books is regarded as being equivalent. Christians do not know their Bibles as they should. Let me earnestly recommend the daily prayerful reading of the Word as the safeguard against all the evil doctrine that is current to-day. The knowledge of truth is the best specific against error.

A. J. P.

LEGALITY AND LEVITY.

WE desire to offer a brief but pointed word of warning against two opposite evils which we can see plainly working amongst Christians at the present moment. These are legality on the one hand, and levity on the other.

As to the first of these evils, we have sought, in many of our former numbers, to help souls out of a legal state as being, at once, dishonouring to God, and utterly subversive of their own peace and liberty. We have endeavoured to set forth the free grace of God,

the value of the blood of Christ, the standing of the believer before God in perfect righteousness and acceptance in Christ. These precious truths, when applied to the heart in the power of the Holy Ghost, must deliver it from all legal influences.

But, then, it frequently happens that persons, when apparently delivered from legality, run into the opposite evil of levity. This arises from the fact that the doctrines of grace are only taken up intellectually, instead of being wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. A vast amount of evangelical truth may be received in a very light way, without any deep work of conscience or thorough subjugation of the flesh in the presence of God. When this is the case there is sure to be levity of spirit. There will be a very wide margin allowed for worldliness of various kinds—a liberty given to nature wholly incompatible with practical Christianity. And there will be exhibited a very deplorable want of conscience in the practical details of daily life—duties neglected, work badly done, engagements not faithfully observed, sacred obligations trifled with, debts contracted, extravagant habits indulged. All these things we place under the head of levity, and they are, alas ! too common amongst the very highest professors of what is termed evangelical truth.

Now we deeply deplore this, and would desire to have our own souls, as well as the souls of all our Christian readers, really exercised before God about it. We fear there is a great deal of hollow profession amongst us, a great want of earnestness, truthfulness, and reality in our ways. We are not sufficiently permeated with the spirit of genuine Christianity. We do not give sufficient attention to "the girdle of truth" or "the breastplate of righteousness." In this way the soul gets into a very bad state indeed; conscience does not act. The moral sensibilities become blunted. The claims of truth are not duly responded to. Positive evil is trifled with. Moral relaxation is allowed. So far from the constraining power of the love of Christ leading forth in the activities of goodness, there is not even the restraining power of the fear of God keeping us back from the activities of evil.

We appeal, most solemnly, to the consciences of our readers as to these things. The present is a deeply solemn time for Christians. There is a demand for earnest, deep-toned devotedness to Christ; but this cannot possibly exist where the claims of practical righteousness are neglected. We must ever remember that the selfsame grace which effectually delivers the soul from legality is the only safeguard against all levity. We

have done very little, if anything at all, for a man if we bring him out of a legal state into a light, easy-going, careless condition of heart. And yet we have frequently marked the history of souls, and noticed this sad fact respecting them, that when they are delivered out of darkness and bondage they became far less tender and sensitive. The flesh is ever ready to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and therefore it must be subdued. It needs that the power of the Cross be applied to all that is of nature. We want to mingle the "bitter herbs" with our paschal feast. In other words, we want those deep spiritual exercises which result from positive entrance into the power of the sufferings of Christ. We need to meditate more profoundly upon the death of Christ—His death as a victim, under the hand of God—His death as a martyr, under the hand of man.

This, beloved reader, is, at once, the cure for legality and levity. The Cross, in its double aspect, delivers from both. "Christ died for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world; according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1. 4). The believer is not saved in order that he may enjoy the world, but that he might get done with it entirely. We know few things more dangerous for the soul than the combination of evangelical truth with worldliness, ease, and self-

indulgence—the adoption of a certain phraseology of truth where the conscience is not in the presence of God—a merely intellectual apprehension of *standing* without any earnest dealing with the practical *state*—clearness of doctrine as to title, without any conscientious reference to the moral condition.

We trust our readers will suffer the word of exhortation. True, it is not a very agreeable task to call attention to practical evils—to urge the solemn duty of self-judgment—to press upon the conscience the claims of practical godliness. But there are times when the true condition of things amongst Christians weighs heavily upon the heart, and rouses the soul to make an urgent appeal in reference to matters of walk and conduct ; and we believe the present to be just such a time. The devil is ever busy ; but just now he is specially on the alert. The Lord has granted much light upon His Word. The gospel has been brought out with clearness and power. Thousands have been delivered from a legal state, and now the enemy is seeking to bring souls into a light, careless, carnal condition, by leading them to neglect the wholesome and indispensable exercise of self-judgment. It is simply a very deep sense of this that has suggested a word of warning on “ *Legality and Levity.* ”

T. N. O.

THE PARADISE OF GOD.

PARADISE ! Its very name is a synonym for everything that is delightful, a garden where there are pleasures for evermore ! It is a scene where God surrounds Himself with everything morally beautiful, even as He put round about Adam “ every tree that is pleasant to the sight,” adorning his abode with choice products of His creative skill.

What the pleasure-garden and park of a mansion are to the broad acres of the tenant farmer, so the Garden of Eden was to the rest of the world. But at its best it was but a faint picture of the Paradise of God, the holy, happy place where God dwells ; the innermost circle in the heavenly expanse, the third and highest heaven. The Lord God came to Adam’s garden as a visitor, but here He is, so to speak, at home. Here are found His chiefest joys. In it is the tree of life, whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations, and there the living fountain.

It was to Paradise that Jesus went when He committed His spirit to God His Father. There the penitent thief—redemption’s earliest trophy—joined Him that *same day*. There every one who has fallen “ asleep through Jesus ” has gone from that day to this ; absent from the body they are all present with the

Lord (2 Cor. v. 8). Paradise is not—as so many think and teach—a sort of purgatory where souls are made fit for a higher and nearer place. To be there is to be *with Christ*, and Paul reminds us that this is better—far better—than a happy life of service here (Phil. i. 23). It is the heaven of heavens, for Jesus is there, and to that blest place He will bring His redeemed in glorified bodies like His own, and give them to eat of the tree of life.

Who shall declare to us its wonders ! Paul has been there (see 2 Cor. xii.) and he tells us that its language has no earthly counterpart, and cannot be translated into human speech. They were “unspeakable words” and unsuited to our present state. Much has been revealed which we can comprehend, but there are limitations to our knowledge whilst here. “Now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

What a scene of blessedness awaits our ransomed spirits ! Who can describe the joys which will be ours when, in resurrection and in glorified bodies, this heavenly language shall be familiar to us, for being in the things we shall understand what the “words” mean. Even in our everyday talk words have no meaning without some knowledge of the things they represent.

We may gather from the description of Paradise in Genesis II. some features of that

more glorious Eden above. That which is first is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. In Eden "the Lord God made . . . every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew" (v. 5). Just so the heavenly plants which shall flourish in the courts of our God are already fashioned by God's gracious hand. We only wait for our glorified bodies, for we are now part of that new creation whose home is in Paradise. How pleasant to Adam's eyes those trees were, how good for food ! but what shall we say when we think of that tree which was in the midst of the garden, the "tree of life" ? So in the antitype, in that more enduring Paradise, there will be the "Tree of Life," with its perennial fruits, ever new, ever fresh, unfading and eternal.

Then we read (v. 15) that the garden was put in charge of "the man . . . to dress it and to keep it." How our renewed nature is moved as we contemplate Jesus, "the last Adam, the second man" (1 Cor. xv. 45-7) who will with that hand once pierced on Calvary lovingly nourish and "dress" those plants which bloom in the Paradise of God. How carefully He will keep the garden so that no deceiver shall ever enter, no serpent ever beguile. There we shall eat of the tree of life and find satisfaction, refreshment, rest.

Nor is this all. The first Adam opened his

eyes on the sixth day and beheld his abode prepared, planted, and adorned with everything to delight his eyes and meet his bodily need. He found himself set, as head, over the lower creation, and to every animal he gave its name. The fish of the sea and fowl of the air were all subjected to his dominion. But in all these there was found no "helpmeet," no one to answer to those affections which had been implanted in his nature and were ready to be awakened. Having fallen into a deep sleep he awoke, and lo! there was another occupant of the garden. As he lay in that death-like sleep the Lord God formed his counterpart, and brought to the man a helpmeet. "Bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh," she was a suited companion, a true helpmeet, one with him in life and nature, and sharing in all that over which he was set as head.

So in that more perfect Paradise Christ will present to Himself a glorious Church, spotless and unblemished, the true Eve, who was curiously formed in the lower parts of the earth, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh (Eph. v. 30). He had loved the Church and had given Himself for it, sanctifying and purifying it, and in the coming day of glory He will present the Church to Himself, all glorious. Of the earthly queen in Psalm XLV. it is said, "her clothing is of wrought gold," how much more of "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev.

XXI. 9). In Matthew XXII. we read of “ a certain king who made a marriage for his son.” In the Paradise of God that marriage will be celebrated and nothing then shall be wanting to fill the cup of eternal happiness for Bride and Bridegroom (Rev. XIX. 7).

“ O day of wondrous promise !
The Bridegroom and the Bride
Are seen in glory ever,
And love is satisfied.”

H. N.

“ GRACE UPON GRACE.”

“ **S**IN shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace ” (Rom. VI. 14). The law brings the sinner in guilty, and so long as there is a sense of condemnation there can be no making use of the power of God against the power of sin. Hence, before a sinner can overcome the power of sin, he must first be delivered from its guilt.

“ Grace ” is the most lovely word in our vocabulary. We like to think of the grace that saves the soul as “ the eager love of God, stooping to bestow mercy and favour upon rebels who deserve nothing but His displeasure.”

And when God by His grace has saved the sinner, He gives him a standing in grace

When I look at myself I feel I am full of unworthiness and deserving condemnation daily. But blessed be God, He continues to bestow mercy and favour and every good gift on the principle of *grace*. THERE IS, THEREFORE, NO REASON WHY GOD SHOULD NOT BLESS ME, for His blessing does not depend upon what I can be towards Him, but upon what He is towards me, and His attitude is one of unchanging, continuous, eternal GRACE. Grace is the soil in which all the trees of God's planting have been rooted, and rooted *for ever*.

What an encouragement to prayer resides in this thought. If I deserve nothing from God, then I have as much right to ask for big things as for little things. “ Expect great things from God ” was Carey's motto.

God gives “ *grace upon grace*,” *grace following grace* in marvellous succession. He is able to make all grace ABOUND towards us, present grace taking the place of that which is past in a continuous and never-failing stream. Let us see to it then that the channel through which those beneficent waters flow to us remains ever free from self-made obstacles, or we shall thirst in spite of the inexhaustible supply which is at our disposal. If we do not use, we shall lose. Here, as in everything else, according to our faith is it unto us.

E. A.

THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE.*

WHAT is the *secret* of a happy life, even under the most trying circumstances ?

To be—to have a spiritual existence—to begin with, and to *live* in fellowship with God, and to walk in the path of His will.

With Paul it seems to have *commenced*—and this at the time of his conversion—with the *excellency of the knowledge* of Christ Jesus his Lord ; with the sacred dignity and glory of His person as Son of God, and with the whole extent of His work. He began not only with Jesus as Saviour, but with Jesus as the risen and glorified Man, associating Himself with His people, and His people with Himself—head of the New Creation and of His body the Church (Acts IX. 1-31 ; Phil. III. 7-14).

From that moment Christ was *everything* as an object for his soul's adoration, day by day, and the Holy Spirit the *power* of the new life of which the Lord Jesus was the source. The goal *ever* before his soul was to have Christ for his gain in heavenly glory.

The chief of sinners the Spirit of God allowed him to proclaim himself to be, and with his pride crushed, his self-esteem cast aside as worthless, and his will completely broken, he

* Copy of a letter to an introspective child of God, suffering at times from the gloom of an up-and-down spiritual experience.

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owned in his teaching later on that the death of Jesus was the grave not only of his sins, but of his sinful self. This was a settled question with him, and so, forgetting the things that were behind, *he rejoiced in the Lord alway*.

Not being under the power of anything but the constraining love of Christ, he was a *delivered, happy* man, living in fellowship with God. Communing *with* God respecting His beloved Son, the fulfiller of His counsels and the manifestation of His ways.

He knew well that the *secret* of peace within and of power without was to be *taken up* with what was good, ever and only with good.

His doctrine and manner of life agreed, and he lived his spiritual life as he lived his mortal life, moment by moment. He is the great model of a tried yet *happy* man, a man subject to like passions as we are, and he could say, "Be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example."

Let us never forget those three days of blindness, when God gave him time for *reflection*; and here lies the *secret* of true growth and abiding peace and joy, as he exhorted his son Timothy: "*Meditate* upon these things, give thyself *wholly* to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." Many a one, thank God, can say, "I have *tried* and *proved* these" methods and find them answer admirably."

THOMAS OLIVER.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DEREHAM.—Hebrews VI. 6.—You will never rightly understand this passage unless you see that the apostle has in view professing Christians from among his own countrymen, the Jews. The Jewish nation, as we know, had been guilty of crucifying the Son of God and putting Him to an open shame. Some of them had indeed been led to repentance and their thoughts concerning the One whom they had crucified had undergone a total change. They had gladly taken their place in the ranks of those who confessed Him as Saviour and Lord. Now suppose any one of these Hebrews who had professed to believe in the Son of God were to renounce the Christian faith and return to the company of those who had crucified Christ. What would they be doing? Why, crucifying the Son of God afresh as with their own hand. They would be affirming once again that the death of the cross was no more than He deserved. If any one did this it would be a sign of hopeless reprobation. We are sure you would rather go to the stake than thus deny Christ. The passage, then, has no bearing at all on a case like yours.

As to 1 John III. 9, the verse is much misunderstood through not seeing that the Apostle John is here speaking of the children of God according to their nature. In being born of God they became partakers of divine life, and certainly, *when viewed as such*, the child of God does not practise sin. We use the word “practise” rather

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than "commit," for such is the force of the term. That he is liable to sin is, alas! only too true, for "the flesh"—that evil principle inherited from fallen Adam—is still in him. To practise sin is characteristic of the one who is "of the devil," not to practise sin is characteristic of one who is "born of God." The apostle does not pause to fence round the doctrine he is teaching with divers guards, but states it in the most abstract way.

But after all, no explanations of hard texts will bring to your soul the peace you crave. If we could explain all the difficult texts in the Bible to your entire satisfaction it would still leave you in darkness and doubt. You need to know and believe the gospel. Through Christ Jesus, risen and in glory, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins (Acts XIII. 38, 39). By Him all who believe are justified from all things. It is God who tells you so. It is His message. *2 Look then away from yourself*—look to Jesus—the One who has borne your sins in His own body on the tree. He must be your resting place, your confidence, your all. Not what you are but what He is, not what you can do but what He has done. His work is finished, and complete atonement has been made. It is there you must rest if you would have peace.

E. L.—We entirely agree with you that it would be an evil and a shameless thing for any one to be continuing in a course of sin and at the same time to be boasting of being saved with an eternal salvation. This is antinomianism pure and simple—it is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. That the natural mind of man is quite capable of

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doing this there can be no doubt. It is quite true that the Good Shepherd gives to His sheep eternal life and says of them that they shall never perish, but it is also true that He says of such that they hear His voice and that they follow Him. If a man is not following Christ, but is found in paths of sin, how shall we know him to be one of His sheep? "By their fruits ye shall know them." We are not denying that a child of God may fall under the power of some sin and get far away from God, but we question whether, while in that state, he would boast of being a saved man. If he did we should stand in doubt of him.

In dealing with anxious, unestablished souls we should never think of turning their thoughts in upon themselves or upon their outward ways to find out whether they were Christ's or not. We would direct their minds to the finished work of Christ and to the sure witness of the written word of God. Faith rests there, and any other foundation is but a delusion and a snare. But when established in grace, nothing is more wholesome and necessary than the practice of self-judgment—not to determine whether I am a Christian or not, but to see how far my inward state and my manner of life agree with what I am. And so the Apostle Paul said: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts xxiv. 16). This is happy work and on no account should be neglected.

"Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live."

WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE?

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”—JOHN IX. 35.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”

JOHN III. 36.

WHAT is it to believe on the Son of God, and what is involved in that simple exercise of faith? Some may think this a purely elementary question, only fit for babes in Christ—a question that any tyro can answer off-hand. In that case it should not be hard to give it a clear and definite reply. But, alas! it is easy to assume that we know when really we do not. Such a mistake any of us may make, and even those who believe themselves to be better versed in Scripture than most of their fellow-Christians are liable to fall into it. And so I venture to entreat any who entertain this comforting belief about themselves, and all others, not to dismiss the question as if it called for no second thought. Let them search and see what the Holy Scriptures say about it—as was the custom in old days—and then inquire how far their latest views agree with that unerring guide.

I make bold to emphasize this advice. There is need of it. So many assertions are made nowadays and received on the bare word of the

one who makes them. No scripture is brought forward in their support. No inquiry is made to find out whether they are warranted by the Word of God or not. And if one has courage to ask for chapter and verse he will possibly be regarded with suspicion and distrust. Never mind. Let such a one go on asking for Scripture proof and not be content until he gets it.

Now to our question, *What is it to believe on the Son of God?* Let us look at John I. 11-13. Here the Evangelist states with the utmost brevity that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." What a tale those few words tell! *He* came, the Hope of Israel—the Messiah—the Fulfiller of all the glowing promises made unto their fathers—and *they received Him not!* They searched the Scriptures and thought that in them they had eternal life. Their sacred writings—read every sabbath day in the synagogues—were His witness-bearers, and yet they did not—would not—come unto Him that they might have life (John v. 39, 40). On the contrary, they pronounced His claims false, denounced Him as a blasphemer, and insisted in Pilate's judgment hall that He should be crucified. Was ever story so tragic? *But some did receive Him*—they were the poor of the flock—and to these He gave the power, the right, the privilege to become children of God, even to

them that believed on His name. Here, then, we plainly see that to receive Him, and to believe on His name, are equivalent terms. The one who receives is the one who believes, and the one who believes is the one who receives. To receive the rejected Saviour, to believe on Him, to confess Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to be numbered among God's children. And all such are born of God. It is no little thing, then, to believe on the Son of God, the Eternal Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, if in so doing we receive the right to be the children of God—that is, to take the place of such, distinctly and definitely.

In chapter II. 23 of John's Gospel we read of others who believed on His name when they saw the miracles which He did. "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." How was that? At first sight this seems strange indeed—they believed, and yet He stood aloof! He did not trust them, no, not for a moment. Were they not sincere? There is no reason to doubt their sincerity. How, then, is the fact to be explained that "Jesus did not commit Himself to them?" What is the solution of this enigma? It is found in this—that their belief was based on external evidence. They believed because they saw the miracles. Such credentials they could and did accept. But their belief went no further. It moved

in the intellectual sphere and left conscience and heart untouched. It was reasonable, it had much to say for itself, but it was a belief of which an unregenerate man was capable. Such is the faith of thousands in this day. They call themselves Christians, and never suspect that their profession is nothing but an empty shell—a house “swept and garnished,” but having no living inmate! To believe on the Son of God means very much more than that.

To receive Him under every name by which He is revealed, the Way, the Truth, the Life—to receive Him as the Lamb of God, the Bearer away of the sin of the world—as the Son of Man lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life—as the Son of God, the proof and manifestation of God’s love to sinful men—as the Bread of Life whereof if a man eat he shall live for ever—as the Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep—as the Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures and who is now risen again and is in glory—to receive Him thus, to hearken to His words which are spirit and life—this is to believe on Him to the saving of the soul, and to life everlasting (Heb. x. 39 ; 1 Tim. i. 16).

We do not mean in speaking thus that Christ in all these various ways appears in the vision of the soul at first. When the awakened

jailer at Philippi was bid to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he should be saved, it was as a Saviour, the only refuge for the lost, that he believed on Him. And so with all of us. But from that happy moment Christ was his and he was Christ's. Now, the Christ of the fathers in the family of God is the Christ of the babes, the Christ of "Paul the aged," who had finished his course and had kept the faith, is the Christ of the Christian of yesterday. There are no two Christs. Growth in the knowledge of Him is another matter, but the One in the knowledge of whom we grow is ours *at the very start* of our Christian course.

If any thus receive Christ, if they thus believe on Him, do they not receive forgiveness of sins ? Are they not justified from all things, and sealed with "that Holy Spirit of promise" ? Undoubtedly it is so if Scripture is to be believed (Acts XIII. 38, 39 ; Eph. I. 13). But in the teaching of the Apostle John those who thus receive Him have another thing, namely, *eternal life*, and they are owned as God's children (John I. 11-13 ; III. 36). Are, then, these different terms—forgiveness, justification, eternal life, etc.—of equal value ? Do they all mean the same thing ? No indeed. Some of them are richer than the rest, but *in having Christ we have them all*. They are ours, though we have to learn their worth and meaning afterwards. Let us take pains to be clear

as to this. We fear that some who once saw what we are saying plainly enough are letting it slip and even doubting if not denying it. They tell us that "we do not get eternal life by believing—that faith is the title to it." Nothing more. But we cannot recall a single passage of Holy Scripture which puts it in that way. And we earnestly ask those who speak this new language, whether we only acquire a *title* to Christ when, through grace, we believe on Him, or is He, indeed, ours then and there? Can we have Christ and not have eternal life? Ignorant we may be, having everything to learn. But if I know that Christ is mine—the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me—am I not warranted in saying that eternal life is mine and that I have it in having Him? Does it not say in 1 John v. 12, "He that hath the Son hath life"? Surely so, and it cannot be for our mutual comfort to deny it, or in any way to becloud the blessedness of it, in the soul of the youngest believer.

But let us not hold the truth in terms only—content to know that eternal life is ours without seeking to understand that great phrase in all the fullness of its many meanings. This is where some come short. They are sure that eternal life is theirs, and if believers on the Son of God they have the warrant of the Word of God for saying so, but when you ask them to

tell you something about the life they have they are not able to say much, if anything at all. And what they do say seems to show that they see no difference between the new birth, forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life. In their eyes they all have but one meaning. Now babes in the family of God may be excused if they can say but little. We do not expect them to distinguish between things that differ, or to express in accurate terms all that which they truly enjoy according to their measure. A babe in its mother's arms knows what it is to love and be loved long before its infant lips can frame a sentence or utter a single syllable. But we must not remain babes nor be satisfied with the knowledge of the truth in terms, but go on to possess it in the faith of our souls. Then it becomes substance to us—real riches—and our inward and outward life pass under its mighty influence. When a child is born heir to a crown and kingdom, he knows nothing of his birthright and his high estate. The nursery, the cradle, and his nurse's knees are the things the child knows most about. But we expect him to grow in understanding, and when at length he comes to realize who and what he is, his whole life, so to speak, undergoes a great change. And so, if life, eternal life, is communicated to the soul at the earliest dawn of its spiritual history, let the one who knows that he has it, in that he knows

that he has Christ, go on to learn more of it in its ever-expanding meaning. Life is a profound thing, eluding all definitions and full of ever-multiplying wonders. And if this be true of creature-life as we see it in the world around, how much more is it true of eternal life, in which the knowledge of the Father and the Son and of those unseen and eternal things which God has prepared for them that love Him has so large a place (John xvii. 3 ; 1 Cor. ii. 9-12). It is in harmony with this that Christians who are rich in this world, and who have within their reach all that money can buy, are enjoined to lay hold of that which is life indeed (1 Tim. vi. 19), while Timothy, that choice servant of the Lord, is exhorted to flee these things, to fight the good fight of faith and to lay hold of eternal life.

Let us then be on our guard lest we make knowledge and experience the measure of the blessing wherewith we have been blessed. *In having Christ we have all*, for every blessing is treasured up in Him. At the same time we must take care not to be like a man who holds parchment deeds that prove him the undoubted owner of rich estates, yet who never takes trouble either to survey or to enjoy them, but leaves them lying idle, and yielding no wealth either to himself or to any one else. It is the diligent soul that shall be made fat, and unto him that hath shall more be given.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OBSCURE WORKERS.

MANY of the readers of this magazine can doubtless point to some human instrument by whom they were led to the Saviour. The immediate occasion of their decision for Christ may have been the preaching of a sermon, the reading of a tract, or personal intercourse with a believer. And they always couple their conversion with the name of the speaker or of the writer who got them into saving touch with the Lord. But were there no other agents at work? Had they not received earlier impressions of divine truths which prepared the way for the act of saving faith? In the great day when sowers and reapers will rejoice together it is most likely that those who stand out in our minds as having led us to Christ will share their reward with others whose influence on us was none the less real because largely unrecognized by us at the time of our conversion. The fact is, *God divides up the work of the conversion of a soul*, using more than one human agent.

It is rare, indeed, that only one person is instrumental in bringing a soul to the Saviour. It may happen that a godly mother, whose teaching of her child in early years is backed up by a holy life at home, is the means, in

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later years, of leading him to a personal trust in the Redeemer without any other Christian influence having been brought to bear upon him. But such cases are exceptional.

The great apostle to the Gentiles affirms that while he had *planted*, Apollos had *watered*. And our Lord reminded His disciples that one sows and another reaps. Let not the Sunday-school worker be discouraged if, while faithfully and lovingly commending the gospel to his class, he sees no apparent fruit to his labours. It may be that the Lord of the harvest has made him a sower, and that to another will fall the happy privilege of reaping the golden grain.

Let us attempt to briefly describe a case of conversion which might, at least in some respects, serve as a type of what has occurred in countless instances in the past, and which is being repeated to-day in the history of many a soul that is won for the Master.

A godly, praying mother brings up her child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She not only instructs him in Biblical and gospel truths, but makes his salvation a subject of earnest and believing prayer. In course of time he attends a Sunday-school where the same or kindred truths are week by week instilled into his ever-growing mind as he passes from class to class. At the age when a boy begins to think himself too old for the

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Sunday-school, he leaves, and goes out into the world to earn his living, still unsaved. His mind has been stored with gospel texts, but he has never yielded to Christ, in spite of an earnest appeal on the part of his teacher to do so. Being now out of touch with spiritual associations, and finding himself at an age when we like to test everything by our own reason and to challenge all authority, he learns to question the truth of what he all along has been brought up to believe. He breathes a new air of liberty; he means to see life and have his fling. He finds it very convenient to doubt. And so a few years later we find our young man liking to call himself an agnostic and the gospel old-fashioned nonsense. But his mother's prayers hang around his neck, and he cannot entirely shake off the impressions of early years. At the same time his conscience is often smitten when he contemplates the godly lives of one or two of his workmates, and he finds himself doubting his doubts and saying to himself, "After all, there must be something in the old gospel; I wonder if it is true after all." The evidence of a holy life is beginning to have its effect and he commences to say less and think more.

A book on Christian evidences which has been given him silences some of his mental difficulties and stimulates his interest in the

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things of God. One evening he enters a meeting where the gospel is being proclaimed, and the preacher's message reaches his conscience. He is now thoroughly awakened, his sins press upon his heart, and he longs for peace. Passing by an open-air meeting he is arrested by the singing of a hymn which comes back to him with painful familiarity, for he had often sung it in his childhood's days ; and as he drinks in the words of the speaker he realizes that as a lost sinner his only hope is in Christ. After the meeting is over he lingers behind, and is approached by one of the workers.* Our young man is in dead earnest and that night he is led to the Saviour, to the great joy of the worker who was on the watch for souls. His address is taken and a letter from the leader of the meeting, with the booklet it encloses, are the means of bringing him peace and assurance.

Now, in this case, who was the instrument that God used to that young man's conversion ? Was it only the personal worker who pointed him to the Saviour ? All *he* did was to put the finishing touch to a work in which, as we have seen, *several* individuals were concerned.

* What a pity it is that those who attend open-air meetings do not look out for personal dealing with any strangers who may be lingering behind. Instead of being on the alert to seize an opportunity for speaking to any anxious souls, how often do they gather together among themselves, and then walk off to spend the rest of the evening in social pleasure.

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A large piece of stone is being struck with a hammer. Blow after blow descends, without any apparent effect. The stone seems made of adamant ; nine blows of the heavy hammer have fallen, and still no result. But at the tenth blow the stone is shattered piecemeal. Was it only the tenth blow that broke the stone ? Were all the previous nine useless ? We think not. Their work was to render the shattering of the stone at the tenth blow possible. And so it is in the work of saving the lost. *God divides the work of conversion, that no flesh should boast in His presence.*

As far as the work of building up the soul of the believer is concerned, it is even more obvious that God divides it among many labourers. Many indeed are the human instruments employed in moulding the lives and characters of those who are the heirs of eternal glory ; and every one is necessary. What an honour belongs to even the most obscure of God's servants !

Fellow-workers, have we not here a grand encouragement to do *what we can* in the Lord's service ? We hear that well-known exhortation come to us with fresh meaning and power, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, *forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*"

E. A.

“WHAT WAIT I FOR?”

PSALM XXXIX. 7.

THIS is a searching question for the heart ; but it is oftentimes a most salutary one, inasmuch as we may constantly detect ourselves waiting for things which, when they come, prove not to be worth waiting for.

The human heart is very much like the poor lame man at the gate of the temple in Acts III. He was looking at every passer-by “ expecting to receive something ” ; and the heart will ever be looking out for some relief, some comfort, or some enjoyment in passing circumstances.

It is amazing to think of the trifles on which poor human nature will, at times, fix its expectant gaze—a change of circumstances—change of scene—change of air—a journey—a visit—a letter—a book—anything, in short, is sufficient to raise expectations in a heart which is not finding its centre, its spring, its *all* in Christ.

Hence the practical importance of frequently turning sharp round upon the heart with the question, “ *What wait I for ?* ” Doubtless, the true answer to this inquiry would, at times, furnish the most advanced Christian with

matter for deep humiliation and self-judgment before the Lord.

Let me now quote the sixth verse of our Psalm, “ Surely every man walketh in a vain show : surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.” Here we have three great types of character, as set forth in the *vain show*—*vain disquietude*—and *heaping up*. These types may sometimes be found combined in one person ; but very often they have a distinct development.

There are many whose whole life is one vain show, whether in their personal character, their social or commercial position, or in their religious profession. There is nothing solid about them, nothing real, nothing true. The glitter is the most shallow gilding possible. There is nothing deep, nothing intrinsic. All is surface work—all the merest flash and smoke.

Then, again, we find another class, whose life is one continued scene of vain disquietude. You will never find them at ease—never satisfied—never happy. There is always some terrible thing coming—some catastrophe in the distance, the bare anticipation of which keeps them in a constant fever of anxiety. They are troubled about property, about friends, about trade, about children, about servants. Though placed in circumstances

which thousands of their fellow-creatures would deem most enviable, they seem to be in a perpetual fret. They harass themselves in reference to troubles that may never come, difficulties they may never encounter, sorrows they may never live to see. Instead of remembering the blessings of the past, and rejoicing in the mercies of the present, they are anticipating the trials and sorrows of the future. In a word, “*they are disquieted in vain.*”

Finally, you will meet with another class, quite different from either of the preceding—keen, shrewd, industrious, money-making people—people who would live where others would starve. There is not much vain show about them. They are too solid, and life is too practical a reality for anything of that sort. Neither can you say there is much disquietude about them. Theirs is an easy-going, quiet, plodding spirit, or an active, enterprising turn of mind. “They heap up, and know not who shall gather.”

But, reader, remember on all three alike the Spirit has stamped “VANITY.” Well, therefore, might the psalmist, having challenged his heart with the question, *What wait I for?* reply, “My hope is *in Thee.*” No vain show, no vain disquietude, no heaping up for him. He had found an object in God worth waiting for; and, therefore, turning away his eye

from all beside, he says, “ My hope is in Thee.”

This is, indeed, the only true, peaceful, and happy position. The soul that leans on, looks to, and waits for Jesus will never be disappointed. Such a one possesses an exhaustless fund of present enjoyment in fellowship with Christ ; while at the same time he is cheered with the blessed hope that when this present scene, with its vain show, its vain disquietude, and its vain resources, shall have passed away, he shall be with the Lord, to behold His glory, and to be conformed to His image, for ever.

May we, then, be much in the habit of challenging our earth-bound hearts with the searching question, “ *What wait I for ?* ” Am I waiting for some change of circumstances or for the Son from heaven ? Can I look up and, with a full and an honest heart, say, “ Lord, my hope is in Thee ” ?

May our hearts be more thoroughly separated from this present evil world and all that pertains thereto, by the power of communion with those things that are unseen and eternal.

O teach us so the power to know
Of risen life with Thee ;
Not *we* may live while here below,
But Christ our life may be.

ANON.

THE CUP.

“This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”—MATT. XXVI. 28-9.

WHAT is the New Covenant? I think it is simply the expression of the nature of God shining out in righteous love upon the soul brought under it. Israel of old was under the Old Covenant, which was a covenant of works. As a people in the flesh, and standing before God as responsible to keep His law, they could not taste the blessedness of the love of God until the holiness of God had been met. But those under the New Covenant have been removed from off the ground of the responsibility of man in the flesh. Other responsibilities, as Christians, no doubt, are ours, but we are no longer responsible to meet God in the holiness of His nature, for on that ground we are wholly lost. Our responsibility has all been met by Another, God’s righteousness has been satisfied with respect to all we have done and all we are. As it is written, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter III. 18).

Now being thus brought to God, and the question of our responsibility settled, His love can shine out in righteousness unhindered, and both sides of His character meet in our blessing. And now we joy in God. Our joy and delight is found in the knowledge of all that He is, the full glory of God ; and the New Covenant, so far as it goes, is the expression of this glory, seen in *all* its fullness in Christ at the right hand of God (2 Cor. III). We say "as far as it goes," for while the blessings of the New Covenant are ours, the New Covenant blessings, which Israel will enjoy by and by, do not reach up to the full measure of our portion now in Christ.

Now the "cup of blessing, which we bless" is the cup of the New Covenant ; and it is the cup of the New Covenant because in it we get the expression of the heart of God towards us. The blood of Jesus is the expression of God's heart to me. If you ask me what value God sets on me, if you ask me what is the depth of His love to me, ask me the value He sets upon the blood of Jesus, because that is what He gave for me. And thus it is that the shed blood of Jesus is the cup of the New Covenant ; in it I learn God's heart to me. It is not merely that in the cup I see what clears me from all guilt before Him—I do—but what particularly comes forth in it is the love of God. "God commendeth His love toward us,

in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But what a cup it is! Think for a moment of what it cost the Blessed Son of God to bring that cup to me. Look at Him in Gethsemane. See Him as He views that other cup, the cup of wrath. See Him as all the bitterness of the sin He must bear rises before the mind of Him who knew no sin. See Him as He anticipates all the wrath of that Holy God—He who was in the bosom of the Father from eternity. Watch Him as He prays; as the sweat falls to the ground like great drops of blood; as He says in His agony, "Father, if this cup may not pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." "Thy will be done." The Father's will is that I drink the cup of blessing; then He must drink the cup of cursing. "Thy will be done."

And now they come with staves, as to a thief, to take Him. One disciple betrays Him, another denies Him, all forsake Him. Behold Him as He stands before Pilate, before Caiaphas, before Herod. Behold as they buffet Him, as they spit upon Him, as they array Him in a purple robe, crown Him with a crown of thorns and mock Him. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment." He is nailed to a cross of wood, raised aloft from the earth as

unworthy of it. He thirsts : they give Him vinegar to drink. “ He trusted in God that He would deliver Him : let Him deliver Him if He delight in Him.”

But now, at the sixth hour, darkness descends over the land, and darkness unimagined by human mind comes into the soul of the Crucified One. Through all His woes and sufferings heretofore, there has been one thing that has sustained Him—unclouded communion with the Father. But now, at His darkest moment, when not one in this world stands by Him, He passes out of the light and joy of that communion into the experience of being totally forsaken of God. The waters come into His soul, the waves and billows of the indignation of a thrice-holy God pass over His head as He sends forth that unanswered appeal, “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ”

God has veiled that scene in darkness ; we would not attempt to probe the sufferings so veiled. The depth of what passed in His soul during those hours no finite mind knows, nor ever will know. But this we do know—He drinks the cup ; and He *fills* the cup—our cup.

