

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.

VOL. XXXII.

LONDON :
THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPÔT
12 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1915

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SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



1915, AND AFTER.

CAN we, in using the date of the opening year as the title of a magazine article, reasonably append to it the two words “ *and after* ” ? Can we speak of the future in any way save in mere speculation and the expression of an opinion that will be valueless to the reader ?

The reply is in the affirmative. Thank God we can. When I say *we* can, I mean that Christians can, those who believe the Bible can. There is no other source of information as to the future, unless we are disposed to attach importance to the fantasies of *Old Moore's Almanac* or other productions of that nature.

As to the past, other sources of information are open to us. History speaks with utterance more or less accurate, though never *so* accurate as when enshrined upon the sacred page of inspiration. We have authentic evidence, apart from the Scriptures, of the life and death of Christ in Palestine, nineteen centuries ago. But the Christian derives his knowledge of the essential happenings of the past not from the

uncertain pages of the secular historian but from the sure utterances of the Word of God.

To this certainty of knowledge, as to the past, the apostle Paul appeals in his letter to the Thessalonian Christians as a basis for inviting their faith as to the future—the future of which he speaks to them “*by the Word of the Lord.*” He says, “*If we believe that Jesus died and rose again*”—and we do, of course, believe these two great facts. We should not be Christians if we did not. Then with equal readiness we may believe the pronouncements that follow as to the future, for they rest on the same unassailable foundation, the Word of God.

How many of the predictions of Scripture have already become accomplished facts! The prophet Zechariah refers to this in the opening verses of his book. He bases his appeal on the fact that what God said He would do He had done. “My words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake (see margin) your fathers?”

Yes, God’s Word does not return to Him void. It always comes to pass. And if we needed any assurance as to the predictions that belong to the future, we have it in the striking fulfilment of the predictions that belonged to the past.

Then what can we say as to the immediate

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future? What will the changing months of 1915 unfold? And what after that?

For the Christian, there may be no "after that," here on earth. We may not even reach the end of the present year. For the sure promise of the Lord's return was never so near the day of its fulfilment as it is to-day. For the worldling, the future is a dark one. Left behind at the home-call of the Church, he will have to face the terrors of the times that follow, and ultimately stand before God to be judged for his sins.

With that, however, we do not propose to deal in this paper. Our object is not to give a prophetic outline of the future but to raise a practical question of present importance: *What of 1915, and after, if the Lord does not come, and the Church's sojourn on earth is prolonged for a little season?*

Three and a half centuries ago England was threatened with dire disaster. Spain, the mightiest empire of those days, was preparing to destroy her. The "Armada," named "Invincible" because it was really deemed to be so, was launched against her coasts. But there were saints in England then, men and women of faith and courage who had freed themselves from the iron yoke of Rome. We have no record of the prevailing cries which must have gone up from their hearts to God. But we have a record of the result. *It was in the days*

of the Armada that the first servants of Christ left these shores as missionaries, to preach the gospel in the first of the British colonies.

Two centuries passed, and more. Again this country was faced with imminent danger. Napoleon, with the whole of Western Europe at his feet, was threatening England with invasion. A vast fleet of transports was to bring his armies across the channel. Again there was a turning of men's thoughts to God. Mighty, prevailing intercessory prayer ascended from the hearts of many. With what result? *It was during the stress of the Napoleonic wars that heralds of the gospel began their labours, so abundantly blessed of God in South Africa, the Indies, the islands of the Southern Seas, and indeed throughout the whole world.*

Once again the clouds of trouble gathered thick in Britain's sky. The war with Russia, in the Crimea, and the terrible Mutiny in India, covered the land with a pall of darkness and mourning. But again the Lord of Hosts, the God of infinite resource, showed Himself as still able to bring meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. *A great wave of blessing, beginning in Ireland, in 1859, spread far and wide, on both sides of the Atlantic. Thousands were livingly converted to God. The savour of that gracious movement remains to this day.*

Then came the Boer conflict, and Britain

had to wage a war five thousand miles from her shores. She found it no light task, and again the gloomy clouds of sorrow and suffering settled down upon the nation. But there were some who "heard the rod" and set themselves to seek God's presence and enquire of Him. *Almost immediately there followed the great Welsh revival, when, in spite of much that was merely carnal, there was a real work of the Spirit of God resulting in thousands of conversions.* The revival spread to other lands. In far-off Manchuria seasons of blessing were experienced that seemed Pentecostal in their scope and intensity. In China, India, and many another land the reflex of that gracious visitation from God was felt.

And 1915 finds the nations again at war, locked in titanic struggle that dwarfs every previous conflict.

What will be the outcome? Our question relates to moral and spiritual things. Will there be another great revival? Will God in His infinite mercy move once more by His Spirit, and cause His voice to be heard in power amid the apathy, the love of pleasure, the forgetfulness of God, the drift toward open apostasy that are so characteristic of the present day?

"May God grant it" will be the prayer of every reader of these lines. But let us raise the question, thoughtfully and without undue

haste, to find an answer : *Upon what does the possibility of such a revival depend ?*

If it depends in the remotest degree upon us, Christians, God's children, then it becomes us to give ourselves to prayer and fasting, to earnest seeking of God's face, to humiliation and self-judgment, to determined renunciation of selfishness, worldliness, and indifference.

Brethren, shall we do it ? Shall we set ourselves to intercede with God for another merciful visitation, another awakening for saint and sinner before the Lord comes ? Fellow-Christians in America, in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, in India, in all lands where *Simple Testimony* finds its readers, shall we not join in earnest, expectant, believing, importunate prayer to God that He would grant us this boon ?

We do not deserve it. We have been cold and self-satisfied, inclined to indulge in spiritual pride and to live in the past rather than to avail ourselves of all the *present* resources which God has given to His people. Let us confess it with shame of face. Have we confessed it already ? Let us do so again, in private and with others likeminded.

And it may be that God, for Christ's sake, will in this matter too, do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we either ask or think.

H. P. B.

AFTER THE LORD COMES.

WHEREABOUTS in the Book of Revelation are we to locate the tragic events that are now taking place on the Continent of Europe? Such is the question which a correspondent asks of us. We may be sure that a similar question is being asked by many. And no wonder. To see nation after nation hurling their battalions one against the other—to hear the tramp of millions of armed men marching to the battlefields—to behold the modern instruments of war at work on land and sea and in the air—to read of cities, towns, and villages swept away or reduced to ruined heaps—to be told of hundreds of thousands of men wounded, maimed, killed—is enough to recall the terrible scenes of the Book of Revelation when the seals of judgment are broken, the trumpets sounded, and the vials of wrath poured out. Are those times upon us? Are these gathering nations being brought together for “the battle of that great day of God Almighty”? (Rev. xvi. 14). This is what men are asking.

We think not. Our reason for saying so is this. Ere the seals of the roll of judgment are broken in Revelation vi. the Church is seen in heaven, and it assuredly is not there yet. Her history on earth ends with the ending of chapter iii. For the story of the seven

churches is the prophetic outline of her earthly course from beginning to end. Only we must remember it is the Church viewed as a responsible body and not as it is seen in the Epistles of Paul—a body united to its glorified Head. So in the fourth chapter of the Revelation a door is “opened *in heaven*” and the seer is invited to “come up hither” and he will be shown things that must be hereafter—that is, things that follow the close of the Church’s course on earth. The solemn judgment scenes of this book do not receive their complete fulfilment till after the Lord has come and taken His Church to heavenly glory.

But, as coming events cast their shadows before, so the stupendous conflict now going on enables us to realize, in some degree, what will befall the nations when their hour comes. And if we believe that hour will soon strike, how it should stir us up to look for the return of our Lord. Not as Judge do *we* look for Him. He comes to us as Saviour and as the Heavenly Bridegroom. Are we waiting and watching for Him? Pilgrims of the night, are we looking to see “the bright and morning Star”? (Rev. XXII. 16).

But what will happen after the Church has been caught away? That is a question full of interest and which must be answered in parts. First, as to all those who have heard the gospel of peace and salvation and have

neither received nor obeyed it, we are told in plain terms what will befall them. They listen to another tale. For them the old gospel—old, but ever new—had had no charm. Many of them, indeed, had grown so wise that they esteemed it folly. They stood by while the modern Jehoiakims cut out with their penknives page after page of Holy Scripture and cast them into the fire (Jer. xxxvi. 23). They raised no protest, they felt no fear, they rent no garment. And now a new evangel is proclaimed. It comes from the mouth of that trinity of evil named in Revelation xvi. 13. If the old gospel was confirmed with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, so shall this new one be. With this difference. The signs, wonders, and miracles of our Lord were wrought in the power of the Holy Spirit, but these will be Satanic, and the wonders by which men will be deceived are described as “lying wonders.” The father of lies is the parent of them. But the new gospel suits men exactly. They embrace it. It is but a lie but they believe it to be truth. They fall under strong delusion and the penalty of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and His glory is their ultimate end. The first and second chapters of 2 Thessalonians explain this fully.

It has been said that the day of grace will be over when the Lord comes to take His

own away. And what is meant is true enough. It will be over for those who trifle with their opportunities and treat the claims of the Saviour and the affairs of their soul as matters that call for no attention. But the day of grace will not be over for all mankind, and the activities of the Holy Spirit will not cease. A new movement will begin. The Church having been completed and taken to glory, the promises relating to the remnant of Israel and their final restoration to their own land come up for fulfilment. "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hands of him that was stronger than he" (Jer. xxxi.). In the course of the accomplishment of this sure purpose of God they will pass through the great tribulation spoken of by Jeremiah

(chap. xxx. 7), and by Daniel the Prophet (Dan. xii. 1). It will be "the time of Jacob's trouble," but they shall be saved out of it. Then will be wrought in their souls that deep repentance of which Zechariah speaks in chapter xii. of his book: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." And the land shall mourn, every family apart. King, prophet, priest, and common people all shall mourn, individually and collectively, in that great and solemn day.

Nor is the grace of God exhausted or all His purposes fulfilled when this takes place. There is a largeness about His mercy which our narrow thoughts are slow to understand. For in Revelation vii., after the elect of the tribes of Israel are sealed, we read of a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues. These, clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands, stand before the Throne, and before the Lamb. They come out of the great tribulation, even as "the remnant of Israel" had, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And if the tribes of Israel

have their blessing on the earth with Jerusalem as their centre, so, too, this innumerable company of redeemed ones from among the Gentile nations have their sphere of blessing on the earth according to the most perfect wisdom of God. He sets the various families of the redeemed each in its appointed place. Both heaven and earth shall be peopled with the ransomed of the Lord and the glory of the celestial shall be one and the glory of the terrestrial another. And surely we, who know and believe that the Church will hold her unique place, given to her in the counsels of God, can rejoice that the love of the Saviour and His great redemption work reach out to others beside herself. Of Israel, He says, with touching tenderness, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). And so of these redeemed from among the nations it is said, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Of the judgments that accompany the loosing of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials we do not speak. Anyone wishing to pursue the subject should read *The Coming of the Bridegroom*, by Dr. W. T. P. Wolston, or *Lectures on the Second Coming of our Lord*, by Mr. W. Kelly. We can heartily commend both books,

AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT.

A VERY familiar sight in almost every town to-day—numbers of men wearing the uniform of the British soldier.

A Christian, ever on the look-out, came across a group of these uniformed men in one of our northern seaports, and at once he yearned for their souls. The temptation to avail himself of the opportunity to put before them the way of SALVATION was irresistible ; so he called to them :

Are you ashamed of that uniform ? Chorus,
No.

Are you ashamed of your King ? Chorus,
No.

Are you ashamed of your country ? Chorus,
No.

One more question, men :

ARE YOU ASHAMED OF JESUS ?

There was not the same chorus of response, but one young man, stepping forward, saluted, and answered :

No, sir, for He is my Saviour.

My Christian friend was cheered beyond all

telling, and out of a full heart he preached unto the rest, JESUS.

A good gospel story, you say. Well, yes; but is it not a good "story" for Christians? Surely it is.

Let me ask you, my dear fellow-believer, to put to yourself the question: "Do I confess Christ so readily, or am I somewhat of a secret believer and perhaps a little ashamed to confess the name of Jesus with boldness?"

Do you think there ever was a day like the present when, as Christians, we should be "*READY, AYE READY*" to speak to others of the needs of their souls?

How many of the young and noble sons of Britain have offered themselves to stand for King and Country. They know full well what they are doing, and are quite prepared in their loyalty and patriotism to give up their lives if called to do so. That means much, does it not?

But what about you, my dear Christian friend? Yours may not be a call to arms, but surely a *call to avail yourself of your privilege*. Have YOU thought of the souls of these men? Are YOU seeking to put the gospel before them? "I cannot preach—I don't feel called to it," you say. Probably not, comparatively few are called to publicly preach the gospel; but can you not, after prayerfully waiting upon God, arm yourself with a few sound

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gospel tracts, or perhaps a few copies of the gospels, and thus seek one of the many opportunities of circulating the glad tidings of salvation. I verily believe that at present there is an open door we may never have again. Moreover, is it not a fact, grand and glorious, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming, very, very soon, for His own?

“I haven’t time,” you say. Time! you haven’t time to spend in the Lord’s service! Do you not covet, when life’s journey is over, to hear Him say, “Well done, good and *FAITHFUL* servant”? Not necessarily prominent servant, but *FAITHFUL*.

Think, too, what joy you will give to your Lord when HE commends you. And you will count it an honour far beyond the much-coveted V.C. Remember, also, that an opportunity missed, is an opportunity lost for ever.

Let me add one word more, *NOW* is the time. *DO IT NOW*.

“Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. VI. 2).

We quote pretty often Proverbs XXVII. 1, but shall we not take it home to ourselves?

R. N. C.

The writer of the above article suggests that we publish a list of gospel tracts suitable for the soldiers. We do so on the cover of this month’s magazine.

MORAL GLORIES OF THE LORD JESUS.

“Mine ears hast thou opened.”—PSALMS XL. 6.

THESE words speak of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. Descending lower than the angels in the scale of creation He took upon Him the form of a bondman, and in doing the will of God He found unceasing delight.

This was the object that brought Him into the world—to do the will of God. Hence He could truly say, “In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law is within my heart.” That which the various sacrifices under the law failed to accomplish He has done once and for ever. Many and great results flow from the supreme act in which He expressed His perfect devotedness to God. Hebrews x. tells us that through the one sacrifice for sins which He offered on the cross our sins have been completely put away. We are ever viewed as standing in the infinite value of that precious blood, and can now with boldness draw near—where it was death under the law to approach—into the very holiest; perfected for ever by Christ’s one

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offering. The sins He bore, the believer is assured, will be remembered *no more*. Never again shall a sin-offering be laid on the altar. There is *no more* offering for sin. Conscience, which once spoke loudly as to our sins, is silenced by the efficacy of the Blood, which has fully atoned for them. We have *no more* conscience of sins. They are blotted out of God's book, and we need therefore never recall them, unless it is to adore our Saviour-God for His forgiving love as to them.

Our souls delight to linger over the perfections of the Lord Jesus. He was perfect as a Servant as well as a Son. Capacity, intelligence, and devotedness—three traits of a true servant—shine out in Him. He became a true man and was thus capacitated to serve. He knew what the "volume of the book" contained, He was intelligent as to the will of God. Then what unceasing delight He found in doing that will—it was written in His heart!

The "Ear" that was "opened" in Psalm XL. is found *listening* in Isaiah L. 3-6. He was dependent as well as obedient. Morning by morning as He awaked He turned to His Father for guidance as to His service. The Lord God had given Him the tongue of the learned, but if those lips are to be opened it must be as sent of the Father. Every word He spoke, every miracle He wrought, every gracious deed was an expression of the Father's

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will. Many weary hearts were in Judea ; many heavy laden, sick, and sorrowful. He was gifted and sent to bind them up, but it must be done in the way of obedience.

Travel in thought to Bethany—the one spot where in peace He could retire after a toilsome day in Jerusalem. Very dear that family had grown to Jesus. He “loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus” (John XI.). A messenger arrives bearing the sorrowful tidings of the sickness of Lazarus. Jesus remaining where He was, the messenger returns unaccompanied by Him ; but telling the sorrowing sisters that the glory of God was to be the outcome of this sorrow. Was He indifferent to it ? Was He unable to succour those He loved ? No, but this perfect Servant in every good work did the will of God. Looking for guidance, no word fell on His ear the first morning. Listening again the second morning, still no direction to go to Bethany. In waiting He waited patiently, and the third morning He was bidden to go. Spite of the disciples, who warned Him of the deadly hatred of the Jews, and the death-peril that confronted Him, He went. The light of the Father’s will illumined His path, and He stumbled not. He knew perfectly well that Calvary lay at the end of that journey ; but, He “was not rebellious neither turned away back.”

How perfectly His deity and humanity shine

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out at the graveside. Perfect, blessed man as He was, weeping and groaning His heart poured forth its grief at the havoc death had wrought. "God over all, blessed for ever" as He was, one word showed that in Him dwelt eternal power and Godhead. Jairus's daughter and the widow's son of Nain had witnessed to His life-giving power, but the one had only just died, and the other was unburied. Here was one who had lain four days in the grave. Turning to His Father for guidance He prays and is heard. He cries, "Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth," a living man. Jesus was thus declared to be the Son of God with power.

This Jesus is our Jesus, our Saviour, our Lord, our Exemplar! What perfections meet in Him! Tears and groans speak of His perfect human sympathy. Tarrying until the Father's will was known proclaims His perfection as a Servant, while the immediate response to the word "come forth" declares Him to be the Eternal Son. Our souls would fain bow at His feet in adoration and worship.

Let those under long-continued pressure from a suffering body, or adverse circumstances, take comfort from this tarrying of Jesus. God is not unmindful of your sorrows, but He has an end in view, and when the lesson is learned, deliverance will come. In the meantime there is comfort from the God of all

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comfort. Long and sorely Job was tried, many and bitter were his sorrows ; but when the “end of the Lord” was reached he found Him “very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” So will you. Job learned himself—as a result he abhorred himself. Job learned God, and found Him better than all his fears. So will you ; when exercised by the trial, it shall yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness (Heb. xii.). Meantime you can unfailingly count on the sympathy of our Great High Priest, who through a pathway of suffering has been fully qualified for the office He now fills.

But His gracious service did not end with His life. Turn to Exodus xxi. 2-6. A Hebrew servant had finished his term of service and was now free to go. But, if so, he must go out alone. The wife he loved, the children that were dear to him, must remain in servitude. If he elects to stay he must evermore be a bond-slave. Should he plainly say, “I love my master, my wife, and my children ; I will not go out free” : then his master, with an awl, must bore his ear to the doorpost ; witnessing thus to a perpetual servitude. The antitype of this may be seen in Gethsemane on the night of the betrayal. Rejected by the nation He had come to bless, the Lord Jesus might have been conducted by cohorts of angels back to heaven. God had been glorified every step of the way, and neither sin

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nor Satan had found any vulnerable point. But now a cup of sorrow such as He had never tasted was presented to Him to drink. Would He go out free? But then no sons of God should ever fill the Father's house, no bride of the Lamb should find a place there!

Listen to His answer. "Not my will but thine be done." "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair" (Isa. L. 6). Setting His face like a flint, this perfect, blessed Servant traversed the sorrowful way from Gethsemane to Calvary, and drank the cup from His Father's hand. He accepted all that it meant in a servitude that will never cease.

Behold Him in glory, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, knowing the name of each lamb in the flock, carrying them in His bosom, bearing them upon His shoulders until they are brought "home"! Contemplate Him as their gracious High Priest, ministering mercy and grace, directing their pathway, as His Father directed His, and empowering them to walk in the same path of obedience. Again, think of Him as the Advocate with the Father, restoring the wanderers, bringing them to their knees in confession, washing their feet with the pure water of the word and recovering to them their lost communion. Nor will His service cease when our pilgrim days are done. As an Angel-

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Priest He will minister to the persecuted Jewish remnant. As King of Kings He will vanquish every foe and establish a reign of righteousness on the earth. Never until the last enemy is destroyed will He lay the sword down, and yield up the kingdom, having purified earth and the heavens of all evil.

Nor will that service cease then. God, all in all ; Jesus will take His place, *as Man*, the Firstborn in the heavenly family, surrounded by His fellows throughout an endless and blissful eternity ; but a Man upon whom all the others will depend for blessing and sustainment. Neither angel nor man lives of inherent life. No creature can exist unsustained. The tree of life—Jesus Himself—shall be their food, because He lives they live also. God alone is self-existent.

What a future lies before us ! In that glorious body in which all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, we shall see the lowly Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, the Son of God, who has willingly, voluntarily, out of love to us and devotedness to God, become a Servant, for ever !

Of the vast universe of bliss,
 The centre Thou, and Sun ;
 Th' eternal theme of praise is this,
 To Heaven's beloved One ;
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
 That every knee to Thee should bow !

H. N.

THE MAN WHO LIVES RIGHT.

TWO business men had been talking about the things of God. One of them was a sinner, saved by the grace of God ; the other thought that good works and right living fitted a man for the presence of a holy, righteous God.

They had been speaking of one who had lived an honourable life, and the latter remarked, " It's a great comfort to a man when he comes to die to know that he has lived right ! " " Yes," answered the other, " but where is that man to be found ? "

" Oh ! of course I don't mean that a man can live altogether right ; but one meets with those who live nearly right, and are very good men."

But being very good does not fit us for the presence of a holy God ! Nothing short of perfection will suit Him. Where is the man who is perfect ? Christ is the standard of perfection. He is the One who knew no sin, either in thought, word, or deed. People talk about doing their best, and of leading a right life, but who ever does ?

I recently heard someone say of a young man lying dead, " He certainly has a good chance for heaven—he was so good to his mother ! " And yet that same young man cared absolutely nothing for God or His gospel ; but often opposed the truth.

Where is the man who lives right? Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart; and He who searches hearts says of men, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one . . . that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans III.).

In view of this, God's testimony as to man, well may we ask, "Where is the man who lives right?" There was but One who has ever trod this earth who lived right; even Him of whom His enemies were forced to confess, after the most searching tests, that they found "no fault in this Man."

Jesus walked this earth a sinless, holy Man separate from sinners, and then on the cross laid down His spotless life in atonement for our sins. His was the only perfect life on earth, and only those who stand before God in all the fullness and perfection of that life offered up for them on the cross are accepted before God.

Is this where you stand to-day—in the presence of a holy God, in all the acceptance of that holy life once offered up for sinners? If so, God accepts you. If not, you are on the way that leads to eternal perdition. F. L. F.

WORTH REMEMBERING.

HOW desirable it is that we should deal faithfully with ourselves—judging everything before God that is of self. And, withal, seeing that the truth as it is in Jesus pervades the whole heart, and forms and fashions the life—that the affections are governed and the character formed by the hope of His coming. Cherish a tender conscience. Remember this—whatever unfits for Christian duties—whatever cools the fervour of devotion—whatever indisposes us to read the Scriptures, or engage in prayer—whatever we could not engage in with a perfectly clear conscience, in the presence of a rejected and suffering Saviour, are not for us. The pleasures, amusements, recreations, which we cannot thank God for, should be avoided. When the thought of God—of Christ—of His coming—of the judgment-seat, falls like a cold shadow on what we call enjoyment, we are out of our right place ; let us flee from it.

Let us never go where we cannot ask God to go with us. Let us never be found where we cannot act as Christ would have us. Let us pass each day as pilgrims consciously on the way to their heavenly inheritance. Let us press after close communion with Jesus. Let the love of God reign in our hearts ; and thus shall we be kept from a thousand snares,

26 "EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING."

exhibit a holy consistency, and become possessed of a peace and joy which passeth knowledge.

C. H. M.

"EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING."

A SILVER lining ! Nay, it is all bright
Upon the other side ;
Could we but climb, by faith, the mountain height,
And there with Him abide.
With " Jesus only," other voices stilled,
That He might fully speak
The tenderness with which His heart is filled
For us so poor and weak.

He tells us of His never-failing love,
His purposes of grace,
And whispers gently, " In My Home above
Soon shalt thou see My face,
In radiant glory, every shadow passed,
And every cloud dispelled,
The fair inheritance possessed at last,
Only by faith beheld."

He tells us He is waiting still to bless,
To fully satisfy,
With His unbounded love and tenderness,
The yearning spirit's cry.
It is the *pierced* hand which presseth sore.
Then can we doubt His love ?
Nay, let us rather praise Him more and more,
As we His mercy prove.

N. T.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SEEKER.—Luke XXII. 35-8.—“He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” We do not think these words of our Lord are to be taken literally. His answer in verse 38 not only forbids it, but implies that His disciples did not understand what He was saying. While with them He had cared for them and they had lacked nothing. But now He was to be delivered into the hands of wicked men and crucified and slain. And the kingdom of which He had spoken to them and in which they were to have places of distinction was not yet to be established in power and glory. All this would involve a great change and His words were to prepare them for what was about to come. But they did not enter into His mind, and the Lord does not pursue the subject further. There were many things He had to say, but they could not bear them then (John XVI. 12). They should be said later on, when they were in a condition to receive them.

READER OF S.T.—Matthew XX. 16.—We gave an explanation of the entire passage, of which this verse forms a part, in the correspondence columns of our December issue, which please see. Bear in mind the subject is service and the rights of God to reward as it seems good in His sight. Many are called to serve, and some are chosen vessels as Paul was (Acts IX. 15). But the reward in every case is all of grace.

28 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SIMPLE BELIEVER.—ROMANS VIII. 1.—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Here the verse ends, and the words that follow are omitted on the best and most ample authority. They are rightly found in verse 4, but not in verse 1. See the Revised and other modern versions. If retained, their tendency would be to lead to an examination of our walk to see whether we were “in Christ” or not, and the plain, positive, emphatic statement as to *no condemnation* would be greatly weakened. Self-judgment as to whether our heart and ways are in keeping with the great fact that there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus is right enough and most salutary. But if such exercises be used to ascertain whether we are in Christ or not the result is harmful in the highest degree. For if the scrutiny leads to the conclusion that we are “in Christ Jesus” it savours of intense self-righteousness and our confidence rests on a wrong foundation. The process always plunges honest souls into darkness and doubt. It is important therefore to understand that the opening statement of Romans VIII. is to be received in all its blessedness and without any qualifying clause. There is, indeed, now no condemnation—there can be none—to those in Christ Jesus. They are beyond its reach even as He is in whom they stand.

WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life” (JOHN v. 24 R.V.).

THERE are certain passages in the Bible on which the Holy Spirit of God has placed singular honour. Multitudes of souls have been led by their means into spiritual liberty—into the knowledge and enjoyment of pardon and peace and acceptance with God. John v. 24, which we quote at the head of this paper, is one of these. What is there about this text that it should be so used? Have you ever inquired, have you ever thought about it? Is its very great simplicity the secret of its usefulness? Is it the positive way in which it speaks of things, or is it the magnitude of the truths themselves of which it treats? Perhaps all three.

The Lord Himself is the speaker, and the “verily, verily” with which He prefaces His words gives emphasis and some solemnity to what He is about to say. And He speaks of great things indeed. Eternal life—exemption from judgment—and a passing out of death into life—such are the supreme subjects with which He deals.

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“ Verily, verily, *I* say unto you.” We may lay stress on the pronoun *I*. All other voices must give place to His. It is not the servant who now speaks but the Master, and from His lips shall come nothing but what is wholly true. In earnest and respectful tones we ask our present-day theologians, our powerful preachers, and all others, to be silent while we listen to His voice. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth Him that sent Me, *hath* ”——Pause, my soul, and inquire whether thou art among the number of these. Dost thou hear His Word? Is it sweeter to thee than honey or the honeycomb? And dost thou believe Him who—moved by a love that no tongue can tell—sent His only begotten Son into the world to be the Saviour of it? Come, my soul, what sayest thou to this? If thou canst say “ Yes, indeed I do,” though thou sayest it in trembling accents, then listen to what thy Saviour saith and fear not to believe Him fully. “ He that heareth . . . and believeth . . . hath eternal life—and cometh not into judgment—but hath passed out of death into life.” Here are three glorious facts. Wonderful they are, passing belief had *He* not spoken of them thus. And the words are not His only, but God’s. “ For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God ” (John III. 34). Not to believe Him is to make God a liar (1 John

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v. 10). Who would not shrink in horror from the guilt of such a sin ?