“ This cup is the New Covenant *in My blood.*”

Slowly the cup of wrath is drained, drop by drop ; and as it empties, the cup of blessing fills ; till at last, at the ninth hour, comes the

cry, "It is finished," and He bows His head and gives up the ghost. His cup is empty now, drained to the dregs; and ours is full. The vail is rent, God is declared, the Son of God has spoken. The soldier pierces His side, forth flows the stream, eternal testimony of the love of God.

And now we drink the cup. "Drink ye all of it." Among all our blessings, what is there like the cup? Pointing as it does to the great source of them all, the love of God, what does it not include? "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?"

I am afraid we sometimes get so much occupied with our blessings as to forget what it cost the Lord to procure them for us. It is easy enough to say "My cup runneth over," but let us never forget that if our cup runs over, so did His. But in His cup there were sorrow, wrath, God's holy judgment against sin.

But what a joy to every true heart to see that He is going again to drink the cup. Not the cup of wrath, thank God, no, that is gone for ever, drained at Calvary! But the cup of blessing remains, eternal as the love of God, and He, with us, will drink that cup, in His Father's Kingdom. "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall

see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." He has gone into death, but He stands in life, and with Him through eternity there shall be a countless host, His seed, fruit of the corn of wheat that died. "And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in *His* hand." He is the One who takes away the sin of the world; then He shall have a world without sin. He shall have a world in which everything is in accord with what God is, and everything is to the Father's eternal pleasure; a world in which God shall be supreme over all, and in which God shall be all in all. Then at last, when all creation is one orchestra of praise to its Redeemer-Creator, when the Son shall see restored to the Father that which He took not away, He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. He will look back with complacency to all His woe. He will drink again of the fruit of the vine, and we shall drink with Him.

Thus we look on with joy to the day of His glory; but may it not be ours even now, in the days of His rejection, to drink with Him? It is. In this, the scene where He has been crucified, there is yet a company, not of the world though in it, who own His authority and whose hearts go out to Him whom, not seeing, they love. There is yet a company whose joy it is to be found in His company, showing forth His death, remembering Him in

His humiliation and rejoicing in His exaltation, and giving forth, from hearts touched by Divine Love, the worship the Spirit directs to the Source of that love. They drink the cup. Their glad hearts overflow. The love that enfolds them is reflected back to the One from whose riven side it flowed, and He, too, drinks the cup with them. They look back with satisfaction to the travail of His soul, and He, together with them, is satisfied. And then the Mediator of the Better Covenant, as the Minister of the True Sanctuary, leads the praise ascending to the Father, in whose heart all took its spring.

May it then be ours, during the little time that separates us from the day when He shall appear, to be here as the "King's cup-bearers," presenting to Him the fruits of His own woe and agony from hearts revelling in His matchless love. "Until the day break and the shadows flee away" let us not only look for Him to come "like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Division"; but leaving Lebanon and Amana, Shenir and Hermon, "the lions' dens, and the mountains of the leopards," let us come to Him where He would have us find Him, on "the mountain of myrrh, the hill of frankincense" (Cant. II. 17, IV. 6-8).

W. J. P.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. H.—The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians—that great resurrection chapter—tells us that “there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” That which is sown in the grave is the natural—that is, “a body which had an animal life from the soul,” that which is raised is spiritual, *not spirit*. Of the spiritual body we know but little, but this we do know, that when the Saviour comes for whom we look He will transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory (Phil. III. 21). Christ, then, is the pattern. To His glorious image we shall be conformed (Rom. VIII. 29). We shall be like Him (1 John III. 2). Now the Lord Jesus, in heaven, is not a spirit. He has not laid aside His manhood. There is a Man in heaven on the throne—infinitely more than man we know, but still a man such as He was when risen from the dead. “Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have,” said He to His frightened disciples when He suddenly appeared in their midst. It is to His image—the risen Man—that we shall be conformed. And when that comes to pass we may be sure that our body of glory will be entirely suited to the sphere in which we move and to the varied employments in which we shall then engage. Other details faith leaves in the hands of Him before whose wisdom and power difficulties vanish away.

And then as to Christ’s glorious reign, we must not limit it to the fulfilment of Luke II. 32–3. True, He will receive the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of

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Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. But a crown of *many* diadems shall be His, and that is only one of them. For under His feet—as Son of Man—all things *in the heavens* and upon the earth shall be placed (Eph. I. 10). The earth will be but a part of His wide dominion—the glory of the whole universe will be His. And the Church shall share in His reign as His co-heirs. What will be *your* particular work I cannot say. Priests unto God and His Father we are and shall be, and His endless praise shall employ our lips. Other service of love His grace will appoint. But when the wisest has said his last word on these exalted themes he is obliged to fall back on the saying of the Apostle Paul, “ Now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known ” (I Cor. XIII. 12).

In reference to your next question, it is an old idea that soul and body constitute an unconverted man, and that when regenerate he is “ *spirit*, soul, and body.” But we are not aware of any Scriptural grounds for such a thought. John III. 6 says “ That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” but that is not *the spirit* of a man. Moses in his prayer on two occasions speaks of God as “ The God of the spirits of all flesh ” (Num. XVI. 22, XXVII. 16). The Apostle Paul also, in his reasoning in I Corinthians II., says, “ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save *the spirit of man* which is in him ? ” This passage shows further that the *spirit* is the seat of the understanding. The *soul*, it will be found, is identified with the affections—right or wrong—and with love, hate, and the appetites of the body.

Finally, you will never find in Scripture anything about the *soul* sleeping. When the beggar died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, is that a pictorial representation of his going to sleep and knowing nothing? When the rich man died and in *hades* lifted up his eyes, being in torments, is that a picture of a sleeping, unconscious soul? When the Lord said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," did He mean that he should go fast asleep? When Paul had a desire to depart and to be with Christ, did he mean that he desired to go to sleep and be conscious of nothing more? Such questions carry their own answer and refute the idea of the sleep of the soul. Falling asleep, in Scripture, never means soul-sleep. It is the man who sleeps, but always as identified with the body. So Stephen fell asleep, and devout men carried him to his burial—his body, of course; but the Lord Jesus received his spirit. We trust our answers to your queries are clear though they are necessarily brief.

INQUIRER, SEVEN KINGS.—I John I. 7.—Will you allow me, before I deal expressly with your question, to state briefly what I take to be the force of the verse? There are three points in it, all of which are of prime importance. First, God is in the light, that is, He is now fully revealed in the Person and Cross of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He no longer dwells in thick darkness, no longer gives glimpses of His glory in partial revelations, as in the types and shadows of earlier days. God is in the light. His love, His righteousness, His perfect holiness, His intolerance of all evil is

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now made known, and nowhere so strikingly as at the Cross. In the light of that revelation of God the Christian is set and in it he walks. Secondly, if we walk in the light, it is not in isolation that we walk. Others are there, too, and so we have fellowship one with another. Thirdly, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all, or every sin. How could we be before God, in the light of all that He is, were it not so? Through the efficacy of that Blood we are whiter than snow, or we could not stand in the Divine Presence at all. Such, in few words, is the force of the passage.

But the third clause is much misunderstood. It is taken as teaching that the blood cleanses us every time we fail to walk *according to* the light, whereas the point is not *how* we walk, but *where* we walk—in the light. And it is the blood, in all its abiding value, that fits us to be there.

The *if* of the first line is not in the least suggestive of doubt. It is based on the certainty that the Christian is set in the light and walks in it. Walking *according to* it is quite another matter. Alas! we all come short in that. Our resource is not a fresh application of the blood. The ninth verse shows us what to do. And the cleansing there spoken of is *moral* cleansing, not judicial. The latter is once for all, the former is needed as often as we fail. Is this plain? If not, let us hear from you again.

E. M. A.—Back numbers of *Simple Testimony* may be sent to Mr. Wood, Mission Hall, Fenham Road, Peckham, London. Although intended mainly for believers, you need not shrink from giving this magazine to any one.

“UNTO THE END.”

(Specially for the aged.)

A SPECIAL meeting for the help of *young* Christians was arranged some few months ago in a northern city. A short address was to be given, followed by half an hour's conversation on the subject that the speaker had chosen.

Naturally the topic was selected in view of the peculiar needs of *young* people. The special difficulties of *young* believers were dealt with, the temptations that particularly assail the *young*, and the trials to which they are exposed. Much stress was laid on the fact of their lives still lying ahead of them, fraught with wonderful possibilities, if only they would own Christ as their Lord and Master from day to day, even as they had already trusted Him as their Saviour.

Among those present was an elderly gentleman who had been permitted to attend this meeting for the young at his urgent request. He waited till almost every one had gone, and then approached the speaker.

“ I do not want to complain,” said he, “ but I feel that I have a grievance.”

“ And what may that be ? ” inquired the other, in a sympathetic and kindly manner.

“ Well,” said the old gentleman, “ I feel

that we elderly folks might be considered a bit more. We have no end of meetings for the *young*: classes for *young* men and *young* women; special addresses on the difficulties of *young* Christians. Where do we older ones come in? What about *our* special trials and difficulties? Could you not have a meeting to help *us*? ”

What do *you* think as to this, kind reader? Of course, there are in most places very much fewer old Christians than young, and the urgent need of helping the young presses itself upon the heart of many a servant of Christ. But the older ones deserve every consideration. We owe to them more than words can express. And perhaps a better thing even than a meeting for their special benefit will be a paper in *Simple Testimony* dealing particularly with their case.

So, my young reader, we will bid one another adieu for the present. These pages are not for you. Skip them if you are so minded. You will probably never be an old Christian. I do not mean that you will die in your youth. I mean that *the Lord is coming*, His return draws nearer every day, and evidence multiplies on every hand that the present age is fast approaching its end. It is not likely, I repeat, that you will be on earth long enough to have the special trials and difficulties that come with old age.

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Amongst the trials to which younger Christians are comparative strangers, but which are burdens indeed to those who are of riper years, is

A FAILING MEMORY.

How often one hears some dear aged friend bemoan this fact.

“ In former years I had excellent memory,” says one, “ but now it seems like a sieve. I go to meetings, and greatly enjoy the ministry that is given. But how *soon* it passes from me ! Two or three days afterwards nearly all that I have heard is forgotten. It is the same with what I read. However much I enjoy it at the time, little or nothing remains with me ; and so I lose a great deal that would feed and profit my soul.”

Very heartily do I sympathize with you in your grief as to this. Let me direct you to a passage of Scripture which may help.

In Ruth II. we find that Boaz commanded his young men to help Ruth in her daily gleaning in his fields. They were to suffer her to glean even among the sheaves and were to let fall handfuls purposely for her.

But besides this, they were to draw water from the well, and Ruth, when she was thirsty, was to freely drink from the vessels that contained the water.

Please observe that each evening, on her

return home, Ruth had her measure of barley to show her mother-in-law. *But she had nothing to show for the water she had drunk.* It had refreshed her, and made it easier for her to continue her gleaning in the heat and weariness of the summer day, but it had no visible result.

So with ministry, even when we cannot retain it in our memories. It cheers and refreshes us, lifts up our souls, helps us to realize anew something of the grace to which we owe so much. We go on our way with renewed courage, and find it easier to bear the burdens that a wise and loving Hand has laid upon us, even if we find it impossible to recall what we have heard or read.

Do not then be disheartened, dear aged friend, if your memory does not serve you as it once did. Do not be too much concerned if you forget what you would fain remember. Thank God for the cheer and refreshment that you receive by the way, even though that which has brought it to you finds no permanent place in your remembrance.

You do not, however, forget *everything*, do you? Much passes from your mind, but sometimes you read or hear something that seems to impress itself upon you in such a way that it becomes almost a part of yourself. *That* is the handful let fall purposely for you! It may pass unnoticed by others, but in it you may

hear your Lord's voice to *you*. To retain it requires no effort of the memory. Take it as from the Lord, bind it around your heart, and cherish it as a token of your Lord and Master's special thought for you.

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Another difficulty, or perhaps I should say temptation, which particularly assails Christians of ripe age is the tendency to

LIVE IN THE PAST.

They look back to the days of their early Christian life, and it seems to them that things were brighter then. The spiritual atmosphere was clearer, there were more faith, greater devotedness, a more marked separation from the world and its ways.

All this, perhaps, is true enough. But is that any reason why *your* life and pathway should not be as bright now as in earlier years? The same Saviour sits at God's right hand; the same Father is yours, who has graciously followed you with His love all your days; the same Holy Spirit is here, indwelling you, and as ready as ever to fill you with joy as He leads you to dwell on all that Christ has done, and is; the same Bible is in your hand, from which you have again and again gathered words that have stirred and warmed your heart as no human utterance can do.

I repeat my question in an intenser form. I have asked, Is there any reason why your life should not be as bright to-day as formerly ? I go further, and ask, Is there any reason why it should not be *brighter* ?

You have often pondered the “ beginning of miracles ” by which the Lord Jesus “ manifested forth His glory ” and won the allegiance of His disciples. But have you ever laid to heart this great fact : that *the Lord knows how to keep the good wine to the last* ? (John II.).

Many a draught you have had of good wine that only He can give, the wine of a joy too deep for words. You can conceive nothing better on earth. But your Lord can give you that which is better still : better than the joy you experienced in the fresh early days of your “ first love,” better than all that has gone before.

This is one of the choice treasures reserved for His aged and wayworn saints. He knows how to fill up their declining years with that which shall indeed be to them as the best wine of all : His realized presence ; His nearness in hours of weakness and trial ; bright anticipations of soon (oh, how soon !) being with Himself ; earth with its strifes, its sorrows, and its sighs receding into the eternal past ; heaven with its fullness of joy, its blissful rest, its endless glory coming more and more distinctly into view. This is truly some of the best wine,

kept to the last, for those who have reached the closing years of life's little span.

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In this connection it may be remarked what a cheer and encouragement it often is to younger Christians to witness the joy and steadfastness of those who have pursued the pathway of discipleship for many years. The writer remembers being at a meeting, years ago, which, unfortunately, did not seem to be particularly helpful. The speaker appeared to be in the awkward predicament of having nothing to say, while taking a very long time to say it. But sitting on a front seat was dear old Mr. C——, who for many a long year had served his Master in the Shetland Islands. He was, even then, one of God's aged pilgrims, and the sight of his happy face, his cheery words of greeting afterwards, and his warm handshake have left an abiding impression. It was one of the “little things” that have counted for much with the writer. Again and again the remembrance of it has brought fresh courage, and one has thought, If for *so many years* the Lord has kept and led His servant, filling his declining days with a joy that is so visible to others, can He not, *will* He not, do the same for me?

In this way, quite unconsciously to themselves, aged Christians, when maintained in joy

and brightness, are a testimony to their younger brethren and sisters of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness.

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It must not, however, be imagined that because a Christian is old he is necessarily bright. Alas, the very opposite is often the case. It is a great temptation to one who has behind him a long life of faithful service to rest upon the past, and cease from living, active dependence upon the Lord.

It was so with Uzziah, one of the best of Judah's kings. He was born in troublous times. Amaziah, his father, had served the God of Israel for many years, but at last had “ turned away from following the Lord,” and had fallen by an assassin's sword at Lachish. Uzziah was then sixteen years of age.

Called to the throne thus early in life, he started his long reign with the fear of God before his eyes. “ He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” We read further that “ he sought God,” and that “ God made him to prosper.” His very name, Uzziah, means “ whose help is the Lord,” and of this he proved the truth. No foe could stand against him. In his conflict with the Philistines “ God helped him.” The years sped by, victory after victory attended his arms. “ His name spread far abroad ; for he was marvellously helped.”

Uzziah had now been on the throne for fifty-six years, and had shown by his own shining example how greatly God honours and rewards those of His people who walk in His fear and in dependence upon Him.

The king was now to be numbered among the ancients of Judah. He was in the sunset of his days, with sixty-eight long years behind. Might he not now rest upon his laurels? Surely there was no need for the same vigilance, the same earnest dependence upon a power greater than his own, now that his position was assured.

So Uzziah evidently thought. “ He was marvellously helped,” we read, “ *till he was strong. But when he was strong* his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God ” (2 Chron. xxvi. 16). Oh, pitiful spectacle! To see this dear saint, with such a record of God’s goodness and faithfulness to him all his life, now in the evening of his days turn aside and follow the vain presumption of his own heart!

Uzziah, as a youth of twenty, was seeking the God of his fathers and experiencing His mighty help. At thirty he was still walking with God. At forty it was the same. At fifty, no doubt with increasing faith and increasing joy, he was pursuing the same path. At sixty he was still making God his trust and his defence, and it looked as if his sun would set

amid glories that would seem like heaven upon earth. But at sixty-eight he turned aside, became vain and self-willed, and was smitten by the Lord, and cut off from His holy house until death ended his miserable existence.

What a warning for those who may be tempted to think that old age permits of relaxed vigilance and less dependence. When, after a life of service and testimony, we feel “strong,” *then* is our danger, and *then* the opportunity of the relentless foe who will take full advantage of our self-complacency to blight the evening of our days with a terrible overthrow.

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It is probable that among the readers of this paper there are many who will feel that Uzziah's case bears no manner of resemblance to their own. Instead of a long life of victory they will tell us that theirs has been one of continual defeat. Instead of living for sixty-eight years in happiness and spiritual prosperity and then turning aside to failure and disobedience they know that their footsteps have been dogged with failure from the start, and their sky has always been overclouded, and if there have been gleams of sunshine they have only been fitful and transient. And now that life, with its spoiled record, its missed opportunities, its disappointed hopes, is nearing its close, they feel that they must write themselves

down as utter failures, and that it is now too late to expect any change.

Such may learn a lesson from the story of Shammah. He lived at a time when faith and courage were at a low ebb among the people of God. The Philistines were masters of the land, and there seemed no hope of effectual resistance in any direction. Shammah, however, determines to make a stand for the little bit that was left to Israel. It was only a patch of ground used for growing lentils, probably left unappropriated by the Philistines until then because of the smallness of its value. But Shammah, tired of perpetual defeat, stands in the midst of that lentil patch, and lo! the course of continual failure and defeat is changed for a glorious and crowning victory which *the Lord wrought* by the hand of His servant. The whole story is summed up in two verses (11 and 12) of 2 Samuel XXIII.

Do you feel, dear aged reader, that what is left of your earthly life is but a patch of lentils, a few, a very few, more years at most? But even if only *months* or *weeks* remain, are they not worth making a stand for? If all your past years have witnessed a shameful subjection to the Philistine foe, why not let the sunset of your earthly path be an occasion for a great and glorious victory? The Lord can work it for you even as He did for Shammah. If the lion has well-nigh devoured the whole of your

life, so that you feel you have lived in vain, the Shepherd can deliver from the mouth of the lion two legs, or just *a piece of an ear* (Amos III. 12). Will you not seek His face earnestly and whole-heartedly that this may be so ?

We read in history that on one occasion Napoleon arrived upon a battlefield where his troops had been in hot conflict with the enemy, only to find that the battle was all but lost. The sun was sinking beneath the western horizon, darkness would soon put an end to the strife.

“ There is just time ! ” exclaimed the Emperor, turning to his chief-of-staff. And with characteristic decision he gave his orders and turned defeat into victory.

And thus it may be with you ! Your sun is setting ; the light of your earthly life will soon be gone. *But the final opportunity is now within your reach.* Hitherto the battle has gone against you. Victory, however, may be yours. Let your faith lay hold of the all-conquering Saviour, definitely rely on Him, and see what wonders He can work !

H. P. B.

“ PRAYER is prayer, let it come from the weak or from the strong. It is not the heart or the lip from which it comes, as the Ear that it goes to, which is the great thing.”

THE WASHING OF WATER.

“He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.”—JOHN XIII. 10.

WE must remember that in this passage it is a question of water, not of blood, however necessary the blood of the Saviour be. It is a question of purity, not of expiation.

Note, in the next place, that the Scripture uses two words here which must not be confounded ; one means to wash the whole body—to bathe—the other to wash the hands, the feet, or anything small.

The water itself, employed here as a figure, signifies purification by the word, applied according to the power of the Spirit. One is “born of water”—the whole body is washed : there is a purification of the thoughts and actions by means of an object that forms and governs the heart. It is the reception of Christ by the word. But although the disciples were thus washed, converted, purified in reality, by the Lord’s words, yet they were going to walk in a defiled world, where they could indeed defile their feet. Now this defilement does not suit God’s house, and the love of the Lord does what is needed that the remedy should be soon applied if they contracted defilement which shut them out. Ready to do everything

that they might be blessed, the Lord washes their feet. This action was the service of a slave in those countries, and was the first and constant expression of hospitality, and of the attentive care it claimed (see Gen. XVIII. 4 ; Luke VII. 44).

With this washing of the feet is connected the truth that conversion is not repeated. Once the word has been applied by the power of the Holy Ghost, this work is done, and it can never be undone any more than the sprinkling of blood can be repeated or renewed. But if I sin, I defile my feet : my communion with God is interrupted. Then the Saviour occupies Himself with me in His love.

It will be well to notice here the difference that there is between the Priest and the Advocate—Christ is both, of course. In practice the difference is important. Both offices have to do with intercession ; but the Advocate is for sins that have been committed (1 John II. 1), while the Priest is there that we may not sin, and that goodness may be in exercise in respect of our weakness ; I speak of the Priesthood in heaven (Heb. IV. 15, 16). On the great day of atonement, of which we read in Leviticus XVI., the priest *represented* all the people confessing their sins, with his hands laid on the head of the live goat. It was indeed the work of the Priest, but not properly a priestly act. This work in its reality is

accomplished by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, made once for all. By His one offering He has perfected for ever those that are sanctified, so that we have no more conscience of sins (Heb. x.). But, as belonging to the pilgrim band, Christ, as the great Priest, intercedes for us, in order that we may obtain mercy, and that we may find grace in time of need ; so that in our weakness we may be the objects of the care of God's goodness, and that we may not sin. The Advocate intercedes, when we have sinned, to re-establish the interrupted communion, for it is a question of communion in 1 John 1. Righteousness and propitiation remain always perfect, and form the basis of what is done for us when we have failed (1 John II. 1, 2). The effect of this grace in Christ is that the Spirit applies the word—of which the water is the figure—humbles us in convincing us of sin, and brings us near to God. The story of the red heifer in Numbers XIX. is a very instructive development of this renewing of communion.

The washing of the feet is therefore a service with which Christ is now occupied for us. When by our negligence—for there is never any necessity that we should do it—we have defiled our feet, and we have made ourselves unfit to enter spiritually into the presence of God, Christ purifies us by the word, so that communion may be re-established between our

souls and God. *It is a question of our walk down here essentially.* When the priest among the Jews was consecrated, his body was washed, then he washed his feet and hands at the time of the accomplishment of each service. Here it is only the feet that had to be washed, as it concerns our walk only.

The Lord gives what He had just been doing as an example of humility ; but the spiritual intelligence of what He had done would come when the Holy Ghost had been given. Still, we are called, in this sense also, to wash one another's feet, to apply the word in grace to the conscience of a brother who needs it, and in the humility of which Christ has given the example. But the teaching refers to what Christ is doing for us on high, remaining ever our Servant in grace.

It is indeed a wonderful truth that the Son of the Most High, in infinite grace, humbles Himself even to us, and is pleased in His love to make us fit to enjoy the presence and the glory of God. He took the place of a Servant to accomplish this work of love, and in His love never gives it up. Even in the glory He will still serve us, for love delights to serve (see Luke XII. 37). May the thought of this grace fill our hearts with praise.

J. N. D.

AN UNFAILING RESOURCE.

“My grace is sufficient for thee.”—2 COR. XII. 9.

SHALL we not number this among our most cherished convictions—never to be shaken by earthquake, whirlwind, or storm? No matter what the circumstances—pleasing or painful, dark or bright—His grace is sufficient for us. An ever-present fact, never to be doubted for a single moment.

Happy would it be if deep down in our souls we quietly and firmly believed it. In the abstract of course we do and are ready to proclaim it from the house-top with trumpet voice. But to show that we believe it when trying times come, times of poverty, of bereavement, of broken friendships, of shattered health, when old age creeps on with its increasing infirmities, to show *then* that we believe it is quite another matter. His grace *is* sufficient—there is no doubt about that, but it remains with ourselves to prove it in actual experience. And that is where the rub comes.

You remember the circumstances under which the words were spoken. Paul had been caught up to the third heaven. His experiences were such that he did not know whether he [was in the body or out of it. But such heights had their dangers, and when Paul was no [longer in the third heaven, but had returned to his normal state

of existence, he was liable to be puffed up, so incorrigible is poor fallen human nature. Therefore "a thorn in the flesh" was given unto him—not for correction, but to prevent his being exalted above measure. What "the thorn" was we are not told. There have been many surmises which are only surmises at their best, and therefore worthless. But we know it was something from which Paul would fain be free. And no wonder. None of us like thorns in the flesh, ever rankling, ever irritating, ever reminding us of their presence. But he did the right thing. He went to the Lord about it, to the Master whom he loved and served, and whose work he thought would be hindered by this painful intrusion. Of course the Lord *could* take it away. There is no thorn which He cannot extract, no weakness which He cannot remove, no malady which He cannot cure. Paul was sure of that, and so he prayed for its removal. But no answer came. He would tarry the Lord's leisure then, and patience should have her perfect work. Weary of waiting he prayed the second time. Still no answer. All was silent on the heavenward side. What could be the meaning of this? Was the Lord unmindful of His servant? Had He ceased to care? Had prayer become a fruitless exercise? That could not be. So for the third time he prayed and besought the Lord that the thorn might be taken away. And then the

silence was broken and the answer came, but not in the expected form. The thorn was never to be removed. The apostle should carry it with him all his earthly days. But, said his Lord and Master, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." What an answer! Never afterwards did Paul pray for its removal. He accepted the divine decision. He knew better than to question either the wisdom or the love of it, and all he felt is told out in those heroic words, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Ah, you say, but that was Paul, and *I* am not Paul. Of course you are not. You are simply yourself, a tried and feeble saint, with some thorn which is hard to bear, some burden heavy to carry, some clog that cripples your activities, some chain that keeps you from moving far away. And you have prayed, and prayed, and prayed, and nothing comes of it, and the thorn is still there. But is not the Lord—yours as much as Paul's—saying to you in tones of tenderness and sympathy, "My grace is sufficient for *thee*"? Does He not know, does He not care? Will you not

receive the thorn from His hand? Will you not now prove in *your* experience the truth of those blessed words which were not only spoken to Paul, but are written for you? His will is wise and good. Can you not say, "*Even so,*" and will you not ask Him to help you to learn for your own self, day by day, that His grace *is* sufficient even for you?

And then what a witness for Him you will be! What a testimony to others of the all-sufficiency of Christ to sustain the heart in dark and adverse days and to give songs in the night. It is a lovely sight when the life of an aged, or infirm, or suffering saint is like a glorious sunset, flooding the heavens with its golden sheen and flushing every fleck of cloud with crimson and purple. There is much in such a life that brings glory to God, that encourages the hearts of all who come in touch with it, strengthening their faith and making them feel what boundless resources there are in Christ on which faith can ever draw. Fellow-pilgrim, may such a life be yours. Look up into the open heavens and think of the One who is there—One who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities and who is able to succour in every trying hour. Let your will lose itself in His. Learn to lean upon Him and you shall find that His grace is sufficient for you and that His strength is perfected in your weakness.

HEAVEN OUR HOME.

THE joys of that home are threefold. The Father will have His joy, the Son—"Firstborn among many brethren"—will have His, and we shall have ours. But the best of us but feebly apprehend the things which God has prepared for us there. What sacred anticipations fill the soul as we contemplate them! What rest and peace, what fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore await us in that blessed home where love eternal reigns.

Conceive what a joy it will be for the Father to surround Himself with the "many sons" "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1. 4), and see in them at last the fulfilment of that which He had purposed for them in a bygone eternity. What delight, what satisfaction to His heart to see them there, each one conformed to the image of His Son in glory!

Already we are sons, accepted in the Beloved, children, born of God, whose privilege it is to behold the manner and the measure of the Father's love. Each believer is as truly a child of God now as he will be when in the Father's house above. He is as truly loved now as he will be then. Moreover, he has been set in this near relationship by the sovereign act of God, and according to His eternal purpose. No power can ever take him out of

it. It is an ever-abiding relationship which none can break.

May we not reverently say again that the Father's cup will be full when He beholds every member of the redeemed and heavenly household in the image of the Firstborn, and sees those who were once afar off—prodigals, but even now clothed in the best robe and feasted (Luke xv.)—at home in their everlasting abode?

Jesus will be there. He will have His joy in the “many brethren,” even as the Father will have His in the “many sons.” He will see in them the fruit of the travail of His soul and will be satisfied. On earth he had declared that His Father was their Father. He had died that they might share this privilege, and lived to maintain them in all its blessedness. But then we shall know the meaning of those words “My brethren” in all their fullness of blessing. What a joy, too, it will be to Him to present one and another to His Father as having confessed Him before men on earth. He will confess their names as those who had walked worthily of their relationship and kept their garments undefiled (Matt. x. 32).

But if we may discriminate between the many joys of that bright day we venture to think that not the least will be when the Church for which He died, and for which He now lives and labours, will be presented to

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Himself, "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. XIX. 8). As we sometimes sing:—

"Thine eye in that bright cloudless day
Shall, with supreme delight,
Thy fair and glorious bride survey,
Unblemished in Thy sight."

Then His cup will run over ; then, indeed, He will be more than satisfied. He will rest in His love and joy over us with singing !

It is sweet to contemplate the whole redeemed family dwelling together in holy, happy concord. No jarring notes, no envious feelings, no bickerings will mar the harmony of that day. Every ingredient of our fallen nature will be left behind. Love alone will be the atmosphere of that home. Even now "he that dwells in love dwells *in* God" : how much more when we dwell *with* Him ! *Now* we are called to love each other with a pure heart fervently, and it is because we love the brethren that we know we have passed from death unto life ; *then* the very nature we possess will be love, and that alone. Each will reciprocate the affection of the other and display the qualities of the source from which their nature springs. Unalloyed love will fill every bosom ; human and divine affections commingling ; each having the same object, and all having the same feelings. What family unity will be enjoyed !

If regrets are possible there, it will surely be because so little true, brotherly love and family unity had marked us on our way to the Father's house. How love displayed itself in all the words and ways of Jesus! What patience marked His footsteps, what long-suffering, what forbearance with "His own"! We are to love each other as He loves us. The proof of our having learned at His blessed feet is shown in our thus loving one another.

How the contemplation of heaven as our home should lead us to cultivate its affections now: to cast the mantle of charity over the failings of our brethren, to pray as to their faults instead of exposing them, and to seek their restoration and spiritual well-being. It should lead us to cultivate that charity which thinks no evil, bears no grudge, and forgives injuries as Christ has forgiven us. It should lead us to refrain from a carping, criticizing spirit, which makes a man an offender for a word, and sees evil where none exists; to walk in meekness, and when reviled to revile not again, to do good to our enemies and pray for them who despitefully use us. These are some of the ways in which the love that shone so fully in Jesus should be reproduced in us.

Sometimes His love took the form of rebuke when the conduct of any of His disciples called it forth, but it did not alter the love itself. Neither should it in us. But, as we have said,

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in that Home all these will be things of the past, and if remembered above will only add to the gratitude of our hearts at the grace of the Father and the Son which led them to bear with us so patiently and to love us so perfectly. The Holy Spirit will also have His joy and the unbroken communion of the Holy Ghost will then be enjoyed for evermore.

Would that our souls anticipated more ardently the joys of the Father's house! We shall then be together and that for ever. Together with Him, "together with them," sums up our happy prospect. We shall be with the Father and the children, with the Redeemer and the redeemed, with the Bridegroom and the bride, with the Spirit and the members whom He has now baptized into one body. Gazing on Jesus we shall see the Father. The Father looking on us will see Jesus. "I in them, Thou in Me," we shall then be perfect in one.

H. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

999.—John XIII. 10.—We should carefully distinguish between the atonement made by the Lord Jesus when He suffered for us on the Cross and the work of the Holy Spirit in us who believe. By the former our sins have been blotted out; by the latter we have been born again—the word of the Lord being the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to effect it. We are "born of water

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and of the Spirit," the water being a symbol of the word. This answers to the first of the two washings of John XIII. 10, and is never repeated, for, in the nature of things, no one is born again the second time. The washing of the feet, named in the same verse, is another matter. This we often need. It is a figure of the service of love which the Lord Jesus Christ carries on to fit His saints for having communion with Him in that heavenly scene where He is gone. On this we need not enlarge, as it is dealt with in a paper in our present issue entitled "The Washing of Water."

We sincerely sympathize with you in the trying circumstances of which you speak in the remainder of your letter. As we write, Psalm XXXVII. comes into our mind. We beg you to read the first thirteen verses. They seem peculiarly suited to your case. It is painful to suffer for doing what is right and good. Were it for some fault it would be another thing. But a Christian is often called to endure this trial. In your case it is a perpetual chafing, a veritable thorn in the flesh. Bear it patiently, for this is acceptable with God. "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil," says the Psalmist. We are apt to do so. Every impulse of our fallen nature would prompt us to pay people back in their own coin, to render evil for evil, grudge for grudge. Such is not the Lord's way. He has left us a better example. "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." In His steps we

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have to follow, and in doing so God will be glorified and we shall be blessed. Take all from God's hand as David did when Shimei cursed (2 Sam. xvi. 9, 10). Leave it with Him and go on your way rejoicing in the Lord. "Fret not yourself because of evil doers." Their day will soon be over, yours is an eternal day. In the light of this you may well remember the Lord's words in Matthew v. 44, "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Such are the blessed principles of heaven's kingdom which our Saviour will give us grace to practise if it be humbly sought.

W. M.—It is quite true that the Jewish sacrifices were types of the one sacrifice for sins offered by the Lord Jesus at Calvary. But they were only the shadow and not the very image. No sacrifice could adequately set forth that great sacrifice by which God has been glorified in all the attributes of His being, and our sins for ever put away.

In the Mosaic economy there was no sacrifice for high-handed and wilful sins, but there was for sins of ignorance. This excites your wonder, but such was the case. If a man sinned wilfully he had to bear the consequences. Achan sinned, but no atonement was suggested for his misdeeds, nor for those of the rebellious son in Deuteronomy

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XXI. 18. And even when Moses sinned in failing to honour God before the people at a critical moment, no sacrifice served to atone for the failure of that man of God, and he had to die on the wilderness side of Jordan (Deut. III. 23-27). Grace can pardon any sin as assuredly Moses' sin was pardoned, but grace does not exclude us from the holy government of God.

As to the reason why the Jews offer no sacrifices now, we believe none have been offered since the destruction of their temple and the overthrow of Jerusalem. Is not this in fulfilment of Hosea III. 4? "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice," etc. We think it is. When restored to their own land again, and they come under the New Covenant of Jeremiah XXXI. 31-4, sacrifices will be offered once more on their altar (Ezek. XL. 19-27). Not then to atone for sins, but to keep before the mind and heart the Sacrifice of Calvary, in virtue of which their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more.

J. S. R.—No one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit till he has believed the gospel, though we fully acknowledge that it is by the gracious work of the Spirit that he is led to believe. We discriminate between the operations of the Spirit on the conscience and heart and His personal indwelling. By the former, the individual is made alive to his needs, which find their answer in Christ; by the latter he is sealed as one of God's own. This difference should be well observed.

THE THREE WEATHERCOCKS; OR, FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

AGAIN and again in Scripture, particularly in the epistles of Paul, we find the three Christian graces, as they are sometimes called, in close companionship. Instances of this may be found in Corinthians, Colossians, Thessalonians, and the epistles to Timothy. But we need not go further for the purpose than the opening verses of that grand evangelic chapter, the fifth of Romans. Here we read of the FAITH that justifies and gives entrance into the present favour of God; the HOPE which fills us with joy and with bright anticipations, and the LOVE, commended to us in the fact that Christ died on our behalf, and now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

In this paper we shall examine some of the reasons why the faith of Christians to-day is not more constant; why hope does not gaze with a more steadfast and unwavering eye upon the future, and why love, divine, infinite, and inexplicable as it is, is not better understood and appreciated.

I. FAITH.

During a recent visit to the city of Seville, our attention was directed to the famous cathedral tower, surmounted at the height of 350 feet by the gigantic figure of a woman.