It is much to be observed how simply the Saviour speaks. His words could not have been simpler had He been dealing with commonplace matters and not with truths more priceless than the treasures of the land and sea. And they were so spoken that our faith might receive them as artlessly as a little child receives the words that come from a mother's mouth. We need not hesitate to believe them then. Indeed there is no other way to possess the comfort, the joy, the peace, and the endless riches which they bring.

Nor does the Lord see fit to enlarge on the blessings which they receive who hear His Word and believe Him who sent the Saviour here. They are enlarged upon elsewhere. Would any one know more of the life eternal which is revealed in the Son and imparted to the believer ? Let him read the writings of the Apostle John. Would he learn more about the believer's exemption from judgment ? Then he should study the Epistle to the Romans. And if he would better understand the meaning of passing from death unto life, he will find help in Ephesians II.

But of one thing we may all be sure. Whatever spiritual wealth is hid in that great phrase "*life eternal*"—however much its meaning may grow in our eyes as we ourselves

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advance in the understanding of divine truth, it all belongs even to the babes in the family of God. The young men and fathers may know more. But life eternal is an imperishable gift to every believer. There are no exceptions.

Exemption from judgment, too, is not a subject of uncertain hope. Our confidence as to it rests on our Lord's own words in John v. 24, "*Shall not come into judgment.*" The reason we know. He Himself has borne our sins in His own body on the tree. He has borne the consequences of them. It is by His stripes that we are healed (1 Peter ii. 24). Judgment, to determine our guilt and the measure of it, is past. Have we not confessed our guiltiness in repentance before God? Judgment, in the sense of punishment, our blessed, divine, and holy Substitute has borne when on the cross. Into judgment therefore no believer ever comes. Thank God for such relief!

And he is "*passed out of death into life.*" The condition of all men by nature is that of death—spiritual death, of course. A man may be much alive to ten thousand temporal matters; he may be keen, energetic, having a vigorous intellect that suffers nothing to escape it, and yet be dead to God and to the vital things of the soul. His years are spent in a region of death. Out of that state is he brought when he hears the Word of the Son of God and believes Him who sent the Son. He

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enters into life in the true sense of that pregnant term.

We thank God for John v. 24. May the Holy Spirit continue to use it in blessing to souls beyond number.

But there is another passage at which we must look ere closing this article. It is 2 Corinthians v. 10.

“For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad ” (R.V.).

Does this collide with what has been said on John v. 24 ? Not in the least. For here the apostle speaks as a *servant*—as one under responsibility to his Master before whose seat he would be made manifest one day. For if life eternal be ours, if there be no judgment for us ; if we have passed out of death into life ; if we have been made free from the servitude of Sin, it is that we might serve a new Master who is withal our Saviour to whom we owe everything. We are saved to serve. Should we not then earnestly endeavour to be agreeable to Him, and will not the certainty of our being made manifest before His judgment seat be a stimulus to us to make it our constant aim to be so ? Such is the force of the passage. If any doubt it, let the preceding verse be read. We quote it from the Revised Version. “Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether

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at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him." The meaning then is plain. We shall not come into judgment to have it decided whether we be saved or not, but we shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ as His servants. Everything will then appear in its true light. It will be the day of losses and rewards. The wood, hay, and stubble in our life and service will be burnt up. It shall perish and pass away. Whatever abides shall have its suited reward from our Master's hand (1 Cor. III. 12-15).

It would be well were we often to ask ourselves the question: What will our life look like when made manifest at the tribunal of our Lord? What will He say about those contentions for which we had no remedy save the sword of division? He had said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," but we never sought to be among their number. He bade us love one another as He had loved us, but we never asked Him, with tears, to teach us to do so. He left us an example that we should wash one another's feet, but such lowly service did not suit our taste. He had said, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me," but we—some of us—followed afar off, as did Peter. What shall be said of these things in that day? On the other hand, everything will He remember, however small, that has been done out of love to Him. A cup of cold water shall not be

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forgotten. And in His kingdom there will be places of distinction, given by Him to those for whom they have been prepared (Matt. xx. 23). There will be the "white stone" on which will be written a new name known only to the one who receives it (Rev. ii. 17). These rewards will be ingredients in our cup of joy. But while this is so, let us *never, never* forget that our deepest joys will not be those which are the outcome of our labour and of our devotedness to Christ. Deep as these may be, there are others which will be far deeper. They are those which we shall have in common with all our brethren—the fruit of divine grace and of our Saviour's redemption work. Blessed be God that it is so !

In the light of the judgment seat of Christ and in the deepening sense of what grace has done for us, as stated in John v. 24, may we seek in all things to be well-pleasing unto Him. May His love constrain us not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who for our sakes died and rose again (2 Cor. v. 15).

Lord, we are Thine : Thy claims we own,
 Ourselves to Thee we'd wholly give,
 Reign Thou within our hearts alone,
 And let us to Thy glory live ;
 Here let us each Thy mind display,
 In all Thy gracious image shine ;
 And haste that long-expected day
 When Thou shalt own that we are Thine.

OF WHAT USE IS THE STUDY OF PROPHECY?

(Address given at Stockleigh Hall, St. Leonards-on-Sea.)

HALF a century ago Christians all the wide world over gave themselves more or less to the study of prophecy. Massive and exhaustive treatises were written ; smaller pamphlets and tracts by the thousand poured from the printing presses ; special conventions of Bible students were held to consider the subject, and sermons innumerable were preached upon the Lord's second coming and subsequent events.

In our day, however, the study of this great subject has been largely dropped. A new generation has arisen to whom the mere ABC of prophecy is an unknown tongue. Social questions, engaging the attention of many, have riveted their thoughts upon the things of earth, things of passing import, rather than upon heaven things, things of eternal moment.

Not that the Christian is to be indifferent to the present, and to allow his mind to dwell exclusively upon the future. For us who belong to Christ the present is a wonderful time. It is the day of the Holy Ghost's resi-

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dence on earth, and of Christ's session at God's right hand. He is there as our Great High Priest, and we are linked up with Him as His brethren, His companions. Meanwhile, the Church of God is being formed, and taken out from among Jews and Gentiles to form a unique company belonging to heaven, the body and bride of Christ. All this, and more, makes the present period one of tremendous importance for the Christian.

Present things, however, should not divest our minds of all interest in the future. But to a large extent this interest has been lost and men have begun again to ask the question : Of what *use* is the study of prophecy ?

It is the question of a utilitarian and materialistic age. For the readers of these pages it should be sufficient to answer that the subject forms a large part of that revelation which God has been pleased to give us in the Scriptures, and therefore possesses indisputable claims upon the attention of all who reverence His Word.

But the question need not be dismissed thus. For we read that *all* Scripture (the prophetic writings included) has been given that the man of God may be "thoroughly furnished *unto all good works*" (2 Tim. II. 17). Our equipment for practical life will therefore suffer loss if we neglect so large a part of the Scriptures as that devoted to prophecy.

There is a *use*, a help in the performance of good works, in the study of this subject.

The whole matter, in the minds of many, is assuming fresh interest in view of the terrible European war. One hears such questions as, "Will the battle of Armageddon be fought during this war?" "Is the Kaiser one of the great personages whose coming in the last times is foretold upon the prophetic page?" Such questions, while exposing the ignorance of those who ask them, indicate a certain revival of interest, and a desire to know what the Word of God has said as to the future. And this measure of renewed interest affords the Christian student of prophecy an opportunity of calling attention to the striking predictions of Scripture.

Before we speak of the *use* of this study, however, let me refer to the great *honour* which God has been pleased to put upon us by His revelations as to what the future will bring forth.

We have the following remarkable passage in Amos III. 7: "*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.*" God treats His servants as *confidential* servants; indeed, as more than servants, for the Lord Jesus said, "*I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my*

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Father I have made known unto you " (John XV. 15).

Think for a moment of the wonderful significance of these words. We are privileged to be *friends* of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as such to be entrusted with divine secrets. Am I not right in calling this a great honour? Who would be indifferent to it?

An admirable illustration of this is afforded by the case of the man of whom God spoke as "My friend,"—"Abraham, My friend" (Isa. XLI. 8). The wickedness of the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, had come up before God for judgment, and He was about to deal in righteousness with those abominable plague spots. The matter had nothing to do directly with Abraham, though his nephew, Lot, was a resident in Sodom. Yet God says: "*Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?*" He *did not* hide it from His "friend," but honoured him by taking him into His confidence and communicating to him the news as to Sodom's impending overthrow.

Moses, too, was honoured in like manner: "*He made known His ways unto Moses.*" The verse continues: "His acts unto the children of Israel" (Ps. CIII. 7). Do not these closing words imply that the children of Israel were treated with equal confidence? No, for while

they were made conversant with His *acts* of mercy and power, we read, "They have not known My *ways*." The secret of His ways was reserved for Moses, who was thus honoured with Jehovah's confidence and admitted to the counsel of His thoughts.

What heartlessness, what selfishness must that be that is indifferent to honour like this! God has made gracious communications to us as to what He will yet bring to pass in heaven and earth. Do any of His children reply that such matters are "non-essential"? Shame upon us to say such a thing, or even to think it! Non-essential, indeed! Are we then only to pay attention to what immediately concerns ourselves, bears upon our own blessing and ministers to our personal comfort?

Of course, like every other good thing, the study of prophecy may be abused; and it will be well to refer to its possible abuse before dwelling upon its manifold use. The gospel itself is subject to abuse. We read of men who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude, ver. 4). That, however, is no reason for our ceasing to preach the gospel and proclaim the grace of God far and wide. Nor is the abuse on the part of some of the prophetic Word an adequate excuse for its neglect on the part of others.

We regard as an abuse of the prophetic

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Scriptures that undue occupation with times and seasons, persons, places and events, that has led many astray. Instead of viewing all with regard to Christ, and God's purposes in connection with Him, they have formed schemes, fancied events, fixed dates and generally brought discredit upon the whole study. Some, beginning as students of prophecy, have ended by becoming prophets themselves,—pseudo-prophets, whose folly has been manifested.

These observations bring us to the heart of our subject—the *use* of the study of prophecy. I shall classify its uses under five heads.

IT MAGNIFIES CHRIST.

And this is always good to the Christian. It establishes his heart, and draws out his affection and admiration to Christ. Prophecy presents Him in His various glories. As Israel's true Messiah, He will sit on the throne of His father David, and reign from the river to the ends of the earth. He will come, too, as the Desire of all Nations, and will be the Head of the Gentiles (Ps. XVIII. 43). All creation will acclaim Him, and He will hush its groan and remove its curse. Finally, all things in heaven and earth shall come under His sway and proclaim His glory, and even "things under the earth" shall bow at His

Name, though excluded from the scope of the blessing which He will bring.

IT PROMOTES COMMUNION WITH GOD.

We find this in connection with Abraham, to whom reference has already been made. God made communications to him as to what He intended to do with Sodom, and Scripture calls this "*communing* with Abraham" (Gen. XVIII. 33). Communion, in this sense of the word, means sharing things in common. God shared His thoughts with His "friend" and thus Abraham had communion with Him.

For us, too, the communications of God form the basis of communion with Him. As one has said, "We think His thoughts after Him," and that is no small thing. We can, as we study the sure word of prophecy, look up and say with David: "*How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me. O God! How great is the sum of them!*" (Ps. CXXXIX. 17).

In the case of Abraham this led to his taking the place of an intercessor, and pleading with God on behalf of Sodom. And we, too, as we contemplate the terrible judgments which are to break upon the world, may well set ourselves, in communion with the mind and heart of God, to intercede with Him and thus be the means of rescuing some before the day of vengeance comes.

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IT NURTURES FAITH IN GOD'S WORD.

As we read the prophecies which pertain to past times, and see how marvellously they have been fulfilled in every detail, our faith grows, and we are filled with admiration at the accuracy of the predictions. "This, indeed, must be God's own Word," we say, "none but He could foretell the future with such exactitude."

The fact of past predictions being fulfilled is used in Zechariah i. 6 as the basis for an appeal to the men of Israel to give heed to the prophetic word. For we may be sure that predictions as to the future will come true, since those referring to past events have proved to be so accurate.

Take, for instance, the great range of prophecies as to the circumstances of the life, ministry, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We find in the Old Testament detailed prophecies as to the manner and place of His birth ; the tribe and the family of which He should be born. The character and sphere of His ministry are indicated, and the fact of His rejection. The manner of His entry into Jerusalem is foretold ; also His betrayal by one of His intimate friends. The very price of the betrayal is mentioned. Other details are given ; the parting of His garments ; the offering to Him of vinegar upon the cross ;

His burial in a rich man's tomb. All these, and many other prophecies, were fulfilled to the letter. How it increases our wonder at the perfection of the Scriptures as we trace out the detailed fulfilment of these utterances of previous centuries !

Other predictions concerning the Jews have been fulfilled in a way that has excited the wonder of all who have looked into the subject. Napoleon is reported to have said that the Jews, as a standing witness to the truth of old-time prophecies, afford the most striking evidence as to the divine character of the Scriptures.

Space forbids our enlarging upon this fascinating field of study, or we might draw attention to the marvellous accuracy, for which nothing but inspiration could account, of fulfilled prophecies as to Egypt, Tyre, Babylon, Philistia and other nations. The reader may profitably trace out these for himself, or may consult Urquhart's *Wonders of Prophecy* (Marshall Bros.).

IT SAVES FROM MISUNDERSTANDING AND DISCOURAGEMENT.

This refers specially to those who seek in any way to be the *servants* of the Lord Jesus. Let it be noted that the book of Revelation is particularly addressed to such. It was given

of God to Christ, "to shew unto *His servants* things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. I. 1).

If a servant of Christ pursues his path of labour under the impression that the world is to be gradually converted by the spread of the gospel and Christian influences, how depressed and discouraged he must get every time he faces facts! For the fact is that the tide of sin and rebellion is rising on every hand with alarming swiftness. There is more heathenism in the world to-day than at any previous period of its history. But when one learns from the prophetic page that the world will not be thus converted, but that it is hastening on to fiery judgment; that the glorious, universal reign of Christ will not come till that terrible judgment has been visited upon men; and that meanwhile God is working by the gospel to *take out from among the nations* a people for His Name, then one is not disheartened nor dismayed at the contemplation of things as they are to-day.

Again, hearing of the many efforts that are being put forth to restore the Jews to their own land, and finding from a superficial survey of prophecy that such a restoration is assuredly to take place, the Christian may allow himself to become enthusiastic on the subject, and imagine that he is serving the interests of Christ's kingdom by doing all he can to help

in this movement. A fuller knowledge of the prophetic word will, however, lead him to a very different conclusion. He will learn that the restored Jewish state will be marked by inveterate hatred to Christ. They will receive the Antichrist as their lord (John v. 43), and will be bitter persecutors of the godly remnant amongst them, driving them eventually from Jerusalem and the land of Israel, so that the language of the second book of Psalms (Ps. XLIII. to LXXII.) voices their anguish. One would be preserved by a knowledge of prophecy from affording help or countenance to a policy that will result in such a terrible state of things.

IT HAS A SEPARATING, PURIFYING EFFECT.

The future of the great world-system is depicted in colours of terrible darkness. It is revealed that the culmination of European politics will be the re-establishment of the Roman Empire in a democratic union of ten kingdoms under an emperor who shall be supported by, and in close league with, the wonder-working Antichrist, the false king of the Jews. To trace out all this has the effect of separating the Christian, heart and soul, from the trend of international politics, making him devoutly thankful that his interests lie in another sphere altogether.

So, too, with the fallen church, the great Babylon of Revelation xvii., the pseudo-bride. As the Christian student of prophecy sees her true character exposed, and reads of how she will be judged and overthrown, destroyed by the civil power that she has sought to dominate, he is led to shrink increasingly from all her doings and to determine to be as separate from her ways as possible. He finds that God's children are exhorted to "come out of her"; for this is the only way to avoid being "partakers of her sins" (Rev. xviii. 4).

The full-blown development of the great corrupt religious system depicted under the figure of Babylon is, of course, still future. But all its essential features may be seen around us. And besides, we see the fearful ravages of the rapidly increasing drift towards apostasy. Men who still cling to the Christian name speak contemptuously of great Christian verities like the Incarnation; the Deity of Christ; the atoning character of His sufferings; His resurrection; the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and so on.

To be shown how all this will end will have a marked, practical effect upon the man of God in at least three directions.

(1) He will avoid the leaders and teachers who are spreading these evil doctrines, and will not even salute them (2 Ep. John, v. 10).

(2) He will not enter a place where such teachings are tolerated, nor sanction by his presence an attitude which he knows, from prophecy, will ripen into avowed hostility to God and Christ.

(3) He will abstain from contributing to the funds of missionary societies whose emissaries assume a neutral attitude towards the great fundamental truths of Christianity, or maybe, insidiously undermine them.

In these, and other ways, the study of prophecy will help to govern the Christian's course, and guide his feet amid the intricacies of these difficult days.

May God help us then, one and all, to be like Daniel, in the ninth chapter of his book. He had "understood by books" something of what God had in store for His people, and he set his face to seek the Lord's mind, by prayer and fasting. In true humility he confessed the nation's sin as his own, and in God's good time the answer came. Daniel received the marvellous prediction of the seventy weeks, perhaps the most wonderful unfolding of the course of events in the whole wide domain of prophecy.

If Daniel's attitude is ours, we may be sure that God, who loves to be inquired of, will reward our desire, and grant us the light and understanding that we seek.

H. P. B.

THE SAFETY OF THE BELIEVER.

“ I KNOW whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.” So spake the Apostle Paul. God would have His children rejoice in the almighty keeping power of their Saviour. There may be faith where there is no assurance, but if any have doubts as to the perfect safety or final perseverance of the people of God they should not rest until the apostle’s confident language becomes their own.

The believer’s safety is assured by *God’s plain word*. “ This is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing ” (John vi. 39). And again, “ They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand ” (John x. 28). Amid all the waves of human opinion and the reasonings of the flesh we have here an immovable rock upon which to rest our faith : a “ thus saith the Lord ” upon which to plant our feet with unwavering confidence.

God does not make our security to depend upon *our* grasp of Him but upon *His* grasp of us. A little child is on board ship with her father. A heavy sea is rolling. The child is

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walking the deck, tightly grasping the hand of her father. At every lurch of the ship she clings the more. All the while her heart is full of fear lest her grasp should break and she be hurled into the angry sea. Presently her father speaks a strange word. "My child, *let go* my hand entirely, and let *me* hold *your* hand." The child lets go ; the father takes hold. And now there is a notable difference : the safety of the child henceforth depends not upon her own weak grasp of the father's hand, but upon his strong grasp of hers. And as a consequence all fear has fled from her heart and she is kept in perfect peace. And this is the exact picture the Word of God gives of our safety. Trusting our own strength to hold on robs us of peace ; trusting God's power to keep rids us of all anxiety.

Again, the believer is safe because of *God's eternal purpose*. We were saved when we trusted Christ, and we delight to sing of the happy day when we fixed our choice on Him. But we go further back still, even to the time when all our sins were put away at the Cross. But even there we should not stop. There is the past eternity when God purposed our salvation. "Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world " (Eph. 1. 4). We rest on His unchanging and sovereign grace. "He cannot deny Himself." He will not change His mind and alter the decree that gave us to

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Christ. It gives a blessed sense of security and peace to be thus taken out of ourselves and to rest on the eternal purpose of the Father as well as upon the work of the Son.

And further, *the work of Christ* makes us eternally safe. Says one, "But what about the sins I have committed since conversion? And how about those I may commit in the future?" All those sins were future when Christ died, and now they are *all under the blood*. God does nothing by halves or imperfectly. The blessed work of Calvary takes in the sweep of the *whole* life in its entirety, not merely that portion of it before we were saved. Sin committed after we knew the Lord is more heinous—or should be so to us—than sin committed before; and if one single sin, whether committed before or after conversion, is not covered by the Blood we are lost. No, the eternal God views the entire lifetime as one; and when Christ put away our sins He put them *all* away for ever. How then can there be any such thing as condemnation? What blessed assurance this gives, begetting a peace that passes all understanding!

Not only so, but we are safe because we are *sealed by the Holy Spirit* (Eph. 1. 13). On a river in America the logging season was at its height. Away up in the mountains thousands of logs had been set adrift by the lumbermen. All these had first been stamped with

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the owner's initials. Every log so sealed was protected by the laws of the State. No man, save the owner, dare take it, under penalty. But sometimes in the busy rush of the lumbermen a log was missed in the stamping and launched into the river without the usual seal. These were called "prize logs," and could be taken at will by whoever found them adrift in the river. Thousands of logs were floating past in the swift current. In the midst of them were a couple of men in a boat, on the watch for "prize logs." Time after time they rowed up to the logs and then turned away. They dared not touch them; they were sealed with the magic initials of the owner. Some of the logs were of poor quality, but the men dared not touch them, for *they had the seal*.

Satan, the river-pirate, is ever on the alert against the sons of God. He would gladly take us as prizes if he could. But the presence of the seal keeps us safe from his clutch. We belong to the Lord; we are His purchased property; His blood-bought possession; and the seal of the Holy Spirit denotes the mark of His ownership; and it is also both the guarantee and foretaste of that eternal inheritance to which we have been called and of which we are heirs.

The Lord Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me." We are safe because we have been

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given by the Father to the Son. What a blessed truth! God will not take away any part of the gift which He has bestowed upon Christ. The glory of both the Father and the Son are bound up with the safety of the believer who is the Father's gift to the Son. Would it not reflect dishonour on the Godhead if the feeblest one who really belongs to Christ, by gift of the Father, could be lost?

The believer is eternally safe because he is a living *member of the Body of Christ*. This is a glorious truth that has brought comfort and peace to thousands. Can the Body be complete if any one member is absent? He who "cannot be untrue to Himself" will never repudiate one who enjoys a living union with Him, for He then would be repudiating Himself! The absence of a single saved soul from the presence of God would mar the harmony of heaven and give occasion to Satan and his hosts to blaspheme the name of God and accuse Him of want of power or faithfulness or both. But "May I not slip through the hand of Christ?" says one. That cannot be, for you are one of His members.

Finally, we are safe because *our Saviour is living* to intercede for us. Now that He has ascended to the throne of the majesty on high He is still carrying on a blessed ministry on behalf of each one of His own. Will He forget us? Will He fail in His work? The thought

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is foolishness. With boldness we take up the language of the apostle and say : “ We are confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

The Lord has not left us in ignorance of the reasons why our safety as His children is eternally secure. After our brief survey of the truths upon which our safety rests, is there one who can still fail to realize that we shall most certainly be “ kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time ? ”

We desire instinctively to close with that triumphant challenge in the eighth chapter of Romans :

“ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. 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.”

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. B. P.—JOHN XIII. 2.—We presume the supper here mentioned was the Paschal supper and not the Supper of the Lord, though we know that the latter was instituted on the same night. Whether Judas was present and partook of it is a question that has been often asked. In comparing the accounts of the various Evangelists we incline to the opinion that Judas was *not* there—he had gone out. But we do not feel able to speak positively.

As to the human spirit of our blessed Lord entering *hades* as implied in Acts II. 27, it was, of course, after the cross. It could be only then.

G.—ROMANS XIV. 21 is certainly a passage to be borne in mind in reference to the use of unfermented wine at the Lord's Supper. Primarily, no doubt, it has a wider application, and refers to our individual resolve to do nothing whereby another may be made to fall. This would be true charity. If at any time it were thought desirable that only unfermented wine should be used at the Lord's Supper, we would not in the least object, but we have yet to be shown that Scripture enjoins its use and forbids the use of any other. Did it do so it would be simply a matter of obedience and there would be no option. But, so far as we know, it cannot be placed on that ground.

H. A. M.—MATTHEW XXV. 1-13.—We do not believe that the foolish virgins of this parable only represent those who make a *public* profession of the Christian faith—that is, unconverted “church

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members " and those who take " The Sacrament " without having any vital link between their souls and Christ whose name they bear. They do represent these, but not these only. For example, the large majority of folks in this land call themselves Christians—meaning that they are neither sceptics, nor heathens, nor of the Hebrew faith. They must therefore be considered professors, for they accept Christianity as the religion of the nation to which they belong, even though they are not "*religious*." All such are neglecters of the " great salvation," and their responsibility is very great indeed (Hebrews II. 3). The foolish virgins embrace these, and Scripture holds out no hope that they will have another opportunity of being saved after they have crossed the bar and entered the eternal world. To bolster people up with such a hope is, in our judgment, to deceive them. They build their house upon the sinking sand. But we need not say more. In next month's issue we hope to insert a paper discussing the question, "*Will there be, for those who reject the gospel, another chance of salvation after the Lord has come?*" It is a question of vital importance, and for that reason we should like to see the March number very widely circulated.

We regret that your remaining question, relating to those who will be saved after the Church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, according to I Thessalonians IV., cannot be answered till next month for want of space.

A QUESTION OF VITAL IMPORTANCE.

Will there be, for those who reject the Gospel, another chance of salvation after the Lord has come?

BORN a cripple !

Such was the unhappy fate of a little lad, the son of Jewish parents, long years ago. His birth took place just seven years before the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem.

Handicapped from the start by his incurable lameness, what could the poor fellow do ? He could not run about like other lads ; he could not work like other youths ; he could not follow the various paths of life trodden by men who had strength of body and soundness of limb.

But he had friends. These were wont to carry him morning by morning to the entrance of the temple. There they left him, and there he stayed through the weary hours of the day, an object of compassion to the passers-by, of whom he asked alms.

Wonderful things happened in that temple, by the gate of which he lay. One of them occurred when he was a youth of nineteen. The learned doctors of the law, who were accustomed to resort thither to discuss intri-

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cate theological questions among themselves and to teach the common people, were one day accosted by a Boy of twelve. I spell Boy with a capital letter, for He who was then growing in wisdom and stature was the Son of the Highest. He not only asked questions of the doctors, but answered theirs in a way that filled all the bystanders with astonishment. The scene was ended by Mary coming in with anxious zeal to claim her Son. But enough had been said and done to mark that day down as one of the greatest in the history of the temple.

Eighteen years passed, and the poor cripple was still asking alms at the Beautiful gate. He was now thirty-seven years old. Tidings had reached Jerusalem of the wonderful Prophet that had arisen in Galilee and was attracting multitudes by His teaching. I spell Prophet with a capital letter, for it was He who nearly two decades before had conversed with the doctors in the temple. And Jerusalem, which had been troubled at the tidings of His birth, was stirred again by the fact of His arrival within its walls.

To the temple He again repaired. Day by day He passed within its gates. Day by day He sat teaching all who would listen (Matt. xxvi. 55). One day His enemies took up stones to fling at Him (John viii. 59). On another occasion, while walking there, in Solomon's

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porch, they did the same. But "He escaped out of their hand" (John x. 39).

Through all these stirring events the lame man lay at the Beautiful gate begging. He must often have seen that wonderful Stranger and have gazed with awe upon His face, and heard the gracious accents of His voice. He was now getting on for forty, and (mark the point) the presence of the Lord Jesus day by day in the temple made no difference to him. Many a cripple was healed, but he was not of the number. Jerusalem had her day of visitation, but the lame man was not one who profited thereby.