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This figure, though weighing nearly three tons, is yet so finely balanced that it turns at the slightest breeze, and thus serves the purpose of a weathercock. Upon inquiry we were informed that the statue is supposed to represent Faith, and that many a jest is current in other parts of Spain at the expense of the good people of Seville for having chosen a *weathercock* to represent a virtue which should be, above all things, constant.

The tower, upon the summit of which the figure revolves, was built hundreds of years ago, and was then surmounted, not by a weathercock, but by an immense iron globe plated with burnished gold and which is said to have reflected the sun's beams so brilliantly as almost to rival the sun itself !

Surely the burnished globe is a far more fitting symbol of faith than the weathercock. For the globe, in receiving the rays that fell upon it, was transformed into the likeness of the sun itself. Faith receives the revelation that God has been pleased to give of His grace, the shining of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ ; sets her seal to it, and thus the sinner is transformed into a Christian, the child of wrath into a child of God.

But however aptly the globe with its cover of burnished gold may symbolize true faith, it is to be feared that the faith of many rather resembles the fickle weathercock.

A woman and her little daughter attended a gospel meeting one Sunday evening. The preacher dwelt upon the fact that *assurance* of salvation is the privilege of the believer, and that it comes by a simple reliance upon the Word of God. He read the thirty-ninth verse of Acts XIII. : " By Him all that believe are justified from all things," and observed that this was not Paul's opinion but the Word of the Living God. Whether they feel it or realize it is not the question. The point is, what God says. Our hearts may say, " If you were truly justified you would feel different, and because you don't feel different, therefore you are not justified." But " God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things," and *He* says that believers "*are* justified." He that trusteth his heart is a fool ; but he that stakes his confidence upon a clear statement of the Word of God is a true child of wisdom.

All this fell like gracious balm from heaven upon the distressed repentant soul of the poor woman. For she had claimed the Saviour as her own ; she had knelt by her bedside and with tearful eye had confessed that she was a sinner indeed, with no hope but Christ and the precious blood He had shed for her. She, then, was one of the " all that believe," and to her those glorious words applied, " are justified from all things."

No wonder the words framed themselves

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into song in her happy heart ; no wonder joy and peace expressed themselves in smiles, so much so that the little lassie trotting home from the meeting by her mother's side remarked :

“ Mammy, you *do* look glad to-night.”

“ Yes, dearie, your poor mammy is very, very glad.”

“ What are you so glad about ? ” said the child.

“ Why, because I'm justified from ‘ all things.’ Didn't you hear how the preacher explained it ? ”

“ But how do you know ? ” continued the little questioner.

“ It says so in the Bible. And the Bible is God's Word. It says, ‘ All that believe are justified,’ and your mammy is one that believes in Jesus. So, you see, it's quite true.”

With childlike faith and simplicity the little lassie believed what her mother told her. She believed her mother's word, as her mother had believed *God's* Word, and rejoiced accordingly. The humble cottage was a home of joy that night, as mother and child read over the golden words together, “ All that believe are justified from all things.”

Monday came, with its cares and toil. And this particular Monday seemed to be a day of special worry. Everything went wrong. The poor woman, burdened and weary, felt altogether upset. A feeling of despondency crept over her.

"Surely I should not be feeling like this if I were *really* justified from all things," she thought. "I wonder if, after all, I made a mistake last night." And her faith, like the statue on the cathedral tower of Seville, swung round to the north as the bleak wind of trial and disappointment came sweeping down upon her.

And thus her little daughter found her as she came bouncing in from school. Amazed at the sad look upon her mother's face, she asked :

"Why, mammy, what's the matter? Why aren't you still glad? Aren't you still 'justified from all things'?"

"Oh, I don't know; I don't know what to think. I don't feel to-day as I did yesterday."

The child said nothing, but went to the side-table where a Bible lay, and opened it. The place where "the beautiful text" was had a marker between its leaves. The text itself was marked by a pencil line, and on the page were some *watermarks*—marks made by the falling of tears of joy and thankfulness.

Eagerly the little girl looked at the now familiar passage. Then, Bible in hand, she ran back to her mother.

"Mammy," she said, "the text is still in the Bible! Don't cry. Look! It's the same to-day as it was on Sunday. So you're still 'justified from all things.' Don't you see, mammy?"

The child had taught her mother a lesson. God's Word is as true amid the cares of

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Monday as amid the bright privileges of Sunday ; as true when the heart is burdened and oppressed as when it raises a song of grateful praise ; as true when we feel just as we think we ought not to feel as when our feelings are everything we could wish. Blessed be God for this !

Let not our faith, then, be like the weathercock on the tower, swinging round in response to every wind that blows. Rather let it resemble the burnished gold that received the sunbeams and reflected them, so that all who looked upon it could see that it dwelt in the sunshine.

II. HOPE.

On a village steeple in the Midlands there is a certain weathercock which has, so far as I know, nothing remarkable about it, but which became an object of profound interest to a little boy. His father had promised to take him to the seaside if the weather should be fine on the following day. And he had added, " It will probably be fine if the wind keeps in the south."

From that moment Charlie could think of nothing but the way the wind was blowing. He lost his interest in games and books, and sat by the window watching the weathercock on the old steeple. If it swung to the east or the west, or veered round towards the north, Charlie felt despondent and ready to cry. If it

steadied itself towards the south, he was in an ecstasy of delight, for that, according to his father's word, would probably mean a fine day to-morrow, and an early start for Rhyl or New Brighton.

That was the little lad's *hope*. We, too, who belong to Christ, have a hope, "that blessed hope," as it is called in Titus II. 13. Given to us in greater detail in other passages (notably I Thess. IV. 13-18, and I Cor. XV. 51-54) this hope may be briefly stated as the expectation of the Christian that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again, first into the air to gather all who are His, whether alive or dead, to Himself, and subsequently to reign with His saints over the earth for a thousand years.

In apostolic times the weathercock of expectation pointed steadily in the direction of the promised advent. Converted pagans flung their idols on the rubbish-heap. Not only did they serve the living and true God, but they also *waited for His Son from heaven* (I Thess. I. 10). And this, as we might expect, produced a marked effect in their life and conduct, for "every man that hath *this hope* in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (I John III. 3).

Years passed, and the weathercock began to oscillate. It no longer pointed steadily and constantly in the direction of the Church's wonderful and unique hope. "Evil servants"

arose who said, "My lord delayeth His coming," and Christians began to occupy themselves more and more with the affairs of earth, until the "bishops" of the Church vied with the princes of the empire in wealth and pomp and pageantry. And even godly, earnest men forgot that there was anything for the Christian to cherish as an immediate hope but the joyful anticipation of being absent from the body, present with the Lord. The gaze of the Church became a grave-ward, rather than a sky-ward one.

Centuries rolled by, and the weathercock swung round once more to its original direction. With astonished hearts men began again to use the watchword of the early Church, "Maran-atha!"—"the Lord is coming!" They searched the Scriptures with amazement at their own short-sightedness in having overlooked or misread the passages, emphatic in their declarations and unmistakable in their meaning, which speak of the Lord's coming. On all sides the "midnight cry" was heard, and in tens of thousands of rejoicing souls the forgotten hope became once more a real and living hope.

But, sorrowful to say, men have deliberately attempted to tamper with the weathercock. They have furtively climbed up, as it were, and laid their hand upon it and turned it in various directions.

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There are some who turn it round to face *the past*, and tell us that the Lord has already come; that He came at the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century, and that no other coming is to be looked for.

Others turn the weathercock in the direction of certain events which, say they, must take place before the Lord comes; such events as the preaching of the gospel (of the kingdom) to all nations; the re-gathering of Israel to the land of promise, etc. Some would have us believe that Antichrist will first come, and that the Church must pass through that great and fiery tribulation from the very *hour* of which the Lord has declared that He will save her (Rev. III. 10).

But when the Scriptures alone are our guide, and they are read with some understanding of the remarkable and unique place that the Church, as such, has in the purpose of God, it is easily seen that the weathercock points truly and steadfastly in the direction of *the Lord's coming for His people* as the hope of our hearts, and that we should live from day to day expecting to hear His voice call us to meet Him in the air.

III. LOVE.

It may seem a strange thing to say, but I say it after considerable thought, and some years of experience in talking to people of all kinds, that there is *hardly anything so little understood by Christians generally as the Love of God*.

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When I say "the love of God," I do not mean His love to the world, His love for those who have sinned against Him with hard hearts and a high hand. *That* love is beyond all comprehension, too great, too utterly stupendous for mere words to set it forth. I refer rather to that special love which God has to us as His children, the Father's love to those who belong to His dear Son.

Would it be too sweeping an assertion if I were to say that ninety-nine Christians out of every hundred connect the love of God with His goodness toward them, His daily care for them, the many mercies He has showered upon them? Do you doubt it? Then put the matter to the test. Take a bundle of gospel books, and when next you have a day's holiday visit some of the villages in your neighbourhood. Go from door to door with your gospel papers, and wherever you find a Christian, ask him how he knows that God loves him.

If he replies, "God loves everybody," point out the distinction, to which I have already referred, between God's love to the world and His love to His own people, and ask again, How do you know that God loves *you*? If I am not much mistaken, in a large proportion of cases you will receive a reply something like this :

"Well, God has been very good to me : He has brought me through many a trial, and

though I have had my ups and downs, yet here I am to-day, still trusting and still following."

Perhaps, however, some kind reader of these lines is rather astonished that one should regard such a reply as anything but very right and good. Well, far be it from any of us to find fault with it. Thank God for all the cause He gives us to speak of His delivering mercy in time of trial, and of His abundant goodness and constant care.

But, I ask, what about those who have *not* been delivered in the hour of their trouble? A Christian who intended to cross to America by the ill-fated *Titanic*, but who was prevented by some unforeseen event, took it as a great proof of God's love that He allowed that event to hinder him from taking that boat. But what about the Christians who were *not* thus providentially hindered, who *did* take that boat, and who went down with her in mid-ocean? Were not they equally the objects of God's infinite love?

God has mercifully and providentially intervened in times of persecution and distress on behalf of one and another of His poor troubled people. The readers of such a book as *A Thousand Miles of Miracle* will be at no loss to quote instances of this. On the other hand, numbers were *not* delivered, no "miracle" of providential mercy was wrought on their behalf. They were left to be butchered with awful cruelty

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by their savage persecutors. Did not God love *them* as much as those that He was pleased to succour and deliver ?

What about Paul ? The mercies which *we* enjoy every day, and which we are accustomed sometimes to speak of as “our *common* mercies,” were often denied to him. He knew what it was to lack food and clothing, to have no roof over his head, and to go from day to day in danger of his life (1 Cor. iv. 11). Had God no love for Paul ?

Let me go further. Let me speak for a moment of Him who came from eternal riches to be poor for love of us. He was acquainted with grief ; worse off than the foxes with their forest lairs and the birds with their roosting-places. He had not where to lay His head. Others could go to their own houses, while *He* had to spend the night on the lone mountain-side (John vii. 53 and viii. 1). Mercies which you and I take as matters of course were withheld from Him. Why ? Was He not then, as much as ever, the worthy object of His Father’s infinite and everlasting love ? Ay, that He was. Then why the poverty, suffering, grief during His lifetime on earth, when it was no question of making atonement ?

Mark the answer : *Because the Father’s love does not express itself in the form of earthly and temporal mercies*, or, at least, is not to be measured by them, though He may give us

many, and we may rightly take them all from His gracious, loving hand.

God is good to *all* His creatures. He bestows His mercies on the unconverted as well as upon those who belong to Christ (Matt. v. 45).

And this brings me to our third weathercock. It is an old story, the well-known one of Mr. Spurgeon's visit to a Christian farmer. I was relating it to a God-fearing widow, by whose fireside I was sitting. She had been passing through the deep waters of sore and bitter trial, and the enemy had taken advantage of this to sow in her heart the seeds of distrust and doubt. She felt that God had forgotten her ; that, at all events, His love was not such a reality towards her as towards others.

So I told her of Mr. Spurgeon's visit to the farmer and of his inquiry when he noticed that in the place of the usual bird, or fish, or arrow, a *text*, " God is love," had been placed upon the old barn as a weathercock.

" Do you mean to suggest by that," he asked, " that God's love is as changeable as the wind ? "

" Nay, nay," replied the farmer, " my meaning is that GOD IS LOVE, *whichever way the wind blows!* "

This is the lesson we need to lay to heart. We must in no wise measure God's love by our circumstances. The gentle breezes from the south may blow upon us, bringing ease

and prosperity ; or the biting blasts may sweep down from the frozen north, bringing trial, grief, suffering, and disappointment. But nothing changes the love of God. The great, grand truth is that He loves us as He loves His Son. Wonderful words ! but the most wonderful thing about them is that they are *true*. Read the glowing words for yourself in John xvii. 23 : “ Thou . . . hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”

How did the Father express His love to His Son when here on earth ? He expresses His love to you and me in the same way. His face *always* shines with radiant delight upon His beloved Son. And His face *always* shines with that same infinite delight upon us !

Let us pause and worship ! It is not because of anything in us, but because we are Christ's, we in Him and He in us, that we are the objects of such love.

Lying before me on the table is a picture cut from an illustrated paper. It is the photo of a small hotel in some country town in Arizona. Stretched across the full width of the building, above the door, is a long board bearing the words :

“ FREE BOARD EVERY DAY THE SUN DOESN'T
SHINE.”

If an unwary traveller should enter the hotel on some gloomy day and demand a meal

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free of charge on the strength of this inscription, he would, of course, be blandly asked by the proprietor :

“ My dear sir, do you really imagine that the sun has ceased to shine ? It may be gloomy *here*, but surely the sun is still shining in all its glorious brightness ! ”

And so with us. We might make the most extravagant promises for the day upon which the sun of God's love does not shine. For such a day will never, never be. In winter as in summer, on dark days as on bright ones, the Father's love to us abides in its infinite greatness, *because His love to His Son remains the same.*

H. P. B.

SONG IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND.

“ What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”

PSALM LVI. 3.

IS GOD for me ? I fear not, though all against
me rise ;
When I call on CHRIST, my Saviour, the host of
evil flies.
My Friend—the LORD ALMIGHTY, and He who
loves me—GOD !
What enemy shall harm me, though coming as a
flood ?
I know it—I believe it—I say it fearlessly—
That GOD, the Highest, Mightiest, forever loveth me.
At all times, in all places, He standeth at my side ;
He rules the battle's fury, the tempest, and the tide.

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A rock that stands for ever is Christ my Righteous-
 ness,
 And there I stand unfearing in everlasting bliss ;
 No earthly thing is needful to this my life from
 Heaven,
 And nought of love is worthy, save that which
 Christ has given—
 Christ, all my praise and glory, my light, most
 sweet and fair ;
 The ship in which He saileth is scatheless everywhere ;
 In Him I dare be joyful as a hero in the war,
 The judgment of the sinner affrighteth me no more.

There is no condemnation—there is no hell for me ;
 The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see :
 For me there is no sentence—for me death has no
 sting,
 Because the Lord who loves me shall shield me with
 His wing.
 Above my soul's dark waters His Spirit hovers still ;
 He guards me from all sorrows, from terror and
 from ill ;
 In me He works, and blesses the life-seed He has
 sown ;
 From Him I learn the “ ABBA,” that prayer of
 faith alone.

And if in lonely places, a fearful child, I shrink,
 He prays the prayers within me I cannot ask or
 think ;
 The deep unspoken language, known only to that
 love
 Who fathoms the heart's mystery from the throne
 of light above.

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His Spirit to my spirit sweet words of comfort saith,
How God the weak one strengthens who leans on
Him in faith ;

How He hath built a City of love, and light, and song,
Where the eye at last beholdeth what the heart
had loved so long.

And there is mine inheritance—my kingly palace-
home ;

The leaf may fall and perish—not less the spring
will come ;

Like wind and rain of winter, our earthly sighs and
tears,

Till the golden summer dawneth of the endless year
of years.

The world may pass and perish—Thou, God, wilt
not remove,

No hatred of all devils can part me from Thy love ;
No hungering nor thirsting—no poverty nor care,
No wrath of mighty princes can reach my shelter
there.

No angel and no devil, no throne, nor power, nor
might ;

No love—no tribulation—no danger, fear, nor fight ;
No height—no depth—no creature that has been,
or can be,

Can drive me from Thy bosom—can sever me from
Thee.

My heart in joy uleapeth, grief cannot linger there,
She singeth high in glory, amid the sunshine fair :
The sun that shines upon me is JESUS and His love ;
The fountain of my singing is deep in Heaven above.

PAUL GERHARDT.
1606-1676.

“ I WILL COME AGAIN.”

JOHN XIV. 3.

AS you read the words of the text at the head of this paper do they not seem to inspire your heart with hope ? Does not the thought of *His* coming again make your very face light up with joy ? Are you not delighted to think that you will see the face of the One whom not having seen you love, and who has been absent so long ? Yes, it cheers us to know that *He* says “ *I will* come again, and receive you unto Myself.” Oftentimes we say “ I will,” and our “ I will ” does not stand, and our intentions are not fulfilled. But when the Lord Jesus Christ says “ I will,” we have something sure to rest upon. His word shall never pass away.

When we wake up in the morning and face the daily duties soon to be commenced, does the thought of the Lord’s near return enter into our minds ? Why should we leave the most important thing of all to be thought about at some more convenient hour of the day ? Remember, it may be that the Lord’s return is nearer than you expect. You will need to bear in mind His words, “ I will come again,” if you want to keep bright throughout the day.

What about the middle of the day with all

its duties and its cares ? As one who has had some years of city life, and seen what rush and tear means, let me suggest that you keep this fact of His coming well in your mind. It will prove *a wonderful help, a great encouragement*, as you engage in your varied tasks. It will enable you to go through all that is before you with a light though tender heart and a bright countenance. Do you say, How can it be done when there is so little time to spare ? Well, look out for the spare moments, even though they be few, and think a little of what these four words mean—“ *I will come again.*” There are times when you have to fix your attention on business, but take care to cultivate the habit of setting your mind “on things above, *not* on things on the earth ” (Col. III. 2). That is the great thing. If you are setting your mind on things here, how can you expect to be a bright, happy Christian ? Why, the fact of the Lord’s coming, although perhaps ashamed to own it in so many words, you would rather not be reminded of at all !

Then at the end of the day, whether it be early or late, this thought, “ I will come again,” will give you cause to render thanks for all the help it has been to you. Some days, try as you will, things will not go as you want them to. They seem bound to go wrong, though sometimes it may be the result of our own mistakes and carelessness. Then without,

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of course, being indifferent to business affairs you may look up and say, “ All’s well.” For remember, “ Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him ” (Ps. CIII. 13). He is coming again, “ for yet a little while, and He that shall come *will* come, and will not tarry.” What a peaceful thought to carry with you as you go to rest for the night.

A few years ago there was nothing approaching the pleasure-seeking on the Lord’s day that there is now. Men are “ lovers of pleasure *more than* lovers of God ” (2 Tim. III. 4). Watch the political men of to-day, agitating the whole world from one end to the other ! Think of the “ wars and rumours of wars ” of which we continually hear, notwithstanding all the Peace Societies and Conferences ! Surely the time of our Lord’s return is nigh at hand. May we be watching for Him, “ for *now* is our salvation *nearer than when we believed* ” (Rom. XIII. 11).

Far spent already is the night,
In hope we hail the day
Of the belovèd Lord’s return
To wipe all tears away.

Jesus, at the appointed hour,
In glory shall appear ;
Then, fashioned by His mighty hand,
We shall His image bear.

L. A. A.

FREE FROM SIN.

ROMANS VI.

TWICE over in this chapter is the believer said to be free from sin. But this does not mean that he has no sin, and the reader will greatly err if he thinks it means anything of the kind. The holiest man on earth is not free from sin in that sense, though we have heard of some well-meaning folks who think they have come to it. The word "free" has no such meaning here. It is freedom as opposed to bondage, not freedom as implying that sin is gone. If I buy a horse and the seller guarantees it to be free from vice, I know what that means. And I also know what is meant when some one tells me that he was once a slave, but is now a free man. It is in the latter sense the word is used in this sixth chapter of Romans, where sin is viewed as one who reigns and exercises dominion over men. From his slavery the believer has been made free.

The doctrine which the apostle is unfolding here flows out of the great truth so blessedly stated in the last two verses of the preceding chapter. There he shows how God's grace abounds over all our sin. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." If sin, like a desolating sea, has rolled over the wide earth, carrying death to every corner of it, grace has

turned back its proud waves and brought in life—eternal life. Sin has reigned, and death in every sense of that pregnant and woeful term is the result. But now grace reigns through righteousness, and life is the result, even eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If that be true, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" says some one. "God forbid" is the apostle's emphatic rejoinder. Grace gives no sanction to sin. Some legal souls, in our day, are much afraid of abounding grace. They think it weakens the forces that make for holy living. "If you are saved with an everlasting salvation, then you may go and do what you like," say they. But how does the apostle meet this false reasoning? By bringing forward a fact of which he had not yet spoken, namely that we have died to sin in that we have died with Christ. And thus death—our death with Christ—has set us free for ever from our old master, whose abject slaves we were. We are now entitled to look sin boldly in the face and to say, "O, sin, we are thy slaves no longer. The authority thou hadst over us once is gone. By God's help we will nevermore yield the members of our body unto thee for the purposes of unrighteousness. Evermore we are dead to thee. We belong to another master now, and Him only will we serve" (*v. 13*).

“Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” Such are the impressive words of verse eleven. And this reckoning is to be always and everywhere maintained. For it is vital truth intended to have a most potent influence over our daily life. But observe that to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin is not the whole of the reckoning ; it is but a half of it. The remainder is, “Reckon yourselves to be . . . alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Dead to sin—*alive to God !*

At this point let us recall the various ways in which God is presented to our souls in the preceding chapters—this God to whom we are now to reckon ourselves to be alive. It is by His grace that we have been freely justified (III. 24). It is He who has set forth the Lord Jesus to be a propitiation through faith in His blood (III. 25). It is He who justifies the ungodly (IV. 5), and with whom we are now at peace (V. 1). To Him we have been reconciled, His love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us, and in Him we make our boast (V. 5, 10, 11). Such are some of the blessed ways in which God is set before us in the early chapters of this epistle, and every one of them powerfully appeals to us to reckon ourselves henceforth to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How helpful and stimulating it is to have God thus before our souls—the God to whom we owe everything, and who commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He is no stranger-God. We know Him. His perfect love has cast out fear. He is the Fountain of living waters from whence flow those streams that have quenched our thirst for ever. It is not only the Lord Jesus, our precious Saviour, who has become our song and our salvation, but God Himself is the One in whom we triumph. “We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It ought not to be hard, then, to reckon ourselves alive unto such a God. We should count it our high and joyous privilege thus to do, as it is indeed our intelligent service (Rom. xii. 1).

But in whose strength can this be done? Not in our own. The Holy Spirit now indwelling us is our Helper, even as Christ is our Helper when we turn our eyes heavenward. But as the Holy Spirit speaks not of or, more exactly, from Himself (John xvi. 13), neither does He act from Himself alone. The Saviour on high and the Holy Spirit below are one in the strengthening of the believer to live to God. And we are thus strengthened in having a divine Object to engage our hearts, even God Himself, revealed in Christ our Lord.

The way of holiness and peace is not in

being continually occupied with sin in our endeavour to free ourselves from its bondage. *We have been made free.* "Our old man is crucified with Christ" (v. 6). In His death not only have our sins been dealt with, but our old sinful self also. And now practical freedom is found in reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin and in having our heart and mind engaged with God, who is only good, and with the things of the Spirit. Let us stand fast in the faith of all this. If it is thus that the truth of the gospel speaks, may we believe it and bless God for such a deliverance. To believe, to reckon as God bids us reckon, is the first step on the road that leads to all this being wrought out in our everyday life.

We add one word more. "Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (v. 14). Let us thank God out of a full heart that it is so. Were we under law we should be under the curse and in sheer despair, for law gives sin its strength, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians xv. 56. Law enables sin to press home upon the conscience our many unfulfilled responsibilities, and to fill it with anguish and great fear. On the ground of law we are utterly lost. But we are not under law, but under grace. Now grace has found One both able and willing to take our liabilities upon Himself and to meet them all by dying under the judgment of God

on the Cross of Calvary. And in that death our moral history as of fallen Adam's race has been brought to an end. "Our old man is crucified with Him." Henceforth, as alive from the dead, we are under the benignant sway of grace. For grace now reigns, not at the expense of righteousness, but in virtue of it.

And what is there that we do not owe to grace? It is by grace that we are justified, saved, and called unto God's eternal kingdom and glory. Grace, too, has made provision for us all along our pilgrim way. It gives us One who is able to succour in every trial, to deliver from every foe, and who ever lives to make intercession for us. There is also the throne of grace to which we may boldly come to obtain mercy and find all seasonable help (Heb. iv. 15, 16). Sin, then, shall not have dominion over us—its power is broken—its authority is gone, and we are its slaves no longer. We are under grace, not law—the grace that forgives, and strengthens, and helps, and cheers; that teaches us "to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus II. 12-14).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. B. K.—We have no doubt at all that children who die in infancy or before they reach the years of responsibility go to heaven. The passage on which we rely for saying so is Matthew XVIII. 10-14. They go there not because they are innocent, for innocent they are not, but because the Son of Man came to save that which is lost. Moreover, our Lord says that “it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” No, not one of them. Let us, then, not think that “these little ones” have no interest in the Saviour. His salvation is large enough to embrace all such. So we believe.

R. W.—Romans VI. 3, 4.—This is an allusion to ordinary Christian baptism—by water, of course, only it should read *unto*, and not *into*, Jesus Christ. It is the same word as is used in 1 Corinthians X. 2 of the children of Israel who were all baptized *unto* Moses in the cloud and in the sea. No one is made a member of Christ by water baptism. As to Psalm CXXXVII. 9—the whole Psalm shows that though Israel was in captivity in Babylon, yet Jerusalem was not forgotten. The hearts of the captives were there and they wept at every remembrance of her ruin. But Babylon, who had wasted Jerusalem, should herself be wasted, and of this they were glad. We can only share in the latter sentiments as we think of that great system called Babylon in Revelation XVIII., in whose coming overthrow we can rejoice. As against individuals we could not cherish such wishes, however much they might oppress us, for it would be quite contrary to the spirit and grace of Christianity.

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S. B., Crewe.—Matthew xxiv., xxv.—You have noticed, I dare say, that this great prophetic discourse is divided into three parts. The first begins with chapter xxiv. and ends with verse 44, the second goes on to verse 31 of chapter xxv., and the third covers the remainder of the chapter. The first section concerns Israel and is placed entirely in a Jewish setting; the second relates to the present period; and the third deals with the living Gentile nations in a day to come, and their judgment. Answering now your question, we believe the reason why the Lord speaks of what refers to Israel first is simply this—He was telling His own disciples, in answer to their question in verse 3, what should happen to their own people. Remember that the disciples were not then Christians, for Christianity, properly speaking, dates from Pentecostal days. They were but godly Jews, the representatives of others who shall be manifested in later times and who had received the Lord Jesus as their true Messiah and the Fulfiller of all Israel's hopes. To these hopes they held fast, as Acts i. 6 plainly shows. Nor did they give them up until they saw and understood what were the hopes of the Church of God, whose calling is heavenly, not earthly. It was but natural, therefore, that the Lord should speak of the things relating to Israel first of all, and afterwards of things belonging to this present period, which is a sort of parenthesis in the ways of God, coming in between the breaking off of God's relations with Israel and His resuming them again, when the Church has been translated to glory. We trust this is plain. If not, please let us hear from you again.

EPAPHRODITUS.

WE want the reader to turn with us for a few moments to Philippians II., and study the brief sketch of the interesting character of Epaphroditus. There is great moral beauty in it. We are not told very much about him, but in what we are told we see a great deal of what is truly lovely and pleasant—much that makes us long for men of the same stamp in this our day. We cannot do better than quote the inspired record concerning him; and may the blessed Spirit apply it to our hearts, and lead us to cultivate the same lovely grace which shone so brightly in that dear and honoured servant of Christ.

“ I supposed it necessary,” says the blessed apostle, “ to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and

that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness ; and hold such in reputation : Because *for the work of Christ* he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me ” (Phil. II. 25-30).

Now it is quite possible that some of us, on reading the above, may feel disposed to inquire if Epaphroditus was a great evangelist, or teacher, or some highly-gifted servant of Christ, seeing that the inspired apostle bestows upon him so many high and honourable titles, styling him his “ brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier.”

Well, we are not told that he was a great preacher, or a great traveller, or a profound teacher in the Church of God. All that we are told about him, in the above touching narrative, is that he came forward in a time of real need to supply a missing link—to “ stop a gap,” as we say. The beloved Philippians had it upon their hearts to send help to the revered and aged apostle in his prison at Rome. He was in need, and they longed to supply his need. They loved him, and God had laid it upon their loving hearts to communicate with his necessities. They thought of him, though he was far away from them ; and they longed to minister to him of their substance.

How lovely was this ! How grateful to the heart of Christ ! Hearken to the glowing

terms in which the dear old prisoner speaks of their precious ministry. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again ; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. . . . Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift : but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But *I have all, and abound ; I am full*, having received of Epaphroditus the things from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."

Here we see the place which Epaphroditus filled in this blessed business. There lay the beloved apostle in his prison at Rome, and there lay the loving offering of the saints at Philippi. But how was it to be conveyed to him ? These were not the days of cheque banks and post-office orders. No, nor of railway travelling. It was no easy matter to get from Philippi to Rome in those days. But Epaphroditus, that dear, unpretending, self-surrendering servant of Christ, presented himself to supply the missing link ; to do just the very thing that was needed, and nothing

more ; to be the channel of communication between the assembly at Philippi and the apostle at Rome. Deep and real as was the apostle's need, precious and seasonable as was the Philippians' gift, yet an instrument was needed to bring them both together ; and Epaphroditus offered himself for the work. There was a manifest need, and he met it—a positive blank, and he filled it. He did not aim at doing some great showy thing, something which would make him very prominent, and cause his name to be blazed abroad as some wonderful person. Ah ! no ; Epaphroditus was not one of the pushing, self-confident, extensive class. He was a dear, self-hiding, lowly servant of Christ, one of that class of workmen to whom we are irresistibly attracted. Nothing is more charming than an unpretending, retiring man, who is content just to fill an empty niche ; to render the needed service, whatever it is ; to do the work cut out for him by the Master's hand.

There are some who are not content unless they are at the head and tail of everything. They seem to think that no work can be rightly done unless they have a hand in it. They are not satisfied to supply a missing link. How repulsive are all such ! Self-confident, self-sufficient, ever pushing themselves into prominence. They have never measured themselves in the presence of God, never been

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broken down before Him, never taken their true place of self-abasement.

Epaphroditus was not of this class at all. He put his life in his hand to serve other people ; and when at death's door, instead of being occupied with himself or his ailments, he was thinking of others. " He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness "—not because he was sick, but—" because ye had heard that he had been sick." Here was true love. He knew what his beloved brethren at Philippi would be feeling when informed of his serious illness—an illness brought on by his willing-hearted service to them.

All this is morally lovely. It does the heart good to contemplate this exquisite picture. Epaphroditus had evidently studied in the school of Christ. He had sat at the Master's feet, and drunk deeply into His Spirit. In no other way could he have learnt such holy lessons of self-surrender and thoughtful love for others. The world knows nothing of such things ; nature cannot teach such lessons. They are altogether heavenly, spiritual, divine. Would that we knew more of them ! They are rare amongst us, with all our high profession. There is a most humiliating amount of selfishness in all of us, and it does look so hideous in connection with the name of Jesus. Its inconsistency with Christianity is terribly glaring.

But we must close ; and, ere we do so, we shall just notice the very touching manner in which the inspired apostle commends Epaphroditus to the assembly at Philippi. It seems as if he could not make enough of him, to speak after the manner of men. “ He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death : but God had mercy on him ; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” How deeply affecting ! What a tide of divine affection and sympathy rolled in upon that unpretending, self-sacrificing servant of Christ ! The whole assembly at Philippi, the blessed apostle, and, above all, God Himself, all engaged in thinking about a man who did not think about himself. Had Epaphroditus been a self-seeker, had he been occupied about himself or his interests, or even his work, his name would never have shone on the page of inspiration. But no ; he thought of others, not of himself, and therefore God, and His apostle, and His Church, thought of him.

Thus it will ever be. A man who thinks much of himself saves others the trouble of thinking about him ; but the lowly, the humble, the modest, the unpretending, the retiring, the self-emptying, who think of, and live for, others, who walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, these are the persons to be

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thought of and cared for, loved and honoured, as they ever will be, by God and His people.

“ I sent him therefore the more carefully,” says the beloved apostle, “ that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness ; and *hold such in reputation*: Because for *the work of Christ* he was nigh unto death, *not regarding his life*, to supply your lack of service toward me.”

Thus it was with this most dear and honoured servant of Christ. He did not regard his life, but laid it at his Master's feet, just to supply the missing link between the Church of God at Philippi and the suffering and needy apostle at Rome. And hence the apostle calls upon the Church to hold him in reputation, and the honoured name of Epaphroditus has been handed down to us by the pen of inspiration, and his precious service has been recorded, and the record of it read by untold millions, while the name and the doings of the self-seekers, the self-important, the pretentious of every age, are sunk—and deservedly so—in eternal oblivion.

C.H.M.

“ He is a true servant who is able to realize that he is the bondsman of Jesus Christ: and he will serve souls best who most realizes what it is to serve the Lord.”

“LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?”

MY Master and my Lord !
I long to do some work, some work for Thee,
I long to bring some lowly gift of love
For all Thy love to me !

The harvest fields are white—
Send me to gather there some scattered ears ;
I have no sickle bright ; but I can glean,
And bind them in with tears.

I would not choose my work ;
The field is Thine, my Father and My Guide :
Send Thou me forth ; oh, send me where Thou wilt,
So Thou be glorified !

I need Thy strength, O Lord ;
I need the quiet heart, the subject will ;
I need the patient faith that makes no haste,
The love that follows still.

And if Thou wilt not send,
Then take my will and bend it to Thine own,
Till, in the peace no restless thought can break,
I wait with Thee alone.

It is not hard to wait—
To lean my weariness on Thee for rest :
To feel in suffering or in service still
My Father's choice is best.

THE CLOUD AND THE STUDENT.

THE story has recently been told of a well-known professor lecturing one day before a large audience of medical students—some eighteen hundred men who pressed in to hear him. He took from his desk a letter, and holding it up before him, said something to this effect :

“ Gentlemen, I have here a letter from one of your number in which he tells the story of his life—a record of shame, of sinful indulgence—that makes me shudder even to look at the letter. At the close of this fearful confession, he asks, ‘ Can your God save such a one as I am ? ’ ”

Stopping for a moment, and surveying his audience, the speaker said : “ When I came to the city this afternoon [it was the city of Edinburgh], there was a beautiful, fleecy cloud spreading itself like a thing of glory in the upper sky, and I said, ‘ O Cloud, where do you come from ? ’ And the cloud answered me and said, ‘ I come from the slums and the low, vile places of the city. The sun of heaven reached down and lifted me up, and transfigured me with his shining ’ ”

Looking about upon the now deeply im-

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pressed throng, the speaker, after a solemn pause, said :

“ I do not know whether this young man is here or not, but if he is, I can say to him that my Saviour and my Master, Jesus Christ, He who is our great God and Saviour, can reach down from the highest heaven to the lowest depths into which a human soul can sink, and can lift you, and lift you, up and up, till He shines in you and through you, and transfigures you with the light of His love and glory.”

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This story, which we quote from the pages of an American writer, serves to illustrate how the Lord Jesus Christ saves a degraded sinner.

And what sinner is there that is not degraded? For SIN is always degrading. Let none imagine, therefore, that he does not need a Saviour because he may not have sunk so low in his own estimation as the student of our narrative.

Notice now two things in the professor's illustration of the fleecy cloud that was formed from the dirty water of the slums:—

1. *A new position.* The water, no longer lying in filthy puddles, was floating in the sky.

2. *A new nature.* Instead of being foul and dirty, it had become fair and “ fleecy,” an object to be admired.

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Let us see how these two things help us to understand how the Saviour blesses the sinner.

1. He gives us a new position *with regard to God*. Instead of standing as condemned criminals before Him, we are pardoned, justified, and made His children. We are brought from the place of banishment and distance, and “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” We are rescued from the danger to which our sins exposed us, and saved, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy.”

All this is true of the sinner who puts his faith in the Saviour. Such a one need have no misgivings in his mind as to whether God can *righteously* treat him so mercifully. He need not argue that God’s *intolerance of sin* would be a bar to such kindness and grace.

The argument would be a forcible one were it not for the fact that it has already been taken into account, and that all the requirements of God’s righteousness have been met by the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

God cares for His own character, and by and by He will intervene in unsparing judgment, so that none may impute carelessness or indifference to Him in connection with His government of the world. “So that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the

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righteous : verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth " ! (Ps. LVIII. 11).

But when Christ stood surety for us upon the cross, the stroke of judgment due to us fell upon Him. God's intolerance of sin was manifested, and the way cleared for His grace to pardon the sinner who accepts it and who has recourse to Christ for salvation.

2. Not only is the sinner who believes in Christ brought into a new position with regard to God, and this in complete accord with His righteousness, but he receives *a new nature*. He is born again, as John III. 3 puts it : born anew by the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, using as His instrument the Word of God. This new nature implanted in the believer is in accord with the *holiness* of God, just as his new position is in accord with the *righteousness* of God. The new nature hates sin and loves what is of God. And the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer, acts upon it, producing growth, and thus conforms him more and more to the likeness of Christ, so that others can take note of him that he is indeed born of God.

In saying this I do not for a moment suggest that no evil desires and no unholy thoughts ever find a place in the Christian's heart. To make such an assertion would be to contradict both Scripture and experience. While a new nature is given, the old remains incapable of

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improvement. It will be a source of continual trouble, ever ready as it is to re-assert itself, unless the Christian walks in the Spirit (Gal. v. 16). Walking in the Spirit means attending to the things which are the subject of the Spirit's testimony—the things of Christ. While these things exercise power over our souls, while they hold us captivated by their charm, "the flesh" (the old corrupt nature) has little power to act.

Thank God, in the day for which we look, the day of Christ's coming again, we shall be rid for ever of the presence of "the flesh." Never again will our joy be disturbed by its intrusion. Then, indeed, we shall be like the fleecy cloud that won the professor's admiration.

Meanwhile let us gratefully remember—

1. That we have been brought to God, from the gutter of our sins, in a way that accords with perfect righteousness, by Him who "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory" (1 Sam. ii. 8).

2. That we have received a new nature, being born of God, and predestinated to be ultimately "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29).

What abundant cause for praise and rejoicing!

H. P. B.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.

HEB. xi. 1-7.

NO doubt the first few verses of this chapter in their primary bearing refer to the visible universe, the world we see around us, framed by the Word of God, coming into being in response to the expression of His will and not as the product of what already existed. But what we as Christians have before our souls is not the visible world but that which is invisible, that which is eternal, the world which God has established for His own glory and satisfaction.

Faith has always the unseen and eternal things before it, because faith has Christ in view. Faith sees things as God views them. It sees a world where sin has entered and upon which death has passed. But it also sees another world, a new order, of which the source and centre is the Son of God, the One out of death. In that blessed Person it sees the One in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. In His death it sees the carrying out of the sentence that lay upon the old order. In His resurrection it sees the establishment of

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the new order, a new world, where all things are of God and into which we are called of God to enter through the way His death and resurrection has opened up.

So to faith this world and all that is of it is ended, but a new scene has come to view. But in that world the things that are seen by the eye of faith are not made of the things which appear here. All there takes its origin in that One who is the image of God, in whom all that God is finds its unhindered expression. What a contrast to what we see here! All that contrasted the Son, when here below, with the world in which He was an outcast, contrasts God's world with this. What came out here was man's lust, pride, and hate; what came out in Him was God's perfect love. All that is in this world—its woe, its darkness, its temptations, its tears, its pomp, its weariness, its sin—will never find mention in the scene where He who is Light and Love fills all in all.

In *Abel* we see the ground of acceptance in that world—the ground of the sacrifice of Christ. Everything is to be put on the basis of the blood, and it is in the eternal state of Revelation XXI—the new heavens and new earth—that the full value of the sacrifice of Christ shines out. It will be there seen how the Lamb of God has borne away the sin of the world, the full scope of the “redemption that is in Christ Jesus” will be manifested, and the

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Son will be satisfied as He sees the travail of His soul. Just as the whole of the tabernacle was sprinkled with the blood (Heb. ix. 21), so in that day everything will go up to God in all the acceptability and in all the fragrance of the blood of Christ ; and we who are privileged to have part there, stand before God to-day in all that fragrance.

In *Enoch* we see one who found himself in an order of things where God was not ; where, indeed, He could not be. But he believed that God *was*, although He was outside. And not only so, but He believed that He could be sought out by the diligent soul, and would reward the seeker. God could not exactly come down into this scene and walk with Enoch, but Enoch found that he could seek God out and walk with God. And he both sought Him out and found Him, and walked with Him. Enoch, we may say, rose superior to death. Death could not come in to sever the communion between God and Enoch ; death was set aside, Enoch saw it not, and the communion began when Enoch sought God out, went on and goes on, and will go on for ever.

Surely this is a picture for the Christian of the blessedness of eternal life. An imperfect picture, no doubt ; for what characterizes our life is the knowledge of the Father and the Son (John xvii. 3), fellowship with the Divine

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Persons (1 John 1. 3) ; to be before God in all the intimacy of divine affection, to know the love that gave the Son and that rests on us as it rests upon Him. Enoch knew *nothing* of such blessedness. But this fellowship can only be enjoyed, if we get, in the faith of our souls, to the place where God is, believing that He is, and diligently searching Him out. We shall not find it in this world, it can only be enjoyed as, in spirit, we enter upon the world where God is, where His love shines out unclouded, and where He can rest, as His nature is satisfied, by its display. And we are there just as Christ is there. We are linked as brethren to the Son, and we are before God, in that scene, in all the blessedness in which the Son is before Him. The same love enfolds the whole family, and as we live in it, know it, rejoice in it, we lay hold of eternal life in all its *present blessedness*. Death can no more touch what we are thus before God as sons than it can touch what Christ is. As regards this scene, we may, indeed, be called to pass out of it through death, or, like Enoch, we may be translated ; but as regards our own proper sphere, death can never touch us any more than it can touch the Eternal Son.

Then in *Noah* we see what corresponds to our present place of testimony in connection with a rejected Christ. There could have been nothing more ridiculous to human eyes than

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Noah's testimony. Yet the very ark which brought down upon him the scorn of the world was that which carried him through the floods of judgment safe to his inheritance in the new world beyond. In the same way our hope is bound up with One who has been, and is, despised and rejected of men. Jesus Christ, the outcast here, has been raised from the dead and set in the glory of God as man ; that is, in Jesus Christ, risen and ascended, all God's purpose as to what man should be is fully displayed (Heb. II.). But the blessedness of it is that God has begotten *us* unto a living hope by His resurrection (I Peter I. 3). God is going to bring *many* sons to glory ; we are to be taken through all that opposes us here, taken safely through death itself, and brought to share in the glory of Him who is the "first-born among many brethren." By virtue of our connection with Him, as His brethren, we shall pass unscathed by death or judgment to the glory ; perfectly conformed to the image of the Son, and forever to be displaying the glory of Him who hath called us.

But while we are all ready to own our position as brethren with Him in His glory, how backward we are to acknowledge our place as His brethren in His rejection. The two thoughts go together. Would that we took up more the outside place the world has given Him, for by so doing we should give out the truest testi-

mony. What force will there be in our profession of hope in Him if we are found going on in that which God has condemned, instead of taking our place morally apart from it all, in association with Him who is our hope? We should find in Him power to bring us through all our trials here, turning each trial to His own glory, and keeping us till the day when we in actuality shall find ourselves in His world, in our inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Till that day, may the Lord grant that our hearts may be drawn out to Himself and the things of which He is the centre; so that we may by faith lay hold of our hope and make it a present enjoyed reality. "The just shall live by faith."

W. J. P.

ASKING AND TAKING.

HAVE we sometimes found ourselves passing from an experience of asking to one of claiming? We beg and beg and beg, and feel surprised if the beggar's knocking is heard. Our praying is oft-times too limp. We need to be more aggressive. God offers us the power, but instead of *claiming* it we keep on asking for it, as if by much praying we should at last be able to persuade our Father to give us what we need. We got the blessing of

salvation at the first, not by begging for it, but by taking it ; and, in the same way, we obtain the grace to meet our needs as believers by taking it.

Prayer is not a substitute for obedience or for faith. It is not the purchase-money which will secure what we desire, while all the time we are neglecting to do our duty. God says "Obey," but in reply we say, "I will pray." All the praying in the world did not secure to us the forgiveness of sins ; the blessing became ours when we obeyed the gospel and came to Christ. As Christians we need to beware against dodging obeying by praying.

It was a *venture of faith* when we first committed our souls into the keeping of the Saviour. And the act by which we commit ourselves as believers to the sure promises of our God is also a venture. Our faith, alas ! is so timid and distrustful that we hesitate launching out upon the naked word of God. Every "Thus saith the Lord" is sure ground on which to plant our feet with unwavering confidence, but our hearts are so full of unbelief, and our spirits are so indolent, that it is with difficulty that we get ourselves to resolutely step out on the plank of divine truth. We want to *realize* more before we take the step that honours God as nothing else does, viz., believing His naked Word. We lack the *feeling* of power, and so we hold back until we

find ourselves helped forward on a wave of holy emotion. But it is a most valuable lesson to learn that *God does not give us feeling to enable us to believe*. If we learn this lesson thoroughly our lives will be characterized by continuous progress, instead of being, as they so often are, a patchwork of enthusiasm and indolence, of activity and apathy.

Satan disputes every step forward we make in the Christian life. Our great enemy aims at blurring our vision of Christ and blunting the power of God's truth on our souls. We need to *fight through*. Faith is not only the weapon with which we gain the victory, but we must fight to maintain faith. Our warfare with Satan is to be aggressive: "*resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" We often give in just as we are on the verge of a triumph. We are about to appropriate a promise when a doubt is injected into the mind, and faith withdraws cowed and baffled. We must *keep on believing and insisting that God is true*.

May we learn to pass from an experience of asking to one of claiming; from begging to taking; from clinging to resting. E. A.

"If I talk of faith, I may mean belief of a testimony—a person tells me a thing, and I believe him. But there is another sense in which I may have faith in that man; that is, I may put my trust in him. We often confound these things. There is the testimony of God, which I have to believe, and a trusting in God, which is the power of my walk."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. W.—John III. 6.—It helps to the right understanding of this passage to observe that what the Lord was speaking about was nothing new. “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” Nicodemus ought to have known, and it was to his discredit that he did not, for the prophets spake of them—see Ezekiel xxxvi., from the twenty-first verse to the end of the chapter, together with chapter xxxvii. Hence the water of John III. 6 has nothing to say to Christian baptism, for how should Nicodemus have known anything of a rite that had not yet been instituted? We are not born again in baptism, but by the Word of God—of which water is a well-known symbol, and by the Spirit.

As to your second question, you certainly have no warrant for thinking “that a brother who does not submit to believers’ baptism cannot be regarded as being born of water and of the Spirit.” There is no Scripture to justify any such thought. The New Birth and Baptism are distinct things. The former is the work of God alone, while the latter is administered by man. If this is not plain, please write again.

VERY ANXIOUS.—We have dealt with your letter as Hezekiah did with the letter sent to him by the king of Babylon (2 Kings XIX. 14). May God graciously send you an answer of peace before these lines reach your eye.

Whether you were truly converted thirteen years ago God only knows. It is quite possible

you were. But you have fallen again into deep sin, and now what is to be done? Is there still hope for you? Is there any balm for your troubled conscience, stung with a thousand fears? Yes, thank God! there is. Mercy has been shown to the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1. 15), and it shall not be withheld from you.

We need not urge you to confess your sin to God, to spread it out in all its defilement before Him. You have done this, though as yet it has yielded no relief. But it is written, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9). Precious promise, to which God is ever true! And the sense of it shall yet be yours.

But notice another thing. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2. 1, 2). The advocacy of Christ is founded on the fact of His being the propitiation. What does that mean? When did He become the propitiation for our sins—yours and mine? For an answer we must go back to the Cross. It was there that He drank the cup which this sin of yours helped to fill. There He bore the stripes by which healing comes to us. There He suffered that isolation from God and from communion with Him confessed in that cry of anguish, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" *He* is the propitiation for our sins. No question then of guilt can ever be raised against those who have fled to Him for refuge. The debt is paid, the penalty is borne, and we are free.

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And He who has gone through all this is our advocate with the Father should any man sin. He takes up our case to do all that is needed to re-form the link of communion with God broken by our sin, and to restore the joy of His salvation to those who have lost it. All the distress of your soul consequent upon your sin is but a part of that process by which He in His faithful and unchanging love is leading you back. It is well that we should feel the bitterness of our sinful folly. Peter, when Jesus looked upon him, went out and wept bitterly. But do not let us doubt the Lord's love. When He called you, thirteen years ago, He not only knew all your past life but what your future life would be. It was before His eye like an open page of a book. He saw the blots, the sad declensions, the falls, and yet, in spite of all, He loved you and drew you to Himself. Nor will He ever give you up. He loves unto the end. Believe in the reality of it. It is because you are what you are that He died for you, and now lives to intercede for you on high: to restore you if you wander, to support you if you faint, and to save you to the very uttermost. Oh, what a Saviour He is! Rest then on His finished work. Look not for frames and feelings, but dare to believe that even your sin is forgiven according to that sure word in 1 John 1. 9. Then ask Him to keep you, to uphold you by His mighty hand. Tell Him that you are weak—weak on every side of your being, and trust Him to strengthen and help you every day. And He will. Doubt not then either His love or your forgiveness. Believe in both, and peace, deep as the great sea, shall be yours.

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A. M. E.—It is quite true that the business of the evangelist is to preach the gospel. But in dealing with the souls of men, is he not to speak of matters which cannot be strictly called glad tidings? When a man is told that he must be born again if he would see the kingdom of God, there is no gospel in that, though it is very needful that he should know it. The Epistle to the Romans is a striking unfolding of the gospel of God, yet it warns some against treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath (chap. II.). Warnings are not gospel, but they must be given. To tell a man that he is guilty before God is not gospel, but he should be told. And when we speak of the judgment of the Great White Throne and what follows it, we are surely not preaching the gospel; but these things must be spoken of that men may flee from the wrath to come and seek forgiveness and salvation. To plead that if a man's business is to preach the gospel he should therefore never speak of the sinner's state, of eternal judgment, of the wrath of God, or of the lake of fire is mere sophistry, and a dangerous delusion.

Let us remember that our minds are finite. We have our limitations, and there are matters which cannot be compassed by human thought. They are beyond us. Our part is to cleave to the Scriptures, and to be quite sure that God's ways shall be justified in the end, however incomprehensible to us. Now it is certain that the same word is used to describe the existence of God, the life of the redeemed and the punishment of the wicked (Rom. XVI. 26; Matt. XXV. 46).

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It is a mistake to suppose that the same measure of punishment will be meted out to all the unsaved. They will be judged according to their works, but some are more responsible than others. They have larger privileges and are therefore more responsible. Hence, when speaking of Capernaum, where many of His mighty works were done, and yet it repented not, the Lord said, "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. XI. 24). In the face of such words the position of the careless, unbelieving ones in Christendom, is serious beyond our power to tell.

You ask the meaning of Revelation XXI. 5, "Behold I make all things new." It refers to the eternal state, when the millennial kingdom shall be over and the final judgment ended. There will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. Former things, with all their imperfection, shall have passed away. The new creation, to which we believers already, in a moral sense, belong (2 Cor. v. 17), will then be here, every part of it bearing the impress of eternity. But the "*all things*" must be limited to the sphere that is in view. It cannot embrace the wicked named in verse 8. And the same may be said of 1 Corinthians xv. 28, "That God may be all in all." This passage refers to the same period. Then, too, there will be the complete fulfilment of John I. 29—the sin of the world will be taken away. It can have no place in the new heavens and the new earth. There will be no sin there; nor can be, for Satan, the great deceiver, will be a prisoner in the lake of fire, never more to come out. He shall be

“tormented day and night, for ever and ever” (Rev. xx. 10).

The subject of everlasting punishment is an intensely solemn one. Every mention of it should give tenderness and pleading power to the evangelist whose heart is already under the influence of the love of Christ. If you would see it, soberly and reverently examined, together with the mutually destructive theories of those who believe in the annihilation of the wicked and those who believe in universal redemption, you should buy or borrow *Facts and Theories as to a Future State*, by F. W. Grant. It can be had through our publisher. But do not suffer your mind to be absorbed with this line of things. It is well that we should know them, but our joy, our strength, is found in occupation with Christ. *He* is our life.

R. R.—There can be no doubt that our Lord’s temptation in the wilderness followed immediately on His having part in John’s baptism, as stated in Mark 1. But there is no discrepancy between that and what is written in John 1. In the Gospel of John there is no record of our Lord’s baptism at all. He mentions the fact of the Spirit descending upon Him, which we know took place at His baptism, but of the baptism itself he makes no mention. The *days* of John 1. are very noticeable. There is “the next day” of verse 29, “the next day” of verse 35, and “the day following” of verse 43, to which may be added “the third day” of verse 1 of the next chapter.

W. M.—Numbers xv. 22–31, with its illustration of presumptuous or high-handed sin in the verses that follow, with Deuteronomy xvii. 12, *prove*

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what is stated in the answer given last month to be the truth. But the difficulty remains that the word does not define what differences the sin of ignorance from the presumptuous sin, nor what relation Numbers xv. has to Leviticus iv.—vi. Nor have I been able to discover any principle that solves the difficulty. As to the reason why the Jews offer no sacrifices in their dispersion, does not the fundamental law of sacrifice account for it in Leviticus xvii. 3–5? This for the wilderness. But Deuteronomy xii. 5, 6, 11, 12, 26, 27—the two latter verses specifically distinguishing the holy things of their offerings from verses 20, 21, their ordinary eating—extends the ordinance to the land. See as to the breach of this and its consequences (Ezek. xx. 27, 28); and their recovery (acceptance of their sacrifices) in the world to come (*v.* 40). Meanwhile, and until that day, the prophecy of Hos. iii. 4, 5 as to sacrifice has its solemn and striking fulfilment. The fact that no acceptable sacrifice can be made, apart from the place the Lord has set His name, affects the conscience of the Jew (where there is a conscience of sins) more powerfully than any other consideration, as I have understood from those who have to do with them. No blood of bulls or goats could take away sins (Heb. x. 4). Nothing of what is eternal entered into the Jewish economy, save as faith looked through the shadow to the substance that was yet to come through Christ. Even the great day of Atonement provided for nothing beyond the sins of one year, though it were the ground of God's remaining among them in His then present government of the people. (J.A.T.)

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

(A page from the life of **Duncan Matheson.**)

IT was under the preaching of Mr. A. Bonar that Duncan Matheson, the Scotch Evangelist, was first awakened. The text was Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7. For some time his conscience had been uneasy, and though he had succeeded in stifling his convictions, yet every now and then they would break forth like the fires of a volcano, and he had no rest. But now his conscience boiled like the angry sea. The words in the text, declaring that God "will by no means clear the guilty," made him feel as if the burning, piercing eye of God was upon him. A mountain of wrath seemed to crush him down; and hell yawned at his feet. Reeling home to his lodgings, and realizing with awful vividness God, heaven, hell, judgment, and eternity, he fell on his knees and uttered his first real prayer: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." But though awakened he was not yet saved.

The gospel, the glad tidings of a full and free salvation, Matheson knew nothing about. Of the finished work of Christ—the only foundation on which the soul can safely rest—he was entirely ignorant. He prayed, and agonized, and suffered, as if forgiveness and heaven were

to be won by such means. But he was on the wrong track. He had yet to learn that—

“Doing is a deadly thing,
Doing ends in death.”

Faith troubled him. He did not know what it meant or how it could be obtained. Many a weary hour was spent in trying to discover what faith was. Book after book was read, but he received no help. Faith ! faith ! faith ! was still his cry. Nor did those from whom he sought help seem able to help him. They gave him counsel, but it did not suit his case. Instead of being bettered, he only grew worse, and his agony was intensified as a voice seemed to say to him : “ Now or never ! *Now or never !* Make sure work for eternity ! ”

How all this came to an end, how his barque, long tossed about on the stormy sea, reached the haven of rest at last, shall be told in his own words :—

“ I was standing at the end of my father’s house, and meditating on that precious word which has brought peace to countless ones : ‘ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ’ (John III. 16). I saw that God loved me, for I was one of the world. I saw the proof of His love in the giving of His Son. I saw that

FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

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‘whosoever’ meant anybody and everybody, and therefore *me, even me*. I saw the result of believing—that I would not perish, but have everlasting life. *I was enabled to take God at His word*. I saw no one but Jesus only—all in all in redemption. My burden fell from my back, and I was saved. Yes, saved! That hour angels rejoiced over one more sinner brought to the Saviour, and new songs rang through the courts of that city to which I had now got a title, and of which I had now become an heir. Bunyan describes his pilgrim as giving three leaps for joy as his burden rolled into the open sepulchre of Christ. I could not contain myself for joy. I sang the new song: ‘Salvation through the blood of the Lamb.’ The very heavens appeared as if covered with glory. I felt the calm of a pardoned sinner; yet I had no thought of my safety. I saw only the person of Jesus. I wept for my sins that had nailed Him to the cross, and they were tears of true repentance. Formerly I had set up repentance as a toll between me and the cross; but now it came freely as the tear that faith wept. I had passed from death unto life; old things had passed away, and all things had become new.

“I wondered that I had stumbled at the simplicity of the way. I saw everything so plain that I longed to go and tell all the world. I felt that if I met a thousand Manassehs I

could say, ' Yet there is room.' I went everywhere telling my glad story. Some even of the saints looked incredulous. Others, like the elder brother of the parable, did not like the music and the dancing. *They* had never left their Father's dwelling ; *they* had never been sin-sick, and knew not what it is to be healed ; no fatted calf had been killed for *them*. These warned me against enthusiasm and exhorted me to be sober-minded. One old man told me I was on the mount but would soon be down again. Another said I needed great humility. But I went on singing my song. Prayer had given place to praise, and night and day I continued to thank God for ' His unspeakable gift.' "

Perhaps the eye of some reader is now resting on this page whose experiences are not unlike those of Duncan Matheson. You are awakened but not yet saved. Conviction, indeed, is not conversion, though it may be the first step on the road. It is one thing to realize the danger you are in and another to be delivered from it. Who can deliver you from coming wrath ? Who can relieve you of your load of guilt ? There is but One—Jesus our Lord. He has stood in the place of the guilty and suffered, the Just for the unjust (1 Peter III. 18). Not your tears, not your sorrow for sin, not your prayers, not any distress of soul which you may feel, can save your soul and put away your sin.

The mighty work needed for our salvation He has already done. Every shred of the glory of it is His alone. Your part is but to stretch forth the hand and receive salvation as a free gift. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Rest there. Other foundation there is none. But Christ is enough. Let your heart cry out: "*None but Christ! None but Christ!*"

"On Christ, the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

Think again of that verse which, as Matheson said, has brought peace to countless weary ones. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God loved! God gave! Precious words! Here is the source—the very beginning—of our salvation. You may have supposed that if you loved God, then He would love you, and that if you diligently sought his face and served Him faithfully you might have hope. But the amazing truth is that He loved us when we were nothing but enmity against Him. This is the love which, when known and believed, casts out all fear. Oh, do not longer doubt His love. Believe it, and embrace the Saviour whom that love has given. It is thus, and only thus, that your heart shall be filled with joy and peace (Rom. xv. 13).

DIVINE LOVE.

THE fountain which had its rise in man's earthly paradise sent forth a river which was parted into four streams. Each stream made a channel for itself, but all had their source in Eden. How like the way of divine love towards us! We read of the "love of God," "the love of the Father," the "love of Christ," and "the love of the Spirit." It is the same love, flowing from the same source, but making for itself different courses and expressing itself in varied ways.

The *love of God* goes out to the whole world, like the great river Euphrates, which traverses verdant valleys and desolate wastes, fructifying, invigorating, refreshing the different lands through which it passes on its journey of nearly two thousand miles. Its broad bosom bears blessing for all, no matter what their nationality. Just so, the love of God flows through this lost and perishing world. Its waters are free, its life-giving properties are for whosoever will. Every thirsty, sin-sick, weary soul may partake of its living water, and peacefully rest on its bosom.

The river of God's grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o'er the barren place,
Where Jesus died.

Then there is the *love of the Father*. The love of God reaches His enemies, the love of the Father makes them His children, adopts them into His family, calls upon them to behold the manner of love which He has bestowed upon them (1 John III. 1). He loves them as He loves His only begotten Son. Like the river Pison, which flowed through a golden land, this love enriches and blesses. It delights to bring us into all the wealth of the Father's counsels, to adopt us as children to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to set us down before Him holy and without blame, for the satisfaction of His own heart. "Beloved, now are we the children of God." We are in a relationship which can never end, members of a family which shall remain unbroken through time, and are going on to the Father's house, where we shall dwell eternally in the enjoyment of the love which has brought us into the children's place.

Everlasting glory be,
 God and Father, unto thee !
 'Tis with joy Thy children raise
 Hearts and voices in Thy praise.

How shall we speak of the *love of Christ* ? It is a love which passeth knowledge ! A love which stooped from the throne of the Eternal to a death accorded to slaves. Like the river Gihon, which encompassed dark Ethiopia,

this love reaches dark, benighted beings, brings them into a relationship to Himself of the most tender and intimate nature. The love of Christ seeks a bride from among those once black indeed, but who, like the bride in the Canticles, can now say, "I am black, but comely." He loved and gave Himself for His Church; now cleanses and sanctifies her, calls her "thou fairest among women!" Yes, we are fair through the beauty with which He has clothed us, and loved with a love of deepest, tenderest affection. We are the bride of the Lamb and destined to share His highest dignities. This special and peculiar affection which Christ has for His Church we should do well to contemplate more frequently and dwell upon more profoundly. Alone in His presence we should do this, so that bridal affections may be kindled in our bosoms, and a deeper response to a character of love of which the most glorious angelic being is ignorant. Let us anticipate the coming day of display, when bride and Bridegroom shall be together, and that for ever!

Thine eye in that bright cloudless day
 Shall, with supreme delight,
 Thy fair and glorious bride survey,
 Unblemished in Thy sight.

The *love of the Spirit* may be compared to the river Hiddekel which flowed eastward.

He ever delights to turn our thoughts to the sun-rising, to fix them on the coming Bridegroom, and to take of His things and show them to us. Once only does the expression occur, "the love of the Spirit," but how full its meaning! What heights and depths are in that short sentence! His first gracious act is to quicken us with divine life, impart a nature capable of loving God and each other. "Every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John iv. 7). Then He takes up His abode in us—having first enabled us to rest on Christ and His finished work, and floods our hearts with the blessedness of God's love. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us" (Rom. v. 5).

He is the Seal which secures us for the day of redemption, the earnest and pledge of our glorious inheritance. He is the "Spirit of adoption" who gives us the conscious blessedness of our relationship to the Father, the happy enjoyment of the children's place. "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father" (Gal. iv. 6). He is the Paraclete, or Comforter, who manages all our affairs down here, just as Christ does up there. When our sorrow is too deep for words, and we can only groan in anguish, He it is who maketh intercession for us (Rom. viii. 27). If our walk and ways grieve Him, He will grieve us,

but He will never leave us. When He grieves us it is with a view to show us that wherein we have failed and lead us to confession and self-judgment, so that our communion with the Father may be restored. It is through Him we are strengthened with might in the inner man, it is His power that works in us. He fills us so that melodious praise ascends from our hearts to the Father. Through Him we are baptized into one body, and He has formed a unity, a holy bond, between all saints, termed the "fellowship of the Spirit," which we are to be careful to maintain in the uniting bond of peace. What a patient, unwearied love is His ! Neither individual nor corporate failure hinders Him in His mission to gather the bride of the Lamb. Until this is accomplished He will go on life-giving, indwelling, rebuking, restoring, refreshing, energizing each individual saint. He is our power for walk, worship, and service. There is no part of our Christian life where we can dispense with His gracious ministry. The "love of the Spirit" is a wonderful love. May we grow in our apprehension of it !

O may Thy Spirit guide our souls,
 And mould them to Thy will,
 That from Thy paths we ne'er may stray,
 But keep Thy precepts still.

H. N.

THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.

EXODUS XII.-XIV.

IT is deeply interesting and instructive to see that when for the first time Scripture speaks of "salvation" it is associated with the name of "the Lord." And if salvation is to be "received" (1 Peter 1. 9), if it is to be "eternal" (Heb. v. 9), and accompanied on our side with certainty, and joy, and gladness (Isa. XII. 2, 3), it must be so. It must come to us with divine authority and with divine power. The name of "the Lord" gives this authority, and the Apostle in Romans 1. 16 writes he is "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"; and in Ephesians 1. 13 he states the gospel is "the gospel of your salvation."

The word "salvation" is found earlier in the Scriptures, viz. in Genesis XLIX. 18, where Jacob, in commanding and blessing his sons says: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." He knew no other salvation.

And God has been pleased to set forth this salvation in the history of His earthly people

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Israel for our instruction. They began their new history as a redeemed people when the blood was sprinkled on the side-posts and upper door-posts of their houses in Egypt. "This month shall be to you the beginning of months" (Exod. XII. 2):

God had revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush, as "come down" to deliver; and in Exodus VI. He announces His threefold purpose: 1st, to bring them out of bondage; 2nd, to take them to Himself for a people; 3rd, to bring them into their God-given heritage. And He takes a new name, that of Jehovah [the One Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come], and with that name He associates the redemption and salvation of His people.

It is as Jehovah that God will bring them out of the house of bondage—from the slavery of Egypt—that they might be His people and be brought to God's house and God's land.

But, seeing their guilty and sinful condition, the question necessarily arises: By what means can they be clear of their sins and guilt before God and be taken into intimate relationship to Himself as His people? God's provision for this is "the blood of the lamb" to be sprinkled outside every house in which the children of Israel were (see Exod. XII.). It was sprinkled there for the eye of God, who alone could appreciate all that it set forth,

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as typifying the blood of Christ to be shed in New Testament times ; and although not for the eye of the children of Israel, yet to them it was a token that God could righteously pass over them as Judge.

They thus start on their new history and path as a justified people, a justification which could never be called in question. Satan sought to call it in question, at the end of their wilderness path in the plains of Moab (see Num. XXIII., XXIV.) ; but Balaam, through whom Satan sought to get the people cursed, is made to see them in "the vision of the Almighty," and they are seen a justified people. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. . . . God brought them out of Egypt. . . . Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel ; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought ? " (Num. XXIII. 21-23). Such were Balaam's glowing words !

Whatever need there was afterwards for God's chastening hand to be upon them because of their ways, their justification remained absolute as at the first, and Satan's effort to bring in the curse was defeated. "When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments." . . . "The

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Spirit of the Lord came upon him," and he is made to exclaim: "He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, . . . How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel" (XXIV. 1-5). Previously to this, Balaam had said, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (XXIII. 20). Such are God's ways of saving grace with a blood-sheltered people.

But while the beginning for Israel was the blood-sprinkled door-posts, God on His side began at Exodus III., the burning bush. He there announces Himself a Saviour-God. We begin at Romans III. with faith in the blood, while in Romans v. 9 it is said: "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

The sprinkled blood was Israel's effectual shelter; but they were not sheltered so that the lot of the people might be improved in Egypt, or that they might stay there. As another has observed, "justification is in view of another world"—for us it is the heavenly glory; for them it was Canaan; so we read at the end of Exodus XII.: "It came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." God did not suffer the people to settle down in Egypt nor stay there a single

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night. It was "the selfsame day" their deliverance or redemption began, and they ate the passover in travelling habit—girded loins, staff in hand. That was not settling down in Egypt. They ate the passover as a people who were standing morally separate from Egypt, as presently they were to be actually separate from it. God had said to Moses, in chapter vi. 6: "I will bring you out." A justified people, a people sheltered from the judgment of God in respect of their guilt, could not remain in Egypt nor be of it; they must come out of it, and be set free from the bondage of Pharaoh. Deliverance or redemption means that they were to become God's people as God had said to Moses, in chapter vi. He would "take them to Himself for a people and be to them a God." They could not be at the same time Pharaoh's people and God's people. For us Egypt is this world in which we were born, of which Satan is god and prince: Pharaoh typically represents Satan. To have to do with God, to be His people and to enjoy the blessed relationship grace brings us into, we must be, in heart and spirit, out of or separate from—this world. "He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4).

Then the people, in the person of the first-born, are sanctified, that is, they are set apart

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to God, to be His people (Exod. XIII.). The meaning of this for us is that we—redeemed from the world and Satan—are to be Christ's and God's. We read in John XVII. : "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." And again : "And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." We are not our own, we belong to Another.

That introduces to the wilderness path, where they had God's care and guidance in the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. They take their journey. So it is with ourselves. God has "called us unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. II. 12) ; and responding to that call, we take our journey with our backs on this Egypt-world, from which we are morally separated. We say, like Rebecca (Gen. XXIV. 58), "we will go," and God says, "I will go with you." Guidance and His care in the way are pledged to us. "He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Exod. XIII. 22).

Under this guidance they are led between "Migdol" and "the sea." They did not get there by chance—they were guided there. They come into a great strait: the sea in front—Pharaoh behind: what can they do? It is now a question not of justification but of salvation from the power and rule of Pharaoh. They cry out—they are instructed to "stand

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still, and see." What? "*The salvation of God*," the way of God's deliverance. They go forward by Jehovah's direction. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward"; and God opened a path through the sea, the waters of which overthrew and destroyed Pharaoh and his host.

For us all this points to Christ's death as deliverance from this present evil world and from Satan's power. We read in Hebrews II. 14, 15, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

They, the children of Israel, never saw Pharaoh any more, nor did they ever again get under bondage to him; nor did any return to Egypt from the wilderness. That God could never allow. So we are delivered once for all from the bondage of Satan and his power. We are free, never to see Satan as Pharaoh any more. The children of Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the "sea-shore." Christ has vanquished Satan, his power in death is annulled. We may have to meet him in our wilderness path as Amalek. In the wilderness it was Amalek and the seductions of the Moabites (another character of opposition and temptation), and not Pharaoh, Israel had to meet.

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We reach our Exodus xiv. at the end of Romans iv. and beginning of Romans v.: “ We believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Faith in the blood will not take us through the wilderness, neither will it separate us from Egypt, although it is the basis of separation ; but the *death* of Christ, the *cross* of Christ, understood and realized by faith, does morally separate the Christian from this present world, and enables him to say with the Apostle, “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world ” (Gal. vi. 14). This is the path of practical and realized salvation, and with faith in God as Saviour we are enabled joyfully to pursue our journey. For Israel this was Canaan ; for us it is the heavenly rest—the Father’s house. God as Saviour separates. It is in the path of God’s salvation we find deliverances, and are enabled joyfully and triumphantly to go through the wilderness (Rom. v. 1–5).

Israel, as Pharaoh’s people, disappears in the Red Sea. It was the burial of the people under the eye of God. “ All our fathers were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Baptism prefigures “ death.” For us it is the truth set forth in Romans vi. and Colossians ii. 12. Christ’s death for us is our Red Sea—the burial-place of the old man—it is where

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God buried it, and we are in the faith of that. We had to stand still to see it; then, it is realized in our souls. We have been planted together in the likeness of His death, "that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. vi.). We are God's freed men. "Christ has made us free."

Now in the light and in the faith of what God has effected in Christ, we are in the path of salvation and have begun its "joy." Exodus xiv. introduces us to the song of xv. God is known as "Saviour." It is "God's salvation" we realize, and God as Saviour is the object of our faith, and we sing—we are in the joy of it.