The day came when the footfall of the heavenly Stranger was no longer heard in the temple courts. Arrested at the instigation of the religious authorities, He had been crucified beyond the city walls. *The cripple had definitely missed the blessing that the presence of the Saviour might have brought him.*

Jerusalem was thrilled with excitement at the news that the tomb in Joseph's garden had not been able to hold its occupant, but that He whom they had slain had risen, and had been seen by many witnesses. But the lame man was still carried to the temple gate, and lay there wondering what money he should receive, until his friends fetched him home in the evening.

One memorable day, however, two strangers

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passed the spot where he lay. He would see at a glance that they were Galilean peasants, but even from them he expected to receive alms. His expectations were further raised when they stopped, and one of them spoke to him. What disappointment must have chilled his heart when he heard the stranger say :

“ Silver and gold have I none ! ”

But little did he dream of what was to follow !

The stranger continued :

“ Such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk ! ”

A new and wonderful strength rushed into his ankles ; a hitherto unknown vigour filled his frame, and there in the temple precincts before all the people he began to walk, and leap, and praise God.

A second chance had come to him. The blessing he had missed before he now received. The day of the personal presence of the Lord Jesus had left him unhealed ; the day of the testimony of his apostles brought him the blessing which filled him with praise.

Now this narrative gives added force to the question we have set out to consider. Is there any analogy in the case of this lame man to what will hold good after the Lord has come for His people ? Will there be a second chance for those who have carelessly missed the blessing that has been at their very doors ? It was so with the cripple ; will it be so with others ?

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May I take it for granted that the reader understands my reference to the coming of the Lord? I do not refer to the day when He will appear in power and glory to establish His rule over the earth. My reference is to that prior event, of which we read in 1 Thesalonians IV. 14-18. The Lord Jesus will descend into the air and call all His people, whether alive or dead, to meet Him there. Every real Christian will be then caught up, to enter with his Lord into the joys of the Father's house. The world will continue its course for a limited period after this, and the rapidly rising tide of evil will carry everything before it. But God will still work by His Spirit and touch the hearts of many of His ancient people, the Jews, and cause them to turn to Him in repentance and faith, and in expectation of the coming of their Messiah. There will, therefore, be *saints* in the days that follow the removal of the Church. Scripture is abundantly clear as to this.

No doubt others, besides those Jews who may be converted, will be numbered among such saints. Great numbers from among the Gentile nations will hear their testimony and, in the striking symbolic language of the Revelation, wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (see Rev. VII. 9-14).

The question is, will any one who has heard and rejected the gospel of the grace of God

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have a chance to be numbered among that great multitude gathered from among the nations after the Lord has taken His Church to heaven ?

Some have answered this question in the affirmative and have set forth their views in a popular and an attractive form that has gained for them wide acceptance. Take, for instance, the stories by Sydney Watson, in which the writer describes, by means of a fictitious and highly sensational narrative, the state of things which he imagines will exist in the days that follow the coming of the Lord. A newspaper editor and other persons awakened by the disappearance of their Christian friends, turn to God and are saved. They have no part in the special blessings of the Bride of Christ, and have to pass through the horrors of the great tribulation, in which they are martyred. But though they have lost a share in the unique heavenly portion of the saints of the present dispensation, yet they gain by their late repentance forgiveness and salvation. They have missed the first great chance, but they have another, of which they avail themselves.

Such is the gospel according to Sydney Watson and others. Is it the gospel of the New Testament ? This is our question. We must not search for an answer in any narrative such as that of the lame man who was healed

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at the temple gate. We must take the plain, definite statements of Scripture. This we shall now proceed to do.

Let us observe that the close of the age which preceded the present "day of salvation" was marked by *a door thrown widely open*. To Peter the Lord entrusted some keys (Matt. xvi. 19) which he used to open the door of the kingdom both to Jews and Gentiles (Acts ii. 41 and x. 48). So far from those who had rejected and crucified the Lord being excluded from all hope of blessing, it was in Jerusalem that the glad tidings of salvation were first to be announced (Acts i. 8).

In contrast with this, the close of the present period of grace is to be marked by *a door that is irrevocably shut*. We learn this from the parable of the ten virgins. With a master hand the Lord Himself sketches the course of the Christian dispensation—the early going forth to meet the Bridegroom—His tarrying—the slumber of those who professed to be waiting for Him—the midnight cry—the consequent awakening—the discovery on the part of some that they lacked what was vital—the coming of the Bridegroom—the entrance of the wise to the marriage feast, and *the closing of the door*.

But the parable does not conclude with the closing of the door. Those that have missed their chance come pleading for admission.

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They are, however, refused. The Lord disowns them. He knows His sheep, but these are not of their number.

On another occasion the Lord went further into the matter of what will happen on the outside of the door that will be closed at His coming. Somebody asked Him a question about salvation. It was a curious question, and instead of answering it directly the Lord, with infinite wisdom, appealed to the enquirer's conscience. And He coupled with His appeal a statement that there will be a day when many shall seek to enter in, *and shall not be able*. Mark these words; they are the very words of Christ (Luke XIII. 24).

If any one asks when that day will be, the answer lies ready to hand. It will be when the Master of the house rises up and *shuts the door*. Then it is that those who have neglected the gracious invitation will rue their folly. They will be awake to the loss they have sustained, and will earnestly knock at the closed door. That they are not heathen is evident. They have eaten and drunk in Christ's presence, and His message has been proclaimed in their streets.

Their cry is in vain. The door is not opened, and they are disowned and thrust away by the Lord whom they had professed to serve but with whom they had no real link.

I am, of course, aware that it is said by

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some that while refused admission to the door of special blessing as part of the Bride, they will, if only they seek it, find salvation and blessing of an inferior kind. But two considerations prohibit such an interpretation of the Lord's words.

First, the question which gave rise to the teaching was not one concerning any special, heavenly blessing, but one concerning salvation in its most elementary aspect. "Are there few that be *saved*?" In His reply the Lord speaks of the strait gate. What gate? Surely the gate of salvation, too strait to admit a single bit of self-righteousness or human effort. It is at this gate that many will seek to enter in. Their earnestness will be evident. But, mark well, the Lord declares they SHALL NOT BE ABLE. Salvation in *that* day will be an impossibility for those who have neglected the offer of it in *this* day.

Are not these four solemn words a sufficient answer to the question that stands at the head of this article? Can there be any mistake as to what the Lord meant? It is not the language of allegory or parable, but of plain prediction. Many will seek and shall not be able. That surely should be enough.

Secondly, those who are denied admission are not offered a second chance. There is no hint of blessing of a lower order being available for them. They are bidden to depart,

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and are thrust out not merely from heavenly blessing but from *the kingdom of God*, and their fate causes weeping and gnashing of teeth (see verse 28).

But there is another passage, one which deals not so much with the coming of Christ as with the coming of Antichrist. This passage speaks distinctly of those who had not "received the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. II. 10). They are described as "them that perish." They *might* have been saved, but they received not that which would have saved them. They are ready enough, however, to believe a lie, and this they do, with the awful result that *all who believed not the truth are damned*. This is clearly stated in verse 12.

Again, be it noted that the heathen are not in question. Those referred to might have been saved by the reception of the truth. They did not receive it. The result is not that some are damned while others avail themselves of an opportunity to obtain an inferior blessing. The language of Scripture is clear, "That they ALL might be damned who believed not the truth."

Our object in dealing with this question at length is twofold. We desire to disabuse the minds of any who may have allowed themselves to be hoodwinked with the idea of a second chance after the Lord has come. This notion

has served the enemy's purpose in deadening the conscience and soothing the anxiety of many who seemed to be awakening to their danger and need. We desire earnestly to remind all such that "*now* is the day of salvation." It is not that *now* is a day of special and unique blessing and that later on will be the day of bare salvation. *Now*, not then, is salvation's day. No reader of these lines will ever be able to say that he was not warned !

But we also desire to stimulate all who know and love the gospel to make greater efforts, with God's help, to spread it. Think, dear fellow-worker, of the terrible fate that lies ahead of those that surround you. They will have no second chance if they fail to enter in at the door that is now wide open. "Time is earnest, passing by." We urge our unconverted hearers to be in earnest. Let us Christians seek then, by God's grace, to be ourselves more in earnest than ever.

H. P. B.

"DON'T THROW ME INTO THE SCRAP-HEAP."

A CHRISTIAN blacksmith who had a great deal of affliction was challenged by an unbeliever to account for it.

His explanation was this : “ I don’t know that I can account for these things to your satisfaction, but I think I can to my own. I am a blacksmith. I often take a piece of iron and put it into the fire and bring it to a white heat. Then I put it on the anvil and strike it once or twice to see if it will take temper. If I think it will, I plunge it into the water, and suddenly change the temperature. Then I put it into the fire again, and again I put it into the water. This I repeat several times. Then I put it on the anvil and hammer it, and bend it, and rasp and file it, and make some useful article which will do service for twenty-five years. If, however, when I first strike it on the anvil I think it will not take temper, I throw it into the scrap-heap and sell it at a halfpenny a pound. I believe my God and Father has been testing me to see if I will take temper. He has put me into the fire and into the water. I have tried to bear it as patiently as I could, and my daily prayer has been, ‘ Lord, put me into the fire if you will ; put me into the water if you think I need it ; do anything you please, O Lord, only don’t throw me into the scrap-heap ! ’ ”—*Selected.*

THE soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
 He will not, He cannot give up to its foes :
 That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
 He’ll never ! no, never ! no never forsake.

THE KINDNESS OF GOD.

“Accepted in the Beloved.”—EPH. 1. 6.

“Taken us into favour in the Beloved.”

NEW TRANSLATION OF J.N.D.

THIS is one of the fair and fragrant flowers that grow in such abundance in the gardens of God. They are all everlasting flowers that bloom there. No biting frost can nip them, no black east wind can make them droop and wither and die. They are always beautiful, and their loveliness grows greater the oftener they are seen.

Accepted in the Beloved. Those who are competent to say so tell us that *accepted* is too cold and formal a word here. It lacks the warmth and glow of the original. “*Taken us into favour*” is a happier rendering, and we shall do well to read it thus.

What an astonishing thing it is that weak and erring creatures like us should be in the favour of God! Were this said of the unfallen angels it could be easily understood. Were it said of the holy apostles and prophets, of Christian martyrs, of eminent and devoted servants of God, we might think it their just reward—a crown won by their own personal merit. But that *we*—so frail and faulty—

should be taken into His favour is another matter altogether. It is indeed wonderful, joy-inspiring, and we praise God for it out of full hearts.

The blessedness of sins forgiven, of sin never to be imputed to us, is very great. David celebrates it in Psalm xxxii., and Paul bears witness to it in Romans iv. But this of which we speak is greater blessedness still; sweeter, more soul-stirring. It sets us under a cloudless sky, a perfect heaven of blue!

But that is not all. We are taken into favour in *the Beloved*. It is in Christ surely, but the Holy Spirit does not put it in that way. He uses other words. Not "in Christ" but "in *the Beloved*." Why is this? It is that we might know the kind of favour into which we have been brought and which, like the sun, pours its bright beams upon us. Think for a moment. Ask whether there is One on whom the favour of God supremely rests. All heaven shall answer, "Yes, Jesus, the Lord Jesus, He is the One." And there are ten thousand reasons why the favour of God should rest on Him without a cloud. Think of His incarnation, of His pathway here of perfect unswerving obedience, of His devotedness to God whose Servant He was! Think of Calvary with its sufferings known and unknown, where God's holiness is seen, His righteousness satisfied, His love displayed, and where the only

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possible ground was laid on which the eternal purposes of God could be accomplished. Is it any wonder that *He* should be in the most pre-eminent degree the Beloved One—the Beloved of the Father? He is worthy to be so spoken of, He alone. And it is *in Him*, the Beloved, that we are taken into favour, so that the favour which rests upon Him is that in which we also are set. Is not this in every way astonishing, passing belief were it not predicated of us in this lovely passage?

All illustrations fail, but look at one in 2 Samuel ix.—the story of David and Mephibosheth. David had come to the throne at length and was firmly established in his kingdom. It is then that he asks, “Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” The house of Saul! Saul his inveterate enemy! Saul who had sought David’s life again and again by every artifice he could think of! There was one—lame on both his feet—living at Lo-debar, a place of no pasture. For him David sends. Mephibosheth may have wondered why. In the dark as to David’s intentions, he may have feared that exile or death would be his lot. But no. The first words that fell from David’s lips set him at peace. “Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father.”

A great thing to have all the land of Saul his father restored to him ! But there was more, "Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

All this kindness did David show to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. No name dearer to David than that of Jonathan. When he fell on Mount Gilboa David lamented over him with great lamentation : " I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." But he was gone, and Mephibosheth should now stand in the favour of the King according to the love he had for Jonathan. And so Mephibosheth no longer dwelt at Lo-debar, but at Jerusalem, the royal city, and did eat bread at the King's table as one of the King's sons.

And so it is with us. Forgiven, and " taken into favour in the Beloved," we eat bread at our Father's table continually as His sons. Is not this the sweet story told in language of unrivalled beauty in Luke xv. ? It is good that it should be told times without number. It is the story of grace, of the kindness of God, which shall fill the heavens by and by with unceasing song.

Lord, 'tis enough, we ask no more ;
 Thy grace around us pours
 Its rich and unexhausted store,
 And all its joy is ours.

DIVINE CERTAINTIES, OR THINGS WE KNOW.

NOT we hope, but “ *we know !* ” What a ring of assurance there is in these words, what certainty and confidence they express ! Twenty-three times the Apostle John uses the word *know* in writing his first epistle: He is speaking of things which are common to every Christian ; and he gives each and all of us credit for knowing what they are. Let us look at a few of the things *all* believers are privileged to know.

First. *We know* that the question of our sins was settled at Christ’s first advent. “ Ye *know* that He was manifested to take away our sins ; and in Him is no sin ” (chap. III. 5). One of the express purposes for which Christ came into the world was to *take away our sins*. The fact of His being raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high is proof positive that our sins have been atoned for and put away for ever out of God’s sight. This blessed work is not being done, it is already finished. The sinless One has been made sin for us. The Holy One of God has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, and God has raised Him from the dead and glorified Him straightway.

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Second. *We know that eternal life is ours.* "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life" (chap. v. 13). Christ was not only manifested to put away our sins but also that we might *live* through Him (chap. iv. 9). How do we get this life? By believing on the Son of God. How do we know we shall never lose it? Because Christ is our life. "He that hath the Son hath life." "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians iii. 3).

How do "*we know*" that we possess this life? On the sure and certain authority of God's holy word, and it is impossible that God can lie. "This is the record, that God *hath* given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life" (chap. v. 11-12).

Have the babes as well as the young men and fathers eternal life?

Yes, all who have appropriated Christ can say, I have life, life eternal, for I have "the Son," and having the Son this life is mine. He is the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us; and as faith believes the record God has given of His Son, it rejoices in absolute certainty and exclaims, "*We know* that we have eternal life, for we believe on the name of the Son of God."

There is another way by which we *know* we

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have passed from death unto life. Do we love the brethren ? By the brethren we mean the whole family of God. Not any special company, or a few with whom we have fellowship, but the children of God, as such, *because they are His children*, and for no other reason.

The assurance of life in Christ does not rest upon experience but on the sure word of God ; still there is an assurance that depends on our conduct. It is when we love in deed and in truth. It is when life in its holy and blessed affections is in activity. “ Hereby we *know* that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him ” (chap. III. 19). The measure of this love is set forth in Christ. He laid down His life for us. We are persuaded Christians would have much more of what is here called “ *heart* ” assurance if they were more active and practical in their love. Love is not a mere sentiment, it is the essential characteristic of the Divine nature in us. Those who love Him that begat love them also that are begotten of Him.

How practical this love is to be ! We *ought*—yes, we OUGHT—to lay down our lives for the brethren. There are many ways of doing this. One servant of Christ may give up his time and spend his energies in oral and written ministry to build up God’s people ; another may visit sick saints, cheer and comfort lone and desolate hearts ; whilst a third labours on the busy

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mart or toils in various ways to have to give to him that needeth. It is this practical care for others of which the Apostle John here speaks.

“ Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ? ” (chap. III. 17). A Christian is the divinely appointed channel by which God ministers to the temporal and spiritual needs of His people. May this consideration stir up those who have “ this world’s good ” to use it now with a view to the future ; may it also make us feel our individual responsibility to comfort the feeble-minded and to support the weak, to weep with those that weep and distribute to the necessities of saints.

Third. *We know* that He is righteous, and that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him (chap. II. 29). This is a mark by which others are to know us. God is light as well as love. Righteousness is a characteristic mark of God’s children. It is the practical carrying out of our responsibilities in every circle in which we are called to walk. It is the outward and visible test by which we distinguish a mere professor from a possessor. “ Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

Fourth. *We know* that we are in “ the last

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time," for there are many antichrists. How are we to test the pretensions of these antichrists? Certainly not by listening to their lectures or reading their books; but by making ourselves daily better acquainted with the pure word of God. By getting to know the truth we have a sure test as to what is not the truth. It is a well-known practice in the banking world to let a youth get thoroughly acquainted with a good bank-note before he handles a bad one. We *know* the spirit of truth from the spirit of error by getting thoroughly acquainted with the apostolic writings. How much need there is for a deeper, fuller knowledge of the Bible in its entirety!

Fifth. *We know* that we are in Christ, and Christ in us. How do we know this? By being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (chap. IV. 13). Yes, God has given the Holy Ghost to all who believe the gospel of their salvation (Eph. I. 13). The possession of the Spirit gives us the happy consciousness that we are in Christ for acceptance, and He is in us as life. "As He is, so are we in this world" (chap. IV. 17).

Sixth. *We know* that the day will soon dawn when our life will be no longer hidden with Christ in God. "When Christ, who is our life,

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shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory " (Col. III. 4). But we also know that when Christ shall be manifested every blood-bought saint will come forth in a body of glory just like His. " We *know* that when He shall appear we shall be like Him " (chap. III. 2). No more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more poverty ! A glorious Saviour will leave the heavens, and the *Man* that was treated as a malefactor when He was manifested to take away our sins will then appear in glorious state to reign without a rival over the whole universe. We not only *know* that we shall be *with* Him, but shall be *like* Him. Conceive what it will be in body, soul, and spirit to be pure as He is pure, righteous as He is righteous, holy as He is holy, in a body in which sin, the carnal mind, the insubject flesh, and the restless will, have no part ! What He is *now we shall be then*. More, we shall see Him *as He is*. We now behold Him by the eye of faith, then it will be face to face.

Seventh. *We know* that on our journey to that bright and blessed home we have a Father's love, a Father's care, and a Father's ear into which we can pour our requests. His answers are sure and certain on one condition. What is that ? " If we ask anything according to His will " (chap. v. 14). How can we tell what is according to His will ? First

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by making sure that our requests are in keeping with His will as revealed in His word ; next by asking in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, approaching the throne of grace in the name of Christ, we plead our need, make our requests known, but ever with subject hearts saying, “ Not *our will* but Thine be done.”

In the last place *we know* that we Christians are like a vessel in a tempestuous sea. All around are rocks and breakers, a dangerous foe, and numerous snares. But keeping ourselves in the safe enclosure of the love of God, and sinning not, but walking righteously, our cruel, malicious, relentless foe cannot touch us.

We are not of the world as Christ is not of the world. “ *We know* that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one ” (chap. v. 18, 19). What a description of the evil moral system with which we are surrounded ! A world since Adam fell, and Cain lived, cradled in the arms of the wicked one ! How we should shrink from association with the world in things religious, philanthropic, and political if we saw that in doing so we cast ourselves into a circle controlled by the wicked one.

We know One who will keep us from it all if we shun the idolatry around. “ We know the Son of God has come, and hath given us

an understanding that we *may know* Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith (chap. v. 4, 20, 21).

H. N.

A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

"He that winneth souls is wise."—PROV. XI. 30.

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—JAMES V. 20.

HAS it ever occurred to you that if every sinner who has been washed in the precious blood of Jesus were to seek to win souls for Him by personal testimony, what joy it would bring to the Master's heart, and what world-wide blessing would result therefrom?

But, dear believer, let the question come home to you. Are you seeking to be a soul-gatherer? Is your heart so filled with a sense of what Jesus has done for you, for your salvation, that you cannot but desire to bring others to Him for eternal blessing? Have you fully realized the solemnity of a soul going down to a lost Eternity? Have you ever had such compassion for guilty sinners on their downward course that tears have come into

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your eyes as you thought of their latter end ? What tender, infinite pity was His who wept over Jerusalem. How He sought out the lost ones, and walked many a weary mile to bring ONE soul into blessing.

Fellow-Christian, the day in which our lot is cast is a hard one, but take courage, for your Lord says, " My grace is sufficient for thee." Apostasy is advancing by leaps and bounds. The Scriptures are being perverted or cast aside as worthless. Thousands of perishing sinners whom only the Gospel of Christ can satisfy are being taught soul-destroying doctrines. The Master is in need of every one of us. He has a mission for both strong and feeble. You know what He has accomplished for your blessing—then tell it out to others. Speak as to dying men and dying women. If you feel you cannot speak, arm yourself with gospel literature and distribute in your surroundings. Many a wanderer has been brought to Christ through these silent messengers. May you realize that your Saviour desires YOU to represent Him in this sin-stricken world, so shall there be from you an answer to His love so rich and free.

See ! the shadows lengthen round us,
 Soon the daydawn will begin ;
 Can you leave them lost and lonely ?
 Christ is coming : call them in.

J. H. R.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. A. M.—In referring to the great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues who came out of *the* great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, you ask : By what testimony will these be gathered in after the Church has been taken up into glory ? We believe, by *the gospel of the kingdom* mentioned in Matthew XXIV. 14. “ *The gospel of the grace of God* ” is another thing (Act XX. 24). When we say it is another thing, we do not mean that the gospel of the kingdom is not a testimony of grace, for the grace of God is necessarily the source of every blessing, as the Blood of the Lamb is the just foundation of it. But, apart from the great blessings which every family of the redeemed will have in common, there are blessings, unique in their character, which the gospel of the grace of God announces. They are heavenly and are inherited by the Church alone. The Gospel of the kingdom is the glad tidings that the King is coming to establish His kingdom, in view of which men are called upon to repent and believe the gospel. The messengers of the King are spoken of as His brethren in Matthew XXV. 40, and Isaiah LXVI. 19 shows that they are chosen from among the spared remnant of Israel. We trust these brief remarks answer your queries. If not, kindly write to us again.

ANXIOUS TO KNOW.—2 TIMOTHY I. 16-18.—A person must be very hard pressed indeed if he can

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find no other scripture than this to justify the offering up of *prayers for the dead*. It obliges him to suppose that Onesiphorus was no longer living—a gratuitous supposition for which there is not a shred of evidence. To such straits are men driven to support a practice which is not sanctioned by one single line of Holy Writ.

But why should it be assumed that Onesiphorus was dead? The answer probably will be, Because the Apostle makes mention of his house only in verse 16, and only salutes it in chapter iv. 19. We very much doubt whether the premiss warrants any such conclusion. Look at 1 Corinthians xvi. 15, where the Apostle speaks of “the house of Stephanas,” the members of which had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. Does the term necessarily exclude Stephanas himself? The seventeenth verse leads us to think otherwise. And in ordinary language it is so. If we speak of the house of Austria do we exclude in thought and meaning the aged Emperor? If any demur and still insist that “the house” does not include the head of it, very well; but may not Onesiphorus have been journeying on some happy service at the time Paul wrote this letter to Timothy? If so this will account for his saluting the house of Onesiphorus only. There is certainly nothing to show that something of the sort might not have been the case. If the practice of *praying for the dead* rests on no firmer foundation than 2 Timothy i. 16–18 then it is a frail and tottering structure indeed, and foolish is the man who houses his hopes there.

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If it be asked, What then is the meaning of those words, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day"? our answer is, that we learn from them how *the day* was linked up in the Apostle's thoughts with the daily life of the Christian. It is the day of manifestation, when our Lord Jesus Christ will come *with* all His saints, the day of recompense and reward. The light of that day, when thrown on our present path, powerfully influences it and braces up the soul to a walk of faithfulness, no matter what the cost. All in Asia had turned away from Paul—not that they had given up Christianity, but they had left Paul to answer for himself at Cæsar's bar. Onesiphorus was not one of these. He sought the Apostle out very diligently and was not ashamed of his chain. What had kept Onesiphorus in such a path of loyalty to Christ and to His suffering servant? Mercy, nothing but mercy which the throne of grace abundantly supplies (Heb. iv. 16). The Apostle, out of that charity that ever filled his heart, could but express the fervent wish that the same mercy that had sustained Onesiphorus might preserve him in every trying hour even to "*that day*." Should you wish to pursue the subject further you might refer, with advantage, to 1 Thessalonians III. 12, 13 and to Jude 21, "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." It is mercy that keeps us all along the road, and mercy shall crown the end. How deeply we shall feel it to be so *in that day*.

AM I DECEIVING MYSELF?

*A*M I deceiving myself? A serious question, to be sure! Those who have reason to answer it in the affirmative seldom ask it. It is mostly young and ardent souls, converted, but needing to be settled and grounded in the truth and grace of God—these are they who ask the question and desire above all things to have a true answer.

And they set themselves to find one. Sitting in the judge's chair they call up their frames, feelings, and experiences and rigidly examine them. They are far more inclined to doubt their conversion than to believe in the reality of it, and the more sincere they are the more miserable they are likely to become. Nor can it be otherwise so long as they are engaged in that kind of business.

Let us survey the situation. If you confess yourself to be a sinner, guilty before God, a lost sinner, utterly unable to save yourself from your sins, then you certainly are not deceiving yourself as to *that*. If you have learned that your deep repentance, your fervent prayers, your changed life—all excellent things in themselves—can no more deliver you from the just consequences of your sins than the repentance and prayers of a convict can exempt

him from the punishment his crime deserves, then clearly you are not deceiving yourself as to *that*. If you have found out that it is only Christ who can save, only His precious blood that can cleanse you from every sin, if you have come to Him, saying from your heart—

“ Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee—
O Lamb of God, I come.”

then, most assuredly, you are not deceiving yourself. You have reason to be comforted. Has He not said, “ Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out ” ? Is not that a true and faithful saying ?

But you are not satisfied. You want to be an out-and-out Christian, a true follower of Christ, and this you feel you are not. What makes you think so ? Is it not the sin you find in yourself and the imperfection you see in your daily life ? This leads you to wonder whether you really are a Christian after all. I am not sorry that such experiences are yours. They are teaching you that you have no strength—a lesson rarely learned from books. The fact is that in our own strength we are no more able to live for Christ than we are to roll the stars along. It takes time to learn this. Some folks seem as if they never would learn it. And there is another lesson, too, that is to be learnt at the same time—the incur-

able badness of *the flesh*—that evil principle which we, children of fallen Adam, were born with. It may surprise you to be told that neither the new birth, the indwelling Spirit of God, nor any of His operations in the soul can ever make *the flesh* better. If you are trying to chain it up, to bind it with the strong fetters of vows and resolutions, you are also finding out that your Samson will not be kept under control thus. But let us be thankful that we are *not in the flesh*, as to our standing before God. We are *in the Spirit*, we are *in Christ* (Rom. VIII. 1-9).

Never let us mix up our experiences with our place before God in Christ. The latter is fixed and unchangeable. If our experiences were always on the highest spiritual range our standing would not be bettered. *Ye are complete in Him*, such is the blessed record in Colossians II. 10. Nothing can add to that.

But the Comforter has come—the Holy Spirit of God. He has come to abide with us for ever. The body of the believer is His temple. He is with us to help us all along the road. Not in our own strength, but in that which He supplies, we are to overcome and hold on our way steadfastly. And how does the Holy Spirit minister strength to us? By occupying us with ourselves? Very far from that. No strength, no blessing, no comfort, no joy can ever reach us by that road. Self-

occupation is the bane of the Christian life. A sick and dying man is not restored to health by dwelling on his ailments from morn till night. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit leads us to *mind the things of the Spirit* (Rom. VIII. 5). What are these? Are our sins, our waywardness, our broken vows, and unkept resolutions “the things of the Spirit”? No, the things of the Spirit are the things which the Spirit ministers—they are the things of Christ—things which are above—things unseen and eternal—things which God has prepared for them that love Him. And all these are revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It is with these things the Spirit would engage our heart and mind, leading us to see their beauty, their greatness, their grandeur, and their priceless worth. By these means our souls are fed and strengthened, and by them we grow in the divine life and are preserved from many a temptation and snare.