There was no singing in Egypt; it was the serious question there of our guilt in the sight of a holy God, and of God's holy judgment and how we could escape it, and how the Judge could rightly pass over us. The blood of the Lamb gives the righteous ground, and this God sets forth in the gospel. Then on the wilderness side of the Red Sea it is faith in God as Saviour, and we then can joy or boast in God as such. He has "become our salvation." Salvation should characterize the wilderness path. God is known as Saviour there, or we should never get through. Christ died to free us from the judgment of God with respect to our guilt.

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Now He lives to save—"much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). "He is able to save to the uttermost" [right through] those that come unto God by Him, "seeing"—what?—He died for them? No. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

We are associated with a risen Christ, the One who has annulled death and him that had the power of death. We believe on "Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." The truth of our baptism is that our responsible life and history as in the flesh, as of Adam, has been brought judicially to a close under the eye of God, and we are in "newness of life"; we live through Him—Christ. "Risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). It is not in what we have done—it is not some attainment of ours—it is faith in God's operation—God's working—this is liberty. It enables us to joy in God, and to travel the wilderness path in salvation and joy.

The Lord is risen: the Red Sea's judgment flood
Is passed in Him who bought us with His blood.
The Lord is risen: we stand beyond the doom
Of all our sin, through Jesu's empty tomb.

The Lord is risen: with Him we also rose,
And in His grave see vanquished all our foes.
The Lord is risen: beyond the judgment land,
In Him, in resurrection life we stand.

F. S. C.

TWO GOLDEN SENTENCES.

“For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.”
PSALM CXIX. 89.

**“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not
sin against thee.”—PSALM CXIX. 11.**

WE esteem it an unspeakable mercy—in the midst of the conflicting opinions and dogmas of men—to have something “*settled*.” It is a sweet relief and rest to the heart that has been tossed about for many a long year on the troubled sea of human opinion to find that there is, after all, something on which one may lean with all the calm confidence of faith, and find therein divine and eternal stability.

What a mercy, in the face of the unrest and uncertainty of the present moment, to be able to say, “I have gotten something settled—settled for ever—settled for ever in heaven!” What effect, we may ask, can the bold and audacious reasoning of infidelity, or the sickly vapourings of superstition have upon the soul that can say, “My heart is linked to the throne of God by means of that word which is settled for ever in heaven”? None whatever. Infidelity and superstition—the two great agents of hell in this very day in which we live—can only take effect upon those who really have nothing settled, nothing fixed, no link with the throne and heart of God. The wavering and

undecided—those who halt between two opinions, who are looking this way and that way, who are afloat, who have no haven, no anchorage—these are in imminent danger of falling under the power of infidelity and superstition.

We invite the special attention of the young reader to all this. We would sound a warning note in the ears of such. The present is a moment of deep and awful solemnity. The arch-enemy is putting forth every effort to sap the very foundations of Christianity. In all directions the divine authority and all-sufficiency of Holy Scripture is being called in question. Rationalism is gaining ground to a fearful extent at our seats of learning, and polluting the streams of religious thought which are flowing over the land. Truth is at a discount, even amongst those who ought to be its guardians. We may nowadays behold the strange sight of professing Christian teachers taking part at meetings where professed infidels preside. Alas ! alas ! men who are infidels themselves may become pastors and teachers in that which calls itself the Church of God.

In the face of all this, how precious are the words, “ For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven ” ! Nothing can touch this. It is above the reach of all the powers of earth and hell, men and devils. “ The word of our

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God shall stand for ever." The Lord be praised for the sweet and solid consolation of this !

But let us remember the counterpart : " Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Here lies the great moral safeguard for the soul in this dark and evil day. To have God's word hidden in the heart is the divine secret of being preserved from all the evil influences which are at work around us. Satan and his agents can do absolutely nothing with a soul that reverently clings to Scripture. May we never forget it !

T. N. O.

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L. T. T. R. H.—We are not ardent believers in " chain prayers ; " indeed, we do not believe in them at all, and would lend no hand in passing them on to others. And this particular prayer seems to us to betray a great want of acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures. Anything that stirs us up to prayer is good, but we are to pray " in the Holy Ghost " (Jude 20). This chain prayer hardly comes under that description. We believe you are right in not sending it on to anybody else.

S. B.—"*The fullness of the Spirit.*"—With every respect for the esteemed writer of this booklet, we think that he does not deal with the subject as Scripture deals with it. There is but little recognition, if any at all, that the gift of the Spirit is

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already bestowed on *every* true believer in Christ. To be filled with the Spirit is yet another thing, for while it is true that every believer is "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," it is not true, alas! that everyone is "filled with the Spirit." Nor is there any need to go beyond the Epistle to the Ephesians for proof. If we look at chapter i. 13, we shall see that in believing the gospel of our salvation we are sealed with the Spirit—marked off as God's very own. Later on we are bidden "not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption" (chap. iv. 30). It is those who have been thus sealed with the Spirit who are exhorted to be "*filled with the Spirit.*" This is proof enough that the two things—the sealing and the filling—are not the same.

Now this booklet does not distinguish between these two. And it insists on conditions which have to be complied with so that "this fullness of the Holy Spirit may become ours." They are three in number. First, there must be the confession that we are not filled with God's Spirit, coupled with the desire to be filled. Second, there must be "one supreme act of self-surrender, the placing of one's whole being upon the altar." Third, we must "dare believe that the Holy Spirit now takes entire possession of us." But, so far as we remember, neither the gift of the Holy Spirit nor our being filled with the Spirit is ever spoken of in our Bible in any such connections. Do we, then, say that these conditions in themselves are not good? Nay; but what we say is that the subject is not placed in such a

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setting. And surely our wisdom is to think and speak of the matter as Scripture does.

That the Holy Spirit of God can now indwell the believer is in itself a witness to the efficacy of that Blood which cleanseth from all, or every, sin. It is on the ground of atonement having been made, and *not because of any act of self-surrender on our part*, that the Holy Spirit is given to the believer. And this was shadowed forth in the leper in the day of his cleansing. The priest took some of the *blood* of the trespass offering and put it on the ear, hand, and foot of the leper who was to be cleansed, and afterward he put the oil there (Lev. XIV. 14-17). First the blood and then the oil. Now the oil is a well-known figure of the Holy Spirit. No one save those who are cleansed from their sin by the precious blood of Christ receives the gift of the Spirit, but everyone so cleansed does receive the gift. When the gospel of our salvation is heard and believed, then the believing one is sealed with the Spirit. Ephesians I. 13 and Acts X. 43-44 make this quite plain, and such we believe is the uniform teaching of Holy Scripture.

Then let us notice the connection in which being "*filled with the Spirit*" is placed in Ephesians V. 18. If when heathens they had drunk wine freely in honour of their deities and to excite their religious frenzy, it was not to be so now. They were to be filled with the Spirit. But what does this filling of the Spirit mean? Is it a fresh or an additional gift of the Spirit? We believe not. It means that "He should take such possession of our affections, our thoughts, our under-

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standing, that He should be their only source according to His proper and mighty energy, to the exclusion of all else." These borrowed words express with more exactness than any of our own what is meant by being filled with the Spirit. Weigh them well.

As to the "one supreme act of self-surrender, the placing of one's whole being upon the altar," Scripture does indeed speak of such a thing. But not in order to receive "the fullness of the Spirit" or, to speak more exactly, to be "filled with the Spirit." The passage we have in mind is Romans XII. 1, 2. But if it exhorts us to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto God—our intelligent service—it is not in view of our receiving anything. On the contrary, it is based on "the mercies of God" which have been already so freely bestowed upon us. And among them is the gift of the Spirit. The Apostle earnestly appeals to us to place ourselves upon the altar—the glad and grateful and willing response on our side to all the manifold and immeasurable mercies which God has freely bestowed upon us in Christ. And if you ask what these mercies are, we beg you to read the first eleven verses of chapter v. and the whole of chapter VIII. You will find them there. It is precisely the same thing in 1 Corinthians VI. 19, 20, where the exhortation to personal purity is founded on the fact that we have been bought with a price, and that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

What a life ours would be were we thus filled with the Spirit—the Spirit, already received, being ungrieved and possessing our entire being!

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If you would see it displayed on its many sides, you should read the Epistle to the Philippians. There we find Christian life in the power of the Spirit of God. But on this we cannot enlarge. Our space forbids it. Let us hear from you again if what we say is not sufficiently clear.

W. J.—We are not quite sure, but we are inclined to think, after carefully reading your letter, that you do not believe in any existence of the spirit apart from the body; so that when a man dies he is done with and ceases to exist till the resurrection day—a dreary belief, indeed; full of gloom and Egyptian darkness. If wrong, you will please forgive us.

The deduction you draw from our Lord's words in John III. 13 we believe to be entirely false. Nothing is more misleading than to tear a text away from its context and then attach a meaning to it which it was never intended to convey. Now it is certain that in John III. the Lord is not telling us where men go to when they die. He had been speaking to Nicodemus of *earthly* things, which that Master of Israel ought to have understood but did not. How, then, should Nicodemus understand and believe if *heavenly* things be spoken of? Now the Lord Jesus was the only one who was competent to speak of heavenly things. No man had ascended up to heaven to learn what those things were and to bring back the report of them to us; but "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven"—*He* could make them known. What has this to do with the question

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of where men go to after death, or whether Enoch and Elias are now in heaven or not? Nothing at all. You must be very hard driven to seek refuge for your doctrine in such a text.

When the Saviour said to the dying malefactor, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," we believe that to paradise he went. The spirit of the man went there, not his body—*that* awaits the resurrection morning. Paul tells us that he had "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which," says he, "is far better." We believe the blessed Apostle is now "with Christ." But that does not do away with chapter xv. of 1 Corinthians, as you would have us suppose. If there is no existence of the spirit without the body, how is it that when Paul was caught up into the third heavens he did not know whether he was in the body or out of it (1 Cor. xii.)? We have spoken to some who believed themselves wiser than Paul, but you, we trust, are not one of these.

We note what you say as to Romans vi. 3, 4. You call our attention to the word *into*. Possibly you may not know that the same Greek word is found in 1 Corinthians x. 2, and there it is translated *unto*. It would hardly do to speak of the Israelites as having been baptized *into* Moses. We believe it should be *unto* in both verses. On reference we find it is so rendered in the New Translation of J. N. Darby. You speak of baptism as the burial of our *wills*. Are our wills, then, baptized with water? Such imaginative handling of the Word of God hardly commends itself to us.

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AN APPEAL.

WE have it at heart to suggest that fervent prayer be made to God, both privately and publicly, for a *revival* of His work among us. We do not now refer to the conversion of souls through the preaching of the gospel, blessed as that is and much to be desired. What is before our mind is a revival among those who are already converted—Christians, not in name only, but in reality. It is among these that we ardently desire to see a revival of the work of God—a movement bearing the unmistakeable marks of the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. Such a movement God alone can bring about, but if many are led to pray—we were going to say, *to agonize in prayer* for it, might we not humbly expect some gracious answer?

Back in the earlier years of the last century—eighty years ago—there was such a revival as we long to see again. It broke forth almost simultaneously in various parts of England and Ireland. Great light was thrown upon the Word of God, and many mighty truths, long hid from the eyes of Christian men, were found in its blessed pages and ministered in very much spiritual power by tongue and pen. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth—the return of the Lord Jesus for His saints—the

heavenly calling—the nature and unity of the Church of God—her calling, hopes and destiny, as distinguished from the calling and hopes of Israel—ministry, its source and power—the Christian standing in Christ, risen and in glory—these were among the truths ministered, and that lived and burned in the souls of very many. And along with this, the gospel was preached in much clearness and fullness, bringing multitudes into peace and liberty before God.

But that movement, like others in their day, has spent much of its spiritual force. It is true these great themes are still with us, but for the most part they are buried in books that are seldom read. And they linger still, in a traditional sort of way, among certain circles of Christians who are apt to think—as we all are—that in having the truth in terms they have the truth which the terms denote. A greater mistake could not be made! Who so foolish as to suppose that talking about pounds, shillings and pence, houses, lands and other forms of wealth, is the same thing as having them in actual possession? But this should only lead us the more earnestly to pray that God would revive His work in the midst of His Church, and that the great truths of “the faith once delivered to the saints” may be so ministered that they shall live and burn afresh in the hearts

and lives of His people? That is the revival we ardently long to see, and for which we might well importunately pray.

And if God, in His great mercy, hearkens to our prayers we shall find that His truth is still living and powerful, and that it will yield the same results as it did in days gone by. Then it brought men out from the world—religious or otherwise—willing to share the fortunes of their rejected Lord and Master. They esteemed “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,” and found in Him and in his love such untold wealth that the glittering prizes of earth were no longer their object and desire. Pilgrims and strangers here, they waited for God’s Son from heaven, their Deliverer from coming wrath. Their citizenship, their home, all that they loved most, was *there*. Oh, that God would raise up once more in His poor Church chosen vessels—men who know the power and preciousness of these things themselves, and who shall be able to minister them afresh to His saints in the power of the Holy Ghost!

And while praying, expecting, and waiting on God for this revival, let us begin at once to give the more earnest heed to the Word of God—each for himself. Let it be read with greater attention and with more heartfelt prayer that the Holy Spirit might enrich us with its eternal treasures. “He satisfieth the

longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." And this, as by the working of an unfailing law, will give intensity to our prayers and supplications for others. It is the law of love.

Nor will that be all. We shall not forget that these imperishable things are the heritage of all believers—young and old. For there is no law of primogeniture in the family of God, no right that does not equally belong to all the children. Why then should His people wander about like mendicants? Why should they live in the workhouse and not in the house and home of their Father? Why hold out the hand to receive the world's alms as if they were beggars? Why drink at its polluted streams and broken fountains—wearied and unsatisfied—when unsearchable riches are theirs?

As we think of these things, perhaps we shall feel more than ever that all of us, in some sense, are "stewards of the mysteries of God." Then, moved by a heaven-born impulse we shall begin to speak of these "mysteries" to others, knowing that gold buried in the earth yields no revenue, and grain in bags and barns, will cover no fields with waving corn. But to pursue this further would divert us from the immediate object of our paper. Prayer—fervent, importunate, unwearied prayer for a revival in the Church of God is what we ask for. Will the reader join us in it?

THE SISTER OF THE DEAD.

A WORD TO THE BEREAVED.

THERE are few, if any, among the readers of *Simple Testimony* to whom this epithet, applied by the Scriptures to Martha, does not belong. Nearly all of us have some beloved relative among those whose bodies lie beneath the cemetery sod. If we are not all *sisters* of the dead, we are, in many cases, their brothers, husbands, wives, parents, children.

With some of us the memory has to travel back through many a year to the sad day when we bade a last loving farewell to the dear one who has "gone before." With others the parting has been more recent, and though we know that it is well with the loved one who has gone from our midst, our tears have not yet ceased to fall.

It is to *all* the bereaved among the readers of these pages that I specially address myself. I want to show you what a real and blessed thing the "comfort of the Scriptures" is.

For Martha, with her grief-stricken heart, the Lord Jesus had words of wonderful comfort, words to which I would call your earnest attention.

I

First let us notice that Martha was herself an object of the personal love of the Lord Jesus. It is not for nothing that the words are recorded

in this connection : “ *Now Jesus loved Martha.*” Mary and Lazarus were also the objects of that love, but Martha’s name stands first in the list. Her understanding of what Jesus said was not perhaps as ready as Mary’s ; she does not seem to have been as quick as her sister to discern what was of greatest value in His eyes. But she was not loved the less on that account.

We often find great delight—do we not—in thinking of Christ’s love to the church : that pearl of great price for which He deemed it worth while to give all that He had, that church which He esteems His body and His bride. But in times of sorrow, when grief seems too deep for words, it is the personal, individual love of the Lord Jesus to each one of “ His own ” that brings comfort and joy to the heart. The thought that He loves ME, has done and will always do the very best for me, and will be close to me in this and every sorrow, is well calculated to cheer the mourner, and lift the heart above its woe.

And you, my Christian reader, are thus loved. The list of names in John XI. 5 is a short one. Add your own name to it and read it, not as past history but as present fact. Jesus loves you to-day as truly and as much as He loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Remember, too, that the dear one for whose loss you mourn is equally the object of that love. You may say with the Jews of verse 36,

“ How He loved him ! ” *You* loved him well, but Jesus loved him more ! *Loved*, did I say ? Nay, *loves* is the better word ; for the love that rests upon us on earth follows us beyond the grave. In leaving earthly life behind, we do not leave that love behind. We do not pass beyond its reach. Think of your loved one in the light of this fact, and say with thankfulness and praise : “ How He loves him ! ” or “ How He loves her ! ”

II

Another thing, fraught with greatest comfort, is the sympathy of Jesus, sympathy that expressed itself in no mere words, but in tears. “ *Jesus wept.* ” Remember that the One we know in glory is the very same Jesus that wept at the grave-side of Lazarus. He is “ not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He is moved to sympathy, not by the mere *knowledge* of our infirmities, but by the *feeling* of them. He who manifested His sympathy by tears in the days of old has still His way of expressing it to His loved ones.

How much one can express by the pressure of the hand ! If *His* hand has been pressing you, dear reader, take it as the pressure of His loving sympathy—His sympathy with *you*.

III

Thirdly, we have the comforting assurance

of resurrection in connection with those that have died. “ *Thy brother shall rise again.* ”

You have not looked upon your loved one for the last time. The parting has rent your heart ; your whole life seems overcast, but it is only “ till He come.” Jesus, with quickening voice, will come, and those who now lie in the cold silence of the grave shall hear that voice and spring up, and come forth. Blessed resurrection of life ! Death swallowed up in victory !

And how will they appear to us then, those loved ones whom we had lost ? Not as they did when with us upon earth, beset by trial and bearing in their bodies the signs of decay and suffering. They will be radiant with the likeness of Christ, shining with His reflection, *with Him, like Him*, for ever. Dry your tears, Christian ; turn from the tomb where he whom you love now lies ; think not only of his happy spirit now “ with the Lord,” but of what the resurrection day will mean for him ! Say to yourself with silent remembrance of all that it implies : “ My brother will rise again ! ” Is not *that* sufficient to put a song into your heart even now ?

IV

The fourth thing is that even in connection with the death of His loved ones, the Lord Jesus can speak of *the glory of God*. “ Said I

not unto thee that . . . thou shouldest see the glory of God ? ” (v. 40).

God's glory is great in creation. Un-numbered worlds, moving in their ordered course, and upheld by His Word, proclaim His glory. But a greater glory still is His in the scene which has been marred by sin and death : the glory of redemption, the glory of an eternal triumph over the powers of evil, the glory of having for Himself a great company of sons, delivered from the domain of death, and knowing by this very means the infinite love that is their everlasting portion.

Death itself thus becomes a minister to the glory of God. Out of the eater comes forth meat ; out of the strong comes forth sweetness. God will bring glory to His own great name, through the death of your beloved one, when, as the God of resurrection, He brings him from the tomb, clothes him with his “ house from heaven,” and gives him his place in that new creation, where neither death, nor sin, nor grief shall ever be able to intrude.

Let us, then, not sorrow as those who are in ignorance of these things. Let us rejoice that He who hath taken away the object of our love will bring him again in such a way that not only he and we will be filled with endless delight, but that God's holy and blessed name will be glorified therein !

H. P. B.

DETROIT. *June*, 1914.

“THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO YOU.”

LOOKING over the well-stocked tables in a Tract Depôt recently, our attention was arrested by a neat card bearing the title at the head of this page. Needless to state, we felt not a little interested.

We were conversant with the holy Gospels with which the New Testament opens, and which bear the names of the four evangelists by whom the Holy Spirit of God was pleased to communicate to us His fourfold account of the advent, life, death, resurrection, and—in two instances—ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Was this “gospel according to YOU” something outside of the Scriptures? If so, we would have nothing to do with it, for it could not possibly have divine approbation. Was it another Gospel? If so, the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Spirit of God, had written about it in unequivocal language of the most condemnatory nature (see Gal. i. 8, 9).

We therefore read with great care what came under these striking words; and desiring to leave our readers no longer in suspense, we venture to reproduce the contents of the card in their entirety:—

“THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO **YOU**.”

“**YOU** are living a Gospel,
A chapter each day,

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By deeds that you do,
 By words that you say.
 Men read what you live,
 Whether faithless or true.
 Say ! What is the Gospel,
 According to **YOU**.”

We confess this made us think, and think furiously. There was no doubt as to its being scriptural to the last degree. No ! it was not another Gospel. It was a continuation of that story which is presented in such a wonderful way in Sacred Writ. Wonderful, because the history of our blessed Lord as a Man among men is set forth with such undisguised simplicity and so free from any attempt at human embellishment, that in reading it we are moved to the very depths of our being. His walk, His words, His works are so narrated that we are filled with wonder and worship as we behold in Him, who was here in lowly grace,

“ *The Glorious Greatness of God !* ”

Luke IX. 43 (New Translation). As we further mused upon the matter, we remembered having heard a servant of the Lord suggest that probably one reason that the fourth Gospel closed in a sort of unfinished way was because God desired that we should finish it, and that the works of our Lord Jesus Christ which could not be tabulated in books should be recorded—or was it reproduced ?—in the lives of His dear people.

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Yes ! There did indeed appear to be something, in fact a great deal, in it. We have reason to fear that the world at large does not read those precious records which to us are of such priceless value ; on the other hand, we have cause to know that *they do read us*.

We recalled a favourite saying of another servant of Christ : " To-day we want Christianity, not in books, but in boots." We understood him to mean that just as we now, through mercy, read *the* Book of books and can write right across its hallowed pages—*CHRIST* ! so, as the men of the world watch us—where we go, what we do, how we speak, in fact our general manner of life every day of the week, and all the day at that—they might be led to inquire wherein we differ from others, and might ultimately be able to spell in our lives—*C-H-R-I-S-T* ! We recalled how it was this " Gospel according to *you* " that seemed to influence men after Christ had gone back to glory. Did not the enemies of Christ take knowledge of the apostles " that they had been with Jesus " ? (Acts IV. 13). And is not the tale of the triumphant progress of the early Christians, as told in the Acts of the Apostles, the proof that in their lives they were ever and anon exemplifying the gospel, and that as men saw the revolution that was wrought in their lives they were attracted, not to them, but to Christ, and, enrolling under His

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banner, the ranks of the Redeemed were increased every day? Continuing our mental survey, there passed before our mind's eye those of whom we read in the Epistles, all of whose lives were gospel sermons. They were found among young and old: Timothy the youth and “ Paul the aged ”; male and female: “ the brother whose praise is in all the churches,” and “ Phœbe our sister ”; those of exalted and lowly birth: “ the elect Lady,” and “ Quartus a brother.” But we must not go further with our list, or our editor will be obliged to say—“ Halt ! ”

Then these selfsame Epistles breathe forth the earnest solicitude of the writers that all those who had received, and believed, and benefited by the gospel should henceforth live it. Have we not there every encouragement to do it? Is not the way in which it may be done most simply set forth? Are we not assured, not once or twice, but again and again, how grateful all this is to our blessed God?

Lastly: In Revelation XIX. 8 we seem to reach the close, may we say, of the printed volume to which we are all contributing. For, we apprehend, “ *the righteousnesses of the saints* ” represent the graces and beauties and loveliness of Jesus as expressed in our lives, so that in measure as we are preaching “ the gospel according to YOU,” we are adorning the

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robe in which the Bride of the Lamb will set forth Christ for the admiration of a wondering universe.

Thus God writes "Finis" upon the gospel inaugurated with Christ's first coming here. The foundation of it was laid in Christ's death and resurrection. The propagation of it has been entrusted to the Holy Spirit of God, who brings rebel sinners under its subduing power, making them in turn the instruments for the preaching of it by life and lip. And the testimony of it will end when "the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout" and summon all His blood-bought people to meet Him "in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

All this seems to place us at once in a position of dignity, yet grave responsibility. If it depended at all upon us, we might well shrink from it; but the power for it is outside ourselves, though communicated to us by the indwelling Spirit. The text which concludes the leaflet shows that there is no effort, no fuss, no noise, no obtrusion of self about it: we have simply to let our light so shine. The light that illumines the darkness at night is unconscious of its shining, while we gratefully derive the benefit.

Sometimes a feeble light is not the fault of the illuminant. It may be due to a faulty burner, or a soiled globe; so we, by the allowance of the

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flesh, or by association with the world, may obscure the light. Hence our Lord's words : “ Let *your* light so shine before men, that they may *see* your good works, and *glorify your Father* which is in Heaven.” Our lives are to be such that we shall radiate the light wherever we go, and men, not hearing our good words but seeing our good works, shall not extol us, but glorify our Father. This was true to the very uttermost of our blessed Lord when He was here. And what child of God does not desire that it should be true of him in ever-increasing measure while left in this dark world, awaiting the return of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Thus will we daily be preaching “ The Gospel according to *you* ” ; for “ The Gospel according to *you* ” is the practical demonstration in the lives of His children of “ the Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord ” (Rom. I. 1-4). God would have everyone to preach it ; the Lord Jesus Christ would seek to attach our hearts more and more to Himself in order that we might preach it ; the Holy Spirit would endue us with the power necessary for the preaching of it, and the world that refuses to read God's Book is ever ready to read God's children.

Lord grant, where'er we go, whate'er we do, we may preach “ The Gospel according to **YOU.**”

W. B. D.

PRAY, TRUST AND WAIT.

(A Word to Mothers.)

“**W**HAT a fearful thing it is to be a mother!” Such were the words wrung from the lips of a lady most suddenly bereaved of a loved son. Yes, fearful in its *responsibility*, fearful in its *grief*. “I gave my child to God,” she went on to say, “but *consenting* to suffer does not annul the suffering.” The dear lady’s trial was severe but not unique. Every day we hear of like griefs, yea, of household tragedies; and even some of us who have been, in God’s mercy, preserved from such afflictions have to confess that our path is encompassed year by year with cares, and anxieties, and, alas! too often with grief. The health of our children, the welfare of their souls, their associates, their education and advancement are all separate cares. It is not while our children’s hearts are all our own, while our loving arms are round them, as they lisp their morning and evening prayers, that our gravest anxieties concerning them exist. It is as they grow away from us, as it were, and we are not so necessary to them; it is when their interests become separate, their tastes alter, and with their growth perhaps a certain reticence begins—it is *then* our cares and fears increase tenfold. How often their

desires are not what we wish! They are less loving, less dutiful. Their dispositions are different from what we had hoped and desired. Ah! many and varied are our trials with regard to them. Is not ours a life of self-abnegation—to many of us a perpetual going without—in the almost hopeless endeavour to “make both ends meet.” But if we would but cast each carking care, each burden, on the Lord, *He would sustain us*. He says, “*Bring thy son hither to Me.*” Nothing, I am convinced, stands between our children and God’s best blessings—but prayer. Let us bring them and, as it were, lay them in His loving arms, and all will—all *must*—be well. His merits have been all-sufficient for millions, to give them a joyous, happy life, a triumphant end, and a blissful eternity! And He is sufficient for millions more; and, if so, for our loved ones. It may be, some of them have been called away suddenly. So far as human eye can see there appeared no hope in their death. But do not give way to despair. The work of Christ is so complete and finished that *one look* of faith is sufficient. And who may judge of what passes between a soul and its Saviour?

Between the saddle and the ground
Mercy sought and mercy found.

An unhappy marriage, if contracted by one of our children, seems to us a grievous and

deplorable occurrence, but *even* this, if we pray and wait, God can turn to good account.

In the course of conversation at a gentlemen's dinner-party, the members were enumerating the good qualities of their wives. One gentleman, who was known to have a notoriously trying wife, was entirely silent. When all had finished their remarks, he calmly said, "Well, friends, I have the best wife of you all." They regarded him wonderingly, with incredulity depicted on every face. "How is that?" one ventured to ask. "Because," said he, "*my wife sends me to my knees a dozen times a day.*" Poor man! We can but think his daily trial and martyrdom was used to draw him into close communion with his God! Dear tried mothers, "hedge about" your children with prayer. Who can know what trials it may ward off from them, or what blessings it may bring down? Let us change our anxiety and worry to prayer, as one truly says—"When we worry we do not trust, and when we trust we do not worry."

I will not worry, I will *trust*;
God knows I am a child of dust;
He knows I long to do His will,
Though darkness closes round me still.

I will not worry, I will *pray*;
I know God cares for me to-day;
And trusting ever in His love,
I'll tread the path that leads above.

NEMO.

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

MATTHEW XI.

IT is not so much the words which the blessed Lord speaks in this well-known chapter, wonderful though they are, but it is the presentation of Himself personally in those words that must strike the mind of the attentive reader.

Thus, in sending a message of reassurance to His imprisoned witness and forerunner, John the Baptist, He not only draws attention to works done by Himself in giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, and life to the dead, but, most significantly He adds: "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (*v.* 6).

Now this testimony—that He should be a stumbling-stone, an offence—was wholly apart from those acts of grace and power which declared His Messiahship and His divine mission. In these there lay no offence, nor scandal. Rather they were a just cause of admiration. They attested His power, goodness, and pity, and called forth man's appreciation; but, underlying all that goodness, there was the truth that, in order to deliver from the effects of sin He must, in grace, meet its awful consequences by death—the death of the cross.

It was here that the offence rested. That cross was prescient to Him; it was the baptism wherewith He was to be baptized, and, in view of which, He was "straitened." John appears to have been taken by surprise by his imprisonment. Hence he sent to the Lord for reassurance, receiving from Him the fullest possible satisfaction; but the Lord was never surprised, for He "knew all things that should come upon him." He was perfectly conscious that, while distributing countless benefactions on poor, needy man, there lay before Himself only the cross and its dire offence. That was to be the greatest benefaction of all—that giving of Himself, whatever the reproach attaching to it. And hence He said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

And then John, when he had received his Master's message, would get the key to his own unexpected condition. He had to fore-run a rejected King and to suffer for His sake.

Has the same key been placed in the hand of each of His followers? Have we all truly apprehended the fact that—

Our Lord is now rejected
And by the world disowned

as much, and as really, as He was near two thousand years ago in Judea? We are slow to perceive that the kingdom, in its authority,

is not yet a thing of display or popularity, but one of refusal and suffering. It is "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." "Not offended in Me!" That is the supreme test of discipleship. It is quite possible to admire the works and to applaud the mighty Workman, just as Jonathan admired the conqueror of Goliath; but to esteem His reproach and to follow in the steps of His rejection is another thing. Yet he who does so is "blessed."

Further, He presents Himself (in ver. 19) as the Son of Man who had come eating and drinking, and of whom they said: "Behold a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Nor was He ashamed to be so regarded.

It was true, thank God, to the letter. There He was in perfect liberty, as Son of the Father, using His creatures in a way which could not be understood by the legalist, and befriending even the publican and sinner. He was a Man amongst men—the Son of Man, as He said—and His friendship toward the sinner was one of His distinctive glories. True, He was holy, harmless, and undefiled in all His ways; but by that friendship He could pronounce pardon on the guilty, and do more than speak of paradise to a penitent malefactor. And yet for such grace He was commonly stigmatized! Blessed stigma! Oh! how He gloried in an offence of this kind! His love

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for the poor, sinful souls of men—that sublimest of all charities—should have secured something else than His rejection. For this reason too He might have said, “Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me.”

And those cities which had witnessed so many of His mighty works closed their gates against Him. They were offended in Him: and not only missed the blessing but incurred a final and irretrievable curse. They rejected Him to their own confusion.

He shines in His intrinsic perfection. In that hour of outward defeat, as we would call it, and in a spirit of absolute submission, He thanks the Father, Lord of heaven and earth, who had hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them to babes. Enough for Him that such should be the recipients of a revelation from His Father. That which was good in the Father’s sight was pleasing to Him.

Then did He lose aught? Nay; “all things,” said He, “are delivered unto Me of My Father.” These were secured indefectibly, even though He passed through death’s dark waters; He should hold them in resurrection; “and,” He added, “no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” Man might appraise His works, but none save the Father could know the Son, who, in the deep mystery of that relationship, must ever be inscrutable to man.

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Again: "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." This revelation is the prerogative of the Son and His utmost delight, as we may learn from John xvii. The Outcast of Capernaum is the Revealer of the Father! But to whom?

"Come unto me" are His gracious words, "all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"*Rest for the weary*": and such rest and for all such!

What fullness resides in that "*Me!*" He stands alone—matchless, and only needs to be proved. He closes His incomparable statement by saying, "Learn of Me, and ye shall find rest to your souls." His gentle yoke of submission to the will of the Father is undoubtedly the pattern for the rest and tranquillity of our hearts here below. "Learn of Me"—why? "For I am meek and lowly in heart"—as all the chapter under consideration beautifully proves—and in so doing we shall find rest to our souls.

I heard the voice of Jesus say :—
 My yoke and burden share,
 Easy the burden I endure,
 And light the yoke I bear ;
 I follow Jesus and I find
 His Father's will the best ;
 And now in yielding to that will
 My soul has perfect rest.

J. W. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. W.-G.—John^{xxi.} 15.—We believe that our Lord's question to Simon Peter, *Lovest thou Me more than these?* had in view the loud protestations of fidelity that Peter had made on the eve of our Lord's betrayal. "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night," said the Lord, and Peter's immediate rejoinder was, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." This was to say, in effect, that his love would bear a greater strain than theirs—if the love of others gave way, his would not. What actually took place we know—he denied his Lord with oaths and curses! After such a downfall, what would Peter now say? *Lovest thou Me more than these?* Wilt thou stand steadfast if the rest do not? Peter had learned the lesson—had learned his own weakness—and could only finally answer, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee." No strong words now about his steadfastness, though he could humbly say that, notwithstanding all, he loved the Lord. It is in this light we read the question, *Lovest thou Me more than these?*

M. R.—You ask why the passover lamb in Exodus xii. was not to be sodden at all with water, while in Leviticus vi. the sin offering was sodden; and why the earthen vessel had to be broken. In reply: Are you not overlooking the fact that the sin offerings were not all dealt with in the same way? No sin offering—the blood of which had been brought into the holy place—could be sodden, or even eaten; it was burnt with fire. But other sin offerings the blood of which had not been

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brought in had to be eaten by the priests ; and it was not forbidden that these should be sodden. Look at Leviticus x. 17, 18, where Moses remonstrates with the sons of Aaron for not eating the sin offering in the holy place, and he adds : " Behold the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place." It was theirs, therefore, to eat, and they should have eaten it. It would seem that in doing so the priests identified themselves with the " iniquities of the congregation," and with the sacrifice offered to put those iniquities, in figure, away. So with us—to eat the sin offering in the holy place is to bear the sin of others on our heart before God, to associate ourselves with it in confession, as Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel did in their day. See the ninth chapter of each of those three books. But such exercises call for spiritual energy, and therefore only the *males* of the priestly family—not the daughters—could eat the sin offering ; moreover, it is *priestly* work. Then the earthen vessel wherein it was sodden was to be broken ; or, if the vessel were brazen, it had to be scoured and rinsed. Does not this suggest that if we have to do with the sins of others, even in a priestly way, it defiles ? (See Num. XIX. 10.) Only One—the Lord Jesus—could have to say to sin and remain undefiled. As to the paschal lamb of Exodus XII., it had to be roasted with fire, not sodden. This is expressive of the holy and unsparing judgment of God which " Christ our Passover " had to bear for our sakes. We who are redeemed to God by His blood feed on Him thus—at the very start—with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs ; we feed on Him as the One

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on whom the fire of divine judgment fell, that we might never come under it—Blessed be His name !

ENQUIRER.—We rise up from the reading of your little booklet feeling that the writer's thoughts are not sufficiently formed by Holy Scripture. His phrases have a semblance of truth and there is a ring of piety about them, but they are cast in a loose and easy mould. And this is bound to encourage loose thinking unless his readers are like the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily to see whether what they heard was true (Acts xvii. 11). But people are not so inclined nowadays, much to their loss.

This booklet should be a warning to us all not to cite Scripture carelessly in support of what we hold and teach. The writer is singularly unfortunate in this respect, for he sometimes refers to passages which have nothing whatever to do with the subject he is treating of. For instance, on page 4 we are told that the *Church* was "chosen by God in the past eternity and given to Christ as His own special portion, His affianced one, predestined to become His bride." Then the writer directs us to Ephesians i. We turn to the chapter and find that it does not treat of the Church at all, does not even mention it till the very end. The whole of the chapter is intensely *individual*, and the Church is just named in the last two verses only. It is true that in verse 4 we learn that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, but it is the saints individually who were thus chosen. And in verse 5 we read of our having been "predestinated unto the adoption of children

by Jesus Christ unto Himself," but that is a very different thing from the Church "predestined to become His bride" as the booklet says. This loose and inexact way of writing is a great blot.

Again, on page 5 it is asked, "What is His heart's desire concerning her (the Church) at the present moment? How is she to show responsive affection to Him as her Head?" We are then referred to Ephesians v. 24. We turn to it and find there is not a word about "responsive affection" in the whole passage from verse 25 to the end. "It is no question of mutual affection," says Mr. J. N. Darby in commenting on these verses, "nor of anything connected with flesh'y imaginations. It is the love of Christ only, perfect according to His own heart before the existence even of the Church." And surely it is so.

Another point which we should not notice at all were it not for the bent of this booklet—the writer constantly substitutes *she* and *her* for the pronoun *it*. Harmless enough in most cases, and calling for no correction, though it is always well to speak as Scripture speaks. Now the Apostle does not employ those feminine pronouns, even when using the analogy of husband and wife, to set forth, in dim shadow, the relationship of the Church to Christ. He invariably uses the word *it*—"Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for *it*; that He might sanctify and cleanse *it* . . . that He might present *it* to Himself . . . that *it* should be holy and without blemish." And the wisdom of this is apparent—it is a guard against carrying the analogy too far, and against what J. N. D. calls "fleshly imaginations." If we

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think of the Church on earth to-day, it is composed of thousands of real believers of various nationalities united to one another by one Spirit and to Christ their Head in heaven. And by and by, when He presents the Church to Himself, it will be the whole aggregate of saints—from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord again. It is well to remember this. It will give sobriety to our thoughts and preserve us from sentimental imaginations resulting from a misuse of the analogy of which we have already spoken.

As for “corporate love,” it is a strange phrase. That all real Christians do love Christ we may not doubt, and were His love better known there would be a more worthy response. But the whole point in Ephesians v. is *His* love and its blessed activities—not ours.

The writer speaks much of the *local* gatherings—saints “convened in assembly”—it is then, so he says, this responsive affection and subjection to Christ is to be shown. Doubtless these admirable qualities should always mark His people. But when gathered together in assembly is it then that the analogy of husband and wife holds good? Is not the Church viewed rather as the house of God (1 Tim. III. 15)—suggesting another train of ideas altogether?

We only touch on one point more. The writer’s highest thought of Christ’s satisfaction in reference to the Church is connected with “His coming kingdom and glory” and “the world to come.” We search in vain for any mention of the Father’s house. This is sadly suggestive.

WHEN THE LORD COMES

THERE is a view abroad, according to which only a class of better than ordinary Christians will be taken up when the Lord comes, while the rest will be left upon earth to go through the tribulation which follows this, when the earth is enduring the vials of His wrath. Those who hold it point to the promise to Philadelphia in Revelation III. 10 as the promise to a special class. The ten virgins of our Lord's parable they maintain to be all Christians—the foolish ones being the unwatchful and unready, who have indeed the oil of the Spirit in their lamps, but no *extra* supply in their “vessels.” Thus their lamps, which had been burning, cease to burn at last, and the fresh supply of oil they get is obtained too late for admission to the marriage. The Lord rejects them only as the *bride*: they lose their place in this, and are shut out to be purified by tribulation, and made ready for the kingdom afterward.

But how many precious realities must be denied to hold this view! Is it our faithfulness, then, that gives us a place among those who are admitted to the dignity of the bride of Christ? Is the Lord, when He comes indeed, going to discriminate in this way between less and more faithfulness?—between ordinary and

extraordinary Christians? What an engine is this for turning the blessed and purifying hope into a means of self-occupation and despair! If things are so, where is the line of acceptance to be drawn? and on which side of it are we? Is my joyful expectation of this blessed time to be based on the belief in my own superiority to many of my brethren? What comfortable Pharisaism, or what legal distress must such a view involve!

If true, why should such a discrimination be made between the living saints alone? Why should it not equally affect the dead? And then, is there to be a purgatory to purify these?

As to Scripture, the support it gives to any such view is only apparent, and results from an interpretation of single passages, which is at issue with its whole doctrinal teaching. The coming of the Lord to remove His saints is not, in Scripture, ever connected even with our responsibilities, but with the fulfilment of the hope with which grace has inspired us. Our responsibilities and the reward of our works are connected with that which is called the "appearing" or "manifestation" or "revelation of Christ"—His coming *with* His saints, not *for* them. At the door of the Father's house, to which He welcomes us when He comes, no sentry stands, no challenge is required. We go into it as purged by the precious blood of Christ, and in Christ. Already

are we not only entitled, but “*meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ” (Col. I. 12).

When He comes to the world, and His people take their places with Him in government, then dignities, honours, rewards of work, will find their place. It will be, “Have thou authority over ten ”—“be thou also over five cities.” But salvation, righteousness, the child’s place with the Father, membership of the body of Christ, our relationship to Christ as His bride—nay, even our being kings and priests unto His God and Father, are things which, as they are not gained, so they are not lost by any work of ours at all. Christ has procured them for us, and grace bestows them—grace, and grace alone.

When, therefore, the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, is there discrimination among those in Christ?—of the dead who shall be raised?—of the living who shall be changed? Nay, but the “dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord ” (1 Thess. IV. 16). Blessed words! How they pierce and scatter the chilling fogs of legalism, and make “the blessed hope,” not a means of perplexity and doubt, but hope indeed!

F. W. G.

THE SNARES OF A YOUNG CONVERT.

SOME time ago I was asked to call and see a young man who was very ill with heart disease. He was a corporal in the dragoons, and had been seventy days in the hospital. On the occasion of my visit he was rather better, and able to be out a little, so I walked with him up and down the barrack square. I soon found that he was in a very wretched state of mind. He had been about five years in the Army, and had, like many young men of his class, pursued a wild and reckless career.

I was not surprised at the tale he had to tell me—a tale of wildness and folly. I was quite prepared for it all, and only too thankful to find the arrow of conviction had entered the young man's soul—that the ploughshare was doing its needed work and making furrows in the conscience to receive the incorruptible seed of the gospel. I believe it often happens that those who reach the haven of peace through the fiercest storms of conscience prove the steadiest Christians afterwards. We must not lay down an iron rule—but we may be allowed to express our deep sense of the value of a thorough, genuine work of the Spirit of God in the conscience.

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Such a work, I felt sure, was going on in the soul of the young soldier—and, inasmuch as the only balm for a wounded spirit is the precious blood of Jesus, I at once proceeded to point him to that divine and all-sufficient remedy. I endeavoured especially to press upon him a truth which had given my own soul peace, years ago, namely, that it is the work wrought *for* you, and not the work wrought *in* you that saves. It was perfectly plain there was a real work of God's Spirit in the young man's soul, and the effect was to make him feel the burden of his guilt. The Spirit of God raises the question of sin in the conscience, and this question can only be divinely settled by the application of the value and efficacy of the atonement of Christ. It will not do to cry "peace, peace," when there is no peace. It must be a real work of the Holy Ghost, bringing home to the anxious soul the value of the atoning work which has for ever put away sin and revealed God's righteousness in the pardon and justification of every soul that simply believes in Jesus.

Now I found that my young friend was looking at anything and everything but this perfect work of the Son of God. He was trying to get comfort and rest in his pious efforts, such as reading and prayer—things very right and valuable in their place, but which, as a foundation for a guilty sinner's peace, were altogether

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worthless. I sought to show him that it was impossible that he should be happy, or ever find peace, while he was looking right away from the object at which God was looking. “God is looking at Christ,” said I to him, “and you are looking at your own works. God says, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you’—God is satisfied with what He has done for you—you want to find satisfaction in what you are trying to do for Him. What a vast difference! God has under His eye continually a finished work—you have under your eye an unfinished work. Hence your misery. If there is a work which must be done, and I am trying to do it, but cannot succeed, I must be wretched. But if I find that this work has been done by another, even by Christ, for me, I am made happy.”

This is the substance of what I earnestly endeavoured to press upon my young friend as we paced the barrack square together. He seemed to grasp it and get comfort from it. He went with me to the gate, and as he shook me by the hand he thanked me fervently for coming to see him, and promised to attend a gospel meeting the next evening, which he did.

Shortly after this I left home for some weeks—and on my return, almost the first thing I heard was that my poor friend was very ill again, and as miserable as ever. I felt truly sorry for this, and lost no time in making my way to the military hospital. The moment I sat down

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beside him, I saw at a glance that he was very ill and very unhappy. I said, "What has gone wrong with you? I thought you seemed quite happy six weeks ago, when we parted at the barrack gate. Whatever has happened to you?" "Oh, sir," he replied, "I am afraid I have not the right kind of faith. I fear I am not converted at all. I am very unhappy."

I saw at once his spiritual whereabouts, and said to him, "Now, look at this. Six weeks ago I found you occupied with your works, and, as a consequence, miserable. To-day I find you occupied with your faith, and as a consequence, miserable. The effect is the same in each case. And why? Simply because in looking at your faith you take your eye off Christ just as much as when looking at your works. Faith never looks at itself to see whether it is the right kind, but ever looks at Christ, assured that He is the right Object. And, furthermore, let me ask you to bear in mind that the ground of my peace is not that I was converted so many years ago, but that Jesus bore my sins on the cross, long ago, and is up in heaven without them. If all the angels in heaven were to express themselves satisfied as to my conversion, that would not form the foundation of my peace. What gives me peace is the truth that God has been satisfied about my sins—by the finished work of Christ. You cannot be too simple in your apprehension of the true ground

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of peace. It is not your being truly converted, or your having the right sort of faith or the right sort of feelings, but simply, that Jesus died and rose again. True, the work of the Spirit must never be separated from the work of the Son in atonement ; but neither must they be confounded. Thousands do confound them, and thus, like you, get into darkness and misery.”

I had provided myself with a few oranges to refresh the poor invalid, so I used one of them to illustrate the point I wished to press. Taking it up in my hand, I said to him, “ Do you see this orange ? Now when I hand you this orange, and you take it, which is it, your hand or the orange, that will remove your thirst ? ” “ The orange, of course,” said he. “ Just so,” I replied. “ It is not the hand, but the orange that does you good. It is not the mode in which you take it, but the thing you take. Now thus it is precisely in reference to your faith and the object on which your faith lays hold. Your faith may be weak or strong ; but whether weak or strong, it is not your faith but the object of it—Christ—that meets your need.”

“ I see it, sir,” said the young soldier, with energy and warmth, “ I see it now, clearly. I have been looking away from Christ, and in this way have got into darkness. May I be enabled to keep my eye fixed on Him alone.” “ Yes,” I said. “ If you want to be wretched,

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look in ; if you want to be distracted, look around ; if you want to be happy, look up.”

After some further conversation, I again took leave of him, and in a few days, as I was going to preach in his neighbourhood, who should accost me but my young friend dressed in coloured clothes and looking so happy. His countenance was radiant, and he did not look like the same man. He had been pronounced by the medical authorities to be unfit for further military duties, and was waiting for his discharge. On my expressing my joy at seeing him, and my hope that he was now quite clear, “ Oh yes, sir,” said he, “ I am quite happy, and I am now determined to carry the blood-stained banner through the length and breadth of the land.”

All this was spoken with much ardour and enthusiasm. I did not in the least doubt his sincerity ; but I feared he was in danger of falling into another snare of the enemy. I therefore said to him, “ You must take care. About two months ago, I saw you for the first time and you were looking at your *works*, and you were miserable. I saw you six weeks after, and you were occupied with your *faith* and were miserable. To-day I find you occupied with your *service*, and I greatly fear it will take your eye off Christ just as effectually as if you were occupied with your faith or your works. It is not that I value faith or service less, but I value

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Christ more. I have met many young converts who have fallen into the snare of getting more occupied with service than with Christ. They have allowed their work to get between their hearts and the Master, and in this way they have fallen into darkness and depression. Keep your eye on the Master—cling to Christ—abide in Him, and then you will be found in service of the right kind. It is only as we abide in the vine that we bring forth fruit. ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto *Me*.’ For what? Is it to *draw* for others? Nay, but to *drink* for himself. And what then? ‘Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.’ This is the true principle—this is service in its right place—testimony flowing out of communion. If you make service your object, you will break down; but if you make Christ your object, your service will be of the right stamp.”

I am induced to put this little story on paper for the benefit of others, by the consideration that the snares and difficulties which beset the path of one young convert may beset the path of thousands; and I do most earnestly desire to be helpful in any way to such. May the Lord, in His exceeding goodness, be pleased to use what I have written for the establishment of souls in His own eternal truth.

ANON.

EVER THE SAME.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”—HEB. XIII. 8.

IN one view of it, the Epistle to the Hebrews is a divine testimony to the truth of this short verse—“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” For the thought of the Lord’s stability pervades the epistle, as also the stability of all that He deals with and of all who trust in Him.

Over this epistle, read in this light, the believing soul might breathe out the words of Psalm xc.: “Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” For it is a psalm which recognizes the vanity or perishableness of everything by reason of sin, and that through Christ alone is anything to be *established*. He imparts *glory* and *beauty* according to that psalm, but stability also.

In chapter i. the apostle looks at the stability of Jesus. He quotes Psalm cii., where Christ is viewed as man chosen out of the people and exalted to be Messiah, and now, instead of taking the kingdom, He is rejected and cast off. Messiah bewails the shortening of His days, but Jehovah promises Him that He should be “the same” still for ever and ever, when all else has decayed. It is the same

word—" *the same* "—in chapter I. 12 and XIII. 8. His person as God is the foundation of all His offices and works. In this way the epistle opens with the most glorious proclamation of this truth. Heaven and earth pass away, but Christ does not. The works of God's hand perish, but the One of God's anointing never can.

His person is thus fixed and stable for eternity. The anointed Jesus is still *the same*. But so is all that He deals with or handles, as this epistle, in the progress of it, discloses, whether it be His *blood*, His *priesthood*, His *covenant*, or His *kingdom*. There is no secret principle of decay, no blemish or cause of death, anywhere. No taint or uncertainty is found here, but stability attaches to each and all—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

His *blood* or *sacrifice*, as the Lamb of God, is established on the inadequacy of every other. It has been offered through the eternal Spirit (chap. IX. 14). In token of which Jesus has sat down in the heavens, with a thought about an entirely different thing. God has promised Him that His enemies shall be made His footstool, and He is expecting that event. That is, so fully has His sacrifice discharged its business and secured the way of the grace of God, that the mind in heaven can now be occupied with glory and the kingdom, or the judgments which lead to it. There is "no more offering."

And, therefore, the sinner that pleads this blood is "perfected for ever." His sins are purged, and he is sanctified "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (see chap. x.).

His *priesthood* is "untransferable" and "continual." He is "a priest for ever" and made "after the power of an endless life." And this is witnessed by His being ordained by the oath of God, the expression or language of an unrepentable purpose. He "ever liveth to make intercession."

Accordingly, the believer who looks to such a priest is saved "to the *uttermost*." He can never fail him. Years and generations find Him the same as the beginning had made Him and left Him (chap. vii.).

The *covenant* which He ministers in like character is stable, it is never "old." God never finds fault with it, so as to call forth another to succeed it, and thus make it old and "ready to vanish away." It abides always "new." It is called "the everlasting covenant."

And, in like manner, the blessings conferred by it are eternal; the sins and iniquities it remits are remembered "no more" (chap. viii.).

The throne He takes is "for ever and ever." It is untransferable and eternal.

And, accordingly, the *kingdom*, which by and by the saints order, is a kingdom that "cannot

be moved.” The “consuming fire” can never reach it, though it may burn up all beside. The saints are heirs of such a kingdom; they receive a kingdom that “cannot be moved.”

Such is the illustration of this short verse afforded by the epistle. The practical word for us is this: not to change our confidence, or transfer it from Him, seeing that He changes not, nor transfers His things to any other.

In the sight of all this glorious stability in Christ our faith is to be stable. This is the characteristic exhortation of this epistle, as the other is the characteristic doctrine. This is the exhortation suited to the doctrine; and, therefore, the apostle is seen throughout the epistle to be in dread of the Hebrew believers changing the ground of this confidence and surrendering their soul to the keeping of some carnal religious provisions in departure from the perfection and sufficiency of Christ. This is the fear which pervades the epistle, as the stability of Christ and all that He touches is the doctrine that pervades it. He sounds an alarm. He blows one of the silver trumpets of the house of God; and, in a different spirit from that in which it was uttered of old, says, “Let the Hebrews hear.” For he says, “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”; and again, “We are made partakers of Christ,

if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” And again, speaking as in the person of God Himself, “If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” And the solemn words in chapters vi. and x. are all upon the giving up of Christ, the “falling away” from the confession of His sufficiency, or the “doing despite to the Spirit of grace.”

Thus, then, the Lord Jesus stands strong, and all that He deals with; but He alone. “The earth and its inhabitants are dissolved, I bear up the pillars thereof.” His blood, His priesthood, His covenant, His kingdom, never wear old. And (blessed had we but hearts softened to receive the form of such a truth) He communicates all His stability to us, as we have seen. Faith appropriates it.

Thus, what Abigail said to David, that his life was bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord his God, this epistle says to us all who by faith make Jesus everything to us. We are interested in Christ’s stability. He shares His eternity with us. It is to our blessing as to His praise that the admiring apostle says, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

* * *

TRUE GREATNESS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN.

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."—MATT. XI. 11.

THIS is undoubtedly a verse which at first sight is rather puzzling. There is something in it of the nature of a paradox ; but a good many things in Christianity are just of that kind ; and I want to point out, if I can, the meaning of this remarkable statement.

Perhaps it is necessary to start by saying that there are two kinds of greatness: *moral* and *positional* ; or, to put it in another way, there is greatness of character and greatness of position, resulting from a change of dispensation. A dispensation is a period of time characterised by a certain mode of dealing on the part of God. We talk of the antediluvian, the patriarchal, the legal dispensations, and we now live in a dispensation that is marked by grace and the gospel. These dispensations are marked by different dealings, and God has in these days inaugurated that which transcends everything that went before.

The greatness of John the Baptist, to which the Lord alludes, was undoubtedly *moral*,

coupled with official greatness in the prophetic office. Luke in the corresponding passage tells us there was no greater *prophet* than John the Baptist. Here it says that there was no *man* greater than he. Evidently, therefore, the Lord here speaks of the greatness of his character ; and yet He adds that the least in the new dispensation that He was about to inaugurate would be greater than John.

I would like everybody to note what it is that makes a man great in the moral sense of the word. If we turn to the Gospel of John, we shall see what made John the Baptist great in the sight of God. In chapter 1., verses 19 to 27, we get a record of conversations between John the Baptist, and those who were sent to examine him on behalf of the Pharisees ; and we find that John persistently refuses to talk about himself. He prefers to speak of the great One who was to come. "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." At last, when they insist on John giving some account of himself, he says, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Nothing more—a very lowly place to take. In the Christian circle the mark of a really great man is that he does not talk about himself and his own exploits. His business is to keep pointing to the Master, and to bear witness to Him.

If you look at John III., verse 30, you get another glimpse of John. "He must increase, but I must decrease." The people came to him trying to stir up his jealousy. They said, "Look here, John, you are being thrown completely into the shade. The One to whom you bore witness, He is capturing the people. His popularity is on the rise, and yours is on the wane." John says, "Very well; I am glad that it is so. My mission is to be but the forerunner, and immediately the royal chariot appears, and the King himself graces the procession, I am content to be out of sight." That is another mark of a really great man. When taken down and thrown into the shade by the Master Himself he gladly accepts it.

And then one thing more. In John x., at the end of the chapter, we get another glimpse of this great man. "Jesus went away again beyond Jordan, to the place where John at first baptized, and there He taught, and many resorted to Him." Evidently the old place stirred up old remembrances, and their minds naturally reverted to John, who some years before had been the man of the hour, and so they said, as they thought over these things: "John did no miracle, but all things that John spoke of this Man were true." John never did anything wonderful. But I tell you what he did: he bore steady, unswerving and absolutely trustworthy witness to the blessed

Son of God. And what can anybody on earth do more than that? This might have been his epitaph: "Here lies a man who, though he never did anything wonderful, never opened his mouth as to Christ but he said something that was absolutely true. He never swerved a hair's breadth from bearing true testimony to the Master." He concerning whom such things could be truly said is going to shine very brightly in the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. John was such an one. He was a great man, not only in prophetic office as Messiah's forerunner, but morally—as to character—in the sight of God. I hope that every one of us will covet that kind of greatness, and covet it very much.

But when you have said all, and admitted to the full John's greatness, yet we have this astonishing statement, that the one who is least in this new dispensation is greater than he. The dispensation was ushered in when the King, having been rejected and having accomplished redemption, went to the right hand of God in the heavens, from thence to exert His blessed sway, not publicly, not with outward glory, but secretly over the hearts of His own.

Let me draw an imaginary picture. You see an aged Minister of the Crown, one of the most striking and distinguished men you ever set your eyes upon. You see him in the royal palace, and what is he doing? Sitting on one

of the chairs with crossed legs, and giving a little lad a ride upon his foot! Would you believe it—with all his mental greatness and the wisdom of years, that little child riding on the aged statesman's foot is the greater of the two? How so? Oh, because he is the son of the King, and a day is coming when, if he lives, the very crown of the realm is going to be placed on his brow. If it is a question of moral greatness, then you must say the statesman is the greater; but if it is a question of destiny or relationship, or of position, then the child is the greater. The very least of the King's sons is greater than the very greatest of his servants. I think that is easy to understand, and it serves as a kind of picture of that of which the Lord was speaking here.

The fact is, John was the last of the long line of most distinguished men, but his career was shortened, and he passed off the scene, never entering into the kingdom of the heavens. That is the plain inference of our text. He died just before the mighty work of redemption was accomplished and the Saviour took His seat at the right hand of God, and when, as a consequence, the Holy Ghost came down to earth and formed that in which you and I have a part, through the infinite grace of God.

If it is a question of character and spiritual backbone, we are simply nowhere compared

with a man like John the Baptist. We hear much about the physical degeneration of the race, but more pronounced than the physical is the spiritual. We have not got the Martin Luthers, the Whitefields, the Wesleys, and the men who were prepared to go to the stake for their convictions. Nowadays the fashionable thing is to have no convictions, to have no backbone. John the Baptist was a giant, we are but pygmies ; but we must recognize that such is the grace of God to us that we have been called into the kingdom of the heavens. Out of the world which has rejected Christ we have been taken ; and during the period that elapses between His rejection and His second coming in glory to take His rights we have been linked up with Him the rejected One, seated at the right hand of God in heaven ; and though we have never seen Him, we have believed in Him in such a way that He becomes to us an object of faith. We live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

If anybody said to me, " Well, now, but how would you distinguish these blessings ? In what respect has there been this great advance from John the Baptist's day until now ? " I should say in the first place that there is all the difference in the world in the matter of REVELATION—the revelation of God Himself. The God who in previous ages let rays of

His glory shine through the dark cloud has, so to speak, rolled back the clouds and shone forth like the sun in his strength. He did so in the person of Jesus become a Man here upon earth, that we might know the God of Sinai, not in Sinai's thunders, but in the gracious accents of the Man Christ Jesus. In the wonderful revelation—a revelation that throws everything that preceded into the shade, we find the first great distinguishing mark of the present dispensation.

Then think of REDEMPTION. Think of the great work being actually completed which has dealt with the whole question of sin. Do you say, "But what about the sacrifices? I thought they were offered for sins." They were valuable as a promissory note is valuable. I hold up a piece of paper. Now, what is that worth? You may say, "Well, I think you could buy about a hundred of those for sixpence. I reply, "That is worth one thousand pounds." Intrinsically it is a piece of paper, with a Government stamp on it, and some ink, worth practically nothing, but because of the name attached to it it is worth a very great deal. The sacrifices had value after that fashion. They were accepted as a provisional settlement, year by year, until the great moment when the Lord Jesus Christ should come, and by His own sacrifice of infinite worth should absolutely liquidate the

whole debt. What a wonderful thing it is, that we live in a day when that work has been DONE. Redemption has been accomplished. We travel, so to speak, into an altogether new region, into which John the Baptist, blessed as he was, never entered.

Then there are the new RELATIONSHIPS, which I was trying to figure a few moments ago by imagining the aged statesman and the little boy. The new relationships are those which are established in the light of the revelation, and on the basis of the redemption work of Christ. The relationship in which we stand with God is, as you know, summed up in two words, on His side that wonderful word "Father," and on our side the wonderful word "Child" or "Son." If you were to read the Epistle to the Galatians, particularly the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth chapters, you would find a wonderful commentary on that point. You would find the apostle reminding them that Christ had come, born of a woman, born under the law, come to redeem those that were under the law that they might receive the adoption of sons. That is what we have received, and into that wonderful position we have now been brought. Do not these things, then, help us a little bit to understand how, as the Lord Himself said, he that is least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than a great man like John the Baptist. We may be

only like little children, but, thanks be to God, our lot has been cast in this dispensation, and we are children of God. We have the knowledge of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We can look up to the God who has perfectly revealed Himself to us and call Him "Father."

Well, I hope that these things will be more real to us. There are so many things that drag us down and obscure our vision. God help us not to forget, but to keep these simple yet profound realities brightly before us; because, depend upon it, it is as we do so that we are able to answer to the grace bestowed, and live lives of courage and backbone which will glorify God.

F. B. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. M. S.—It is not possible that you should have deep, settled abiding peace so long as you are looking at the Spirit's work within instead of fixing your eyes on the one great sacrifice for sins which Christ has offered once for all. He has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree. Such is the explicit statement of Holy Scripture, and it is *there* your faith must rest. To this we add the fact of His glorious resurrection. Not that this latter adds aught to the atonement Christ has made, but it is the clear and undeniable witness that the sins He bore are for ever gone from before God. It witnesses, indeed, more than the removal

of our sins. It tells us that by those atoning sufferings God has been glorified and that nothing less was due to Him who suffered thus than that He should be raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand in heaven. A risen and glorified Saviour is the greatest of all proofs that the question of our sins is for ever settled. Nor can it be raised again without disputing the worth and excellency of the great sacrifice of Calvary and the righteousness of God in setting Him upon His throne.

What has the Spirit's work in us to do with all this? The new birth with everything that flows from it could never atone for our sins so that they should be blotted out. The resting-place of our souls is not a work that goes on within us, but a work wrought out in agonies and blood upon the cross by God's own Son—a finished work to which nothing can be added nor anything taken away. Did Christ bear your sins in His own body on the tree? If you believe He did, what, then, has become of those sins? They are in the depths of the sea, and who shall bring them thence? They are removed from you as far as the East is from the West, and who can call them back? And not only so. Christ has died not only to put our sins away, but to bring us to God. Unto Him we are now brought, accepted in the Beloved, clothed with the best robe, made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and owned as His dear children! (Col. i. 12-14).

The Spirit's work is another thing. That a man must be born again is certain. In no ambiguous terms this great necessity is stated in John III. And

its necessity lies in the fact that our sinful, fallen nature is beyond repair. All that is comprehended in that phrase "*our old man*" can never be restored to innocence. It has been crucified with Christ (Rom. vi. 6) and thus set aside, branded with the stigma of the cross. But there is a "*new man*", which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24). The Christian is a new creation in Christ, and as such has a divinely given capacity to enjoy the things of God. All this is most blessed and of the very last importance, but a moment's reflection will show you that it is not to be confounded with the atoning work of Christ.

As to your other question, alas! it is quite possible for the character of the Christian to deteriorate. It is sad to see one, once marked by charity and devotedness to Christ, become censorious and manifesting but little of the Spirit of his Master. Let us be careful lest we fall into a similar condition. None of us are exempt from the danger. Oh, to keep near to Christ, bearing His yoke and learning of Him who was meek and lowly of heart! It is thus and thus only that we shall find real rest in the midst of a weary world.

QUESTIONER.—Should a Christian, notwithstanding the warnings of God's Word and the remonstrances of his conscience, deliberately persist in going his own way, he must not expect anything but spiritual darkness and gloom. It could not be otherwise. In such conditions the Holy Spirit is grieved and becomes a Reprover rather than a Comforter, and all spiritual growth

is stopped. If this be your case, we earnestly counsel you to confess your waywardness, self-will, and sin to God that you may receive His forgiveness, and that the broken link of communion with Him may be restored. There is no reason why your days should not be bright—they will be if you deal thoroughly and honestly with your soul before God. There is forgiveness with Him—that fatherly forgiveness which every erring child needs. For you *are* His child, cared for and loved with a love that neither thought can measure nor tongue tell. Nothing changes that love, though the manifestations of it may be withheld. The sun shines even when clouds darken the sky. Why should your life be like the parched places of the wilderness when He would fill it with flowers and sunshine and the music of the birds? But it is only in the path of obedience and devotedness that strength and blessing are to be found. Get right with God, then. Let your heart pour forth into His ear your tale of sin and sorrow—that sin that cost the Saviour untold sorrow and suffering to put away. Believe that He is now as ready to forgive as He was at the first when the welcome of the prodigal of Luke xv. had its counterpart in your own happy experience. That God may bless you thus is our fervent prayer. And if the past teaches you that in yourself there is neither goodness nor power to overcome evil, you may thank God for the lesson learnt. “Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength” (Isa. xlv. 24). *You* may say so, out of a full heart, subdued by His grace. His righteousness in the place of your unrighteousness, and His strength in the

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place of your weakness. Let us hear from you again. We shall gladly give you such help as we can at any time.

AN ENQUIRER — The certainty of our being caught up to meet the Lord in the air when He comes again is not based on our consistency and faithfulness. Were it so it would be rank pride and self-righteousness for any man on earth to say he was certain. Such a theory fills honest souls with darkness and doubt. It must do so, for anything that rests on the faithful discharge of our responsibilities rests on a precarious foundation. It is *grace* that brings us salvation, and the same *grace* teaches us to look for “that blessed hope.” Moreover, Scripture is clear enough: “Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Cor. xv. 23). But who are they who share in this glorious resurrection? “They that are Christ’s” is the answer. And does not that include every believer that has “fallen asleep”? We believe it does. Again, “The dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess. iv.). Who are “the dead in Christ”? Does not that descriptive term embrace all true Christians who have died? Certainly. Again, “We who are alive and remain (unto the coming of the Lord) shall be caught up together with them” (the dead in Christ). Do not the words “we who are alive” comprise all true Christians? Most assuredly they do. But we need not continue. Our first article deals with the subject, and it is yet still more fully dealt with in a tract called *The Coming, the Judgment seat, and The Tribulation*, to be had of our Publisher for three halfpenny stamps.

BE NOT TROUBLED.

FOREWARNED by our Lord that wars shall rage, that nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, we are not to be moved when these events occur. Feel them we must, but it is ours to peacefully pursue our pilgrim way to a land where the roar of battle, the shock of arms, and the sanguinary strife, begotten by greed and ambition, have no place. On our way there our Lord's word to us is, "*See that ye be not troubled : for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*" (Matt. xxiv. 6).

Before then much is to happen. The gospel of the *kingdom* is to be preached, *for a witness*, world-wide. The holy place is to be found once more in Jerusalem, and "the abomination of desolation" set up therein (vv. 14, 15).

Many other signs are added, but these suffice to prove that the *end is not yet*. Look at the map. By far the largest portion of the world is shrouded in heathen darkness. Look at Jerusalem, instead of the temple with its holy places, a Moslem mosque is on its site, and a Gentile monarch holds sway.

Be not troubled (John xiv. 1). Our Lord is again speaking to His disciples. This time not

about His *coming again*, but His *going away*. As He does so He pours into their hearts words of consolation. He bids them not to be disturbed and agitated, for this is what He means when He says, "Let not your heart be troubled." How does He console them? Not by fixing their eyes on a world of strife, or an abomination which makes desolate. Instead, He assures them that in His Father's house there are many mansions, and having prepared a place for them they might count with certainty on His coming to take them there. Not a hint does He give that any signs are to precede His descent and their ascent. Their one happy prospect was to be *with Him ; where He is*.

Be not troubled (v. 27). Our Lord is again speaking. He had been telling His disciples that their life was bound up with His life. "Because I live, ye shall live also" (v. 19). They should also know, in the fullest and most unqualified way, that He was in them as life, even as they were in Him and He in the Father (v. 20). And in keeping His words many gracious manifestations and precious visitations should be theirs (v. 21). Best of all, another Comforter should take His place. The Lord had been their paraclete, their guardian, had looked after their interests in every way. Now He is about to depart to the Father, but the Holy Ghost should take His place here,

and bring to their remembrance those words of grace that none ever spake but He (v. 26). Peace, serene and undisturbed, such as He experienced should be theirs also. Again those cheering words are poured into their hearts—made sorrowful by the thought that they were losing Him—“ Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid ” (v. 27). Again He cheers them by the assurance that He will come to them, and bids them fix their thoughts on *His gain*. Fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore lay at the end of His journey (Ps. XVI. 11). In having Himself before their hearts and sustained by the power of the Holy Ghost, sorrow and trouble would be expelled and joy and peace be their portion. Stephen in the hour of his sorrow found himself lifted above it by the contemplation of Christ in glory (Acts VII.). So will it be with us if our thoughts are centred upon a glorified and coming Saviour.

Be not troubled (2 Thess. II. 2). This time it is Paul, inspired by the Holy Ghost, from whom the word of cheer comes. Some of his early converts had turned their eyes from the coming of Christ in glory for them, and had become occupied with events transpiring on earth. Persecutions and tribulations encompassed the flock, trouble and sorrow were on every hand ; they concluded therefore that the great tribulation had arrived and the day of the Lord was

present. How does he comfort them? He bids them not to be "shaken in mind, or be troubled." Why not? Because first of all there is to be a gathering of all Christians to meet Christ, according to the first verse of this chapter and 1 Thessalonians IV. 17. And when that takes place, the "other Comforter" will also leave the world (2 Thess. II. 7). It is His presence that effectually hinders the setting up of the "abomination that maketh desolate." So long as He remains that cannot take place. Having set these three events in their proper order—1st, their gathering together unto Christ; 2nd, the departure of the Holy Ghost; 3rd, that afterwards, not before, the man of sin would be revealed ere Christ's day dawned on the earth—he reminds them that God had chosen them to salvation, sanctified them by the Spirit, and called them by the Gospel to share the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. This glory was to be ever before their eyes. He then directs their thoughts to the *love of God*, and to the Christ in glory Who patiently waits to gather in the last of those who shall form His bride. Then caught up to meet our Lord we shall be beyond sorrow and care for ever and ever. Meantime we are to pursue our path through this troubled scene with untroubled hearts.

H. N.

THE SUPPER OF THE LORD.

IT was on the very night in which our Lord was betrayed, when the days of His sojourn on earth were nearing their end, and in an upper room of a nameless house, that the supper of the Lord had its beginning. The moment was significant. The Lord and His disciples were there, primarily, to keep the passover—that memorial feast which was to be observed by the children of Israel through all their generations. It carried their thoughts back to the memorable night when their fathers, under the shelter of the sprinkled blood, ate the lamb “roast with fire, and unleavened bread ; and with bitter herbs ” (Exod. xii. 8). But now the true Paschal Lamb was about to be slain, and His supper should serve as a memorial of a greater redemption not to be forgotten as long as eternity lasts. “ This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins ” (Matt. xxvi. 28). And that indeed is the foundation of all our blessing. Apart from it we have nothing.

But the supper of the Lord is not only intended to keep before our eyes the work of redemption by which our many sins have been remitted. There is a more touching end in view.

“ This do in remembrance of *Me*.” It is a reminder of *Himself*—the One who suffered for us, of His *love*, so profound that none can fathom it, so immense that it surpasses knowledge. Nothing less than this will satisfy the heart that not only rests in His finished work, but knows the blessed One who did it—“ The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me ” (Gal. ii. 20).