Another thing: the Holy Spirit never leads us to forget our entire dependence on divine help. We need it every hour. “I can do all things,” says the Apostle Paul, but he makes haste to add, “through Christ who strengtheneth me.” Yes, that is it. Not by strength of character, not by indomitable will, but through Christ. Hence that honoured servant gloried even in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him, “for,” said he,

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“ when I am weak, then am I strong ” (2 Cor. XII. 9, 10). It must be so with us. Our song should ever be—

“ As weaker man, a bruised reed,
I cannot do without Thee.”

Simon Peter did not realize this. Strong in his own strength, he declared his readiness to follow his Master to prison and to death. Brave words ! But in the hour of testing he fell at the challenge of a damsel in the palace of the High Priest. A needed lesson, but it cost him bitter tears. Long years afterwards, when writing to his converted countrymen, he reminded them that we are “ kept by the power of God through faith.” No other power can keep us. Let us never, never forget it.

Be of good cheer, then. Do not yield to doubts and fears. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Forget yourself, in whom there is no good, in being occupied with Him in whom there is nothing but good. Let your constant cry be, *Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe*, and He will answer thee, saying, “ Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness ” (Isa. XLI. 10). Is not that enough ?

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

IF the true nature and scope of the blessings connected with the present gospel period were better known, we are persuaded that many doubts and difficulties which often perplex and harass God's dear children would disappear.

In view of this, we would earnestly impress upon our fellow-believers the paramount importance of a diligent, habitual, and prayerful study of the Word of God. It is there that God has been pleased to unfold His mind and will to us, as nowhere else.

Our lot is cast in a superficial and sceptical age, when only that which appeals to human reason is counted worthy of much attention. But the Revelation of God, which the Scripture contains, carries us into a region where the thoughts and opinions and reasonings of men have no place. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). It is with the *unseen* things that we, as Christians, have to do.

Who can fail to see the alarming trend of present-day Theology: the rapid spread of doctrines, creeds, and teachings which have no authority in Scripture: and which, indeed, for the most part, are a practical denial of the cardinal truths contained therein? Alongside

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of that which outwardly bears the name of Christ there is open hostility to God, and defiance of His Word and Name: as also the huge system which is being built up, under the more direct control and agency of Satan, under specious and high-sounding names. It is because we are surrounded by these evil influences that we plead for a more definite and whole-hearted surrender to the teaching of God's holy Word.

It is by means of the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit connects and engages our hearts and minds with that glorious Person who came down from heaven to make God known. It is there we learn His various offices and relationships, His dignities and glories, and there we read the record of His sufferings and triumphs. There also we learn God's estimate of His beloved Son, and the place He has given Him on high, as the Fulfiller of His will, the Revealer of His heart, and the Accomplisher of His purposes, both earthly and heavenly. In the Scriptures we are brought face to face with a plain, unvarnished history of man and his doings on the earth from Adam downwards: with a full description of his origin, his course, and his final destiny in the Great Beyond.

But it is not the mere superficial study of the *letter* of Scripture that is needful, if we would be intelligent in the things of God. If we are to get the mind of the Spirit we must

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penetrate beneath the surface, and for this, we doubt not, a suited state of soul is necessary. Here let us pause and challenge ourselves, dear Christian reader. Uprightness of heart and holiness of life and ways are absolutely essential if the Word of God is to be rightly appropriated by us. The "seed" of the Word, if received into an *honest* and *good* heart, will most surely spring up and bring forth its proper fruit (Luke VIII. 15). If our faces are steadfastly set in the direction of truth and righteousness, the Spirit of God will be free to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us (John XVI. 14, 15), and so shall our path be like that of the Just: which, as a shining light, "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. IV. 18).

Let us call attention to one or two broad outstanding facts of Scripture which God has been pleased to present to us, so that faith might have a substantial resting-place.

1st. Man's natural condition, as seen under the eye of God, is thus briefly summarized: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is *only* evil *continually*" (Gen. VI. 5). This solemn and sweeping statement is true of every member of the human family, and the high-road to blessing is reached when an individual acknowledges it to be true, as to *himself*. He will then be prepared to receive further communications.

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2nd. God has intervened on behalf of man, and has found a way whereby, in spite of his sin and rebellion, and withal consistent with *His* Holiness, he can be brought into favour and the closest terms of intimacy with Himself (Rom. III. 23-26).

3rd. The death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, and the consequent outflow of the gospel to the ends of the earth : is God's great answer to the lying insinuation of Satan in the Garden of Eden : and the eternal basis of every blessing, past, present, or future, earthly or heavenly, which God has designed for man. The glad tidings are being published to the remotest corners of the earth to-day ; not as some vainly think and teach, that the world thereby may gradually be brought into millennial blessing ; but that individuals may be taken *out* of it ere its final judgment is sealed.

Stone after stone is being added to the glorious structure which Christ is building (Matt. XVI. 18 ; 1 Pet. II. 4, 5). Presently it will be completed, and the church, composed of every true believer in Jesus, will be gathered home. The days of sadness and suffering, reproach and persecution, sin, sorrow, and strife will be ended for ever.

The Lord is coming quickly : even now He presents Himself to our hearts as the " bright and morning star " (Rev. XXII. 16, 17) : blest

harbinger of the day of glory, when the dismal shadows of earth shall have passed away, and He who alone is worthy shall sway the sceptre of the universe !

Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring :
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing.
Outstretched His wide dominion
O'er river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinions
Or dove's light wing can soar.

G. F. E.

“SAFE TO LAND.”

“AND so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land ” (Acts xxvii. 44).

Thus ended one of the most jeopardous and eventful voyages ever made. At times the wind blew softly, and at times it was tempestuous. There were both quicksands and rocks to cause alarm. Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and for a whole fortnight the men on board had fasted, taking nothing. All hope was taken away. Efforts the most strenuous were made to lighten the ship of any commodity that could be spared. All was done that men could do to weather the storm and reach the haven, but all was in vain. Despair had settled down on crew and passengers alike ; resignation to fate was their only condition.

The master and owner of the ship was powerless. The Roman captain, who had command of soldiers and prisoners, and who had placed confidence in that master, was of no use whatever.

All on board were equally impotent, all but one !

Paul was there—an apostle, a servant of God, and a prisoner of man.

As a prisoner he was of no account. But amid the storm he had dealings with that God who holds the seas in the hollow of His fist, and who can still the tempest at His pleasure.

Paul stirred himself up to lay hold of God, not, possibly, so much for his own safety (for to him to “depart and to be with Christ was far better” than smooth seas and plain-sailing here below), but for the sake of “all them that sailed with him.”

In true Christian compassion he thought of them, and nobly did he act the part of an intercessor.

He did not attempt to navigate the ship, for that was outside his province. His business, as a servant of Christ, was primarily in prayer and in seeking the interposition of God’s merciful hand in such a terrible crisis.

He did not pray in vain.

True, the tempest was not stilled, nor were the stormy waves set at rest. The ship was allowed to take her course. That was a small

matter ; for the only thing of real value on board was the lives of the men. These were secured. The ship was dashed to pieces, but not a life was lost. “ They escaped all safe to land ” (Acts XXVII. 44).

Oh ! the power of intercession ! Oh ! the duty and the privilege of the child of God to plead in a season of crisis and peril and shipwreck, for the merciful intervention of God.

Paul and Epaphras were, amongst other things, the signal intercessors of the New Testament ; Moses and Samuel of the Old, and to these men of God multitudes of others were indebted for help ministered to them by the God of all grace, in answer.

Do we realize the extraordinary privilege and power of intercession ? Is it our habit by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to intercede for all ?

To-day God calls for intercessors. Who of us will stir himself up ?

When the stress and the storm are altogether beyond human control, shall not they who know the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ lay before Him their plea for mercy for all who sail, as it were, with them, and thus bring in the delivering power of God for the good of the world at large, and for that of His poor suffering people particularly.

Surely no storm is too great for Him !

J. W. S.

THE PENKNIFE, THE SACK, AND THE EGG.

HOW many there are that are positively deterred from coming to the Saviour, or, at all events, from confessing Him as their Lord, through fear of their inability to *stand*. Knowing something of their own inherent weakness, and of the awful power with which the enemy can present his temptations, they hesitate to take upon them the holy name of Christ, lest by their subsequent conduct they should bring dishonour upon it.

While respecting such conscientiousness, I venture to suggest that it arises from ignorance as to two great facts. First: *our own utter and absolute weakness*. Second: *God's power and willingness to uphold us* in the day of temptation. For if some little knowledge of our frailty leads us to regard the future as bristling with difficulties, the discovery of our complete lack of strength would cause us to regard it rather as full of *impossibilities*. We should then conclude that power to sustain us must come from outside ourselves altogether, that if we are to continue for a moment to stand, in the face of all the forces which Satan will assuredly marshal against us, it must be by the power of God.

See! I have a penknife which I will try to stand on its end. The end is rounded and

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smooth, and I have set myself a—what kind of task? A *difficult* one? “No,” you reply, “an impossible task. You can never make that penknife stand up on its end.”

Behold, then, the impossible task actually accomplished! The penknife is standing!

“But,” you remark, “you are holding it!”

Of course I am. Did you think I was foolish enough to imagine that I could make it stand in any other way? That were indeed an impossibility. But to make it stand by holding it up is neither impossible nor difficult.

Let me now read you a line from Romans XIV. containing a magnificent promise. You will find it in the fourth verse: “He shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.” Of whom are such glorious words predicated? Look in the preceding verse and you will see. It says, “God hath received him.” Then of every one whom God has received, as the father in the parable received his repenting and returning son, it is stated that *God is able to make him stand*.

Can you find room for those misgivings which have tortured you, in the face of such words as these?

But we are not mere machines, nor does God treat us as such. If we are “kept by the power of God,” it is through the exercise of faith on our part. We are told this in 1 Peter 1. 5. And we need to know *how* God holds us up.

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Come with me to yonder flour-mill. Do you see that heap of empty sacks in the corner? Take hold of one and try to make it stand up. What! You cannot! You say I am asking you to do an impossibility! No, no; ask the miller to make it stand, and to show you how he does it.

The miller takes the sack with a smile and holds it under the shoot, down which the fine, white newly-ground flour is falling. Soon the sack is full. *Now* is there any difficulty in making it stand? No, indeed, it stands by the weight of what it contains.

Learn then thereby, that in order to make us stand God feeds us and fills us with what will strengthen our souls. Christ is the food of His people. As we appropriate, by faith, His death in its far-reaching significance—a significance in which we are ever finding fresh depths; as we feast on His love and enter by the grace of the Holy Spirit into the enjoyment of those things which will be our everlasting portion, our souls are made strong. The joy of the Lord is our strength. The fullness of God's blessing satisfies our hearts. We look up to Christ with grateful and adoring eyes, and as we walk with Him, study Him, listen to His words, feed upon all that He is, we are "kept by the power of God" and can sing:

Temptations lose their power
When THOU art nigh!

100 THE PENKNIFE, THE SACK, AND THE EGG.

But there is yet another means by which God holds us up. Do you see this egg? What will you say if I propose to make it stand on its end, without my holding it? Taught by experience you will not *say* that it is impossible, but is not that what you *think*?

See! I take it and give it a hard knock upon the table. The shell cracks and splinters. There is a big dent at the end of the egg. On that dent I set it, and lo, it stands!

What a lesson lies here for us! It is by means of the hard knocks, the trials under which we groan, the times of adversity and sorrow, that God sometimes holds us up and makes us stand. Prone to be self-reliant, we have to learn that, like Mephibosheth, we are not only cripples when grace first reaches us, but cripples to the end of life's story. And of this God has to remind us again and again. His gracious hand is laid upon us in sore affliction: Why? Not because He is angry, and is punishing us, but in order to break our self-reliance and stubborn wills; in order to save us from the fall that follows pride, through saving us from the pride that goes before the fall. Who would not then take these blows, these trials of faith, these infirmities and sorrows, with sincere thanksgiving, when we remember that thereby God fulfils His faithful promise: "He shall be holden up"?

H. P. B.

THE SHINING FACE.

A HINDU trader in a market in Northern India once asked a Christian native: "What medicine do you put on your face to make it shine so?"

"I don't put anything on it," was the Christian's reply.

"Yes, you do," persisted the trader. "All you Christians do; I've seen it in Ahmedabad, and Surat, and I've seen it in Bombay."

The convert laughed in the gladness of his heart as he replied, "*Yes, I'll tell you the medicine; it is happiness of heart.*"

Yes, no *outward* application on the face could have put that shining expression upon the countenance that struck the trader. Reformation cannot effect this. Outward reformation can only—like waxworks—produce a resemblance. But it cannot be mistaken for the real article by those who know.

And the shining face is not only to be seen in India. It bears transplanting. A returned China missionary, known well to the writer by sight, was named "*Glory*" by the natives because he had the shining face! It has borne transplanting, for he has it still, as all who see him can testify.

No ; only an *inward* medicine can produce the shining face. It is from inside that its light comes. The wise man knew something of this when he wrote, “ *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine* ” (Prov. XVII. 22).

And wherein lies the secret of a merry heart ? It is not found in the worldling. His gaiety is forced, “ as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.” (Ecc. vi. 6.) His merriment is not spontaneous. It is dependent on his circumstances.

On the contrary, the Christian’s joy is independent of his circumstances and often in spite of them. In the environment of a Roman prison, and with the prospect of a martyr’s death, Paul wrote his famous exhortations to the Philippian believers: “ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord ” (chap. III. 1) ; “ *Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice.* ”

But though the shining face comes from inside it does not come by way of *introspection*. No, it is unconscious. To observe it in a looking-glass is to destroy it. Self-consciousness is fatal.

We read, “ And it came to pass when Moses . . . came down from the mount, that Moses WIST NOT that the face of his skin shone while he talked with Him [Jehovah] ” (Ex. XXXIV. 29).

Ah ! here we get the secret—occupation not

with ourselves, not with our blessings, not with our service, but

OCCUPATION WITH HIMSELF---

not by the way of introspection and effort to conform ourselves to what we would like to be, but by gazing on the Lord in glory. The shining face comes by transformation, by the heart beholding the glory of the Lord.

Oh ! the exquisite delight Moses experienced when for the moment he talked with the Lord. The pattern of things in the tabernacle formed the subject of their conversation. But this pattern spoke only and altogether of Christ—the glory of His person, the perfection of His work, the standing in blessing He would confer on the believer through Him. And further, if these were the shadows, Moses stood in the presence of the Substance. If these were the types, the glorious Antitype stood before him.

And in all the glory of that presence, no wonder that his face shone.

Centuries have rolled by. Moses has passed away, and his dispensation too. The Substance has come. Christ has come. All the glory of God is revealed in the face of Him who died on Calvary's cross. *One* favoured individual—Moses—had the wonderful privilege of that interview on Sinai's mount. Now *every* Christian has a privilege more wonderful

than even Moses had : “ We ALL, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by [the] Lord [the] Spirit ” (2 Cor. III. 18).

What glory is on His face ! His is indeed *THE shining face*. His is like the sun’s, shining in its own strength ; ours, indeed, is like the moon’s, borrowed light, so that we cannot glory in ourselves, but in Him. Wonderful glory that can effect such transformation ! What do we know of it ? “ *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord* ” (1 Cor. I. 31).

May writer and reader know it more and more.

A. J. P.

THINGS WE KNOW.

PAUL uses the expression “ we know ” twice in Romans VIII. In verses 22 and 23 he says, “ WE KNOW that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” How well we know this ! Pain and travail is the sorrowful inheritance of every part of this lower creation consequent upon Adam’s fall. Even Christians, who belong to a new creation, are not exempt. Their bodies are still part of the old creation with its

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attendant evils, and they also groan through pain, weariness, and suffering.

Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation groans,
The air, the earth, the sea,
In unison with all our hearts,
And calls aloud for Thee.

Meanwhile a bright and glorious prospect is set before them. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they wait for the redemption of the body. Already redeemed by Blood, they look forward to redemption by power. They *know* that they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They *know* that these bodies of weakness will be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of their Saviour (Phil. III. 21). They also *know* that when Christ appears they will appear with Him in glory (Col. III. 2).

When this takes place the groaning creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Rom. VIII. 21).

Meanwhile "WE KNOW" that all trials and difficulties, sorrows and disappointments, poverty, pain, and sickness, in some way or other are "working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. VIII. 28).

Behind the tangled skein of our lives, behind the clouds and the sunshine, behind the sorrows and the joys, One Hand has been working for

us, One Mind has been planning, One Heart has been caring. When our chequered pathway is seen in the light of a coming day, and the seeming tangled skein of our lives unravelled, we shall then know that we had not a sorrow too many, and not a disappointment that was not a blessing in disguise.

ALL THINGS *work together for good!* Surely they do. The Father has shown His love to the Son by putting *all things* into His hand (John III. 35). The Son has shown His love to us in death, and still loves us with a love that passeth knowledge, deathless and eternal. Divine love takes cognizance of our every step ; and so controls every event of our lives that good is evolved out of seeming evil.

All that happens is in view of God's gracious purpose to conform us to the image of His Son. Let us keep this in mind and we shall then see that His estimate of what is really for our good often widely differs from ours. When the sculptor hammers and chisels the block it is in order to fashion it into a likeness he has in his mind. It is in God's mind to have sons bearing the lineaments of His Son. If we keep this in remembrance instead of weeping and repining over our trials, we shall be exercised as to them and seek to learn the lesson they are intended to teach. Some of the most Christ-like men and women are those who have had to endure the most crushing sorrows. One who

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had nothing of this world's good triumphantly exclaimed, "*I have Christ, what want I more !*"

Turn now to 2 Corinthians. The end of chapter iv. tells us our light affliction is but for a moment, soon to be exchanged for an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Our eyes are to be fixed on those unseen realities hidden from the eyes of men ; and as we do so we groan—not now from physical ills—but because of a longing desire to possess that house from heaven which is our eternal portion.

As pilgrims here we seek a heavenly home,
Our portion in the ages yet to come.

"For WE KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1). This will be no transient dwelling-place, no tenement of clay, no part of a fallen creation. God is its builder and maker ; it is for this He has wrought us, and given us His Spirit as the sure pledge of its possession. What a glorious prospect !—a glorified body ! fitting and suited home for our ransomed spirit ! and we shall find ourselves with Christ, and like Christ for ever. Mortality with all its attendant evils a thing of the past, swallowed up of life. This is better than being unclothed. To be with Christ when our spirits depart is better than being here, but better still when soul and body are united, and we find ourselves

in the Father's house, conformed to the image of His Son.

Then never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,
Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on our blissful repose.

The descent of our Lord into the air will effect this wonderful change for us who are alive and remain, and then an eternity of bliss ! Meantime we are left here to safeguard the interests of our absent Lord ; we are to serve as we wait. This, according to our several ability, is our responsibility, for each and all are called to work in the great harvest field. Turn to 1 Corinthians xv. 58. Listen. " Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Why ? " Forasmuch as YE KNOW that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Cheer up, despondent mission worker, disconsolate Sunday-school teacher, discouraged gospel preacher, weary lodging-house worker, sorely tried tract distributor ! Do you not know that however black things look, how little results you see, how many disappointments you meet in seeking to serve your Lord, everything done with a single eye, under the constraint of His love, will receive His " Well done " in a coming day ?

A farmer ploughs, harrows, and sows, often in adverse weather conditions, and without

immediate results, but he waits in patience. In due season you shall reap if you faint not. We must also remember that the work of some is to sow, that of others to reap, but both shall rejoice together when the harvest is garnered. If we cannot all be successful servants, we can all be faithful ones. To all outward appearance there never was a more unsuccessful servant than our blessed Lord. After arduous days, and weary nights, spent in going about doing good, labouring, toiling incessantly, apparently He had spent His strength for naught. But was that so? His judgment was with His God; and in the day of glory soon to dawn, innumerable hosts, blessed in heaven and on earth, will witness that His labour was not in vain.

Let us labour on, cheered and encouraged that our labour is not *in vain in the Lord*. His eye discerns all done to please Him. In every good work we are to do His will. If we cannot do what we would, may it be true that we have done what we could. Whatsoever we do is to be done heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men, *knowing* that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. (See Colossians IV. 23, 24.)

To wait for that important day
When Christ His glories will display,
Be this our one great care.

H. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GLENIFFER.—Should compulsory military training ever become the law of the land we see no course open to the Christian but to submit to it. "Let every soul be subject to the authorities that are above him. For there is no authority except from God ; and those that exist are set up by God. So he that sets himself in opposition to the authority resists the ordinance of God ; and they who thus resist shall bring sentence of guilt on themselves." Our quotation is from Romans XIII. in the New Translation of Mr. J. N. Darby. With this agree the words of 1 Peter II. 13, 14, which we supply from the same source : " Be in subjection to every human institution for the Lord's sake ; whether to the king as supreme, or to rulers as sent by him." These passages clearly show that subjection and obedience become the Christian. He may not be a maker of laws ; he should be a keeper of them.

To the true Christian war must ever be a horror. He naturally shrinks from having any part in the slaughter of his fellow-men. But even Christianity is not all grace—there is *government* also. The most ardent advocate of grace in this poor world of ours would hardly desire to see the police force abolished and prisons swept away. But universal military training is not yet established by law in Britain, much less compulsory service. When it is we may count on God to show us what He would have us do, strong in the confidence that no one sincerely desiring to do His will shall long remain in ignorance of it.

DELTA.—If we would learn anything about the priesthood of Christ we should read the Epistle to

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the Hebrews—it is one of its main subjects. So far as we remember there is nothing in that epistle to lead us to conclude that our Lord was a Priest on earth. It is in heaven that He exercises His priestly office. For that reason scarcely anything is said of our Lord's resurrection—it is His *ascension* that is the prominent thing in Hebrews. Our great High Priest is *there*—"set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." On *earth* He suffered being tempted, He learned what obedience meant and its cost, and He passed through all the experiences necessary to the office He was to fill when called to fill it. Therefore He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and can succour us in the hour of trial. But as to the priesthood itself, we believe our Lord entered upon it after His ascension. He exercises it in the heavenly courts. At least these are the connections in which it is placed in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

We do not know of any place on earth that answers to the Holy of holies in the Jewish tabernacle. Does not Hebrews IX. 24 lead us to believe that it was a figure of the true, and that the true Holy of holies is heaven itself into which Christ has entered, now to appear in the presence of God for us? We believe it does. And not only has Christ entered there, but we, too, have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus. Cleansed from our sins, perfected for ever as to our conscience, we enter with boldness into the Holy of holies to worship and adore. In spirit, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we find our place of worship in the heavenly courts. Of old the Temple was the place of worship. But since the Jewish system has passed away there is no place of worship on earth. As God's priests we enter into the Holiest on high and in spirit worship *there*.

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G. S. B.—ISAIAH LXV. 17, LXVI. 22 ; 2 PETER III. 13 ; REVELATION XXI. 1.—Although “the new heavens and the new earth” are named in each of these four passages we think the context of each shows that the expression has not quite the same value in every one of the four. In Isaiah the new heavens and the new earth clearly stand in relation to the restoration and final blessing of Israel and there is no mention of the great physical changes spoken of in 2 Peter and Revelation XXI. And yet the passages are all united—those in Isaiah referring to the immense *moral* change that God will then bring in. It is the first part of the great work which culminates fully and perfectly in the new heavens and the new earth of 2 Peter and Revelation XXI. Nor should this be hard to understand. For even now the believer is, “in Christ, a new creation : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. v. 17). But while this is true in a spiritual sense, it will not be fully and literally verified till the Lord comes and he is changed into His image. *Morally*, the new creation has begun for the believer and he is part of it, *physically* it will be wrought when his Saviour returns and the body of humiliation is fashioned like unto His body of glory. In the same manner, when the millennial state of the Jews begins and they are blessed according to the faithful promises of God, it will be the introduction of a condition of things described as “new heavens and a new earth.” But it is not the climax. It is the start, not the finish. This latter will be reached when the millennial period passes into the eternal day of Revelation XXI. 1-8. If this is not clear will you kindly let us hear from you again.

A WASTE OF LIGHT.

A LADY once saw a large number of lighted lamps all set close to one another in rows on the platform of a railway station. She wondered at the waste of light through so many lamps being all together. But as she looked, a porter came up and began putting the lamps into a dark train that stood near. One lamp was put into each compartment until the whole train was lighted.

The Christian readers of these pages are like the lighted lamps. Once they were darkness, but now they are light in the Lord, and are set here in the world to shine as lights, holding forth the word of life.

But is there not a danger of too many lights being together sometimes? I am not speaking now of fellowship, but of service. Do you preach the gospel, dear brother? Well, if *you* were not preaching somebody else would be doing it! The place would not go unsupplied with a preacher if *you* were unable to be there! But how many dark places in the earth there are where if *you* do not go and preach the gospel nobody else will! There are towns and villages within twenty-four hours of Britain where glad tidings are never pro-

claimed. More, there are villages *in* Britain where the gospel is almost if not quite unknown. There is no one to preach it.

I do not remember an instance in Scripture of the gospel being preached in the room where the Lord's people gathered for their own meetings, for the breaking of bread, prayer, etc. I am not saying that it is wrong to use the meeting-rooms of Christians for the purpose ; I merely say that as far as I remember Scripture would not lead us to suppose that it was the practice of the early brethren, in apostolic days, to do so.

I was greatly impressed, a few months ago, when on a visit with a friend to one of the fairest and least known of the Mediterranean islands. We found our way early on the morning of the Lord's day into the clean, whitewashed upper room where a few disciples had come together to break bread. At the close of the simple meeting we were asked if we would preach the Word for the edification of the believers in the evening.

We said : " Yes ; but can't we have a *gospel* meeting ? "

" Oh," replied the good brother who was speaking with us, " the gospel is for *the world* : we *go out* with that, God willing, this afternoon, and return here for our own edification later."

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The “going out” meant, we found, a journey of nearly all the brethren and sisters to the cemetery, where for two hours the glad tidings were sounded out in the hearing of crowds of people. Some asked questions, answers were given which led on to a fresh unfolding of the grace of God. Hundreds of benighted Catholics listened to the joyful news.

My friend whispered to me at the close, “That was apostolic!” and so indeed I had felt it to be.

I am not speaking of *methods* now, however, but of the need to *spread abroad* with the gospel. The Lord had bidden the apostles bear witness to Him not only in Judea but in Samaria and “unto the uttermost part of the earth.” They, however, and the hundreds of disciples in Jerusalem seem to have been loth to go beyond the bounds of their city home. And God saw that there were *too many lights together*. He allowed a terrible persecution to scatter them, and the happy result was that “they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word.” Philip went down to Samaria, whither Peter and John followed, “preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.” Others, exiled from their homes in Jerusalem, travelled as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, “preaching the Lord Jesus. And

the hand of the Lord was with them ; and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord."

Thus it always is when there is a healthy God-given vigour and warmth in the Church. You cannot accumulate water in a heap except by freezing it. Nor can you keep a lot of saints all together—if they do not reach out in Christlike love to the "regions beyond"—without freezing them ! And it is to be feared that there are many frozen companies of Christians to-day !

May God stir us up that we may each do our share, as called and enabled by Him, both by prayer and in any other way that He may lead, to spread the light in the lands of darkness, or it may be that in these days that afford us *our last* opportunities, God will permit some persecution to scatter us, as in the days of long ago.

The following lines (by G. H. L.) may well be recalled in this connection :

Did not the Shepherd good ye serve
 A fearsome journey take,
 And in these wilds lay down His life,
 A pathway plain to make,
 By which His servants might lead back
 These sheep from mountains cold
 To life abundant evermore
 Within the heavenly fold ?

*Why work where many shepherds show
 The way to pastures green,
 Whilst yonder myriads stray and die,
 And few to save are seen ?*

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Or dare ye stay in idle ease,
Or needless worldly toil,
While these lost sheep, for whom Christ bled,
Are sin and Satan's spoil ?

Oh, how shall fellowship be full
With Him who gave His all
To seek, to save, to die for these,
If we neglect His call ?
Oh, how shall joy, His joy, be theirs
Who would not share His loss ?
For how shall sheep be saved by such
As dare not face the cross ?

H. P. B.

YOUNG MEN ! WHAT ARE YOU
DOING ?

EVERY young man will be familiar with the varied military appeals and placards which constantly meet the eye. Again and again in these days of national crisis the question is asked in clarion notes and with stentorian voice, "*Young man, what are you doing for your King and country ? The nation needs you.*" And there has been a great response. Numbers, moved by a sense of duty, have volunteered to serve, and rallied round the flag. But this only by way of illustration.

I want to ask another question. *Young man, what are you doing for your Saviour, Jesus the Son of God ?* Oh, praise His Name ! What a Saviour He is ! True He *demand*s nothing, but His grace to rebels surely calls

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for something in return. If the patriotic feeling is stirred up and swung into life through bounden duty, how much more should we respond with burning energy and zeal to the Saviour's pardoning love !

In these last and closing days—days of darkness, of declension, of departure from God and His Word there goes forth a great cry, “ *Young man, what are you doing for Jesus ?* ” Behold the fields are white unto harvest, but the labourers are few.

Where are the young men ? Let me speak to them. You have been saved, but what for ? You answer, “ To worship God in spirit and in truth.” Yes, but is there anything else ? Have you not been saved to serve ?

Where are the tract distributors ? One scarcely sees them nowadays. Their work has become old-fashioned and out of date ! There is a great need for young men to go through our streets with their hands full of tracts—to be instant, in season and out of season—ready to tell this poor perishing world of the Saviour it so much needs.

Remember the words of Ezekiel, “ Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it ; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but *thou hast delivered thy soul.* ” And the Apostle Paul could avouch that he was “ pure from the blood of all men,” for he had not shunned to

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declare unto them the whole counsel of God. And more than that, he "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts xx. 26, 31). May the Lord indeed stir us up and shake up our "dry bones."

I remember reading something by Henry Moorhouse on Nehemiah xiii. 23. "In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab : and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people." I cannot tell you what Moorhouse said, but it made an impression on me. It was something like this. "How true is it in this day. Jews married strange wives then, and Christians are marked by worldly pursuits and actions now. In result they have lost power as a separated testimony for God. Christians on Sundays and worldlings on week-days ! They are conversant with the language of Ashdod, Moab and Ammon, but their own language they cannot speak. They know all about the war, the politics of the world, the various football matches, and they have their sacred concerts and bazaars, but for 'things concerning Himself' there is no desire, no appetite, and consequently there is no knowledge." Oh, for a closer walk with God !

Young men, do not forget the Saviour's love to your soul. He gave Himself for you.

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His own life's blood was shed to set you free. I can say, to His praise, that He has saved me, a poor vile sinner held captive by the power of the god of this world in his miserable soul-destroying vices. And you can say the same. Hallelujah ! Jesus has broken every fetter, yea, the power of cancelled sin !

Before there can be any outward testimony, I know there must be the inward flowing out to God Himself. How can this be cultivated ? Only by occupation of heart with the Saviour.

Jesus ! Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill.

There is no other way.

Young men ! Once more let me appeal to you. Where are your tracts ? Saints and servants of God in old days used to dispense them freely. Shall no one be seen giving them away in tramcar, in train, or the various thoroughfares of our cities ? Let us cultivate this service for the Lord. Let us think of the joy of meeting in heaven all those to whom we have been used of God in blessing. Of course we must be careful how we give and what we give and see to it that the seed we sow is well watered with our prayers.

And do not forget that the Lord gives the needed courage and wisdom. He has said, "Lo, I am with you alway," and you know that there hath not failed one word of all His good promise.

B. G. D.

SAFEGUARDS FOR THE SIMPLE.

THE great majority of us *are* simple. A large proportion, converted within recent years, cannot in the nature of things be anything else ; whilst there are many more who, though believers for long, have not made much headway in the Christian life, and in the matter of spiritual growth remain but babes.

In the second chapter of his first epistle the Apostle John divides up the family of God into three classes, which he names respectively “ fathers,” “ young men ” and “ little children ” or “ babes,” indicating in this way three stages of growth ; and from verses 14 to 28 of that chapter we get his special messages to each of the three classes.

To the fathers he speaks in the first part of the 14th verse ; to the young men from the middle of the 14th down to the end of the 17th verse ; to the babes from verse 18 to 28. It is quite likely that the space devoted to each class is directly proportioned to the *numerical* importance of each, then, as well as now.

Many dangers beset the path of the “ babe ” or simple Christian, but of them all the *worst* is that connected with false or anti-Christian teaching. A moment’s reflection will show why this is so. Such teaching has nearly

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always an inoffensive appearance, it is merely a question of imbibing certain ideas, there is nothing about it repulsive or immoral, yet its effect is to subvert the soul and place it practically under the domination of Satan, the god of this world.

The breakdown of a young Christian—let us say in a matter of morality, serious as that would be—is to a breakdown of this character only comparable to the difference between a “battle-cruiser” being struck by a shell, and its being captured entire by the enemy without a scratch upon its paint! The merest tyro in naval matters knows well which of the two events is the greater disaster.

At the present moment the activity of Satan in the matter of anti-Christian doctrines is very great. The various propagandists work with feverish energy which puts us Christians to shame. They thrust their literature beneath your door or into your letter-box. They hawk their books from door to door extolling their virtues and securing many a purchase from the unwary. They worm their way into houses, if by any means they may capture souls for their cause.

Their name is really becoming Legion. At first sight it may seem strange that there should be so much disagreement amongst different portions of the great army of the evil one, since in so many cases their conflicting

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doctrines are mutually destructive. Yet after all the differences are of a surface nature. The devil is like a fisherman who throws out a long line covered with many different kinds of bait, so as to entice as many different kinds of fish as possible. Take notice, however, that beneath each morsel, whether to you tempting or the reverse, there is an identical hook.

The Satanic origin of these many and conflicting evil systems is clearly seen in the fact that, one and all, they agree in overturning the grand foundations of Christianity—such as the Deity of Christ; the reality of His expiatory and vicarious sacrifice; the true nature of sin and its gravity, involving eternal punishment.

It is no small task to take up these systems in detail and expose their evil so that the simple may be saved. Such a work would demand a number of separate pamphlets each of respectable size, and this paper does not attempt it. Moreover, this work has already been done by others with considerable effect.*

We do aspire, however, to point out certain great safeguards, suitable for defence against *all* such evils, and available for the feeblest and most unlettered believer. They are all indicated in the epistle to which we referred

* See cover for advertisements of such pamphlets and catalogue, to be obtained at office of this magazine.

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at the outset ; only to verses 18 to 28 of chapter II we must add verses 1 to 6 of chapter IV.

Of these, the first is the fact that even the babe in the divine family has received

AN UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE.

The effect of this is that he knows "all things" (v. 20), or as verse 21 puts it, he knows "the truth . . . and that no lie is of the truth."

The "unction" or "anointing" is of course an allusion to the Holy Spirit of God, who indwells all who believe the gospel of their salvation (see Eph. 1. 13) ; but we shall understand these statements better if we see that the Apostle John is not here considering Him exactly as a distinct Person indwelling us, but rather as the source of a new life which produces in us new faculties and new powers.

"What !" exclaims some horny-handed son of toil, hardly able to read his own name, "I know *all* things !"

"Yes," we should reply, "in this sense you do, if you are a Christian." The very word "know" used here has in the original language the force of "be conscious of," "know intuitively" rather than "be acquainted with" or "know in detail."

The human infant opens its blue eyes and

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surveys things, from its mother's smiling face to a twinkling star, with a consciousness which no puppy or kitten could ever possess. All its knowledge is truly embryonic as yet, still the human spirit with its faculties and powers is there.

O babe in Christ, just born of God into His family, this Unction you possess! The faculties formed by the Spirit of life are yours.

Are you aware of this? Do you realize that the little you now know practically of God, together with the much which we trust you may yet know, is only yours because you have the Unction? To acquire all human learning from the kindergarten to the Rectorship of a great University only human reason together with the possession of ordinary faculties is needed. To touch the veriest fringe of *Divine* things you must have a faculty which the one not born of God does not possess—the anointing of the Spirit of God.

From this let us learn two important practical lessons.

1. Never trust *your own reason* in the things of God. As a Child of God you can place much more reliance in your spiritual conscience or intuitive perception, though even that is not given to us as a guide.

2. Never trust *anybody else's reason*. Never

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be in the least disturbed by the sayings or writings of the most learned men if not believers. Their human learning may be colossal, their *real* knowledge of divine things, if they are not converted, is absolutely nil.

In verse 27 we again have the Unction referred to, and in a way which is more suggestive of the Spirit of God as a Person. It is said to teach us of all things and to be truth. It is evident therefore that we not only have by the Spirit of God the new faculties capable of knowing the things of God, but we have in Him a thoroughly efficient Teacher.

There is no thought in this verse of belittling the importance of human teachers, gifts raised up by Christ for the blessing of His people (see Eph. iv. 11). The point is that after all they are not the *essential* thing. Apart from the action of the Spirit the best of teachers does not really teach anything, and on the other hand many a humble saint in isolation has been very deeply taught of God.

If then we simple Christians utilize our first safeguard we shall be delivered from dependence upon all human reason, our own or other people's, and cast for instruction essentially upon the Spirit of God.

A very good beginning !

In the second place, we are safeguarded by

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that which we have heard from the beginning abiding in us according to verse 27. That is to say,

DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH NEVER VARY.

They are always the same, equally valid under all circumstances, so that what we really learn of God when we receive the simplest elements of the gospel, we never have to unlearn ; and nothing that we have to learn in our subsequent Christian career ever denies or is inconsistent with the simple truth with which we started.

Let us not pass this over lightly, for it is more important as a safeguard than may be at once perceived.

For instance, when in very early childhood we gazed at alphabet picture books, and placed our fingers upon big A's and little a's, we did not think that we were tracing the foundation on which is reared the superstructure of both language and literature ; but so it was. When a little later we struggled with the rules of addition, subtraction and division, and almost wept over the multiplication tables, we little realized the vast scope of mathematical science, but of this we may be sure, that the genius who in later life finds himself a foremost authority, such as an Astronomer Royal, has never had to learn one fact in mathematics at variance

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with the four simple rules of arithmetic with which he started.

Nor have any of us, though far from being great students of arithmetic. If a plausible individual approached you offering for your adoption a new and up-to-date method of book-keeping, but on a cursory examination you found it assumed that twice twopence are fivepence, what would you do? Promptly reject it? Of course you would!

Even so is it in the things of God. "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning." The gospel of God which brings salvation presents a divine Saviour who died for our sins, was buried and rose again (1 Cor. XV. 1-10), and upon *that* which *is saved*, you have indeed heard from the beginning, everything rests. God's Spirit will never teach you anything that is inconsistent with that.

Therefore if any plausible individual presses upon you, by literature or by word of mouth, any teachings which undermine or are inconsistent with these great foundation truths on which you have rested your soul, *he is a deceiver*. Fall back upon your safeguard and, without the least hesitation, *reject his teachings*.

Consistently with this we find in the early verses of chapter IV. that the truth of Christ's Person, the confession of His true Deity and

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real humanity is made the touchstone of everything. If that be not owned the spirit can at once be set down as "not of God."

In the same chapter, verses 5 and 6, we find the third test which will safeguard us. The test of

APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

Nothing could be sharper than the contrast between the anti-Christian teachers and the apostles. "They are of the world." "We are of God." *Their* teachings were of the world, appealing to worldly principles and sentiments and the world listens to them. The *apostolic* teachings were of God.

Further he says, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Thereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." That is to say, a person's own secret attitude towards God was revealed by his attitude towards the apostles and their testimony, since they were the duly authorized witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If any are tempted to think that this particular test has become obsolete as the apostles have long since disappeared, let them remember that in a very practical sense we have them to-day in *their writings*. The whole of the New Testament has come to us through the pens of the apostles and a few of their associates. The principle enunciated above therefore stands good in this twentieth

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century with this slight modification : *A person's own secret attitude towards God is revealed by his attitude towards the apostolic writings, the New Testament scriptures.*

The third test then resolves itself into this : Does this would-be teacher bow absolutely to the authority of the New Testament scriptures, or does he reject them in whole or in part ; or does he while professing to accept and found his teaching upon them, yet handle them deceitfully, twisting them when inconvenient for his theories rather than reverentially allowing them to speak for themselves ? And, further, are his teachings " of the world," according to worldly principles and maxims, confirming people who imbibe them in the world rather than delivering them out of it ? If so, no hesitation need be felt. He himself and his teachings are *not of God*.

" If that be true, sir," says a young and inexperienced Christian, to one of these, " how do you explain this verse in the Bible ? " And he quotes a text from one of the Epistles.

" Oh ! " is the jaunty reply, " that is merely what Paul says. He was of course a wonderful man, but then don't forget he lived in the first century, and we live in the twentieth. It is no good setting his rather obscure words against our modern light and knowledge."

Do you need anything further to tell you

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whether or no you should lend an ear to that speaker? *You do not.* You may safely label him "NOT OF GOD"; and then leave him severely alone.

This use, however, of God's word through the apostles is, if we may so call it, a *negative* one. God's word, by its very existence, compels the would-be teacher to declare himself as either absolutely subject to it, or as against it. More valuable still is its *positive* use to the believer. No safeguard can exceed in importance that of having the mind and heart well saturated with God's thoughts as set forth in Scripture.

In proportion as we become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and the truth they contain, so also do we become proof against the wiles of anti-Christian teachings. These systems of error gain their successes as the direct fruit of ignorance of Scripture on the part of professing Christians.

Let us all therefore more earnestly read and study its pages in true dependence upon the teaching of the "Anointing" of the Spirit of God.

In order that we may see how amply we are safeguarded from the evil by God's gracious provision, we will close by a summary recapitulating the points outlined above.

1. We have in the Unction a new source of spiritual understanding with its new faculties and powers.

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2. We have in the same Unction, or Anointing, a Teacher of truth, who is Himself the Truth ; the Holy Spirit of God.

3. The gospel which we have believed from the beginning has already given us the grand outline of truth, or to use another figure, is like a seed containing within itself the germs of all that is to be presently developed. Nothing that we subsequently have to learn demands that we unlearn the gospel either as a whole or in part : no item of the most advanced truth but is perfectly in harmony with the most elementary.

4. Absolute loyalty to the New Testament scriptures marks the true teacher in contrast to the non-recognition, or only partial recognition of the apostolic authority on the part of the false.

5. Divine teachings bear their character upon them. They are divine and heavenly and emphatically not of the world. False teachings are always of the world with the world for their end.

God has thus provided us with what we may call the "Holy Spirit" safeguard (1, 2) ; the "Gospel" safeguard (3) ; the "Holy Scriptures" safeguard (4) ; and the "World-test" safeguard (5).

Happy shall we be if we carefully and prayerfully use them. Thus shall we be preserved.

F. B. H.

DIFFERENT CONVERSIONS.

IT is sweet to inspect the way in which the light of God approaches and enters the soul. Sometimes it is *gentle*; sometimes it is *full of force and rapidity*; sometimes it intimates a work more fully on the *heart*; and sometimes a work more on the *conscience* or *understanding*. But it is always God's work, that we know, though the *material* operated upon may be various, and the *mode of operation* various.

Look at Acts viii. 9, 10. The Eunuch was evidently in the hand of God ere Philip met him—he was under the *drawings* of the Father (John vi. 44). And that his heart was deeply engaged is evident, because he forgot the common order, as I may say, of the world, when he bid Philip come up to him in his chariot. He waited for no introduction. The stranger was no stranger, since he referred to that subject which at that moment was everything to his heart. He was another Zaccheus, who forgot his place in society, and pressed through the crowd after Jesus.

Look at Saul. He was full of religious *zeal*—the zeal of an inquisitor. Look at Cornelius. He was full of religious *devotion*—gentle, benevolent, disposed (instead of persecuting others) to judge that all others were better than himself.

Here were different materials, and the mode of operation on them was different. The work was carried on in Saul's soul with characteristic force—that in Cornelius's with like gentleness and grace. But both of them equally needed Jesus. There was no life *in* either or *for* either, but through Jesus.

So the jailer and Lydia in chapter xvi. Lydia was something of a female Cornelius. She was devout, and gentle, and gracious, and the Lord, by a very gentle operation, opened her heart. The jailer was a kind of Saul, at least in his apprenticeship; he was *beginning* to practise his hand in that work of persecution with which Saul had been *long* familiar. But as far as he had gone, he had learnt his art well, and the operation on him, like that on Saul of Tarsus, was in characteristic force. An earthquake accompanied the unlocking of the bars of his strong and iron heart, as "the still small voice" had done the business with Lydia's.

But again; neither the gentle Lydia nor the fiery jailer could do *without Jesus*. Till Lydia knew Jesus, Paul could *teach* her; but he did not *worship* with her, though she was a devout woman. (See *vv.* 13, 16).

May the souls of sinners be precious in our sight! and these witnesses of the grace of God, and of the power of the Spirit, be acceptable to our hearts.

J. G. B.

THE POWER OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

THEY were living to themselves ; self, with its hopes, and promises, and dreams, had still hold of them ; but He began to fulfil their prayers. They had asked for contrition, and He sent them sorrow ; they had asked for purity, and He sent them thrilling anguish ; they had asked to be meek, and He had broken their hearts ; they had asked to be dead to the world, and He slew all their living hopes ; they had asked to be made like unto Him, and He placed them in the furnace, sitting by “ as a refiner of silver,” till they should reflect His image. They had asked they knew not what, nor how ; but He had taken them at their word, and granted them all their petitions. They were hardly willing to follow on so far, or to draw so nigh to Him. They had upon them an awe and fear, as Jacob at Bethel, or Eliphaz in the night visions, or as the apostles when they thought they had seen a spirit, and knew not that it was Jesus. But they cannot go back, for they have come too near the unseen cross, and its virtues have pierced too deeply within them. He has fastened on

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them His look of love, as He did on Mary and Peter, and they cannot choose but follow. Little by little, from time to time, by flitting gleams, the mystery of His cross shines out upon them. They behold Him, and lifted up, and the glory which rays forth from the wounds of His holy passion ; and as they gaze upon it, they advance, and are changed into His likeness, and His name shines out through them ; for He dwells in them. They live alone with Him above in unspeakable fellowship, willing to lack what others own, and to be unlike all, so that they are only like Him. Had they chosen for themselves, or their friends chosen for them, they would have chosen otherwise. They would have been brighter here, but less glorious in His kingdom. They would have had Lot's portion, not Abraham's, if they had halted anywhere—if He had taken off His hand and let them stray back : and what would they not have lost ? What forfeits in the morning of the resurrection ! But He stayed them up, even against themselves. Many a time their foot had wellnigh slipped. But He in mercy held them up : now, even in this life, they know all He did was done well. It was good for them to stand alone with Him on the mountain, and in the cloud, and that not their will, but His, was done on them

Sel.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. R.—It is an old saying and a very true one that we should never go before our faith nor lag behind our conscience. If we have not faith to take a step which would be a distinct advance in divine things it had better not be taken. “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; *which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*” Significant words! On the other hand if the Word of God points out a path in which we should walk it is a serious matter if we do not take it. “For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath” (Matt. XIII. 12). To possess truth in the faith of our souls and to render to it our implicit obedience is the sure way to receive more, but to have it without being under its power, to have it and not to obey it, is to lose that which we seem to have. Let our Lord’s words be deeply pondered. Many a one under the pretext of being able to do good has remained in associations out of which the Word of the Lord would have led him. The reason is very plausible, but when stripped of its feathers it is seen to be nothing but a wile of the devil against which the Christian warrior has to stand (Eph. vi. 11). Think of Moses. A remarkable providence took him in early childhood into an Egyptian palace. There he was brought up as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and mighty in words and in deeds there was no position in the kingdom

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to which he might not have aspired. But when he was come to years light shone upon his soul. He looked upon the enslaved, oppressed, down-trodden children of Israel and he saw Jehovah's name written upon them. They were His people and heirs of the promises made unto their fathers. And that light brought him to a point where two roads met and he had to decide which of them he would take. Would he remain in Pharaoh's court and use his powerful influence to better the condition of the Israelites, to lighten their burdens and to secure for them rights and privileges never enjoyed before? Many prudent reasons suggested such a course. Moses weighed them all. But he came to another conclusion. He had seen Him who is invisible and the glory of Egypt faded away like a summer cloud. "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Whatever the consequences might be his choice was made and the die was cast. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. xi. 24). Not for nothing has his noble choice been recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The story is written for our learning that we might follow his example. Moses' resolve cost him much, long years of toil and burdens heavy to be borne, but it shall have an imperishable reward. May it be ours to follow where the light of the Word leads. Humbly but firmly let us follow it. We shall have to pay the price and others may misunderstand and find fault, but we shall prove that

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the path of obedience is ever the pathway of blessing. And so it has always been.

A. B.—JOHN VI. 44.—“No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.” So said the Saviour when on earth, and we believe the words are true still. But let us understand them aright and observe to whom they were spoken. Not to a timid trembling soul but to the unbelieving Jews who were finding fault and raising difficulties in reference to the Lord’s teaching—these were they to whom He thus spake. Now the words imply no prohibition or hindrance on God’s part. All men are free to come, yea, they are invited and besought to come, and the Blood of atonement being on the Mercy-seat all who come are welcome no matter how many their sins. The difficulty lies in man’s own will and state. There is no disposition to come. So the Lord said: “Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life” (John v. 40). Again, “Light is come into the world, and men *loved darkness* rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John III. 19). Such was and is man’s deplorable condition. So, while he is free to come and is even urged to do so, it needs a power outside himself to incline his heart to answer to the Saviour’s loving call. It is in this light we read John VI. 44.

ANXIOUS TO KNOW.—2 TIMOTHY I. 18.—We are sorry our answer to your inquiry on this passage was not sufficiently explicit to remove every difficulty from your correspondent’s mind. We presume he is unable to understand how One-

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siphorus should need *mercy* "in that day" or how he could receive it. Possibly he is placing too narrow a meaning on the word *mercy*. We would ask him to observe its use in Proverbs xx. 28 and very especially in Psalm xxi. 7. Here there can be no question of demerit, for it is of Messiah the psalmist speaks: "For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." Is it not mercy in the sense of loving-kindness or gracious favour? So with Onesiphorus. He had shown much kindness to Paul, sought him out very diligently when visiting Rome, was not ashamed to be known as a friend of the imprisoned Apostle, and in earlier days in Ephesus he had ministered to Paul in many things. The memory of these kindnesses remained with Paul, and in looking forward to the day when our lives will come up for review the beloved Apostle wished from the bottom of his heart that Onesiphorus might find mercy—gracious favour, loving-kindness—of the Lord then. It was his fervent desire that Onesiphorus might receive abundant recompense for all that Paul, the Lord's servant, had received at his hands. Viewed thus no difficulty should remain.

MR. A. J. PIMM, 1 Laburnum Road, Aldershot, would be thankful to receive any number of good gospel tracts and magazines for distribution among the soldiers at that great military dépôt. Can you send some? The need is both great and urgent.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

NOT a few of the readers of *Simple Testimony* are, we hope and believe, distributors of gospel books. It is happy work, but not of a kind from which one may expect to find *much* present result. However, "the day" will reveal blessed and marvellous results; of this we may be quite sure.

Some, not content with distributing the silent messengers of grace themselves, have helped others to do so, and have sent parcels to those who labour in the lands of midnight darkness, lands over which the pall of Romanism is flung. It is precisely in these lands that one hears again and again of the humble tract becoming a mighty instrument in the hands of God for blessing to souls. From Italy, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and other lands the tidings reach us of souls being brought to God by means of a little book or tract.

Do our readers desire that we should share with them the encouragement that all this brings? Then we will select two instances and narrate them, not only that hearts may rise in thanksgiving to God but that many may be provoked unto love and to good works.

The first comes from Chile, where a book, perhaps a gospel, evidently sold by a colporteur, was the means of blessing.

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“ I was a very bad man,” says the person concerned, “ caring for nothing but sin and pleasure. I bought a little book from a traveller one day and began reading it, not knowing what it contained. A neighbour said it was a ‘ Protestant book,’ and bad, so I ceased reading it, and as paper was scarce I began using it as wadding for my gun.

“ One day while hunting there came on a shower of rain, and I stood under a tree. I took out of my pocket a leaf of the ‘ Protestant book ’ and began to read it. God in His goodness opened my eyes to behold the truth. Although not satisfied with my bag of game, I vowed I would use no more of the little book for my gun. I immediately ran home and said to my family, ‘ We are doing a very bad and wicked thing destroying the little book.’ I caught it up and pasted a back on what was left of it, and began to read its contents, and in a short time God revealed His truth to my poor soul.”

The second instance I will mention is that of a man in Mexico, who received a copy of a gospel magazine and some tracts. Not only was he himself led to the Saviour but indirectly quite a number of others. The brother who gave him the books shall, however, tell the story. He is a Mexican, named Manuel Gonzalez. We translate his letter from *El Sendero del Creyente*, a magazine issued in

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Argentina for the help and encouragement of believers. He says :

“There are those who have little or no interest in spreading the gospel by means of tracts, for they lose heart in seeing so many torn up and even flung into the fire without being read. Perhaps the following will help to encourage any Christians who give themselves to this work and also to rejoice those who publish gospel literature.

“My first little effort was at Zacualpan, and it was that of distributing tracts. One of these precious seeds reached the township of Tezicapan, and fell into the hands of one Nestor Sagal, an ardent Catholic and director of the yearly festival held in honour of the image of Guadeloupe. In spite of being so devoted to this idolatry he was addicted to the terrible vices of drink and gambling. The first tract that came into his hands was *El Sembrador* (a gospel monthly, published in Mexico). An article entitled ‘The Two Ways: the Broad and the Narrow’ touched his heart, roused his conscience, and led to a new manner of life, so that he no longer drank and gambled. More tracts were obtained, these being the only means by which he could learn of Christ, since there was no gospel preaching in the district.

“During the closing days of his life Señor Sagal expressed a desire for a Bible, but

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neither his family nor any of his friends could furnish him with one ; all that they could offer him were the helps of his old religion, which he utterly refused. When his end came, the faith which God had planted in his heart, by means of the tracts, enabled him to die trusting wholly in Christ as his all-sufficient Saviour, leaving directions to his family that nothing need be done for either his body or his soul, for all the work had been already finished.

“ All this made such an impression upon his family that they began to desire to know what it was that had wrought such a change in the life of Señor Sagal and that had brought him such peace in the hour of his death. His aged mother was the first to attend a gospel meeting at Zacualpan, and then, one by one, the rest of the family came. To-day the Word of God is preached in that house, and the township of Tezicapan has a goodly company of believers, and one soul in heaven, by the grace of God, by means of a tract.”

With these instances before us, let us take fresh courage, and with our eye upon the Lord, who alone can make our labour fruitful, and remembering that the day of opportunity will soon be past, let us redouble our endeavours to spread the knowledge of Christ by every possible means.

H. P. B.

THE OLD NATURE AND THE NEW.