And the cross was close at hand with its attendant woes both on the earth and heavenward side. Many sorrows were in His cup. On the earthward side, He was despised and rejected of men, condemned before their tribunal as a blasphemer and made the sport of ribald soldiery, who arrayed Him in purple, crowned Him with thorns and bowed the knee exclaiming in mocking tones “ Hail, King of the Jews ! ” Finally, there was the shame, reproach and the ignominy of the cross with malefactors as His companions there ! On the heavenward side something profounder still. There was wrath against sin—the claims of divine justice to be met—the forsaking of God to be borne. But into that dark domain no thought can enter far. Those solitudes are known to Him alone who went into them for God’s glory and our everlasting good. As we think of it we are lost in wonder too deep for human lips to utter !

And when all this should be over and He

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had gone to heaven again, He bade them remember Him in eating of His supper. Amid the glories of the heavenly places He cares for and values the remembrance of His redeemed on earth. Oh, the blessedness of sitting at His Table to remember Him, not as He now is glorified in heaven, but as He was when the waves of death rolled over Him! Christian reader, that privilege is yours. Do you enjoy it? Is it so sweet, so precious that you would not forego it—no, not for once—to sit under the ministry of the most gifted of His servants upon earth? How unutterably sad it is when Christian hearts give this but a secondary place, and when they are willing to surrender so great a privilege for the sake of hearing a sermon or doing some bit of service. How they wound that Heart of love! Coming in, so to speak, at supper time, to look upon the faces of those who keep in memory His words and care to remember Him as He appoints, He finds their seats empty when they might be filled! No matter where they are or what they may be doing, He does not find them *there*!

In this feast of love the youngest of His saints may share. Do I know the Lord Jesus as my Saviour? Has He washed me from my sins in His own blood? Have I learned to call His Father my Father and His God my God? Am I seeking to serve and follow Him? If my answer to such questions is a joyous "Yes,"

then the Lord Himself has reserved a place for me at His Supper. I go there not because of any worthiness of my own, nor does the sense of my own unworthiness keep me away. My title to be there is all of grace. He who has made me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, has made me meet to sit down at His Table with His redeemed on earth below (Col. 1. 12).

The simplicity that characterized the supper of the Lord in early days but rarely marks it now. Human arrangements—made, no doubt with the best intentions—have largely destroyed its happiest features and reduced it to a religious ordinance needing someone having an official place to administer it. And if any of us see a more excellent way, if we believe that even but two or three simple Christians gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may together partake of the Lord's supper in remembrance of their Saviour, let us be careful lest we view it as "a means of grace"—a channel through which blessing is to be sought and expected. Some, alas, have no higher thought. Their own blessing is all they seek. That we are blessed at such a time we do not doubt, but our blessing should not be our object when gathering together at the Supper Table of our Lord. This were to think of ourselves and our own enrichment instead of Himself and that mighty love of His which

many waters could not quench nor floods drown. Oh, how much better to be occupied with Him than with ourselves—our spiritual vision filled with Him to the exclusion of self. And as we thus sit before Him we shall find that our hearts, touched by the Holy Spirit, will be moved to praise and worship and adoration.

For it is at His Table that we *unitedly* fulfil the functions of the holy priesthood. At other times, too, no doubt, but particularly then. *Do you ever think of it?* Now all believers are not evangelists, or pastors, or teachers, but all of them have been made priests. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever” (Rev. I. 5, 6). And again: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (I Peter II. 4, 5). These passages embrace all believers and exclude none. All of them belong to the priestly family, and all form the “holy priesthood.” But there are many who consent to this, who if asked how and when and where their priestly work is done can give no answer. They do not know, and therefore cannot tell. They are priests in name and title, but are

utterly in the dark as to the privileges and functions that belong to their high calling. Do they suppose that these consist in listening to a sermon, teaching in a Sunday School or engaging in other forms of Christian service? They are entirely mistaken if they do.

To minister to needy souls is happy work indeed, to be diligently and lovingly done. By all means let us break the bread of life and give it to the famishing multitudes of dying men. But do not let us think that is the same thing as *ministering to the Lord* (Acts XIII. 2). Service man-ward is one thing, and it is quite another for saints when gathered at the Supper Table of the Lord to offer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, those spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Connected with this remembrance of our Lord is the truth of His return. "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (I Cor. XI. 26). We stand between the cross and the glory. We look back to the one and onward to the other. Such is our position. Oh, how good it is to look back to the cross, the imperishable witness of our Saviour's dying love, and onward to His coming again when our eyes shall behold Him in His beauty! Christian, is this one of your chief joys? Do you glory in His cross and rejoice in hope of His return?

THE BIBLE AND ITS CRITICS.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

The greatest difficulty encountered by those who speak and write about the inspiration and divine inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures is the gross ignorance of those whose objections they have to meet. It is rare indeed to find an objector who has seriously read the Bible itself, not to speak of the mass of literature dealing with the very questions that are raised. We thus find ourselves in the position of having to discuss the matter with those who, through lack of time or, more often, of serious desire, have not read sufficient to enable them to appreciate fact or argument.

When, some years ago, the writer was appealed to on the subject of Mormonism, he bought a copy of *The Book of Mormon*, and, wearisome work though it was, read the volume through. One thoughtful reading was quite enough to convince him of the true character of the book, and of the religion founded thereon.

As I write, I try to recall a single instance of an objector, or an opposer of Christianity, having seriously read the Bible through. There may be such, but after a good many years of experience with all sorts of people, I must say I have never met with *one* such individual. On

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the other hand, I have met those who, starting with the desire to find food for their hostile criticism, have diligently read the Bible and have been convinced thereby of its divine character.

Your correspondent, W. M.,* who writes to you from Liverpool seems to have come in contact with those who have never given thorough consideration to the subject about which they speak so dogmatically. They have evidently picked up a few favourite arguments from sceptical speakers or writers, and have never troubled to inquire as to what answer has been given on the part of Christians.

Who among us, for instance, cares what the Council of Nicæa decided, or what the Emperor Constantine did or did not do? Not on such grounds as these do we receive the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as divinely inspired.

The canon of the Old Testament was settled before the Christian era commenced. The Lord Jesus Christ set the stamp of Divine approval upon the collection of sacred books by constantly quoting them as the very word of God. He referred to them again and again as a standard of truth recognized and appealed to by all. Neither He nor His apostles ever quoted from the books of the Apocrypha. Josephus, writing about A.D. 90, says :

* See answers to correspondents.

“For we have not (as the Greeks had) myriads of books disagreeing and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two . . . justly believed in.”

By this time, then, the canon was settled, and was the same as we have it now. Josephus's twenty-two books were the same as our thirty-nine, but in his enumeration he groups the twelve minor prophets together as one book, Ezra and Nehemiah as one, so also Judges and Ruth, Jeremiah and Lamentations, and the two books of Samuel, of Kings, and of Chronicles. This is a mere question of classification. The substance of the books (of which the Septuagint, quoted and used by our Lord, was a Greek translation) was precisely the same as that of the Old Testament which we use.

With regard to the New Testament, the canon was settled at a very early date, and all the books that we have therein to-day were universally acknowledged by the end of the fourth century. We Christians believe that God's hand was over it, and that He guided men as to what was and what was not His Word. Can we doubt but that He who *gave* the Word would *preserve* it in its integrity for His people?

This, however, has no weight with the objector. To meet his questionings we have to appeal to the character of the books, and

the reason we often fail to carry conviction, I must repeat, is due to the objector's limited knowledge and capacity. Has he carefully read the "canonical" books? Has he also studied the so-called apocryphal New Testament books? If not, he has no business to express an opinion on the subject. If he has, I do not think he will need anything further to convince him how widely the true differs from the spurious.

With regard to your correspondent's second question as to Darwinism, Sir J. W. Dawson's *Modern Ideas of Evolution* as related to Revelation and Science may be recommended. It can be had from the Religious Tract Society of London, but its language is somewhat technical, and it supposes an amount of scientific knowledge on the part of the reader that some do not possess. The well-known German work on Science and Christianity by Prof. Bettex is now available to the English reader by means of an excellent translation. But it is not "light literature," and demands from its readers an amount of thought and diligence which not many who follow the shallow rationalism of the day are inclined to give.

In this connection perhaps W. M. will be interested to read what was said by Prof. Bateson at a recent meeting of the British Association at Melbourne. Reviewing the theories of Darwinism in the light of facts that

are now established, he says that Darwin "no longer spoke with philosophical authority." And this is just what many practical scientists are feeling.

The truth is that Darwin based his famous theory of evolution upon facts which he assumed would be established. The expected discoveries, however, were never made, but on the contrary, patient investigation has placed on record incontestable arguments in the shape of well-established facts that disprove the ingenious theories of Darwin.

But, after all, to rightly understand Christianity and to appreciate the Scriptures, one needs *to know Christ*. It is one thing to give Him a place, a pre-eminent place, on the page of history, and to esteem Him as a teacher of lofty ideals. It is another thing to know Him as a living Saviour, and to be indebted to Him for all that makes life worth living and eternity worth looking forward to. Personal acquaintance with Christ, which His grace has made possible even for sinners such as we, is the best solution for all the difficulties, intellectual or otherwise, that trouble men's minds. And the writer can wish nothing better for his readers than that they should obtain this priceless gift : the gift of saving knowledge of Christ Himself, and the cleansing power of His precious blood.

H. P. B.

PERFECT PEACE.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee : because he trusteth in Thee.”

ISAIAH XXVI. 3.

HERE is a text for all times—ever precious, but doubly, trebly so when times are troublous. It tells us that we shall be kept in *perfect peace*. Yes, we may say, “though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” But it is not every one who will be so kept. The word of promise is to him who stays himself on the living God. “Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee.”

Let us diligently inquire of ourselves whether our mind is truly stayed on God. Nothing less will do in a day like this, when “men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” Nothing but deep reality will do now. We must be in the presence of God. Our souls must be near to Him at such a time. And then if the tongue be dumb the heart may pour out its burdens and its fears, though it be in words which no lip can fitly frame. But He knows. He understands.

And God is no stranger-God to us. We do

not speak of Him as "the great Unknown." We know Him. He has revealed Himself to us in Christ our Lord. "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," *He* has declared Him. We look at Jesus, at the sympathy, and tenderness and love and hatred of all wrong, that marked Him here below, and in seeing Him we see the Father. We look at His cross and see in it the manifestation of a love that knows no measure—the love of God to sinful dying men. And this God is our God. He it is who bids us stay our mind on Him—the everlasting Rock—"The Rock of ages" as the margin of Isaiah xxvi. 4 reads. Is this what we are doing?

What strength, what support is here! "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel iv. 35). If the world looks like a field abandoned to human passions, it is not really so. God—the everlasting God—is supreme. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him and to work out His sovereign will. He is higher than the highest and mightier than the mightiest, and He is our God and on Him our minds are stayed.

It is no part of His purpose to shield us from trial and suffering. He could if he so wished. Under His hand our life might be as tranquil as a summer sea. No cloud should

darken our sky and there should be no tears to wipe away. But His wisdom which never errs, and His love which our narrow thoughts can never compass, have planned it otherwise. So Daniel must go into the den of lions and his three companions must be cast into the fiery furnace, but One shall be with them there "like the Son of God," and they shall be kept in perfect peace, for their minds are stayed on God alone (Dan. III. 25). Paul too must suffer shipwreck, be a day and a night in the deep, be stoned, be imprisoned, be beaten with rods and have a thorn in the flesh—not to be taken away even at his repeated prayer—but he shall hear a voice saying unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee : for My strength is made perfect in weakness " (2 Cor. XII. 9).

Oh, this is a great riddle. Those who know not our God cannot make it out. They are not in the secret of it, for God is to them "the Unknown." But "they that *know* Thy name will put their trust in Thee " (Psalm IX. 10). And the more intimately He is known the more fully will He be trusted. Let us cling to Him then in our weakness and trust Him if everything seems to go wrong. Let us put our matters into His hand and leave them there. True were the words when Isaiah wrote them, and true are they still, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee : because he trusteth in Thee."

“GIVE US PRAYER.”

IT is years ago now. In those days thousands of merry-hearted South Sea islanders dotted the coastal districts of Queensland. Long before, they had left their tropical island homes—outposts of empire stretching across the blue Pacific. They had crowded across the sea in schooners from the Solomons and New Hebrides, to work the sugar cane of Queensland, in Australia. And many came to see the world. They found as well its Saviour. They became seekers; and then finders. As unlearned and ignorant men they entered the “school” and found it a school of prayer. Many there were who after patient months and years of learning, emerged, to press forward as soul winners and teachers of their heathen friends who daily worked by their sides in the cane-brake. Many a dusty mile they walked, after the day’s work was done, to some distant plantation or school, where they might teach or be taught the truths that now meant so much to them. So, numbers of them grew old in the faith, and in the work of helping the missionaries with the thousands of converts. Such was the work of the Queensland Kanaka Mission.

And now by law these Christian natives were being deported *en masse* to their island homes : being cast out by the Australian Commonwealth. Hundreds had already sailed from other ports, and numbers more had gathered in Brisbane ready to sail. Many hearts quailed as they thought of the change to come. Many of them would stand alone for God among their people. Many would plunge alone into the cess-pool of wickedness where evil held sway. They had no illusions. They knew what heathenism meant ; how dark and degraded : how strong and seductive. They were leaving their Christian friends and teachers to whom for years they had learned to look for guidance and help ; they were leaving them all for what ? For isolation and distresses and fierce temptations.

To-morrow they were to sail. To-night was a farewell meeting, amid bright lights and singing and Christian cheer. There would be none where most of them were going. A man stood up, troubled and sad of heart, stood up to speak and to say farewell. He told how that day he had wandered around the town till he reached the river. There he had seen a man in the dress and helmet of a diver go down out of sight into the dark waters. He had seen the air pumped steadily down ; and had watched the movements of the life-line, the only evidence of the man below. He saw

the concern of the men on the surface for their comrade in his danger and need. Well versed in parable, the speaker had caught the deeper meaning of the incident. He told the story of the man's preparation for peril, and how only the “ wind ” pumped down had saved him. With deep emotion he pleaded with the audience in words like these :—

“ Brothers, we came from our islands of darkness to your land of light. Then we hear of ONE who died for us, long ago. We never hear before. But we find this news is good for our hearts. So we come to learn about Him, and we learn to pray to Him. At first we only come to ‘ school,’ but soon we come to Jesus. And He Who died for us so long ago—He came into our hearts. Now we belong to Him, and our hearts are not dark any more, but full of light, and we are praising God. But now your country is casting us out, and we must go back into the darkness of our islands. We are like that diver who went down into the deep waters. This man is safe only because they give him wind. They pump it down to him, and watch for him all the time. We too are going down, far away into darkness. It is too strong for us. We are not very strong. Oh, brothers, you hold the line for us ! You watch for us. You not forget us when we are far away. You not see us with your eyes any more, only with the eye of faith. But oh, brothers, when

we go down into deep waters, you give us wind !
Give us wind or we die. GIVE US PRAYER ! ”

God induced the hearts of the hearers not only to give them prayer, but later to give them men and women who should follow them across the sea and minister to their souls and bodies. And now after ten years their islands are dotted with churches and Christians. But often the refrain of our hearts, from the thick of the fight, which goes this way and that, and from the midst of those trials and perplexities which always go with spiritual conflicts and victories, the refrain of our hearts is the same as the cry of that simple Christian. For we only echo the call that rises from many hearts when we cry : “ Oh, brothers, give us wind ! Give us PRAYER.” For in large measure we succeed or we fail, we are led in triumph or we have to deplore defeat, as you pray or as you forget. DO YOU FORGET ?

Brethren, “ those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.” For “ God hath tempered the body together . . . that the members should have the same care one for another.” “ Ye are the body of Christ.” “ Bear ye one another’s burdens.”

NORTHCOTE DECK.

AOLA, SOLOMON ISLANDS.

THE BOOK AND THE SOUL.

IN the formation of the character of a successful minister of the Word of God, two ingredients are essentially necessary: first, an accurate acquaintance with the Bible; and, secondly, a due sense of the value of the soul and its necessities. To possess only one of them will leave a man a thoroughly one-sided minister. I may be deeply read in Scripture; I may have a profound acquaintance with the contents of the book, but if I forget the soul and its deep and manifold necessities, my ministry will be lamentably defective. It will lack point, pungency, and power. It will not meet the cravings of the heart, or tell upon the conscience. It will be a ministry *from* the book, but not *to* the soul. True and beautiful, no doubt, but deficient in usefulness and practical power.

On the other hand, I may have the soul and its needs distinctly before me. I may long to be useful. It may be my heart's desire to minister to the heart and conscience; but if I am not acquainted with my Bible, I shall have no material wherewith to be useful. My ministry will be barren and tiresome. Instead of teaching souls I shall tease them, and instead of edifying I shall irritate them. My exhortation, instead of urging souls on along the upward path of discipleship, will, from

a lack of basis, have the effect of discouraging them.

These things are worthy of some consideration. You may listen to a person ministering the word, who possesses a great deal of the first of the above-named qualities, and very little of the second. It is evident he has the book and its moral glories before his spiritual vision. He is occupied, yea, engrossed with them—so engrossed indeed at times as almost to forget that he has souls before him. There is no pointed and powerful appeal to the heart, no fervent grappling with the conscience, no practical application of the contents of the book to the souls of the hearers. It is very beautiful, but not so useful as it might be. The minister is deficient in the second quality. He is more a minister of the book than a minister to the soul.

Then, again, you will find some who, in their ministry, seem to be wholly occupied with the soul. They appeal, they exhort, they urge; but from lack of acquaintance and regular occupation with scripture, souls are absolutely worn out under their ministry. True, they ostensibly make the book the basis of their ministry, but their use of it is so unskilful, and their application so palpably unintelligent, that their ministry proves as uninteresting as it is unprofitable.

Now, if we were asked, which of the two characters of ministry should we prefer?

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Without hesitation, we should say, the first. If the moral glories of the book are unfolded, there is something to interest and affect the heart, and if one is at all earnest and conscientious, he may get on. Whereas, in the second case, there is nothing but tiresome appeal and scolding exhortation.

But, we need hardly say, we long to see an accurate acquaintance with the Bible, and a due sense of the value of the soul, combined and healthfully adjusted, in every one who stands up to minister to souls. Hence, let every minister study the book and its glories and think of the souls and its needs. Yes, let each one remember the link between the book and the soul.

C. H. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANXIOUS TO KNOW.—We do not believe that Scripture anywhere teaches that “sin, root and branch—inbred sin—the sin inherited from our first parents”—is taken away before anyone receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. If any of our readers think otherwise, we should feel obliged if they would kindly send on the passages, and we will carefully consider them. Those who suppose that “sin, root and branch” has been taken away from them must believe themselves now to have no sin. But the Apostle John tells us that “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1. 8). Alas! the apostle’s words have not been attended to, and

false inferences have been drawn from what he had just said, namely, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Those who have drawn them have fallen into the error from which the eighth verse was expressly intended to be a shield. They deceive themselves, and the truth concerning this matter is not in them.

In seeking to know the meaning of the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," we should remember that no Scripture "is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter i. 29). No passage can be isolated from the rest of Scripture, and an arbitrary meaning given to it which the consideration of other passages would not allow. Scripture is one harmonious whole. Now the blood of Jesus Christ does cleanse the believer from all, or every sin. And this is so blessedly true that he now has "boldness to enter into the holiest" and to stand before God, in His courts, as one of His priests (Heb. x. 19). Are we therefore at liberty to infer that "sin, root and branch" is gone? By no means, for in the same epistle, when viewed as runners in the heavenly race, we are exhorted to "lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us" (Heb. xii. 19). *Judicially*, in virtue of the blood of a nobler Sacrifice than was ever offered on Jewish altars, the believer is cleansed from all sin. But let no one confound *judicial* cleansing with inward and *moral* cleansing. Thank God, we are the subjects of both. For the believer's heart—that is, the man himself—is purified by faith (Acts xv. 9). It is on the principle of faith that this has been brought about, and by the communication

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of a new life and nature—ever distinct from the old, corrupt, evil life and nature inherited from our first parents. And to this must be added the great gift of the indwelling Spirit, in which all true Christians share. But this does not imply that the old has been rooted out. Were this so there would be no conflict between the Spirit and the flesh, as described in Galatians v. 17, nor would the Apostle Paul have needed the thorn in the flesh to preserve him from spiritual pride (2 Cor. xii. 7).

As for the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is freely bestowed on every believing soul. Hence all believers can cry “Abba, Father.” But it is as having “the Spirit of His Son” that they can do so (Gal. iv. 6). “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His” (Rom. viii. 9). The tendency of this teaching is either to keep honest souls in bondage, or to make them think themselves very superior Christians. Many are in bondage through self-occupation and seeking after a condition of holiness which they believe will entitle them to receive the Spirit. They do not see that the Holy Spirit is not given to us as a seal or witness of our own holiness, but of the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ by which our sins have been remitted and the believer “perfected for ever” (Heb. x. 17). May we in closing ask you to read the passages of Scripture to which we have referred, and to weigh them carefully and prayerfully. And if there is any point about which you would wish something further to be said will you write to us again.

W. M.—It is not to be supposed that any one

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who has been under the influence of spiritualism for a period of thirty-five years—and is still under it—should be willing to accept the Bible as a Christian does. It is all very well for such an one to laud the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, but in connection with the things of God we should look for nothing but evil from a man who all these years has been giving his mind to “deceiving spirits and teaching of demons” (1 Tim. iv. 1). And men of that school are remarkable for their credulity. They are ready to believe anything against the Scriptures on slight evidence or no evidence at all. What does your fellow-workman know, from personal knowledge, of the “ancient books” of which he speaks? Has he ever read them? Has he even seen the covers of them? Above all, has he ever read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation with an unbiassed mind and anxious to know the truth? To the Christian the Bible is its own witness. He has found in his own experience that the truths it teaches are “spirit and they are life.” It has opened his eyes, not only to see himself and his deep need, but to see the all-sufficiency of Christ to meet his every want. Best of all, it has made God known to his soul—He who is both light and love. But we will say no more, save to refer you to “The Bible and its Critics” in our present issue. It is an answer to your letter from the pen of one whose initials you will recognize. Have you read *The Wonder of the Book*? It can be had for one penny at the Religious Tract Society, 65 St. Paul’s Church Yard, London. If you have not seen it, get it. It is worthy of a wide circulation.

MEET FOR THE INHERITANCE. MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—COLOSSIANS I. 12.

"A vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use."—2 TIMOTHY II. 21.

"**M**EEET for the inheritance of the saints in light!" "A vessel . . . meet for the Master's use!" Happy is he who is thus doubly meet!

The inheritance of the saints in light! What is the meaning of that expression? We read elsewhere of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us" (1 Peter I. 4). Is this the same thing?

Yes, it means all that, and more. It is an all-embracing term. Heaven, glory, the presence of God, everything which the future holds in its hand for us when Jesus comes and glory dawns is comprehended in that great phrase: "The inheritance of the saints in light."

And we are made meet for that blest home and place and portion! Observe the words, "Giving thanks unto the Father, Who *hath* made us meet." Not who is making us meet

or we might suppose it to be a sanctifying process covering the whole of our Christian life. But that is not what the apostle says. His words are, “ who *hath* made us meet ”—it is a thing already done.

“ Are we to understand,” replies some incredulous reader, “ that all of us are fit for heaven and for all that heaven will mean to those who enter there ? Surely you are wrong in believing that your text teaches anything so startling. How can we be fit for that holy place so long as there is so much sin about us ? The utmost any of us should say is that we hope Almighty God may of His mercy deem us fit when our last hour is come. Anything more seems dangerously presumptuous. And if you insist that we must take the words of your text as they stand, then they can only be true of very superior Christians who live much nearer to God than most of us who have to mix with the world every day of our lives.”

Yes, I know that what you say is the view of many. But let me ask who are the *us* of whom you speak ? This epistle to the Colossians was not written to everybody living in the city of Colosse. For the most part its inhabitants were heathens. Christian epistles are addressed to Christians. And what is a Christian ? A Christian is one whose sins are forgiven, who has been redeemed by the

blood of Christ, who was once in darkness and under its authority, but who is now delivered from it and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. He is one who has been made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light and who can take the hallowed name of Father upon his lips when speaking to God in prayer and praise (see Colossians 1. 12-14). When you say *us*, are you speaking of Christians of that sort?

You may think that to be very high ground, at all events higher than *you* can honestly take. You feel, perhaps, that were you different from what you are—holier, more devoted to God and able to take greater pleasure in religious exercises, you might then be entitled to say as much. But you cannot now, and to pretend to more than you feel would only be acting a lie.

We can only answer that were you everything you could wish to be, were your life marked by holiness, devotedness to God, and by an ever-growing care for His things and His service, yet Faith does not and should not rest herself there. Experiences are not always at the same level, and our spiritual life may sometimes languish and show but little vigorous growth. Were our confidence to rest on anything of that kind it would be often shaken, and we should never be wholly free from doubts and fears. *Faith rests on Christ—*

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on His perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice for sins, and on the sure and immovable foundation of God's holy Word. Here we have a solid resting-place which nothing can possibly shake.

When the returning prodigal of Luke xv. crossed the threshold of his father's house, was he not fit to go in? The best robe had been brought forth with the ring and the shoes, and in these he was arrayed. But there was more. Repentance had been wrought in his soul. When afar off his father had run to meet him and covered him with kisses. And then with a broken, humbled heart, he confessed his sins. Forgiven, reconciled, clothed with change of raiment and owned as a son the young man entered in to share in the feast that was being kept, with music and dancing, to celebrate his return. Was he not in every way made meet for *that* inheritance? And is there not in the history of every true Christian the counterpart of all these things? Is he not forgiven, reconciled, clothed with a robe of righteousness, and owned as one of the many sons? To such questions there is but one answer.

If any reader should require that the subject be dealt with in a still simpler way, then, I take up one of the first things to be faced in our spiritual life—the forgiveness of sins. [Are you quite sure that your sins are forgiven?

Do you know, if I may so speak, that God has written the word *forgiven* across the long, dark catalogue of your sins, and that He will remember them no more? (Heb. x. 17). This, when known, is enough to give the greatest relief. Nor is it only of His mercy that we are forgiven. Mercy, indeed, is a thing in which God delights (Micah vii. 18). But not at the expense of His righteousness. It is here that the expiatory sufferings of Christ on the Cross come in—the eternal witness of God's hatred of sin and of His unspeakable love towards sinful men.

And the forgiveness of sins is not intended to be a matter of uncertain hope. The Word of God speaks of it with authority and in no doubtful terms. I will quote one of the plainest passages: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Could anything be plainer? And every word of it comes from God's mouth. If in my inmost soul I believe in the once crucified but now risen Saviour, am I not entitled to say that my sins are forgiven? Is it presumptuous to say so? Is it the vain confidence of a deceived man?

Do you say, "But I have so much sin in me still"? It is true you still have sin in you. The old sinful nature is there with its evil tendencies unchanged. But, thank God, some-

thing else is there too. A Christian is not only forgiven, but he is born again, born of God as John 1. 13 tells us, or, to use a fuller expression of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians v. 17, he is a *new creation* in Christ. Now this does not mean that the old is made better, but that in being born again there has been implanted within us a new life which is as holy as the other is evil. And this new life, to which must be added the gift of the Holy Spirit, is the source of new desires and new aspirations, for its nature is to love holiness and hate sin. Now God views us in relation to this last, and when so viewed the old life—"the flesh"—does not come into the reckoning at all. This explains a passage in the First Epistle of John, which some find it hard to understand: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practice] sin, for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (chap. III. 9). This is true of the believer, looked at simply in reference to the new life which he has received as born of God, and which, as we have already said, loves holiness and hates sin. It is its nature so to do.

But if every believer is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light it is not everyone who is "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" (2 Timothy II. 21). Nor indeed could he be if he did not purge himself from the vessels

to dishonour—men holding and teaching doctrines subversive of the Christian faith. The apostle had just named two of them—Hymenæus and Philetus, who had erred from the truth in saying that the resurrection was already past and had overthrown the faith of some. Such were vessels to dishonour from whom Timothy and all others were to separate themselves if they would be vessels meet for the Master's use. And the same call needs to be loudly sounded in this lax and easy day. There are plenty of men who would fain pass as Christians who by mouth and pen are overthrowing the faith of many. Some are bold enough to call themselves "*Pastors*"—shepherds of the sheep—who yet deny the deity of the Son of God, His atoning sacrifice and the reality of His glorious resurrection! These are not pastors but "*grievous wolves*"—vessels to dishonour, whose books should be burned and from whom every loyal-hearted follower of Christ will turn away. Any fellowship with such is fatal. Reader, would you be a vessel unto honour, meet for the Master's use? Then you must keep clear of doctrines that undermine the faith and of those who hold and teach them. On this point we speak with decision. We say your bounden duty is to refuse all association with men of the stamp of Hymenæus and Philetus. Be loyal to Christ and to His word. You must be if

you would receive your Master's approbation both now and when you stand at His judgment-seat.

But this is not all. Timothy was to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." We are to do the same. We follow *righteousness* in things Godward and manward, rendering unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. We follow *faith*—that whole-hearted confidence in the living God which we shall find to be a source of strength at all times. We follow *charity*—that divine and heavenly quality without which a man is nothing though he speak with the tongues of men and of angels, understand all mysteries and give his goods to feed the poor. We follow *peace* and things which make for peace. If there are others who do the same we are one with them, for all who follow these things do assuredly call on the Lord out of a pure heart. These are our companions in days both dark and bright whether they be near or far away.

But we stop. May every believer who reads these lines know that he is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and may he earnestly endeavour to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use (2 Timothy II. 21).

THE BLOOD THAT SPEAKS.

MODERN theology would drown its voice, higher criticism turn a deaf ear to its message, but still it *speaks*. It possesses many and varied virtues. By it God is glorified and sinners saved. It is the sole and only means by which sins can be remitted and atonement made. "Without *shedding of blood* there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22).

The blood of the slain victim on the day of atonement was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat (Lev. xvi. 14). This was the first act on that great day. God's majesty needed to be vindicated, for His law had been broken, His authority set at nought. Hence His claims must be met first. From Romans iii. 25 we learn that those claims have been met, not now in shadow but in substance, not in figure but in reality. Propitiation has been made by the *blood* of Jesus. The Throne of God is now propitious.

God having been glorified, the blood of propitiation having been presented, God can now justify the ungodly and be just in doing so (Rom. iii. 26). The blood of Jesus is the meritorious cause of our justification (Rom. v. 9). Grace devises the means, faith appropriates them, and thus we are justified. No

sins are passed over or made light of. They all have been righteously dealt with on the cross, so that God can clear the guilty, on the ground of the Saviour's atoning work.

Justification is an act on God's part which nothing can ever revoke. If we have responded to His gracious call in the gospel, we can rejoice that justification is our present and unalterable state before God. So perfect is it that at any moment He can take us to glory. Should Satan, or our unbelieving hearts question this, we can triumphantly answer, "It is God that justifies: who is he that condemns?" And more—the Christ who died has been raised up; who is at the right hand of God; who also intercedes for us (Rom. VIII. 33–35).

This precious blood purges the conscience (Heb. IX. 14). Burdened with guilt and laden with his sins the awakened sinner fears to have to do with God. His conscience accuses him, and he would fain hide away like Adam. Presently God's gracious voice is heard—your "sins and iniquities will I remember no more"—and the trembling sinner learns that the "blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God," avails to purge the conscience. Would you know whether your conscience is purged? It is, if your faith sees in the blood of Christ the complete answer to all your guilt, and your

conscience is occupied with *its cleansing virtues instead of your sins*.

It is also the way of approach to God. We have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews x. 19). It is the door of entrance into the sanctuary, not only to the saved Jew but the saved gentile, for in Christ Jesus we—Gentiles—who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. ii. 13). Where it was death to a worshipper of old to approach, it is the privilege of every Christian now to be found. The veil is rent, the holy and the most holy place is one ; and words of gracious encouragement fall upon our ear : “ Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith ” (Heb. x. 22). We can do so as cleansed and adoring worshippers, “ having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Every disturbing element has been removed Godward ; through the blood of His cross, *Peace has been made*, solid, changeless and eternal. It was made, when by the Eternal Spirit, Christ offered Himself without spot to God. Ethical teachings, higher ideals, and an elevated humanity avail nothing. Self-denying labours, slum work, following noble ideas, can never earn peace. How pathetic was the confession of a baronet a short time before he died last year, that after giving six million

dinners to the poor his good works had not brought to his troubled conscience peace with God ! No. Peace has been made by the blood of His cross, and faith rests upon Christ in death and resurrection. Thus, and thus only, can we know peace with God.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,
 All our sins were on Thee laid ;
 By Almighty love anointed,
 Thou hast full atonement made.
 All Thy people are forgiven,
 Through the virtue of Thy blood ;
 Open'd is the gate of heaven,
 Peace is made for us with God.

Time would fail to tell the perfections and excellencies of the BLOOD. It will be the theme of our praise in heaven, the anthem of the redeemed in glory. What heavenly wonders dwell in the blood of Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, which *speaketh better things* than that of Abel (Heb. XII. 24).

In heaven the blood for ever speaks,
 In God's omniscient ear.

And we would fain extol its virtues on our way
 there.

H. N.

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever ” (Rev. 1. 5, 6).

A BLESSED BENEDICTION.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.”—2 COR. XIII. 14.

THE Lord Jesus Christ came down into this scene as the Vessel of heavenly grace ; for He was the One Who brought into this world, within reach of man, all the grace that originated in the Father’s heart. When we contemplate somewhat—and at most our comprehension can be but slight—of what it meant for the Son of God to become a Man amongst men, to leave the eternal glory which He had with the Father to come down to the manger of Nazareth, we form some idea of the meaning of that wonderful expression, “ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ” “ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich ” (2 Cor. VIII. 9). None could have been richer than He, for from everlasting He was God ; but who could have been poorer than He when He could sit, a wearied thirsty traveller, upon Sychar’s well, and say to her who came to draw, Samaritan outcast though she was, “ Give me to drink ” ?

And why this condescending grace ? It was in order that He might attract to Himself the hearts of men and administer to them the

blessings which were in the heart of God for them ; in order that they might be brought to know “ the gift of God,” and live in the knowledge of the Giver. There were indeed a few who in some measure answered to this purpose. There were a few who could say, “ And we beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth ” ; and these could say, “ Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.” But what of the world in general ? The only answer given by the world to heavenly grace was to award a cross and grave to the Vessel of grace.

But God raises Him from the dead, exalts Him to His own right hand, crowns Him with glory and honour, and gives all power and authority into His hand, *not* that He might avenge Himself upon us who had murdered Him, but that He might make us rich with all the riches which by His death He had acquired. Such is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. His death, further, has become a righteous foundation whereby this attitude of grace to us is justified. It also becomes a way of escape from this present world of sin and death, while through it and in virtue of His resurrection, we have entrance with Him into another world where He reigns. The Holy Spirit comes down from that One who is made Lord and Christ, bringing the good news of God’s grace set forth in Him on high ; and souls are attracted by the Spirit ; they believe the testi-

mony of grace, and so doing they bow to the One whom God has exalted and have access into "this grace wherein we stand." That is, they are translated out of the kingdom of the prince of this world into the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God's love; and become the recipients of all the blessing which the poverty, the death, the grace, of our Lord Jesus Christ, has afforded them.

We get something of it depicted in 2 Samuel ix. David has taken his appointed place as king over all Israel, in Jerusalem. The ark has been brought up—God's glory has been established in connection with his reign. The power of God rests upon David, and his enemies are subdued under him. And now he says, "Is there not any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him?" The house of Saul! Saul, whom he had saved from the Philistine; Saul whom he had so faithfully served; Saul, who had hated him, persecuted him, pursued him as a partridge upon the mountains; Saul, who had treated him much as we treated the Lord! "Is there not any of the house of Saul, that I may show the *kindness of God* unto him?" And so Mephibosheth is brought up; "and he fell on his face and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant." There is the attitude and the language of the heart touched by grace. Oh, that our hearts were so filled with the grace

of our Lord Jesus Christ that we could but fall upon our faces and say, "*Behold thy servant.*" That is what it is to come under the rule of grace. We are not ruled in a legal way but by grace, and just as we come under the rule of grace do we enter into the enjoyment of the blessings which grace secures us.