A YOUNG man had repented toward God, believed the gospel, and knew his sins forgiven. He was so joyful day and night, and so full of praise to God for His mercy, that he could scarcely eat, work, or sleep. After a time—genuinely converted to God though he was—he began to discover *in himself* certain things which greatly troubled him. He had supposed that in being born again his stony heart would be changed, and his sinful desires taken away for ever. But he still found within him a tendency towards wrong things. He was in downright earnest, and sought by all means in his power to crush the evil out and to repress these bad tendencies. Alas! the more he tried, the more unhappy he became. When he wanted to do good, evil was present with him. Then came the suggestion, “Ah, you were never *truly* converted, it was all excitement. Give it up.” He consulted his minister, who advised him to “strive harder, labour more for Christ, and give more to support His cause.” He did this but it did not lessen his misery. He was a mystery to him-

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self and as wretched now as he was happy before. He could not understand why these evil desires should be present with him when he wanted to go on right and keep the Ten Commandments to the letter.

Whilst passing through this experience an explanation of Romans VII. resulted in the removal of his difficulties, and the commencement of a new phase in his spiritual history. Should any reader be passing through a similar experience, may we ask him to turn to that chapter. It contains thirty-three "I's." Whenever a man uses a number of "I's," we may be sure he is occupied with himself. The man described there earnestly desired to keep the law, which is "holy, and just, and good," but in seeking to do so he learned there was something in him which was the opposite of holy, just, and good. He found first of all that he had *good desires but no power to carry them out, and evil desires which were ever present with him and which he could not overcome.* Then he discovered that these evil desires came from an *evil nature called "sin" and the good desires from a new nature called the "inward man."* Then by bitter experience he was compelled to come to this sad conclusion, that strive as he may he could neither eradicate nor improve the evil nature. The case was hopeless.

Have you made this discovery? Have you

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learned your utter powerlessness to eradicate or overcome the evil nature you possess? Do you see that it is so incurably bad that you can neither alter nor improve it? When you have learned this lesson you will cease saying, “*I will be different to-day and do better than I did yesterday.*” You will cease to look for goodness where God says there is none. You will say, “In me—that is *in my flesh*—dwells no good thing. After doing my best, after all my striving, trying, resolving, I am forced to confess *I cannot keep God’s holy law.* Oh, wretched man that I am, *who shall deliver me?*” Thank God there is a Deliverer!

We must travel onward to the eighth chapter to learn God’s way of deliverance. The One Who has delivered us from our *sins* by bearing the judgment due to them is the One by Whom we get victory over indwelling *sin*. How? “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free* from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (by a sacrifice for sin), *condemned sin in the flesh.*” This means that the old evil nature called “flesh” and “sin” was so bad that when Christ was crucified it was utterly condemned. Cease then to look for any good from it. Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. ii. 20). And you, too, must

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reckon yourself to have died with Christ. Your language should be :

Jesus died, and I died *with Him*,
Buried in His grave I lay.

In the end of Romans VII. we find a man thanking God he had found a Deliverer. We want you to find a Deliverer. For this you must look outside yourself, straight up to a glorified Man who is seated on the throne of the Majesty on high. His name is Jesus. Tell me, is He good enough? "Oh, yes," you say, "there is everything in Him to delight the heart of God. He is the very opposite of me; He always did those things that pleased God." Now, let me ask you, if you were perfectly sure that all the goodness treasured up in Him was *now made yours* would you give up yours and rest in Him alone?

That is how the man in Romans VII. got free. He turned away from his "wretched" self, and he began thanking God that in Jesus Christ the Lord he had found a Deliverer. He had come to a sober and right judgment as to self. He had learned to trace everything to its source. His *will* was on the side of the good, and if evil was there he could say, "It is no more *I* that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. VII. 17). If he serves God's law, it is with the mind or "inward man." He had learned to look outside self for power, and that whilst the new nature is powerless, of and

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in itself, to keep the law, power was vested in Christ for Him to draw upon.

Do not imagine that you cannot get out of the wretched condition described in Romans VII. When you have experimentally learned the lesson you will be able to say, "I have learned that I possess *two distinctly opposed natures*. Before I was converted I had only one, my *old self*, which God calls 'sin.' Sinning is doing what *I like* without reference to God. That sums up my unconverted days. Since I was converted I have an entirely new nature called the 'inward man.' This has holy desires, but no power in itself to carry them out. I also see that these natures cannot mingle. I cannot *alter* the bad one, or *get rid of it*. Sin has its dwelling-place in my flesh, and it will dwell there until my natural death. I cannot evict it, nor can I reach a point where I can say I have no sin, for 1 John I. 8 says that 'if we say we have no sin we deceive *ourselves*' (not God, or other people). I have, however, learned that God has condemned sin in the cross of Christ and that He looks upon me as having died with Christ, so that I am to reckon myself as dead indeed unto sin, and count upon Him as a daily Saviour to care for me, support me, and give me the victory."

The lessons God would teach you are these :
In you, that is in your flesh, there is no *good*.
All *good* is in Christ.

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All the good in Christ Jesus *is yours* (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

There is no power *in you*.

All *power* is in Christ.

All Christ's power is *at your disposal* (Phil. iv. 13).

Let me add another word. A clear conception of the *doctrine* of deliverance from this state is not exactly the same as an experimental knowledge of it. If you would know this practically you must walk in the Spirit ; reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin ; not parley or dally with temptation, but look immediately to Christ.

Distrust yourself wholly. Trust Christ fully for power to walk each moment. Yield yourself to God. Reckon yourself dead indeed to sin. Live by the faith of the Son of God. If you are disappointed in yourself, *God is not*. He knew the *worst* about you before He met you in grace. Your worst has been provided for in God's *best*. *Christ is God's best*. Look to Him, and you too shall be able to thank God for deliverance ; but this looking must be a continuous act. Do not ignore the evil in you, look ever, look always to Christ, reckoning yourself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. He alone can deliver you from the power of indwelling sin, but *He can and will*.

H. N.

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THE GREAT ILLUSION DISPELLED.

HAVE you ever seen a mirage? It is a fascinating sight, not easily forgotten.

Travelling, some years ago, with a companion on the Cape Government Railway between De Aar Junction and Beaufort West we were fortunate enough to see one. Away to our left there appeared a large lake dotted here and there with islands. The contrast with the dry and scorched veldt was delightful. Just as we were wondering whether it could be a mirage or not our questionings and doubts were settled.

In an extraordinary way the whole picture began to move, and as it faded it became apparent that the waters of the lake were nothing more than the shimmering heat-waves, and the islands the tops of kopjes in the distance. A few more moments and the lovely lake vanished away, and

Like the baseless fabric of a vision
Left not a rack behind.

Probably you have not seen a sight of this description, yet certain it is that you are perfectly familiar with the greatest mirage, or illusion, of all. The name of this greatest of all illusions is—THE WORLD. By this, of

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course, is meant, not the material earth, not the people comprising its population, but the great "world-system" with its supply of every imaginable gratification for human desires, *without God*.

In this fearful and wonderful organization, evolved by the master-mind of Satan, we have all had our share. Its favours fall to the few, its miseries are tasted by the many; but whatever may have been the particular part played, my reader, if unconverted, is inevitably involved in it with the prospect of sharing in its ultimate ruin.

If converted, you no longer belong to the world-system. As to this the words of the Lord Jesus are plain. He said of His disciples: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"—repeating these words twice (John xvii. 14, 16). Even so there is danger lest—though delivered from it by the work of God—you should be only half-alive to its true character. Easy then to become entangled in its meshes and greatly damaged in soul. It is for any in such peril that these lines are penned.

In his first epistle the Apostle John has some strong warnings on this matter. Will you slowly and thoughtfully read from the middle of verse 14 to the end of verse 17 of chapter 11?

He addresses himself, you will note, to

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“ *young men*, ” that is to Christians not in their earliest stage of Christian life and experience—these are classed as “ babes ” ; not to such as have by long experience matured in their knowledge of Christ—these are “ fathers, ” but rather to those who have reached a kind of middle condition. They have gained such a knowledge of God’s Word as has fortified them against Satan’s wiles in the matter of anti-Christian teachings, yet they have not such a deep and soul-satisfying knowledge of Christ as has made them, like Paul, to count all things but loss for it. They are, therefore, susceptible to the attractions of the world.!

As a matter of fact, if converted young, as is the case with the great majority of Christians, and if normal progress is made, the “ young man ” stage of growth is reached when life is at its best and fullest ; and relationships by marriage and parentage exert their greatest influence. Hence many a Christian, who as a “ babe ” has had a bright history, gets captured more or less by the world in later life, and his light is obscured.

Let us pause, and, as to this, ask ourselves the disciple’s question, “ *Lord, is it I ?* ”

In the verses cited above, the Apostle John states certain facts which if really received will quite dispel the great world-illusion. We may approach them by asking a series of questions.

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First of all we will inquire :

UPON WHAT FOUNDATIONS IS THE WORLD-SYSTEM BASED ?

Mark the answer ! “ All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. . . .” Here the three foundations are plainly named.

The “ lust of the flesh ” is *the desire of* HAVING—the restless longing to have or acquire everything that can minister to any desire having its seat in the body. The phrase covers the whole range of such desires from the lowest animal passion to the highest refinements in the way of creature comforts.

The “ lust of the eyes ” is *the desire of* SEEING. The eye, be it remembered, is only the organ of sight. It is the brain that really sees. This phrase, therefore, covers the whole range of desires connected with the living, intelligent soul which man possesses, rather than with his body. The world provides every kind of spectacle and show to please the eyes or ears. You may visit the lowest kind of music-hall imaginable or the finest and most cultured theatre. If your desires are more intellectual you may wander in paths of science and philosophy, ever gratifying the lust of seeing mentally some new thing, though never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“ The pride of life ” is *the desire of* BEING.

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The worst of the three, this lust lies most deeply ingrained in humanity. It covers every desire connected with the immortal spirit which was man's chief possession and glory in creation. It is essentially *one* desire, the desire of being supreme and first—first amongst the smallest and most insignificant coterie of humanity, or rising in its full height and daring impiety to challenge the supremacy of the God who sits on the circle of the heavens.

On these three foundations then, we repeat, is the world-system constructed. What must its character be ?

Or, changing the figure, let us put it thus : This glittering bauble called the world, perfumed as it seems with otto of roses, is handed to us for analysis. We submit it to the simple test of the Word of God, and what results ? Its glitter vanishes, its perfume dies away, and there is left only these three primitive elements of fallen humanity, hideous and malodorous : that is all.

But is this really so ? Can it be true ? Well, you have only to investigate a little with prayerful desire to know the truth and you will be convinced. SELF is the great motive spring of the world-system, and selfishness the great principle on which it is run. This being so, the things that are in the world, though many of them innocent enough in themselves, are tainted, and must not be

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loved by the Christian any more than the world-system which has tainted them.

Now let us inquire :

IN WHAT WILL THE WORLD-SYSTEM EVENTUATE ? or to what end is it travelling ? The answer of our Scripture is very plain. “ *The world passeth away and the lust thereof.* ” It eventuates in NOTHING, for its end is to pass away.

This is an amazing reply. “ This is a hard saying : who can hear it ? ” we feel tempted to say. Yet it is true.

The field of human activities in connection with the world is vast indeed. There are worlds within worlds. Worlds of “ thought,” consisting in speculations, philosophies, and investigations : worlds of “ word,” consisting in mighty literatures in many tongues and the records, bewilderingly extensive, of the results of human observations and activities : worlds of “ deeds,” some bright and gay, some dark and mournful. The worlds of society, fashion, politics, and pleasure are amongst the former. The worlds of labour, poverty, and vice amongst the latter.

And the sum total of these mighty activities, worked to their fullest extent and carried on from generation to generation to their climax, is . . . *nothing !*

An Oriental fable has it, that a tyrannical prince once bade one of his wise men to give

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him a motto which should be equally applicable to everything within his kingdom, under penalty of death. The wise man reflected for a moment and then replied: "You have but to write upon everything, O King, these words, '*And this, too, shall pass away.*'"

He was undeniably right. His motto was eminently scriptural. The mirage will certainly dissolve. All human achievements will fade into nothingness. The time will come when the last remains of the great pyramid will have crumbled into sand and been blown by hot winds into the Sahara desert, when the very sites of London and New York will have been forgotten, when all human sciences and philosophies will have but entangled men in dreadful and self-inflicted catastrophes and ruin, and when all human greatness and renown will have been hushed in the presence of the Lord.

With all this in view there rings in our ears the apostolic injunction: "*Love* not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Lay great emphasis on that first word.

We are not asked to live like a hermit, or to follow a monastic life. We pass through the world, though not *of* it, and with the things in the world we have to do every day, following our callings and gaining our daily bread. And just because we *do* thus handle

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the world's things continually the exhortation "*Love not*" is so needful.

The world has rejected our Lord and Master. Its princes "crucified the Lord of Glory." Remembering this, understanding, too, the foundations on which it is reared, and knowing the nothingness in which it will eventuate, *can* we *love* it? Impossible!

But we can go a step further and ask another question :

IS THERE ANYTHING REAL AND SATISFYING THAT SUPPLANTS THE WORLD?

There is : It is "the love of the Father" (v. 15). The world-system took its rise directly after the fall of man. It has been evolved in the vain attempt to fill the void in man's heart made by the loss of communion with his Creator. Now nothing but the knowledge of and intercourse with God will satisfy the heart, and in Christianity we have such communion re-established, only in a far more intimate way than was possible when man was originally in innocence. We, Christians, know God, not merely as an all-wise and beneficent Creator but as Father, and that in connection with His very *nature*—love.

"The love of the Father" is the very kernel of all that has been revealed by Christ. The Epistle of John opens with reference to all that the apostles came into contact with revealed in "the Word of Life." And that

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which they knew they communicated to others so that the circle of communion might be extended—communion “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

Here then are plainly two great spheres or systems. The world-sphere filled with innumerable objects, the fruit of man’s inventive genius, but all based upon lust and pride. The Christian sphere, filled with unseen and eternal things, all centring in the Father and His love. The former very imposing and noisily aggressive, like Bunyan’s *Vanity Fair*, yet really unsatisfying and transient; the latter as yet only seen by faith, yet satisfying and eternal.

And mark this: It is impossible that both should hold the heart at one and the same time. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The converse is equally true. If any man have his heart filled with the love of the Father it is impossible that he should love the world. For him the great mirage has no allurements. He not only knows its true character, but he finds himself possessed of positive good and blessing which supplants its vain show altogether.

And yet so deceiving is the world, so alluring, so insistent, that all too often we find the love of it creeping back into our hearts and dimming there the shining of the Father’s love. How great our folly when this is so. Let us be on

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the watch as to this, lest, like the dog in the fable, in attempting to grasp the shadow we foolishly let go the substance.

To some minds, what we have just been saying may appear a little dreamy and mystical. Such would like to remind us that life is made up mainly of hard facts and multifarious activities. That is so. Let us therefore ask one more question. It shall be one asked first by Solomon three thousand years ago.

WHAT PROFIT HATH A MAN OF ALL HIS LABOURS WHICH HE TAKETH UNDER THE SUN ?

To that Solomon had but a mournful reply. In his book of Ecclesiastes he was limited in vision to the world-system, already in his day highly developed. He could only say, " All is vanity ! "

Now let us hear the reply of the Apostle John. Turning from the world, empty and fading, and with his heart rejoicing in the love of the Father, he says, " He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." How great the contrast.

It is quite true that there is the active side of life as well as the contemplative and that for most people the former greatly overshadows the latter. It is equally true that in Christian life both sides are provided for and both sides are properly proportioned and balanced. On the contemplative side there is

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the love of the Father to fill our hearts with joy. On the active side there is doing the will of God for the employment of our energies. The former is the spring of the latter, for only as we learn what the will of God is shall we be able to do it.

It is doubtless true that Spirit-given energies spent in doing God's will can never fail of abiding result. When the world's activities have come to nothing the results of labour for Christ according to God's will shall shine forth in their beauty, yet what is said here is rather that "*He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*" Such an one stands as an enduring exception to the transient nature of everything in the world.

Christian reader ! do you realize this ? You walk through this vain and fading world-system as one already put in touch with the heavenly system of things centred in God the Father and the Christ in whom His love reposes. You are left here to do His will and represent these abiding realities in the midst of the dying shadows, and not to attempt any reformation of the world and much less to associate with it. You are privileged to labour for the furtherance of Christ's interests with the certainty that time will not cause the fruit of such work to crumble into nothingness. The world's greatest things, compared with God's smallest things, look small indeed !

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Again we ask, *Do you realize this?* Oh! wake, thou Christian that sleepest, and arise from amidst the dead world that surrounds thee; then Christ shall shine upon thee.

Then, with the world-illusion dispelled, you will tread more firmly that abiding path of doing the will of God which is indeed a path of the just, which is "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The language of your heart will be:

'Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below.

F. B. H.

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S. A.—JOHN XV. 6.—You ask us to give a simple explanation of this verse—a verse which, as you know, is often quoted to prove that one who is a true Christian to-day may nevertheless be a lost man to-morrow. Now we say at once that we hold this use of it to be exquisitely wrong.

By a true Christian we mean one who has repented of his sins, who has been born of God, who has living faith in Christ, whose sins have been washed away in His precious blood, who, having received the Spirit of adoption, can cry "Abba, Father," and who seeks to live to the glory of God. We do not believe that such an one may fall away and finally perish.

How could we believe it if we kept in memory our Saviour's explicit assurance, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:

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and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand ” ? How could we believe it in the face of the positive assertion of the Apostle Paul in Romans VIII. 33, “ Whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified ” ? How could we believe it with the Apostle’s triumphant challenge ringing in our ears, “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? ” Or with our eyes on those rejoicing words, “ 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 ” ? (Romans VIII. 38, 39.) Whatever the meaning of John xv. 6, we may be sure it cannot overthrow those glorious sentences so full of life and peace.

What then is the Parable of the Vine and its branches intended to teach, for we must not separate verse 6 from its context ? We answer, *The secret of fruit-bearing and of our absolute dependence on Christ, if we would bear fruit at all.*

Cast your eye on the first line : “ I am the *true* Vine.” Was there any vine before this ? Yes, the nation of Israel was Jehovah’s vine. “ Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt : Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land ” (Psalm LXXX. 8-10). And what sort of grapes did it bear ? *Wild grapes.* “ The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His

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pleasant plant: and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Isaiah v. 7). Grapes, wild grapes, nothing more! It was a vine only fit to be fuel for the fire (Ezekiel xv. 6).

But Christ, the *true* Vine, takes the place of Israel, and Christianity supersedes Judaism. If fruit is to be brought forth to God now it will be found in connection with the *true* Vine. Nowhere else. We believe the parable had a very particular application to the apostles, though not an exclusive one. They were the branches in a pre-eminent degree. They were about to receive a great commission. As their Lord had been sent of His Father so they were about to be sent by Him. They should be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. How needful it was in every way that men called to such work should remember and feel their entire dependence on Him. The branch severed from the vine could not bear fruit of itself. No more could they. "Without Me ye can do nothing." Remark, it is a question of *doing*, not of believing the gospel and being saved.

In its application to ourselves, it is the vine of Christian profession. There was a Judas among the twelve, foolish virgins among the ten, an evil servant among the many faithful ones, and so there may be fruitless branches in the Vine. Profession, and having share in the outward privileges of Christianity, carries responsibility with it, but partnership in these is no guarantee of the individual having received forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. If the professor did not

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abide in the Vine, if after partaking of its great privileges he renounced Christianity, and, if a Jew, went back to the Jewish system, he was like a branch cast forth. And withered branches of the vines of earth can be made nothing of—they are worthless, and men gather them and cast them into the fire. Hebrews VI. 4–8 and 2 Peter II. 20–22 are precisely on the same line.

All this is simple enough. Difficulties arise when we bring into the parable matters with which it does not deal. It is not intended to teach us how a saved man may keep saved. This is the use some make of it. But surely no such thought was in our Lord's mind when he spake the parable to His disciples.

A vine is valuable in proportion to the fruit it bears. To do the will of God, to serve Him, to glorify His name, this is fruit. How can this be done? Only as we abide in Christ. Every Christian has his niche to fill and his work to do, even as the apostles had theirs. But they apart from Christ could do nothing. Neither can we. Let us then abide in Him, always realizing our dependence, always keeping near to Him, always cleaving to Him with purpose of heart. It is thus that we shall bring forth fruit and the Father's name be glorified.

E. F. G.—Whether the verse you quote from the gospel of Luke (chap. VIII. 13) describes your case or not we cannot tell. The persons pictured there hear the Word, and anon with joy receive it, but they have no root and in the time of trial their faith fades away. We hope and believe that it is not so with you.

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It is not the best of signs when the word is at once received with joy. It seems to show that the one who thus receives it does not see himself to be a sinner guilty before God and from whose judgment he can find no escape. Yet such is the state of all men, as we know from Romans III. 19. Now the truth of our lost condition can never be received with joy. On the contrary it fills the heart with fear and trembling. And so it should.

Does a man hear with joy that every penny he possesses must be given up to satisfy his creditors ? or if sick that his case is hopeless and the physicians can do no more for him ? Should he be a prisoner, will he hear with joy the sentence that sends him to the gallows ?

It is indeed a good thing when the seriousness of our condition is felt, when the work of repentance is deep and the sinner realizes that he is unclean and therefore unfit for the presence of God, and when in his distress he exclaims, " Woe is me ! for I am undone " (Isaiah VI. 5). It is quite possible that little or nothing of this sort took place at the time of which you speak.

If so, we hope you now see what you are—a sinner, a guilty sinner, undone, lost. God alone can deliver you. No one else can. If He deals with you as you deserve to be dealt with your future is black indeed, a night without a morning. Go, weep for your soul, your poor soul, your lost soul, that has an eternity of misery staring it in the face ! But God is able to set you free, and He is as willing as He is able. He tells us how He can bring His salvation near. There is a mercy-seat, on which, so to speak, the Blood of atonement

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has been sprinkled. There God can meet you. For He whose blood is sprinkled there has so satisfied the requirements of the Throne that God can be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus even though the believing one may have been a most ungodly man (Rom. III. 26 ; IV. 5).

You will find no comfort in sitting on the judgment seat—in examining your past experiences to discover whether you were truly saved when you first made a profession of being a Christian. The joy and peace you long for will not reach you by that road. You had better get down before God and tell Him, in the anguish of your soul, that you are utterly undone and that you have neither goodness nor strength. Go down to the bottom. Then tell Him that you have heard the good news which He has published for guilty, hell-deserving men. Tell Him that you have heard of *Jesus* and that you cast yourself upon Him, and if you perish, you will perish there.

And what will be the result? If you have never been forgiven before you will be forgiven then, if you have never been justified before you will be then. But how shall you know this? Will it be by a sudden revulsion of feelings, by an in-rush of experiences such as you have been hoping for? We think not. All these may be held back, lest you should rest in your changed feelings as so many are apt to do to their subsequent sorrow. How then shall you know it? *By the Word of God* which never changes, but abides unmoveable, like a rock that mocks the angry sea. And it is by the Word that God speaks to your soul, so that

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in believing it you believe Him—not the Book only, but the God of the Book, *you believe God*.

Remember that no word from God's mouth will profit your soul unless it be mixed with faith. No food will nourish a famishing man unless it be eaten, and water will quench no one's thirst until it be drunk. Neither can God's Word profit you unless it be believed. What does He say to you in Acts XIII. 38, 39 and in John v. 24? Turn to those passages and see. In reading them believe what God says as if He spake to you face to face as He did with Moses in old time.

Should the joy of former days not come back at once, never mind. You will have *peace*, and that is even better than joy. God is never called the God of joy. He is *the God of peace*. Not that a Christian is a stranger to joy. Far from that. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." So says the Apostle Paul. But it is *in the Lord* we rejoice. Not in our feelings, for they soon change; not in our experiences, for they are as fickle as the wind; it is in Himself that we rejoice. *Keep your eye on Christ in glory*. He is your Saviour, who loves you and has washed you from your sins in His own blood. He is your Shepherd, from whose hand no one can ever snatch you. He is your Keeper, able to save you to the uttermost, till your pilgrim days end in eternal glory. Look away from self and from everything relating to it. Self at best is but a broken cistern that can hold no water. Keep, we say once more, your eye on Him in whom you have both righteousness and strength (Isaiah XLV. 24). Let us hear from you again.

A CASKET OF JEWELS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

I DO not know whether we shall be on safe ground in assuming that all of us here are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. No one can tell for certain by the look of your faces whether you belong to Christ or not. I know nothing of your spiritual history. You know ; God knows. I take it for granted, at all events, that most of us have been the subjects of God's converting grace. Should there be any who do not know that their sins are forgiven, that everlasting life is theirs, and that they have been brought, as dear children, into God's family, I trust the word that may be spoken to-night may bring to them the blessing that most of us have received and enjoy.

I am going to lead you on simple lines, and in doing so shall take you to some four or five passages of Scripture. Let us look at Acts x. 42 : "And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He Who was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." I need not tell you that the Apostle Peter is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, risen and in the glory of God.

And he further says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Let us stop here for a moment. Certainly this passage is plain enough. No one should find any difficulty in understanding it. There may be some one who is saying to himself, "I wish I knew that my sins were forgiven." Well, if there is in your heart a desire to know that your sins are remitted, that they have been blotted out, as the sunshine blots out the dark clouds from the sky, cast behind God's back, thrown into the very depths of the sea never to be brought up again, if you have a desire to know such good news, then listen to this verse: "To Him," that is to the Lord Jesus, Who once died for sinful man upon the cross of Calvary, and is now raised from the dead and seated in glory, "to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." It is through His merits, His worth, His work, His sufferings, His blood-shedding, His death upon the cross of Calvary, and not through your prayers, your repentance, your good works—all of which are right and most excellent in their proper place.

Observe, too, that word "*whosoever*." I have often blessed God for using it in His gospel. I would not have my name put in its

place for untold wealth. You may wonder at that and say that, "If your name were found there you would know it was for you." Not exactly. Why, there are plenty of people in the world whose name is the same as mine, and so there would be a never-ending quarrel as to which of us was meant. But God in His wisdom uses the word "*whosoever*." That means you. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." No language could be clearer or more positive. And Who is it that says all this? The Apostle Peter was the mouthpiece, but the words are God's words. We can believe them, and rest upon them with the most absolute assurance. "Whosoever"—you—me—any of the perishing millions of this city—"whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." When shall we receive it? When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, when, as poor sinners, we come to Him. When did the bitten Israelites receive life and healing? When their eyes rested upon the brazen serpent. When did the sick woman in the gospel, who had suffered for twelve long years, get healing? The instant she touched the hem of the Saviour's garment. So with us, the moment we come to the Lord Jesus as poor, guilty, ruined, undone sinners, and cast ourselves without reserve upon Him, we get the forgiveness of all our sins.

Now look at Acts XIII. 38, 39: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Notice the following verse: "And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." I pass over the thirty-eighth verse, where it is said that the forgiveness of sins is preached unto men. Thank God that it is. God would have His gospel proclaimed to every creature under heaven. But the thirty-ninth verse tells us that "by Him"—that is the Lord Jesus, once upon earth, once upon the cross, but now risen, and in the glory of God, the living Saviour—"by Him all that believe are justified from all things." All who put their trust in Him, all who come to Him being in themselves guilty, lost, ruined, and undone, *are* justified, not shall be at some future day, but **ARE** justified from all things.

What is it to be a justified man? It is to be clear from every condemning charge, to be reckoned righteous before God. A justified person is one against whom no charge can ever be successfully laid in heaven's high courts. Another passage tells us that God Himself is the Justifier. He is the One Who clears us. He is the One Who absolves us from every charge of sin. How clear and decided this verse is! Do you say, "What is the difference

between being forgiven and being justified ? ” I believe they are two sides of the same gracious act. If I think of my sins being forgiven, I think of the grace and compassion, and love and goodness of God that has forgiven me the mighty debt that I owed. If I think of my being justified, I think of the righteousness of God that has cleared me from every charge. God is just in justifying me, a guilty sinner, by the blood of Jesus. All this that I am setting before you is grounded on the full and complete atonement that our Lord Jesus Christ wrought upon the Cross of Calvary. I must not linger longer on that, though it is a blessed thing indeed to know, should conscience charge and justice frown, that before God we are cleared from every condemning charge. All charges that could have been laid against us have been laid against Him Who was our Substitute. He has borne our sins, and met the demands of divine justice so that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is now forgiven and justified from all things.

Look at John vi. 47. Here the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the speaker : “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” You see all our passages speak of different things, but they all use in one shape or another the word “ believe.” Everlasting life is something different from forgiveness of sins. Do not let us suppose that

these beautiful terms of Scripture all mean the same thing. In the minds of many Christians they do, but in reality they do not. Suppose some one gave you a casket of jewels, and said, "That casket, with all its contents, is yours." You open the lid, and you bring out one jewel. What is that? A pearl. You bring out another, and what is that? A ruby. You bring out another, and what is that? An opal. You bring out another, and what is that? A diamond. You would distinguish between a diamond, an opal, a ruby, and a pearl. They are all precious stones, and all in the casket. They are not all, however, the same. Do not let us suppose that forgiveness, and justification, and eternal life all mean exactly the same thing. Many Christians think that these beautiful terms simply mean that the believer in Jesus is a saved man. That he is a saved man I do not doubt. All these jewels belong to you, all of them are strung, if I may so say, upon the golden thread of faith, but they are all different. I do not attempt to explain what that great term "eternal life" means. It means much. It is a phrase that has more sides than one. I only call your attention to the Lord's words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life." Precious word!

Look now at John I. 11. Speaking of the Lord Jesus it says, "He came unto His own,

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and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." And he goes on to say that all such "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Even so now, as many as believe on His name are entitled to take the place of being children of God, for His children indeed they are. What a great thing it is to be a child of God, to be able to look up to heaven, and speak of God as your Father! If envy could ever have a place in the bosom of the angels, they might envy you a privilege so great as that, for they never call God Father. If you were to read your Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and write down on paper all the utterances of the angels, you would never find that they take those two words *Abba, Father*, upon their lips. It is a privilege that belongs to us through the infinite grace of God.

Who then are they who are forgiven? Who are they who are justified from all things? Who are they who have received the great gift of eternal life? Who are they that are brought into the family of God as His dear children? Simple believers in Jesus! If you are a believer in Jesus, even though you only became one a few hours ago, all these things are predicated of you. You have got a casket full of priceless jewels. You may

examine the contents of your casket at your leisure, and learn the value of the jewels that are there. If you have Christ, you have them all.

Now look at John VII. 37: "In that last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Notice the next verse, where you get the divinely given interpretation of the words that the Lord had just spoken: "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But when Jesus was glorified at God's right hand, then the Holy Spirit was given. Who is it that receives the great gift of the Holy Spirit? This passage tells us: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." We believers, our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. We distinguish between being born of the Spirit and the gift of the Spirit. Born of the Spirit is one thing. Every truly converted soul is born of the Spirit. To receive the gift of the Spirit is another thing, but the believer has received this great gift.

Now before I stop I ask once more who it is that has received all the great blessings of

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which I have been speaking? Every true believer in Christ. I am not telling you of theories spun out of my own brain. I am only pointing out to you simply what these beautiful passages set before us. Do not let us think that all these great things mean one and the same thing. If we are not able to distinguish them as we should like to do, let us pray to God to illumine our understanding, so that we may see the difference between forgiveness, justification, life eternal, the gift of the Spirit, and our being brought into this near and dear relationship with God as His dear children. But remember, going back to my figure, that the whole casket is yours with its precious and priceless jewels. The diamond is one thing, the pearl is another, the amethyst is another, and the opal and ruby are still different, but all are yours.

 GOOD WORKS.

ONE of the first signs of a converted person is that he desires to do good. Whereas before his conversion he may have done many wrong things, he now at any rate *desires* to depart from "evil and do good." As to how far each one accomplishes this we do not propose to consider now.

When a soul is born again he is a new

creature with new desires, new thoughts. "Old things are passed away: behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

Whilst this is quite true, we must not forget that the old nature still exists, even as Paul wrote to the saints at Rome, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. vii. 19). It is only as the Christian relies on God and His power that he can do any good works at all.

Now let us see what Paul has to say about good works in the Epistle to Titus, for there is much said on the subject in that small letter.

In chapter i. 16 he speaks of some who "profess that they know God: but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every *good work* reprobate."

If a person is introduced to me as a Christian, yet all the while his works deny the profession he has made, if I see no change in his conduct and manner of life; no good works resulting, it at once sets me thinking and wondering as to whether he is *really* a Christian after all.

But the Apostle now goes on to tell Titus that he was to be the very opposite of this. Good works were to *characterize* him.

1. "In all things showing thyself a *pattern* of good works" (chap. ii. 7). I wonder how far *we* Christians are a *pattern* of good works? Are we a positive example to others in this

matter? Do other Christians look on and see this great trait coming out “in all things”? Not only are good works to be shown forth in the big affairs and important matters, but in *all* things, even in the smallest details.

2. “*Zealous of good works*” (chap. II. 14).

Here we get something further. We are to look for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; and whilst looking for the One Who gave Himself for us we are to be “zealous of good works.” This is one reason why we have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is, therefore, of great importance that nothing should be allowed in us that would prevent our zeal in this matter; but rather that we should seek to carry out God’s purpose. So that not only are we to be “a pattern of good works,” but we are to be *zealous*—very diligent about the matter.

3. “*Ready to every good work*” (chap. III. 1).

In ordinary things what serious consequences sometimes result from our *not* being ready; and when we come to His service what opportunities have we missed—opportunities which will never, *never* come our way again? The Lord Jesus wants servants who are *always* ready, and not only so, but “ready to *every* good work.” Not merely ready to do *some* good works as and when they appeal to us,

but ready at His bidding, ready to hear His call, "fit for the Master's use."

There is plenty of doing in the world, but "if any man serve Me, let him follow Me." Follow your Lord and Master and you may be sure you will *always* be "ready to every good work." If we are in this state others will soon see we are doing good works though we ourselves may possibly be unconscious of it.

4. "Careful to *maintain* good works" (chap. III. 8).

Besides showing ourselves a pattern of good works, being zealous and being ready, we find it necessary to "maintain" good works. It is the *maintaining* that tells.

If you have up till now realized and understood the first three points in some little measure, then see you follow them up by the fourth. The apostle emphasizes it by the words "be careful," for it is easy to let our hands get slack, and the tempter is ever ready to take advantage of an available opportunity—therefore BE CAREFUL. Keep near to the Lord, seeking His guidance in all things. It is good to start well, but there is the continuing which is surely not less important.

The writer feels the need of the exhortation quite as much as the reader does. May they both be stirred up more!

L. A. A.

THE CAT AND THE PIGEONS.

THE London City pigeons are well known. They frequent various places, such as the precincts of St. Paul's Cathedral, the Mansion House, Guildhall, and Blackfriars. Every mid-day sees them on the look out for food thrown to them by those who love these pretty and interesting birds. So tame are they that in some places they will actually come and eat out of the hands of their kind friends. Now and again dangers threaten them, and from a recent example I think some useful lessons may be learned.

One day, after the usual luncheon hour, I proceeded, as I was accustomed to do, to throw a little corn to the pigeons frequenting the neighbourhood of my own office. Now pigeons are not usually associated with anything savouring of pugnacity, but on this occasion one of the birds appeared to entertain feelings of spite towards another, and it gave vent to these feelings by following it, and administering vigorous pecks.

Little did the pigeons think of the danger which threatened them. Within a very few feet, stealthily advancing behind the cover of a statue which stood there, I sighted a black cat. In an instant, realizing the situation, I chased away the marauder. It seemed at first unwilling to be baulked of its prey, but

finding it impossible to carry out its evil design it beat a retreat.

{ ' Now for the moral of my little story. I could not help reflecting on the incident, because it seemed to afford an apt illustration of what we meet with in our Christian experience. Amongst the commandments of the blessed Lord to His disciples when sending them out, we read the following: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." How often we have to own that we are neither the one nor the other. How often are we rather like the two pigeons. It may be that one brother conceives that he has some grievance against another, who thereupon becomes the object of his repeated attacks. First it may be two brothers who differ, and then perhaps many more start pecking one another, if I may use this word in a moral sense. In the meantime who is it that is watching this sad spectacle? Who is it that sees those who should have been a testimony to the world of their being Christ's disciples by the love which they have to one another, now quarrelling, and to use the words of the Galatian epistle, "biting and devouring one another"? Why, surely it is the great enemy, Satan. Nothing suits his purpose better. Whilst he has them, metaphorically speaking, pecking one another, he will seek, like the cat, to spring into their midst, and if

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he cannot destroy—which, thank God, he cannot do eternally—he will scatter the flock of God. Though our life is hid with Christ in God, and is therefore for ever beyond the reach of Satan's attacks, yet how many of God's people, while engaged in unseemly strife, are upset by Satan, and their testimony for the Lord destroyed. Others, too, are driven in all directions, as the birds of my story.

But is there not a Friend at hand in the hour of need? Yes, He Who ministers to His people their food by the way is also the One Who has overcome the foe, Who by His priestly service and intercession is able to afford timely help, not merely to help them in time of need, but to prevent them from falling. How much we owe to the untiring and un-failing intercession of our Great High Priest we but little understand. What saved the pigeons from the danger which threatened them was that they had a friend and protector near, and shall not we be kept safe if we are near the Lord? Do not let us be like the fighting pigeons, occupied with attacking each other. Rather let us be going on together, keeping near the One Who has saved us, and Who supplies us with all the spiritual food that we need, and Who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

W. MC D.

A GEM FROM EACH OF THE MINOR PROPHETS.

1. Hosea. " Out of Egypt have I called My son " (chap. XI. 1).

2. Joel. " I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh " (chap. II. 28).

3. Amos. " I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen " (chap. IX. 11).

4. Obadiah. " The Kingdom shall be the Lord's " (21).

5. Jonah. " Salvation is of the Lord " (chap. II. 9).

6. Micah. " Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea " (chap. VII. 19).

7. Nahum. " The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him " (chap. I. 7).

8. Habakkuk. " The just shall live by his faith " (chap. II. 4).

9. Zephaniah. " He will joy over thee with singing " (chap. III. 17).

10. Haggai. " My Spirit remaineth among you " (chap. II. 5).

11. Zechariah. " Shoutings . . . Grace, grace unto it " (chap. IV. 7).

12. Malachi. " The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings " (chap. IV. 2).

Each of these gems will bear the closest scrutiny ; and, while viewed separately and

GEMS FROM THE MINOR PROPHETS. 185

seen in individual and distinct beauty, they may also be strung together.

The first is the Son called out of Egypt ; the second, coming as a consequence, is the Spirit poured out ; the third is the Tabernacle—God's dwelling place ; the fourth is His Kingdom ; the fifth is His Salvation in the power of death and resurrection ; the sixth is its blessed result in the sins of His people being completely removed ; the seventh announces the trouble that they who trust in Him may expect, even though they find in Him their stronghold ; the eighth proclaims the principle on which their life shall be victoriously run ; the ninth tells of the pleasure which God finds in His poor and afflicted but faithful people, He "rejoices over them with singing" ; the tenth certifies the continuance of His Spirit among them ; the eleventh declares that shoutings of grace shall acclaim the bringing forth of the headstone and the finishing touch put upon the structure by Him Who had also laid its foundation ; and, finally, the twelfth gives us the rising of the Sun of righteousness over scenes blighted by sin, and nations desolated by war and hatred—rising in light and glory "with healing in His wings !"

The Son, called out of Egypt, to do the will of God at Nazareth ; to be acknowledged by Him as "beloved Son" at Jordan and on

the Mount ; to “ learn obedience by the things which He suffered ” ; to weep over Jerusalem ; to witness a good confession before Pilate ; to “ give His life a ransom ” on the cross of Calvary ; to ascend, as man, to the right hand of the Father whose will He accomplished, and whom, in every detail of that perfect life, He glorified ; He comes forth, eventually, as Sun of righteousness and giver of health, when the long night of this weary scene shall be succeeded by the morning of millennial peace and glory.

Lord, haste the day !

J. W. S.

ANCHORED.

LOOK at that little boat calmly resting upon the still waters, and gently rising and falling with the undulating waves. As the summer sun shines upon all the scene, what a picture of peace it presents as it reposes upon the bosom of the deep blue ocean, whose surface is scarcely ruffled by the gentle breeze.

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The sun has gone down, darkness has closed all in gloom, the lightning's flash is seen, the distant roar of thunder is heard, and the calm waters are lashed into angry billows by the tempest that is now raging in all its fury. Ah, what will become of the little

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boat left to that angry sea? Surely it will drift far away and be lost in the vast deep.

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Morning dawns, the sun again rises, the roar of the tempest has ceased. You hasten down to the shore and look for the frail craft. There she is, riding as quietly and calmly as ever, in the very same spot where she was seen yesterday. Ah, suddenly you remember she is anchored, that is the secret of her security. Everything depends upon the anchor; the raging tempest may test its power more than a calm sea, but that boat would as surely drift on a calm sea as a rough one. It is only the anchor that keeps her.

So with the believer. He has an Anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the Veil. The winds of trouble may roar, the waves be lifted up, disturbance, unrest, distraction, sorrow on every side, but they never touch the security of the believer.

Within the Veil! That is where he is secured. No storms penetrate there; the angry waves may ruffle the surface water, but the bottom of the sea is calm and undisturbed. So the trials of this life may toss the believer about, but they will never touch the anchor of his soul, for it is within the Veil, No disturbing element can ever enter there.

H. N.

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A PRAISE SONG.

HOLY Father ! we address Thee—
Loved in Thy belovèd Son ;
Holy Son of God, we bless Thee,
Boundless grace hath made us one ;
Holy Spirit, aid our songs,
This glad work to Thee belongs.

Wondrous was Thy love, O Father !
Wondrous Thine, O Son of God !
Vast the love that bruised and wounded,
Vast the love that bore the rod ;
Holy Spirit, still reveal,
How those stripes alone can heal.

Gracious Father ! Thy good pleasure
Is to love us as Thy Son ;
Meting out the self-same measure,
Since Thou seest us as one.
Blessed Jesus ! loved are we,
As the Father loveth Thee.

Hallelujah ! we are hasting
To our Father's house above ;
By the way our souls are tasting
Rich and everlasting love.
In Jehovah is our boast,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost !

M. B.

THE BIBLE.

THE Bible is a wonderful book. It has come down through floods and flames. It has lasted through fire and blood. It has outlasted the revolutions of the ages ; and in days when empires rocked and thrones shook this book stood, and when Emperors and Kings banded together to stamp it out of existence, God had copies of this book in secret, with His eye on them, and His hand over them, ready to bring them out when needed.

If the Bible had not been the Word of God, man would have put it out of the world long ago. There has been no book in the whole world man has so attacked as the Bible, and amongst the many proofs that it is the Word of God is the fact that it withstands all man's attacks.

Through all the past ages of darkness, wickedness, and infidelity (2 Tim. III. 8, 9), the ancient Scriptures have been preserved to us though man has tried to burn them and scatter them to the winds.

Men and devils have conspired together to wipe them out, but here they are to-day as fresh as ever, and as if only just given to us :

“The holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus ” (2 Tim. III. 15).

God has preserved them, because He is for all men, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter III. 9). This fact is the essence of the gospel (John III. 16), and the Apostle Paul says, “I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts xx. 32).

May we each seek daily grace to value the Bible more and more. If you are in the habit of laying it aside in order to take up a newspaper or any other reading, I would say, “Halt ! ”

Never was there more urgent need of keeping close to the one grand and paramount authority, *the voice of Holy Scripture*. No human language can possibly set down in suited terms the value of the full, clear, competent, because divine, authority of the Word of God. “It is written ” (Matt. IV. 4) is a sentence which every Christian man, woman, and child should seek to have engraven on the tablets of the heart ; we can move on with a firm foot and a peaceful mind when we have that high authority for our position and our practice.

(*Selected.*)

BY FAITH YE STAND.

WHAT is the value of truth, if we are not walking in it to the glory of the Lord? Is it not rather for such the deepest condemnation? Therefore there are none for whom one may justly dread so much as for ourselves—for you and me, if careless. The more simply God has led us outside the mere reign of dreary tradition, with all its darkening and blinding effects, the more He has brought us in presence of His own word, and given us to bow to the free action of the Holy Ghost, that we may enjoy the grace and truth of Christ—the greater the danger, shame, and pain when we either act unworthily in our own persons, or take lightly in others that which dishonours the Lord Jesus. Such indifference, if it exist along with a better knowledge of the Word of God, makes all the more sad the contrast with that precious expression of His own grace. Nevertheless be sure that there is not only the same danger of slipping as for others, but when those who have the better knowledge do trip, they are apt to fall lower with less shame than such as know less with more conscience. When such unseemliness appears, many not understanding this are

scandalized. They wonder how it can be that those possessed of better knowledge of God's Word can so grievously turn aside; the truth is that the cause is painfully simple. Not a few go on decently in the religious world through love of reputation, and a desire to stand well one with another. With little power of godliness, they have the highest value for position and their interest. Can any one doubt who knows the general state of things that this exercises immense power of a low kind? But it is not so where the Lord has distinctly led them out into a platform practically Christian.

There nothing is allowed of God to pass in the long run but the power of the Spirit; and the danger is like Peter's, when he was no longer in the ship (where he was safe enough comparatively), but went out to Jesus walking on the water. Then it is Christ Who sustains, one way or another, or sinking is inevitable.

Faith alone could avail itself of the divine power; the lack of it exposed him the more because of his ardour, though the Saviour was immediately in sight to extricate from peril and sorrow. Nothing but dependence on Christ can rightly keep the Christian—I do not mean from drowning so much as dishonouring the Lord.

(Communicated by H. A. M.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. A. L.—Perhaps the following remarks which we cull from the pages of a contemporary may help to meet your difficulty: “Many nowadays, having imbibed mistaken views, would turn the rulers of the land into ministers of *grace*, whereas God has made them ministers of *justice*. If thieves and robbers arise to kill and to destroy, the ruler is to go after them with the sword, and if a nation should arise to commit the same deeds it is to be met in the same way, though this may require the calling out of all the forces the ruler can command. War, if just, is but an extreme form of government. The Christian, who is called upon to follow in the footsteps of Him Who came ‘not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them,’ naturally shrinks from having part in this sort of work. It is not congenial and he avoids it as far as in him lies.” Nor is this to be blamed. Scripture tells us that judgment is God’s “strange work.” He delights in mercy, not in judgment, though He will assuredly execute the latter. And so do His children.

As to your question, “How can I love my enemy if I am trained to kill him?” it seems to us that you are not keeping clearly in view the difference between grace and government. The burglar has no right to call the policeman his enemy because he has taken him prisoner and

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walked him off to prison. True, in our individual pathway we are not to retaliate, to repay enmity with enmity and evil with evil. Other and happier feelings are to possess us. But this in no way conflicts with government in the world. The ruler is "the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. XIII. 4). So in either case, whether for the praise of him who does good or for the punishment of him who does evil, the ruler is *the minister of God*.

L.—Romans XIV. 13.—This verse certainly admonishes us not to put a stumbling-block or an occasion of offence in our brother's way. If the use of fermented wine at the Lord's Supper is judged to be such an occasion, then that is enough to justify its disuse. In such matters the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves. But in these things we are not to judge one another, as verse 17 warns us, and all of us should remember that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."

T.—*Conscience* is that faculty in us that takes knowledge of right and wrong. Acquired by the fall of man, it is a useful monitor but an uncertain guide. *Heart* is a word variously used in Scripture, and no one fixed meaning can be attached to it.

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It is a figurative expression and in the main means the individual himself. Our Lord tells us that out of the heart proceed all manner of defiling things—they come from the depths of his moral being (Matt. xv. 19). We are also said to believe with the heart—that is, with the heart interested in the thing believed (Rom. x. 10). In Hebrews x. 22 we read of the heart being “sprinkled from an evil conscience”—that is, the individual believer, burdened with the sense of his sins and his unfitness for the courts of the Lord, sees that burden removed by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. *Soul* is connected, generally speaking, with our animal nature and *spirit* with the higher and intellectual side of our being.

As to the books about which you inquire, *Baxter's Saint's Rest* is an old Puritan volume, very much esteemed by many but not read so much now as in former days. Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* we cannot unreservedly commend. “The author was a Catholic, who, as far as he had light, was pious; but in whose writings the Cross of Christ scarcely once appears as an atonement and the way of salvation. He must be regarded as a man who endeavoured to love God, but who had the least possible knowledge of the love of God, and of the truth of the gospel” (J. N. D.). The third book you name is one with which we are not acquainted.

Delta.—We cannot say more on the subject of conscription and the Christian's relation thereto than we have already said in some recent issues. Possibly our answer to A. A. L. in the current num-

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ber may help. Yes, Scripture furnishes examples of obedience to rulers coming into conflict with the will of God. In every such case the will of God must be done at all costs. So thought the three Hebrew worthies of the Book of Daniel who rather than obey the king's decree suffered themselves to be cast into the fiery furnace. So thought Daniel himself and faced the lion's den. The apostle's answer to the Jewish rulers tells the same story. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." In all things God must be first. But whether, if conscription becomes the law of the land, anyone would be justified in refusing to serve is another matter. Wait and see. In any case, each must act according to his own faith and what he believes the will of God to be.

"My Beloved is mine : and I am His."—CANT. VI. 3.

LONG did I toil, and know no earthly rest ;
 Far did I rove, and found no certain home ;
 At last I sought them in His sheltering breast,
 Who opes His arms and bids the weary come.
 With Him I found a home, a rest divine ;
 And I *since then am His*, and He is mine.

Yes, *He* is MINE! and nought of earthly things,
 Not all the charms of pleasure, wealth, or power,
 The fame of heroes, or the pomp of kings,
 Could tempt *me to forego His love* an hour.
 Go, worthless world, I cry, with all that's thine!
 Go! I my Saviour's am, and He is mine.

A WORD BY THE WAY.

IT would be sad indeed were the heart of the Christian to be insensible to the sorrows of the day in which we live. All of us are conscious that an element of sadness has entered into the life of the nation for which there can be no cure so long as the war lasts and it continues to exact its daily toll of human life and to plunge family after family into mourning for loved ones fallen on the field of battle. Morning by morning the tale is told of gains and losses, of brave deeds that will live in history, while fortune seems one day to favour this side and on the next to lean to that. But the end is not in sight and no one knows for certain how things will go. Little wonder then if our minds become absorbed with these great and grave matters. And there lies the danger against which we raise a kindly but warning voice. Let us give earnest heed lest all that is going on in France and Flanders, in Italy and Russia, and in the Gallipoli peninsula engross our thoughts to the damage of our spiritual life. Let us be on the watch lest the things which are seen crowd out of our vision the things which are unseen and eternal. That's the danger.

For anything that enfeebles our spiritual life and beclouds the true outlook of the soul weakens in us the power for prayer and intercession—a work to which we are called and in which we should most earnestly engage. Never was it more needed. The Apostle Paul gives us very specific instructions in reference to it in 1 Timothy II., and exhorts us to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings for all men—even the very highest—kings and all that are in authority. Everyone may not know that the word *intercessions* means “personal and confiding intercourse with God on the part of one able to approach Him.” This is exactly the privilege of the true believer. He is entitled to approach God with boldness—to come with courage to the Throne of Grace and plead the cause of others. Was there ever a time when it was more called for? And if on the part of the nation and its rulers there is not the acknowledgment of God that we would earnestly desire to see, so much the more should *we* give God His place. For though the world looks like a field abandoned to human passions it is not really so. God’s hand is on the helm. He knows how to make the wrath of man to praise Him and so to overrule it that it shall work out His wise designs. Those who know not God may think that victory will always follow the biggest battalions, but others who

know Him and who have read His word aright will not think so. Power belongs to God and the shields of the earth are His. "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy" (Ps. XXXIII. 16, 18). Of the truth of these words the heart of the Christian is well assured. If others should forget it let us remember it when kneeling before the Throne of Grace with supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings. May we own for ourselves and others the supremacy of God. May we humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and if on the ground of our conduct we can enter no plea for help, we can cast ourselves upon His mercy.

Some of us may find it difficult to frame our words aright. We feel our infirmity. The things that are taking place are too large for us to grasp in all their varied bearings. But God knows. He reads our hearts and sees the desires which His Spirit awakens there (Rom. VIII. 26). In that there is comfort. So we pray on, even if our prayers are more like groans than anything else. They reach His ear and He knows their meaning.

And He will keep our hearts in peace in

dark days as well as bright ones if we only trust Him. High above the noise of the water floods comes a well-known voice saying unto us, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John XIV. 27). What cheering words are these ! And as we listen to them we charge our souls to remember that our home, our portion, our sphere of blessedness is in a land that is fairer than day. God's right hand shall bring us there. And all along the way, be it rough or smooth, there is One who will be always telling us that His grace is sufficient for us : for His strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. XII. 9). Let us hide these words in our heart. There is power in them, and life and light, and endless blessing.

"IF upon a stormy sea thou art buffeted by huge waves and contrary winds, cover the boat of thy soul with the sweet will of the Eternal God, and thou shalt be filled with peace : resting tranquilly without fear or ill—wrapped in the robe of His love, which no waters can penetrate."

"You are walking on *very thin ice* just now, but 'underneath are the Everlasting Arms'; although you may not *feel* them, they are there!"—Deut. XXXIII. 27.

HOW THE LORD OF KUSSAK KEPT HIS WORD.

“An honourable man ; all that he saith cometh surely to pass.”—I SAM. IX. 6.

“Lord . . . who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. . . . He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”—PSALM XV. 1-4.

“Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name.”

PSALM CXXXVIII. 2.

RUNJEET SINGH, one of India's warrior princes, had laid siege to the fortress of Kussak. His plans had been made, guns and men had been placed in their positions, and the word of command went forth that the place was to be taken by storm.

The fortress of Kussak stands high on the spur of a lofty mountain range. For hundreds of years brave chieftains had dwelt there with their vassals, maintaining their independence in spite of repeated attacks. And the onslaught of Runjeet Singh's army was resisted as bravely as those in bygone days had been.

Weeks passed without the besiegers making appreciable headway. At last Runjeet Singh gave up hope of success by ordinary means. So he sent a message to the brave lord of Kussak, undertaking to treat him with princely

honours if he would surrender, and promising to give him certain villages for a possession.

The lord of Kussak, however, did not want villages. He desired to maintain his independence and to guard his mountain stronghold. But there was one great difficulty that confronted him, namely, the failure of his water supply. They had neither wells nor springs in the fortress. They had large tanks to catch the rain, but of what use were they when no rain had fallen for months? The tanks were almost empty. The garrison could not hold out without water. What should they do?

There was no sign of rain. So at last the lord of Kussak sent an envoy to Runjeet Singh, promising to surrender the following morning.

That very night, however, the clouds gathered in the sky and the rain began to fall. Before morning dawned the tanks were filled to overflowing. The soldiers came to their commander and said :—

“Don’t let us surrender ; we have plenty of water now.”

Sadly, but firmly, he answered : “ *I have promised, and I must keep my word.*” And at the time fixed he marched out with his troops and surrendered to Runjeet Singh.

It was a brave and honourable act. The keeping of the promise meant loss. In the

language of the psalm quoted at the head of this narrative, he had sworn to his own hurt. But like the man whom the psalm so strikingly commends, he did not change when he discovered the loss that the keeping of his promise entailed. He did not plead "necessity." He had passed his word and he would not go back on it.

Naturally one's mind turns to the contrast between this chivalrous deed of a pagan chief and the ignoble act of a so-called Christian nation in attacking a weaker country whose neutrality it had pledged its word to respect and to defend. The plea of "necessity," put forward by the German Chancellor, places such perfidy in a still more unfavourable light. But the object of this paper is not to recall the worthlessness of a German pledge, but to emphasize something that is of superlative importance to both the reader and the writer, namely, *the unswerving fidelity of God to His Word*.