And what blessings they are! Romans v. brings out a few of them. First of all, I am justified, then I have peace with God and can rejoice in hope of His glory. Once His glory filled me with dread, because I came short of it, and if the glory of God were to be displayed I must go. But now His glory is no longer my dread, but my hope. And then as to the present, if I have tribulation, I can glory in it—not in getting out of it, but *in* it—because the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient to meet all the tribulations. I can look upon Him and see Him as He underwent tribulations ten thousand times greater than mine, and hear Him say, "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*" His resource is mine—the love of God is shed abroad in my heart. Once there was distance and darkness, but now there is perfect love, God's love, a resource to meet all difficulties triumphantly, "*The love of God.*" The love that went out to me when a stranger to Him, the love that gave the Only Begotten Son to bring me to Him, to place me as a son before His face, to sit down in perfect liberty,

holy and blameless, to feast upon all that He is as displayed in Jesus Christ His sent One—that is the love which through grace the Spirit sheds in my heart, and it is enough. “ For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ” (Rom. VIII. 38–9).

“ *And the communion of the Holy Ghost.* ” For after all apart from the Holy Spirit it would all be nothing to us. By Him we were first led to accept the testimony of grace. And then it is by Him that I am led into the good of all that grace bestows, for by Him I answer to the rule under which I am brought. How am I, on the earth, to answer to the rule of heaven? By walking in subjection to the Spirit sent down from heaven. My responsibility is to walk in the Spirit—to let Him have full scope, ungrieved, unimpeded, to take of the things of Christ and show them to me, to occupy me with the One in whom grace reigns. And as I am occupied with His grace, I am formed in grace, and so become in my little measure a vessel of heavenly grace. His grace is all available for me. I have not to labour to produce it, I have only to go on in occupation with Him, led by the Spirit, and He will produce it in me ; so that I may go

through this scene both enjoying and displaying grace, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God and the blessing of man. “*My grace is sufficient for thee.*”

And then again it is by the Holy Spirit that I answer to the love of God, so that I am led consciously into the place He has for me. Like Mephibosbeth, I am brought—and I have to be brought—to find myself seated with Christ, in the place of a son, feasting upon that which He feasts upon (2 Sam. ix. 11). God sends forth into my heart the Spirit of His Son, crying, “*Abba Father*” (Gal. iv. 6). I abide in God, abiding in His love, and so He abides in me, His love being perfected in me (1 John iv. 12–16). And what characterises me now in my walk down here is that I have *His Spirit*. Naturally I may have a proud spirit, a rebellious spirit, but now I have *God’s Spirit, Holy Spirit*. Well may we thank our God that He has brought us thus to have part in the “*fellowship of the Holy Spirit.*”

And may He grant us spiritual discernment to perceive the things which grieve the Spirit : in order that there may be nothing within to hinder the increased enjoyment of those glorious realities, “*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.*” So will our path be the path of the just, “*that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*” W. J. P.

ENOCK, OR WALKING WITH GOD.

IF you will turn to the fifth chapter of Genesis you will find quite a number of names mentioned and a few facts recorded about each, such as the age of the person, his family history and his death. But of Enoch we get some further particulars. It is said of him that he “*walked with God*,” and this at least for three hundred years !

We read very little about him in the Bible, just a reference here and there. But this one thing seemed to colour all his doings—*he walked with God*.

In those early days God had not revealed Himself to men as He has done since. Enoch knew nothing of the wonderful truths that the Lord Jesus Christ made known to His disciples, such as, “*The Father Himself loveth you*” (John xvi. 27). Nor this : “*Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” Yet, are not we who live in New Testament times often put to shame by this Old Testament saint ?

What think you, dear reader, is it to walk with God ?

Is it just to think of Him as you rise up in the morning, to ask for His blessing on the day

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that lies before you, and to thank Him before retiring at night for all the mercies bestowed? Is it to go, as often as possible, to meetings, and lectures, and hear more about Him and His ways?

Surely it is far more than this. Walking with God is to be much in His company. • If you are habitually *walking* with anyone there will be constant interchange of thought and an intimacy so close that whatever affects one will affect the other. What a privilege to walk thus with God, while never forgetting the reverence and godly fear due to His holy name!

Alas! our walk with God is often interrupted because we sin, and grieve the Spirit of God. If we only cultivated this habit more, what a different story would the end of each day tell!

And we then would know His will for us in the details of daily life; where He would have us be; what He would have us do; what He would have us say; and be ever ready to run at His bidding. We should hide nothing from Him, but confide all to His loving care. Happy, indeed, would be our lives if they were ever thus dedicated to God.

“To walk with God, O fellowship divine,
Man’s highest state on earth, *Lord be it mine.*”

Is that the language of your heart? If it has not been so hitherto, may it be so now. And

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let us remember for our encouragement that “He *will fulfil* the desire of them that fear Him.”

We are not surprised to find it said of Enoch in Hebrews xi. 5, that “before his translation he had this testimony, *that he pleased God.*” If you walk with God you, too, shall please Him ; but mind, the walking *must* come first.

What proportion of our daily lives is spent in His company ? How far can it be said of us that we please God ? Often we consult our own pleasure and then think of God’s will. There was One and only One of whom it could be said, “I do *always* those things that please Him ” (John viii. 29). He consulted not His own pleasure, for we read, “Even Christ pleased not Himself ” (Rom. xv. 3). He was the One in whom the Father delighted and of whom He could say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

I wonder, reader, what *your* epitaph would be were it written ? Enoch’s was very short : “HE PLEASED GOD.” What a witness to be borne to any man ? Could there be a better ? Do you *want* anything less ?

If our little acts of service were put down, to what extent would it be possible for the Spirit of God to write these words, “*He pleased God* ” across them ? That is the test.

We know only too well how our own will is oft-times only too prominent. If we cannot

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just get our own way we chafe under it. But how sweet it is to let God have His own way with us, even in the face of great disappointment ; to walk with Him and be content at once to accept His will, which *must* be best, although we cannot understand it perhaps just at the time. Yes, even when some great trial, which *you* cannot account for, seems to have rudely placed itself right across your pathway, it is good to be able to look up and say from the bottom of your heart, “ *Not my will, but Thine be done.* ” And so would “ the peace of God which passeth *all* understanding ” keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We should feel things, why, of course, we should, just as much as ever. But then the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain us in the midst of the trial. The Apostle Paul could say, “ I have learned, *in whatsoever state I am*, therewith to be content ” (Phil. iv. 11). I am afraid many of us have not quite reached that stage. Still, there it is, written for *our* instruction, if we will only heed it.

The secret of it all is found in keeping close to God, walking moment by moment with Him. In so doing our lives will be subject to His will, and they will be well pleasing to Him.

L. A. A.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

WE were crossing by the ferry from New York to the New Jersey shore. I was looking around me with astonishment, for it was just twenty years since my first visit to America, and things change considerably in that space of time on the other side of the Atlantic. Huge new buildings, counting their storeys by scores, had arisen, making the neighbouring edifices, once reckoned giants, now look like pigmies.

“ Can you see the spire of the old church ? ” asked the friend at my side.

I looked, and looked again, but could not see it. At last, peeping out from among the forest of “ sky-scrapers ” which overtopped it to such a degree that it was hardly visible, I discerned the well-known spire that was once the loftiest building in New York.

“ Yes,” said my friend, “ *the church once looked down upon the world that surrounded it, but in our day the world has come to look down on the church.* ”

How apt was the comparison ! The Church of God did, indeed, begin her career in a position far too lofty for the world to walk with her in it. She looked down on the world, not with an air of proud superiority, but with the gaze of one who was not of it, but was in it

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for a season as a heavenly stranger. Little by little, however, the world and the Church have approximated, the world putting on a religious guise and adopting, to a large extent, the Christian name, while the Church has largely lost her pristine purity and has sunk more and more to the level of the world. For this the world only despises her, and laughs at her shame. *The world has come to look down on the Church.*

Not merely the "professing" church, as we call it, but those that are really converted are often, in their manner of life, their pursuits and aims, and their associations, so much like the world that only the eye of Him Who knows all things can discern the difference, and tell those who are His from those who are not.

Let us remember, however, that the day is coming when all will have to appear in their true character. Those that are Christians in name only will then be manifested as *of the world*, and those who truly belong to Christ, but who have resembled in their walk and ways the citizens of earth, will be manifested as Christ's and will at last see the true nature of that evil thing with which they have coquetted.

The illustration has been used of a great snowball, formed by rolling it about on the surface of a road. It has picked up all manner

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of grit and dirt till it becomes a composite mass, partly snow and partly foreign material. But by and by the sun shines out in its strength. The particles of snow, melted into water, are drawn up as vapour to the sky. And what is left? A heap of mud and dirt.

Thus it will be when the Lord comes. A great separation in the professing church will take place. Those that are really Christ's, like the particles of snow, will be caught up to Himself, while those who have been part of the snowball, so to speak, without being particles of snow, will be left behind, a heap of refuse, fit only to be spued out of Christ's mouth.

H. P. B.

TO-MORROW.

"Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34).

Does each day upon its wing
 Its allotted burden bring?
 Load it not beside with sorrow
 Which belongeth to the morrow.
 Strength is promised, strength is given,
 When the heart by God is riven;
 But foredate the day of woe,
 And *alone* thou bear'st the blow.
One thing only claims thy care;
 Seek thou first by faith and prayer
 That all glorious world above,
 Scene of righteousness and love;
 And whate'er thou need'st below,
He thou trustest will bestow.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A READER OF *S.T.*—It is hardly necessary to say that the relationships of life—so sacred here—have no place in the resurrection state. Our Lord's words in Matthew xxii. 30 seem conclusive as to that. They are for time, not for eternity, and end with the ending of our earthly days. But if the relationships cease we do not say that the love attaching to them necessarily passes away, though it would assume other forms, suited to the blessed state in which we then shall be. When a man marries he leaves his father and mother, that is, he forsakes the nearest and closest of existing ties, and cleaves unto his wife. So with the woman on her side. In marrying she is released from the obedience she was responsible to render to her parents and comes under the headship of another. But on both sides the love attaching to the former state remains, though other relationships have been formed which modify it. But we do not dogmatize on this. As to recognition in heaven of those we have known and loved on earth, and others besides, we see no reason to doubt it. The disciples on the holy mount recognized Moses and Elias, and Paul, in writing to the Thessalonian saints, endeared to him by precious ties, declares they would be his joy and crown of rejoicing at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. ii. 19). How could they be so if he would not know them from other saints in that day?

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J. H.—Hebrews XII. 24.—We do not think the reference here is to the sacrifice that Abel offered and to which allusion is made in chapter XI. 4. It is the blood of Abel himself, shed by Cain and which cried to God for vengeance on him who in his anger slew his brother Abel. The blood of Jesus, shed by the hands of wicked men, might well have called down judgment. Instead of which, in the wisdom and grace of God, it became the foundation of the New Covenant and pleaded for mercy and forgiveness for the guilty. The following quotations support this view :

“ The blood of Christ had been shed on earth, as that of Abel by Cain ; but instead of crying from the earth for vengeance . . . it is grace that speaks ; and the shed blood cries to obtain pardon and peace for those who shed it.”—*J. N. Darby*.

“ Abel’s blood cried to heaven, and testified against his sinful brother ; but the blood of the Lord Jesus, who was hated and killed by man because He was righteous, speaks more powerfully and effectively, securing our pardon and acceptance.”—*A. Saphir*.

A. B.—I Peter I. 15, 16.—This call to holiness in every department of a Christian’s life is based on the fact that God Himself is holy. Sin is abhorrent to Him, and it should be so to us His children. It could not be otherwise to the new nature, and to the Holy Spirit who indwells us. They greatly err who suppose that the doctrines of grace weaken the incentives to holiness of life. It is entirely otherwise. Are you a child of God ?

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Is that relationship one that can never be broken ? If you answer in the affirmative, then inasmuch as you are ever one of His children you are ever under the obligation to follow holiness. So long as the relationship lasts, so long the obligations attaching to it last. And let it be further remembered that the Father, on whom we call, judges according to every man's work, and with Him there is no respect of persons. The fact of our being ever His children places us ever under His fatherly discernment and discipline. Therefore let us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. Not in fear of being cast out and disowned should we misbehave, but in fear lest we should grieve, by careless ways, the One whose love has set us in the children's place and thus bring ourselves under His correction. We must always distinguish between grace and government. Both principles are strikingly set forth in Psalm LXXXIX. 30-4, which please read.

We heartily thank the kind friends who, without favouring us with their names, have sent us postal orders for our Missionary Calendar fund.

Have any of our readers any back numbers of *The Gospel Messenger*, *Gospel Tidings*, or *Scattered Seed* ? They would be gratefully received by Mr. A. T. Pimm, 111 Grosvenor Road, Aldershot, for distribution among the thousands of soldiers soon going on active service. Or our Publisher would send a parcel of them to the above address at a very reduced rate.

THE GRACE OF GOD AND HOW THE CHRISTIAN MAY RESPOND TO IT.

READ 2 KINGS IV. 8-11.*

I SUPPOSE we all regard these Friday evening meetings as special occasions. If, however, they are special for you, they are more so for me, as I very rarely have the privilege of addressing you. So I can assure you it is not without counting on God for guidance and help that I accepted the invitation to speak to you to-night.

I have not had the experience of some who are here, but I have learned that it does not do to be guided in the choice of one's subject by what we might think would be suitable. In the life of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, we find that He dealt with people in a very different way to what we should have thought likely. For instance, He did not speak to the woman He met at the well of Samaria about the necessity of being born again as He did to the religious Pharisee of the preceding chapter. He spoke about worship. We should have thought that that subject would have been more opportunely dealt with in His con-

* Notes of an Address by Mr. H. P. Barker, at the meeting for young men held every Friday evening from October to March at 130 Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.

versation with Nicodemus, and that the new birth would have been a far more suitable theme to enlarge upon with that poor woman. But this would show how mistaken our judgment would be. So do not think it strange if to-night, in addressing young men, I take a text about a woman, this great woman of Shunem.

May I not speak for you, as well as for myself, when I say that we ardently desire to show in some practical way our gratitude to the Lord Jesus, and our appreciation of all that He has done for us? We would not like our lives to pass without having shown in some way or other our appreciation of His great goodness to us. Now I think this great woman of Shunem will teach us the suitable and acceptable way for the recipients of great benefits to show their appreciation of them.

I hope we are all accustomed to study Scripture in its context. If we study this chapter in that way we shall see that the opening verses present to us a very suitable subject for *grace* to deal with. Here is a poor woman who had four terrible visitors who came and thrust themselves into her humble cottage without knocking at the door. The first of them was Death. He came and seized her husband, and carried the breadwinner of the family away. Then came another, Distress. One by one the various articles of household

furniture had to be sold to pay the expenses of the day, till absolutely nothing was left. Following in the wake of distress came another terrible visitor whose name was Debt, for everything being sold, the poor woman had to go in debt to obtain the ordinary necessities of life. And now the creditor had arrived upon the scene, and was going to take her two sons and sell them for bondmen to recover his money, so that the fourth visitor might rightly be called Despair.

In her despair she cries out to Elisha the prophet, the servant of God. He enquires : " What have you in the house ? "

She says, " I have nothing save a pot of oil. That is all."

What a suitable subject for the grace of God to deal with ! Elisha says, " Send and borrow vessels, big and small ; borrow not a few. Let them bring the vessels here ; then shut yourself up in your room with your two sons, and begin to pour out."

This she did ; and went on pouring, and the pots big and little were soon filled to the brim, and she said to her sons, " Pass me another."

" There are no more," they said, and then the oil stayed.

If we take the oil as an emblem of the grace of God, first remark that there is no limit to the grace on the part of the Giver. The only limit is the lack of capacity to receive more on the

part of the recipient. We put limits to the grace of God that blesses us, by the littleness both of our faith and our capacity to receive, but on the Giver's part there is no limit.

"Now," says Elisha, "you have this supply of oil, go and sell it. First of all discharge the claims of righteousness. Pay your debts. Then live thou and thy sons on the rest."

What an apt picture of the grace of God, first of all in discharging the claims of divine righteousness, giving God a righteous title to justify us, and then sufficing for us all the way home for the rest of our lives!

What I have said thus far is introductory. It would be useless to talk about making a response to the wonderful grace of God unless we have some understanding and appreciation of the grace that has not only met us in our need, but which has done so much *more* for us. ¶ When we come to the second woman in the chapter, the important woman of Shunem, we find set forth, I think, a suitable way of making a response to the grace that has reached us. The first thing I notice about her is that she appreciated Elisha. Elisha, I suppose, is a type here of the Lord Jesus Christ. The miracles that he wrought, unlike many of Elijah's, were miracles of grace. This dear woman appreciated him. She constrained him when he passed that way to turn in and eat bread. Now I believe what is of great value

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in the eyes of God is this, that those who benefit by His grace should make much of that blessed Person through whom the grace has reached them.

Suppose we could have five minutes' quiet talk together and I were to say, "What is the Lord Jesus Christ to you?" I wonder what your answer would be. That question was once asked of Lord Tennyson. A friend of his was walking with him through his beautiful grounds. Anxious to know whether the poet who had written so many striking things about Christ knew Him as his personal Saviour, he said, "My lord, what is Jesus to you?"

Lord Tennyson stooped down and picked a little daisy from the lawn, and holding it up said, "All that the sun is to this flower, giving it life and strength, beauty and fragrance, the Lord Jesus is to me."

I hope those of us who are saved will not be content with saying, "He is my Saviour." We want to be able to say much more about Him than that and to express our appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ in more glowing terms.

Let us see what this woman did. *She valued the company of Elisha so much that she wanted more of it.* She said to her husband, "We cannot be content with having him as a casual guest. Let us make a little chamber for him, and put suitable furniture in it, so that beneath this roof of ours there shall be a

chamber all his own." She had been studying Elisha, and had drawn her own conclusions from what she had seen. "I perceive that this is a holy man of God who passes by us continually," said she to her husband. So she prepared for him.

Now it is a very great thing to study the Lord Jesus Christ, and not only the Bible that speaks about Him. Do not think I am belittling the studying of the Scriptures. He who makes headway in the Christian life is the one that studies his Bible and knows it well, but it is possible to be a student of Scripture without being much of an observer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been reading lately about some of the Spanish martyrs in the ninth century—those whom the Moors put to death when they were in the occupation of the country. One thing struck me in reading their history. Though they bravely laid down their lives for Christ, and were given the opportunity to say what was in their hearts with their dying breath, not one of them had anything to say about Christ Himself, unless the historians do them less than justice. They died denouncing Mahomet and Mahometanism, and defending the truths of the Christian religion, for which they were giving their lives. The earlier martyrs under the pagan empire, and the later sufferers under the Romish persecutions, went

for the most part to the stake with hearts full, and with faces beaming with joy, and bore testimony to the treasure they had found in Christ Himself. Unlike them, these Southern martyrs of the ninth century had little or nothing to say about Christ. It was all creed and religion. With their latest breath they repeated the creeds and denounced error, and all that sort of thing. Of course, we want to have right doctrines, and orthodox creeds, and to shape our beliefs on scriptural lines, but above and beyond all this we want a personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants to be the companion of our bright days as well as of our dark days. He does not want us to treat Him as we treat the doctor, and just run off to Him in the hour of need.

If this is to be so, we shall have to prepare for Him, as this woman of Shunem prepared a little chamber for Elisha. Mark the furniture. I think it is rather significant. First of all the chamber was to be built on *the wall*. That surely is not without significance. If you are going to have a chamber in your life that will make the Lord Jesus feel a welcome guest, it must be built upon the wall. The wall in Scripture stands for separation. It shuts in that which is of God, and shuts out that which is not of God. When I speak of the wall in this way I am thinking of the world to which you once belonged. Let the wall stand between

you and it ; let the world be on one side of it and you with your rejected Saviour and Lord on the other. I think the reason why many a young Christian—and many an old one, too—fails to enjoy the company of the Lord Jesus as he might is that he retains his link with the world. He has not got the wall for the little chamber to be built on.

Have any of you ever been to Whitby for your summer holidays ? If you go, pay a visit to the museum there. You will see a glass case near the door, containing a curious object. In that case is a single key, which seems to be hanging on nothing. It is not resting on the floor of the case, and it certainly is not suspended from the top, because when the door of the case is open you can pass a pencil over the top of the key. What holds it up ? Stoop down, and look carefully, and you will see the two terminals of a powerful magnet right at the top of the case. It is the pull of the magnet that holds the key in its position.

But why does it not pull it up completely so that it cleaves to the magnet ? Ah, thereby hangs a tale ! You can pass your pencil over the top of the key, but *you cannot pass your pencil beneath it*, because an almost invisible hair holds it down to the bottom of the case, and though the magnet has a strong pull, that little hair is sufficient to counteract its force.

I see that you perceive the application of the story. Up yonder in heaven is the Lord Jesus, acting like a powerful magnet, pulling and attracting our hearts, and here is this little hair of the world holding them down. My brother, snap that hair, so that the key shall go right up to the magnet, so that the Lord Jesus with the powerful attractiveness of His love may have His place with you.

Besides the chamber being built on the wall there was placed in it a bed, a table, and a candlestick. I think *the bed* speaks of that which is so difficult to get in London life—*restfulness*, the very opposite of that rush and bustle that is eating the very spiritual life out of many a Christian to-day in this city. Spending your days, as you have to, in the atmosphere of London business life you need to see to it that the bed is put in the little chamber; that you have your moments of quiet, free from the rush that affects the mind as well as the body, because the Lord Jesus, if He is to be the companion of your heart, seeks that atmosphere of quietness in order that He may make His voice heard.

Do you know the shortest sermon that was ever preached? I think it must have been the shortest. I cannot conceive of any shorter. It was preached in America some years ago at one of those big summer conferences at Ocean Grove. We talk about the thousands that go

to Keswick Convention in this country, but it is nothing to the numbers that crowd to those big semi-religious, semi-social conferences in America. Upon this particular occasion the hot August sun was pouring down his scorching rays. Horses were falling dead in the streets of New York, and the people at Ocean Grove were going about in their shirt-sleeves. Preachers and hearers alike felt that it was no occasion for a long sermon, and the preacher read out his text and preached his sermon in four words. I venture to think that nobody forgot the sermon. The sermon was, "*Don't worry ; it's wicked.*"

Young men have their worries as well as the older folks. People often make the mistake of imagining that the only trials and difficulties young men have are mental or perhaps moral ones. But there are plenty of things to *worry* the young men of London. They have their business difficulties and all sorts of things. Now if we live in an atmosphere of perpetual care, always worrying about things and wondering what is going to happen next, our very worries may drive us to the Lord Jesus in the hour of our need, but I do not think they are conducive to the quiet, holy, blessed atmosphere of communion with Him.

Besides the bed there was *the table*, and I suppose the table speaks of *communion*. I think the Lord Jesus wants to have communion

with you. You say, "Do you mean that He wants me to pray to Him?" Oh, no; to pray to the Lord Jesus is one thing, to hold communion with Him is another. What would a father think if his children never had a word to say to him except to ask him for something, or perhaps to say "Thank you" when he gave them what they asked for? Very strange children they would be! Yes, and very strange children of God are they who have nothing to say to their Father, and nothing to say to their Saviour except to ask Him for something, or perhaps to thank Him if He gives it to them. That is not communion. The Lord Jesus wants us to show our appreciation of His love by talking to Him sometimes, and by letting Him talk to us. A friend of mine has a little four-year-old girl. When he went home the other day she put her arms round his neck and said, "Daddy, I do love you." That was not asking for something. It was not saying "Thank you" for anything. The little lassie did not say, "Oh, father, what have you got in your pockets for me?" No; it was just "*Daddy, I do love you.*"

I think the Lord Jesus loves to see something as artless and simple as that among His people. Just look up into His face sometimes, and say, "Lord, I cannot say much about my love, it is so little, but I do love Thee; I cannot help loving Thee, because Thou hast loved me,

because Thy love is so great and wonderful." I think He prizes that beyond all words.

Then besides the table there was *the candlestick*, which I suppose stands for *testimony*. I think the Lord looks for us to express our appreciation of His grace and goodness in this way, too.

"Oh," says somebody, "but I live in such an obscure corner that I have no opportunities of bearing testimony." Perhaps not in any widespread and public way, but you know when God made the sun and the moon He made the stars also, and though the stars individually do not give us much light, yet in their shining up there they do bear testimony to the Creator's wisdom and goodness and Godhead. I heard of a crowded building, I think it was a theatre, in Vienna, and the cry of fire was raised. The manager, fearing an explosion, had all the lights turned off, and the vast audience became frenzied with fear. They began to fight their way to the door, and in the darkness they could not see where the door was, and trampled on one another. In the confusion many lives were lost. There was a little girl who had a box of matches, and she struck one, and standing on a seat held it up. By the light of that match held aloft by that little child the people saw where the door was, and made for it, and the confusion was at an end. Now if we can only hold up a little

glimmering match, it may light somebody to the door. There is somebody, who if he does not hear the gospel from *your* lips may never hear it from anybody else. It may be somebody that works in the same office, or that goes up to business in the same train with you each day. You know the gospel and he does not. You are the missionary to that man. Oh, seek grace from God that you may have the candle in the chamber, that you may have the light burning so that someone may see his way to the door and find his way to Christ through the testimony that you may render.

RELIGION WITHOUT CHRIST.

THE world to-day is full of religion, professed by those who really do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Someone has said, and we fear the remark is a true one, that "Religion is the devil's instrument to blind men's eyes." Wherever you go you will meet men and women belonging to this or that system of religion who know nothing either of the sinfulness of their own hearts in the presence of a holy God, or of God's way of salvation for the lost, through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

When General von Bibien told the German Emperor that he was a lost sinner, and needed

a Saviour, just like any other sinner, the Kaiser thought the General crazy, and exclaimed, "Me! Why, I am the *head* of the Church!"

Recently in the hills of South-Western Pennsylvania I came across an Episcopalian rector, who was doing simple gospel work in a scattered farming community, seemingly with some result. In the course of conversation he said to me: "For many years I was the rector of a fashionable Episcopalian church in New Jersey. I was quite a successful preacher as they go, *but I was myself unsaved*. Many young people came into the church, but they were the children of those who were members, and simply followed along in the footsteps of their fathers and mothers. They were not saved. They only joined the church as the proper thing for one of their family to do. Then I suddenly woke up to the fact that I was myself unsaved. Now I am preaching as simple a gospel as I know how."

Perhaps one who reads these lines may also be a "church member," or even a rector of a fashionable congregation, and yet himself be unsaved. There must be individual dealing of the soul with God in order to be saved.

Nicodemus came to the Lord Jesus and said, "*We* know Thou art a Teacher come from God." Jesus answered him and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto THEE . . . ye must be born again." Are you born again? Have

you ever seen yourself a lost sinner before God, on your way to eternal perdition, and fled to the shelter of the precious blood of Christ for salvation ?

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, orthodox, and a teacher of religion, but he needed to be born again. Isaiah was a prophet who denounced sinners and pronounced woe upon those who broke God's holy law ; but he soon cried, " Woe is *me*." Job was a righteous man—none like him in the earth—but when he saw himself in God's presence he cried, " I am vile ; I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

You may be nominally a Christian, but have you ever seen yourself a vile sinner in the presence of God ? or is yours a religion without Christ ?

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If " sinner " is your title, there is a Saviour for you : a Saviour Whose precious blood cleanses from *all* sin. If you are simply religious you are respectably and religiously going to hell, and unless your eyes are opened before you die you will wake up in eternal perdition. May God save you from " religion without Christ," that you may find your only refuge and hope in Him Who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke XIX. 10).

F. L. F.

THE MAN OF GOD.

WHO is on the Lord's side? Who? Who cares for the glory of God upon earth? Who for the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ down here? Who stands for the rights and for the interests of God the Holy Ghost upon earth—first, as to the testimony of the word of life among men; and secondly, as to the walk of those who have received that word of life?

'Tis the man of God's place to answer, "I—I am the man you call; the duties you describe are mine. Other duty, other service or occupation here below have I none."

His answer may be with an "Alas! it is I," and with many tears, if his day be as Jeremiah's, or himself as Timothy, but answer to the challenge he must and will, when it reaches him.

The doctrines of grace set all the children of God on one level as to the benefits of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord—all partakers of one Spirit, one life, one hope, etc. But this by no means hinders God from separating some from the mass of them, and giving to them peculiar benefits for the sake of all the rest. Such I conceive to be

the case with "the man of God." God's man for a crisis, or a generation, will have a distinctive place, as had Timothy in his day; and when Paul wrote about "the man of God" Timothy was the party before him. Timothy had a crisis to meet, a generation to serve, and Paul was teaching him how to do it.

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. III. 10-17).

No one that fears God would dare to say that God has no right to raise up and have on earth here a man and there a man with no

other object save to recall to His people His claims over them. No one but what must admit that there was such a chain of witnesses for God in Old Testament times. None that cares for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the Holy Ghost as Comforter, and the flock of the Lord but what must admit that grace has raised up, from time to time, men who were wise to know the signs of the times—men whom God fitted to see and know the bearing of His Scriptures upon the present phases of things.

To deliver the Truth of God, in a way worthy of the Revealer of it, must be every servant's aim. Of that there can be no doubt. The Lord Jesus was perfect as the witness for God, as He was perfect in every other respect. He knew all the fullness of the divine glory, of the divine character, for He was God ; and He knew the solemn, awful importance to man, for eternity, of time-relationships with the truth of God. And I feel how, in a peculiar way, responsibility rests upon us, the handlers and holders of the Scriptures, as to the way in which we present truth to others. God knows how feeble we are, and how little we know how to commend the truth and ourselves to every man's conscience. But we do want our message to be read and to be received ; and it is not enough for us to have left the letter at the door of the house.

I have often, when feeling ready to find fault with others at work, had cause to stop and warn myself, thus : “ Take care, in finding fault with this other, you are not really proclaiming that you—the fault-finder—have leisure enough, at home and away from the work, to find fault with an ease-renouncing labourer in the field, your own Master’s servant.” And the fault, in such a case, I find, is oftener about *the way* of doing it than about the thing sought to be done, or about the object and aim of the labourer. Luther and Calvin made great mistakes, no doubt of it ; so did Whitefield and Wesley ; but *they lived out their light for God*.

The Epistles of Paul to Timothy were both of them the expressions of a heart which knew what it was to bear the heat and toil of the day. And if the writer was lion-hearted as any free-born citizen of Rome, how gently, yet firmly, does he try to rouse the courage of his more timid and gentle fellow-servant to prove himself worthy—in all patience and in all long-suffering, yet with full purpose of heart and personal self-surrender—to follow the Lord right on to the end of his course below.

T. P. T.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. W.—We do not in the least deny that the Lord's Supper was instituted on the *night* of our Lord's betrayal ; and it is very probable that the observance of it mentioned in Acts xx. 7 took place in the evening. *All that* we willingly concede. But nowhere are we distinctly enjoined to celebrate it only at night. Mr. Mauro, in his pamphlet on *The Lord's Supper*, assumes that we are, and argues on that assumption. We rejoice that you no longer defend his views and have ceased to be troubled by them. We believe that Scripture is quite silent as to the hour in which it should be observed. Moreover, it is the privilege of the saints—and every believer is a saint—to eat the Lord's Supper as often as seems fit and right. Acts xx. 7 shows that they did so on the first day of the week, but there is nothing to forbid its being taken at other times if occasion offers. We are under no law as to it. It is also to be regretted that Mr. Mauro insists on the use of unleavened bread and wine of a certain sort. Occupation with details of that kind tends, in our judgment, to beget a spirit of legality and to divert us from the main object of that precious memorial feast. For our own part we esteem it a most cherished privilege to remember our Saviour in the Breaking of Bread, whether in the evening or any other time of day, and we should think it neither better

nor worse were the bread and wine unleavened or not. Such points, we venture to think—will Mr. Mauro forgive our saying so—have little value. Let us, to whom the Lord's Supper is a frequent privilege, be jealous lest we observe it with a heart but little exercised and stirred. May we be preserved from the least measure of formalism in connection with so precious a privilege. May it ever be to us a true remembrance of our Saviour, whom men crucified and slew, but whose great love, on the other hand, led Him into the dark waters of death for our sakes. Amid the glories of the heavenly land He cares for the remembrance of His saints on earth, and when it springs from a deep appreciation of His love it is sweet to Him. Of that we may be sure.

J. W. S. New South Wales.—Acts XXI. 4–11.—In reading these verses we cannot resist the conviction that the intense affection of this devoted servant of Christ for his own nation—his profound desire for their salvation—his cherished hope that they would listen at last to his testimony—so possessed him that he did not recognize the voice of the Spirit speaking either through the disciples of verse 4 or in the pleadings of others in verse 12. We cannot believe that the Apostle would knowingly and wilfully disobey the heavenly Voice. It is indeed a striking proof that sentiments, wholly good in themselves, may, if not kept under proper control, make us incapable of recognizing divine leading. But we know there was but one Perfect Servant Who *always* did those things that

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pleased the One Who sent Him (John VIII. 29). As to the words, "The will of the Lord be done," the companions of the Apostle together with the brethren of the place, finding the Apostle remained unmoved, ceased to entreat him further. For, after all, the Lord was on high, and He was able to make the mistakes of His devoted servant to work out His sovereign will. They could only say as they ceased, "The will of the Lord be done."

C. O. A.—Your question "Did the soul of our Lord go into Hades?" is decisively answered in Acts II. 27. The body of the Lord was placed in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa and His spirit went to the place of departed spirits—Hades. *His death was an indisputable reality.* Thus the theories of those men who would fain deny the truth of the resurrection by denying the reality of His death are refuted and swept away.

F. D.—MATTHEW XII. 31, 2.—If we take in conjunction with this passage the corresponding one in Mark III. 28–30 we shall see that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was a sin of a peculiarly base and solemn nature. The miracles of our Lord were not denied. The fact that demons were cast out could not but be acknowledged. These things were evident to all. But the scribes which came down from Jerusalem declared that it was all done in the power of the devil. The Lord from heaven, the Holy One of God, was thus said to be the servant and instrument of Satan himself. Sin of such a sort, partaking of the nature of blasphemy, was proof that those who committed it were hope-

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lessly reprobate. In Luke XII. 10 it is also mentioned, but there it is in connection with the testimony of persecuted servants of Christ when they should be brought before synagogues, magistrates, and powers. The Holy Ghost would speak through them and teach them what to say. Serious would be the result of resisting their witness. An example of this is given in Acts VII. 51-4. We cannot say for certain that such blasphemous sin could not be committed now, though we are sure that those who fear they have committed it would be the last in the world to charge their Saviour with being an agent of the devil, or to gnash with their teeth upon His servants and cast them out and stone them.

R. Mc.D.—Matthew XIX. 30.—In seeking the meaning of any particular verse it is always well to observe the context. The Lord had just dealt with the rich young man who had neither faith nor the courage to follow the Lord. His great possessions blocked the way and treasure upon earth outweighed treasure in heaven. He went away sorrowful. Whereupon Peter remarks that he and the rest had forsaken all to follow Jesus. The Lord answers that they would have their recompense in that day when He, the Son of Man, should sit in the throne of His glory. Nor they only. Whoever had forsaken whatsoever was naturally dear to him for *His name's sake* should be rewarded an hundredfold and inherit eternal life. "But," He adds with great significance, "many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Let Peter then and all of them

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take heed. It was by faith they stood. Many a servant had started well and had a place in the first ranks who at the end might be among the last. Demas may have been one of these (2 Tim. iv. 10). And have we not known in our day some who were once honoured servants of Christ—their ministry was sought after and valued, and it had many seals. But where are they now? There are others whose gifts and resources are small, but they use them with humility and with a devoted heart. When they started they seemed among the last, but they shall be with the first at the end. As to the other passage (Matt. xx. 16), it follows the parable of the labourers, all of whom received every man a penny. Here the great point is *the sovereignty of God*, Who reserves the right to do as He pleases. “It may seem hard that a man should be toiling for fifty years, and that another, brought in at the close of his life, should be honoured in heaven as much as himself. But God is the only righteous, the only wise, Judge of which is for His own glory. If He please He will put all on an equal footing. He will reward the work that is done, but He will give as He will. It is the sovereignty of grace in giving as He pleases; not only in saving, but in rewarding in the time of glory. So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”

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