If God commends His servants for keeping their word it is because in this they resemble Himself. If Samuel is mentioned as "honourable," it was because his *word* was to be depended on.

Think of all that God is. Consider His omnipotence, His wisdom, His majesty, His delight in mercy. All this, and more, is involved in His Name, for His Name is the

revelation of Himself. And above all this, beyond all His Name, God has magnified His Word !

What " word " is this to which such a place of unspeakable honour is given ? Not exactly the Scriptures, though they are in very truth the Word of God. If the Scriptures had been referred to, another term would have been used in the original Hebrew. The term employed has more the force of " a saying " or " a promise." (The learned translator of the " New Translation " points this out in a footnote.) What the passage conveys is that when God has passed His Word, He esteems the keeping of that Word to be His supreme interest, surpassing all else in importance.

Does this in any way concern us, the reader and writer of these pages ? It may alter the perspective of our view as to what is of primary importance in the thoughts of God, but has it any practical and direct bearing upon our welfare ? Yes, indeed it has. Let me show you how.

(1) God has pledged His Word to forgive, justify and eternally save all who put their trust in Christ. There can be no doubt as to His *ability* to do so. He is not like those of whom we read that "*they are not able to perform*" that which they intend (Ps. XXI. 11). In this matter we may with all assurance take our stand with Abraham who was " fully

persuaded that what He had promised, He was *able also to perform* " (Rom. III. 21).

The sinner who turns in faith and repentance to the Saviour need have no misgiving as to the result. God will most certainly fulfil every pledge that He has given to such.

(2) But there is another thing. God has made statements with reference to all who *have* put their faith in Christ. These statements are every whit as reliable as the promises already referred to. They are clothed with the same authority, and depend upon the same immutable foundation, namely, the sure adherence on the part of God to every word that He has recorded.

The statements of which I speak contain the emphatic assurance of the complete forgiveness, and present justification and possession of everlasting life, of every one who has put his soul's faith in the blessed Saviour. Let me quote some of them.

As to forgiveness : " God, for Christ's sake, **HATH** forgiven you " (Eph. IV. 32). " I write unto you, little children, because your sins **ARE** forgiven you for His Name's sake " (1 John II. 12).

As to justification : " By Him all that believe **ARE** justified from all things " (Acts XIII. 39).

As to the present possession of everlasting life : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that

believeth on Me HATH everlasting life ” (John VI. 47).

“ I never saw anything like it ! ” exclaimed a lawyer as he was leaving the bedside of a dying Christian ; “ Mr. A. is JUST AS CLEAR in spiritual matters as he always was in business matters.”

What was it, do you think, that excited the lawyer’s wonder, and made him speak like this ? He had heard a friend ask the dying man whether he had any doubts or fears as to the future.

“ No,” he had replied, “ I have not ; why should I ? The Word of God says : *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* Now I do believe on Him ; I trust Him as my Saviour. Can there be any doubt, then, about my future ? ”

The lawyer thought this was extraordinary confidence. But was it ? Would it not rather have been extraordinary incredulity if one shadow of misgiving had remained ?

Thank God, then, for the stable foundation on which we may build our assurance. Heaven and earth will one day pass into nothingness, but not a syllable that God has uttered, not a word that He has caused to be recorded, shall ever come to naught.

H. P. B.

RESURRECTION.

IN very many pages of Holy Scripture, the ceaseless activities of the devil against all that is of God upon earth are clearly portrayed. Nothing seems to damp the ardour with which he wages war against all that is good. Nor will his incarceration in the abyss during the millennial reign of Christ humble the pride of his evil nature, for the moment he is released he will be found with unabated zeal leading rebellion against his Maker (Rev. xx. 2, 7).

When, after the Church has been caught up at the coming of Christ, Satan is cast out of the heavens, with all the more zeal will he pursue his wicked career upon earth, knowing that the time of his imprisonment is at hand (Rev. xii.) The loss of his heavenly position will only incite him to deeds of more daring wickedness. There is no end to his God-hating activities but the lake of fire and brimstone, where his opportunities for working evil will have passed away for ever (Rev. xx. 10).

Though his agents are everywhere, and working in every land for the undoing of the human race, his ceaseless, and most virulent attacks, are reserved for that which bears the name of Christ. It is in the circle of Christian profession that he has been most successful. When the true saints have been taken out of the way he will find the sphere of his most

powerful operations in apostate Christendom. There the revived Roman Empire will astonish the world, and to the head of that imperial power he will give all his influence. These coming events are already casting their dark shadows upon the nations which profess the name of Christ.

But if we see the Christian profession, which is solemnly responsible to maintain a light for Christ, becoming largely traitorous to His interests, we can be thankful that the Holy Scriptures remain, and that we have the Holy Spirit to unfold their precious truths to our souls, and to strengthen us in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. We have not been left to our own resources. Unfailing resources are in our living Head, unfailing power in the Holy Spirit, and unfailing fountains of eternal truth in the Holy Scriptures ; that Word which He has magnified above all His Name (Ps. CXXXVIII. 2). Therefore we have no reason to fear the issue : “ The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ” (Rom. XVI. 20).

Still the conflict has to be continued, and with a foe who carries on his warfare under a false flag, and whose servants are clad in the uniform of soldiers of the Cross. He and his agents will quote Scripture, and bewilder you if possible with an imposing display of dead languages, and with many references to the Old

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Testament, through which they cannot find their own way, but that will not matter if you can only be misled.

Indeed, I have generally found that those who seek to pervert the truth prefer the Old Testament to the New. The New is too plain for them, for there the true and full light shines. Like owls and bats they prefer the gloom. There they are more at home. From the Old they cunningly elaborate a system of doctrine, in which the unwary can find no flaw, and the New they would have us read in the light, or rather the darkness, of their system. The Old, and that perverted, is to teach us the meaning of the New, instead of the New being used to make clear to us the meaning of the Old. The subtilty of the Serpent is manifest in this.

That no evil doctrine can be found in the Old Testament goes without saying, for it is the revelation of God, but in those ancient oracles God was hidden within a veil, and it was from the darkness where He dwelt that He spoke to His people. But in the New there is no veil, for God is in the light, and He is speaking plainly to men. The Old cannot be understood apart from the New, but the New needs no help from the Old to make its words intelligible. The power that would hold us in the darkness, now that the true light shines, is of him who was a "murderer

from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it " (John VIII. 44).

The precious and special truth with which I desire to occupy the reader has always in this dispensation been the great object of the enemy's attack. It was upon the resurrection the first onslaught was made, when the gospel was preached at Pentecost (Acts IV. 2). It was then opposed by the sect of the Sadducees—a small sect in that day—but now its name is legion. Alas! its emissaries crowd our thoroughfares, sit in the seats of learning, and lead the thoughts of the multitude.

It is not my intention to examine all that is advanced by the enemies of the gospel, in their vain endeavour to make it appear that God has been defeated in His own creation by Satan, who, however powerful, is but a creature—fallen, it is true, but in his pristine condition, " full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty " (Ezek. XXVIII. 12). Nor do I intend to examine every Scripture in which this great truth of resurrection is taught. One text is enough for the soul who knows God, enough to silence the devil also, though it may not silence men. Still I hope to refer to more than one, if God permit.

We are told by some that there is nothing in Scripture to support the doctrine of the

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resurrection of the body and that the body is never said to be raised. Scripture, it is affirmed, always speaks of the resurrection of persons. Now I make bold to say, that (leaving out "risen with Christ") the body is always in view when resurrection is in question. It is never brought before us in any other way. The widow's son of Nain, Lazarus of Bethany, and Christ Himself are witnesses of the truth of what I say. In every instance, what goes into the grave is what comes under the power of resurrection. Then we have in Matthew XXVII. 52, 53, the resurrection of bodies plainly stated. I defy any one to show me in any part of Scripture where resurrection is spoken of and the body is not in view.

But I am told that we must not say the *body* is raised, we must simply say the *person* is raised. But in the passage quoted from Matthew the body is said to be raised, and I am not wiser than God. In Acts II. 29 Peter says of David, that he "is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." What has that to do with it, if the body is not raised? Without the truth of the resurrection of the body Peter's argument falls to the ground: "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial" (Acts VIII. 2). How could they do that if Stephen was not there? But if Stephen was there Stephen shall be raised, and he who says Stephen was not carried to his

burial says so in the very teeth of Scripture, as also does he who says that that same Stephen shall not be raised from the dead.

There are two aspects in which a dead saint is viewed: one, as present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8), the other, as buried in the grave. It is to this latter aspect that resurrection applies. We are told that Christ died, was buried, and was raised (1 Cor. xv). The angels bid the mourners, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. xxviii. 6). It does not say that He died, went to Paradise, and was raised. No, the resurrection is connected with what went into the grave. And it is so with all others as well as with Christ: "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice" (John v. 28, 29).

I know I shall be met with the statement that we must make an exception in the case of our Lord. But the Spirit of God will not allow us to do so, and the Apostle will have none of it. He says, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen" (1 Cor. xv). And throughout the whole Scriptures resurrection occupies itself with that which is buried in the grave.

That the resurrection is that of persons nobody in his senses would deny, but death is that of persons also; and yet it is only the body that is really dead, as we read in James II. 26: "The body without the spirit is dead."

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The spirit cannot be said to be dead, for it passes into the presence of the Lord, and in that state "lives to the Lord" (Luke xx. 38; Rom. xiv. 8)—a state very far better than the best state of a servant of God upon earth, whatever enjoyment of heavenly things he may have, or however sweet to him the service of Christ may be (Phil. i. 23). This being so I need scarcely say that to fall asleep in Christ has only reference to the body, for were the spirit asleep it could not be spoken of as better than going through this world in the unspeakable enjoyment of the love of God, and in His service who loved us and gave Himself for us. The Lord says of Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep," and He went to the grave where Lazarus was, and called with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." If the spirit of Lazarus was that which slept, why not go where his spirit was? why go to where the body was? Stephen commended his spirit to the Lord, and then fell asleep. His spirit left his body, and the body was dead, but seeing that our Lord by His death has removed the sting, which is sin, we are only said to sleep when we die.

Therefore, though the resurrection is of persons, it is persons who come out of their graves; and to say that it is not is not true. It is a falsehood, root and branch—a lie of the

devil. It denies the gospel, it makes God a liar, and destroys the souls of men.

Hard words! somebody will say. But which words are the harder? the words that make God a liar, or those that make man one? For the Apostle expressly declares that if Christ be not risen he has borne false witness (1 Cor. xv. 15), and filled the ears of perishing creatures with soul-destroying lies. But if Christ is raised and we are to be raised in His likeness, what about the man who denies it? I cannot regard this as a mere defective apprehension of the gospel; it is a virulent attack upon the power and blessing of divine truth.

But someone will say, Nobody denies either the resurrection of Christ or that of others. But I reply, Christ left the *grave*. This is the only kind of resurrection I find in Scripture. I do not read of any resurrection out of hades, though the souls of those who go there will be brought back out of that condition. But resurrection itself always refers to the body. A man may talk till he wearies both himself and everyone else about the metals and the gases that go to make up this earthly frame, and of all that happens to it in the grave, but when he has finished he will find that he has not effaced one line of God's revelation, which says, "All in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."

The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee

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that we shall be raised, and our resurrection shall be after the pattern of His (2 Cor. IV. 14 ; Rom. VI. 5). Seed-time and harvest, winter and spring, day and night, sleeping and waking, keep this mighty truth everlastingly before our souls. May we not forget it. “ It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body.” “ Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 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 ” (1 Cor. XV).

J. B—D.

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PART WITH HIM.

JOHN XIII. 1-17

MUCH has been written upon these verses, so much that we almost fear to add more, but the sweetness of them to our own hearts lures us on.

The imagery here is all Eastern. The traveller was to be guest in the house, he had received the invitation long before, he had accepted it, and now after his journey to the house, his sandals must be removed and his feet washed before he could take his place with the host. Let us apply the figure. Our Lord was going *to the Father*, back to the Father's house, but He would have His own with Him there, to have part with Him in the Father's house in the Father's heart. But there was something in them that hindered. He had called them to follow Him long before and they had accepted His invitation, but the dust of the journey clung to them, nothing of earth could enter there, and so in lowly grace He washed their feet and wiped them in His tender way that they might enter, even now, into the Father's house, and know something of its sweetness.

“In Him we tread those radiant heights,
His endless joy our own ;
The full, deep tide of God's delights
He would not drink alone.”

THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

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“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” Do we know them? Are our hearts resting there even now, in the joy and love of the Father’s house, where no shadow can ever enter? If so, are we telling others of its sweetness, and so luring them from the things of earth that they too must press on to have part with Him?

J. L.

THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

THE character of the Table of the Lord is peculiarly eucharistic, the character of thanksgiving. He took bread and gave thanks (Luke XXII. 19). This ought to strike our minds, and it is the line in which our thoughts should flow. We should realize it to be a table of thanksgiving, as showing all that we have in Jesus. It is not the place for prayer so much as for praise—heavenly, spiritual worship. We should not go there with the troubles of the wilderness, but to feast on what the Lord has given. When our souls realize this our mouths are filled with praise. The blood was outside on the doorpost on the Passover night, the feast was inside: the things that feed the soul are the things inside with God.

¶ In Revelation IV. there is a scene of worship; what led to the worship was the fullness connected with God Himself. In chapter V. it is

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the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and in verse 9 comes out the worship—"Thou art worthy." It flowed from what was in God's Son. They were filled with what He had done for them. If we have not been walking with the Lord confession will be needed, but it must be made before coming to the Table. Thanksgiving and praise flowing out of hearts filled with what is in God form the character of spiritual worship. There is individual responsibility that we are not there with a defiled conscience; if we are we rob the Table of the Lord of its true character.

G. V. W.

OUTPOST DUTY: OR A STORY OF A HYMN.

A BEAUTIFUL story was told by the late Professor Drummond concerning Wesley's hymn "Jesu, Lover of my soul." Two Americans who were crossing the Atlantic met in the cabin on Sunday night to sing hymns. As they sang the last hymn, "Jesu, Lover of my soul," one of them heard an exceedingly rich and beautiful voice behind him. He looked around, and although he did not know the face, he thought he knew the voice; so when the music ceased, he turned and asked the man if he had not been in the Civil War. The man replied that he

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had been a Confederate soldier. "Were you in such a place on such a night?" asked the first. "Yes," he replied, "and a curious thing happened that night, which this hymn has recalled to my mind. I was posted on sentry duty near the edge of a wood. It was a dark night, and very cold, and I was a little frightened, because the enemy was supposed to be very near. About midnight, when everything was still, and I was feeling homesick and miserable and weary, I thought that I would comfort myself by praying and singing a hymn :

'All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring,
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.'

After singing that, a strange peace came down upon me, and through the long night I felt no more fear."

"Now," said the other, "listen to my story. I was a Union soldier, and was in the wood that night with a party of scouts. I saw you standing, although I did not see your face. My men had concentrated the aim of their rifles upon you, waiting the word to fire; but when you sang out :

'Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.'

I said, 'Boys, lower your rifles, we will go home.' "

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANXIOUS TO KNOW.—Do you distinguish between the cleansing or washing which Scripture attributes to the Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and the washing of which John XIII. 10 speaks? The latter, you will remark, is spoken of in two ways. First, there is the washing that needeth not to be repeated, it is once for all. In the second place there is the washing of the feet—a daily thing. But each washing in John XIII. 10 is *with water* and not with Blood. Carefully observe that. These two washings are figuratively set forth in the Old Testament. In the consecration of the priests, which you will find described in Leviticus VIII., the first act was to wash them with water (verse 6). This was never done again. There was no second washing of that kind. But provision was made for the washing of hands and feet as often as the priests went into the tabernacle to minister (Exod. xxx. 19). It is to these two washings, we believe, the Lord refers, in speaking to His disciples in John XIII. What answers then, in our case, to these two washings? The first is the New Birth. We are born of water and of the Spirit. This cannot take place more than once. No one is born again many times over. It is once for all. “Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter i. 23). The feet-

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washing is another thing. This we constantly need, for we are walking through a defiling scene, where the feet get soiled, and so they have to be washed with the water of the word. It is *moral* cleansing. Connected with this is the present ministry of the Lord on high (see 1 John 1. 9 and chap. 11. 1). So the act of feet-washing in John XIII. is a picture of the efficacious ministry of our Lord, which never ends till our pilgrim days are done.

Now the cleansing we receive through the Blood of Jesus is another thing altogether. This, too, is once for all, as Hebrews x. teaches most plainly. Indeed, to suppose there can be any repetition of it is *in one sense* to degrade the atoning Blood of Christ to the level of the blood of those sacrifices which were offered year by year continually. And yet so many Christians think it needful to be cleansed in the Blood of their Saviour every day. But it is a profound mistake. Confession of our sins to God, self-judgment, feet-washing, all these are indeed daily requirements, but the reapplication of the Blood of Jesus is quite a different matter. We beseech you to read Hebrews x. from the 1st to the 22nd verses. Mark the contrasts in verses 11 and 12. In Judaism there were many sacrifices, in Christianity there is but one. Those sacrifices could "never take away sins," but this One perfects "*for ever.*" In those there was a constant remembrance of sins, but in virtue of this one God declares "their sins and iniquities will I remember *no more.*" In all the abiding worth of the Saviour's "one offering" every believer stands. The question of his sins, so far as

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the imputation of them goes, is *for ever* set at rest, and his title, or moral right, to enter into the Holiest can never be challenged without calling into doubt the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus. When this is understood, then the conscience of the believer is "perfected." He then knows the meaning of those five words in verse 2, "*no more conscience of sins.*" Think over all this, and if any difficulty yet remains, let us hear of it and we will try to help you further.

J. D.—The foregoing reply to another enquirer will have partly answered your query as to John XIII. 14. But you desire to know how we can wash one another's feet as the Lord enjoins us to do. In our reply above we have referred to the feet-washing of the priests in Exodus XXX. 19. But this reference does not exhaust its meaning. In Eastern lands the washing of the feet is not only a cleansing but also a refreshing service. We ought then, *led by the love of Christ*, to be joyfully ready to do the least and lowliest thing if it would contribute to the refreshment and well-being of any of our Lord's disciples. But to engage in such service effectually we must have the spirit of our Master—that meek and lowly spirit which was always to be seen in Him. He is most like his Master who counts himself the servant and slave of all. To such an one shall be given the privilege of washing, in nameless ways, the feet of others. He will have laid aside his garments—that is, everything that hinders—and be always ready with basin and towel to serve. Happy servant! May that honoured place be ours.

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T.—You have observed, of course, the different ways in which the word *soul* is used in Scripture. For example, Stephen in speaking of Jacob and his kindred going into Egypt says they were in numbers “threescore and fifteen souls” (Acts VII. 14). Here *soul* is but another word for *person*. We speak in the same way—a ship sinks with a thousand *souls* on board. It is the individuals that are meant. Then *soul* is used to denote that part of us that does not die with the death of the body. So in 1 Kings XVII. 21, 22 Elijah prays that the child’s soul may return to him again, and the Lord heard him and it returned. In ordinary language the two words—soul and spirit—are used for one another. So Stephen in the hour of martyrdom cried, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Scripture, however, in certain connections distinguishes between them.

The term “a man in Christ” signifies the individual. Every true believer is entitled to speak of himself as a man in Christ.

B.—We do not wonder that your study of Mrs. Eddy’s book leads you to conclude that the belief of Christian scientists is something very different from what has been revealed either in the Old or New Testament. It is indeed. In their theology there is no room either for the deity or the true humanity of the Lord Jesus and it denies the reality of His death, His atoning sacrifice and the fact of His bodily resurrection. A system of which this can be said is branded with the mark of an evil origin. It is from beneath and of the devil.

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But there is no need for us to fill these pages with a refutation of its many errors and absurdities. The work has been done—well done, by others. You will find *Christian Science: briefly tested by Scripture* by A. J. Pollock quite sufficient to enlighten you as to its main doctrines, as also the manner of life of its founder, Mrs. Eddy. It can be had, post free, for fourpence from our publishing office.

As to the case of healing you mention, we knew a lady years ago exactly in the same condition. Indeed, so serious was the state of her heart that she was forbidden even to lift her hand to her head. She afterwards married, became the mother of a family and is still living and, we believe, quite well. Had this lady been brought into touch with Christian Science her recovery would have been placed undoubtedly to its credit.

But even if Christian Science could point to actual miracles of healing it would not be relieved from the charge of being Satanic in its origin. It is by “power, signs and lying wonders” that the new religion will be accredited when the Wicked One, the man of sin, is revealed (2 Thess. II. 7–12). Its adherents will be able to appeal enthusiastically to these evidences. They will be incontestable. And they will serve their end. They will bring people under the power of the “strong delusion” which will result in their solemn judgment. The marks of those days can be seen already. In the same connection you may read Matthew VII. 21–23, from which we learn that the doing of wonderful works is no passport into the kingdom.

THE WORD AND THE TOUCH.

“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in nowise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid His hands on her : and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”—LUKE XIII. 11-13.

I WANT to deal as briefly as possible with a particular difficulty that affects many Christians, though happily not all. Some of us are naturally light-hearted, and manage to go on our way without much thinking of ourselves. Now that may be a danger. It is possible to go through life light-heartedly and miss the exercises that others have, and to lose the profit that these exercises yield. On the other hand, it is the tendency of some to turn in upon themselves and to be everlastingly scrutinizing their own feelings. They are always in a state of self-occupation, which neither tends to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ nor to their own spiritual good.

If you are suffering as a Christian from being occupied with yourself you are like a man who is ever looking at his own feet and stumbling just because he does so. Your

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thinking about yourself does not produce the power you would fain possess. The more you search for it in your experience and in your service the less there appears to be.

Now this poor woman is a striking type of souls in your condition. She was evidently a child of God, and not an unconverted sinner, for the Lord speaks of her as *a daughter of Abraham*. There is a spiritual significance in those words, as we may learn from Galatians III. 7, "They who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." This woman was a daughter of faith, for she walked in the steps of that faith which Abraham had, who was the father of the faithful. They are truly his children who follow in his footsteps spiritually, in other words, those who are believers. This woman was one of them, and the astonishing fact is that for eighteen long years she had been bound by Satan. From this we learn the power that Satan may have over one who is really a true child of God. In her case it was a physical infirmity. She was bent double, and so bent that she could see nothing but herself. You might perhaps go a long way before you find a Christian so wholly occupied with himself as to be unable to see anything else. Most of us have our bright times, when we seem to get away from ourselves. Then something happens, and we get again into the old rut.

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Now the Lord Jesus was equal to this terrible case. The affliction which this woman had is spoken of as *a spirit of infirmity*, and the spiritual affliction of which I am speaking may be so described. Those who suffer from it seem to live always in the shade. They feel morally bowed down, and are occupied with themselves. They say, "I am such a failing creature and is it not right to be conscientious and to scrutinize my motives and my behaviour?" Yes, but it is not right to allow this to become a continuous process.

This woman came into the synagogue. It was the custom for men to worship in the main body of the building and the womenfolk in a gallery, behind a sort of grille. You will agree with me that a woman who "could in no wise lift herself up" was a most unlikely person to come under observation. But such is the beautiful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that she was the only person that He singled out. His eye rested on the sufferer. To her He said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." Then the Lord put His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.

The same Saviour can deliver you from your unsatisfactory experiences or your fancied good experiences—the worst thing of all.

There are some verses in the Psalms which exactly describe this state. The Psalms give

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us every kind of experience. Sometimes we are carried down to the depths of despair. Then again we are on the mountain top, finding all our resources in God. Almost every experience that can be thought of may be found in the Book of Psalms.

Let us turn to Psalm LXXVII.: "I cried unto [God with my voice, and He gave ear unto me." That is the theme of the Psalm. God did give ear. "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted." Evidently the Psalmist was passing through a very gloomy time. Then he makes this extraordinary statement: "I remembered God, *and I was troubled.*" This is not the experience that is normal to a Christian. Properly speaking, he would say, "I remembered God, and my heart overflowed with joy." Here he says, "I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." He felt crushed beneath a load that he could not support. "Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak." He could find no words to express his inward misery.

If you met a man with a doleful face you would say, "You look very down to-day. What is troubling you?" Now the mind has a very great effect on the body. The Psalmist was so troubled that he could not sleep. He could not pray, and he hardly liked to talk to

his fellow-men. What has he been dwelling upon? He tells us. "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times." People often speak of the good old days, and exaggerate the blessedness of them. He says, "I call to remembrance my song in the night." But that does not help him. He adds, "I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search." He was trying to find something to lay hold of as a source of happiness in the old days. What will that do for him? The next verse shows us. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? Will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Does His promise fail for evermore? . . . Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" It seems to me as if these questions came out like a torrent, tumbling over one another. What is the man doing? He begins to judge God by his own miserable experiences? He doubts God. Will the Lord cast off for ever? Wherever is there anything to give the smallest idea of such a calamity as that? He asks these questions: "Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Does His promise fail for evermore?" We can answer these five questions and say "No" to every one of them. He doubts God because of what he finds in his own wretched heart. Now that is the tendency of us all if occupied with ourselves. It may be

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that to-day you fear that you have deviated from the right path. The devil would like you to brood over that. It is right to confess this failing, but God desires that having confessed it you should have done with it, so that the happy link of communion between your soul and the Lord may be restored. The enemy would use these things to bend us double, to make us look morbidly within. Nowhere are we told to brood over our failures. We are told to confess our sins. God is faithful and just to forgive them, so that we may go on in communion and in power.

Is there any hope for a man like this? Look at verse 9 of our Psalm. That little word "Selah" marks a pause. Now stop and think. Think of the length to which a man will go in his doubting and questioning of God. Now the scales fall from this man's eyes, and the first thing he says when he comes to himself is, "*This is my infirmity.*" That is the very word that is used in regard to the woman in Luke XIII. Lay hold of that, and it will do you good. The spell is broken as soon as we label the thing with its right name. God's way is that you should judge yourself, and condemn yourself in thorough accord with the cross of Christ, where all that you are as a man in the flesh was condemned. God's desire is that you should confess and be forgiven, and go on in communion. In the days when the Psalmist

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was looking within, he remembered God, and he was troubled. Now he says, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember"—not "my own miserable failures," but—"the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember Thy wonders of old." He thinks of better things.

Just as there are caterpillars which always take the colour of the leaf on which they are feeding, so there are Christians who are always characterized by that upon which their minds are dwelling. If you dwell habitually upon mournful things, you will have a mournful face. Do you want to be happy? Dwell upon happy things. That is a simple recipe, but a very good one. Do you know how to be miserable? Dwell always upon that which is dark. You say, "There are plenty of these things, and are we not to recognize them?" Of course we should. But having confessed them to God, let us dwell upon the things that are good and right and blessed. Let us remember the works of the Lord. Let us remember His wonders of old.

And now the Psalmist raises his eyes to heaven, and he says, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Who is so great a God as our God?" You would hardly believe it was the same man. His heart and mind are dwelling upon God, and instead of mourning about his own feebleness, he is rejoicing and praising

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God. "Thou art a God that doest wonders. Thou hast declared Thy truth among the people."

Well, thanks be to God, we can go a great deal further than the Psalmist. God had revealed Himself then in His greatness in creation, and in righteousness, but we know Him as revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the God that we know, and in whom, through infinite grace, we may rejoice.

Now for one moment I take you back to the woman. How did the Lord produce this wonderful change in her, so that instead of always looking at herself she could stand upright and give glory to God? By His *word* and by His *touch*. These, I believe, are symbolic. What liberates our souls and sets us in happy liberty before God? It is first the *word* of the Cross. The gospel comes to us with a word of forgiveness. It tells us most emphatically that all who believe are justified from all things. No one in the world is, on God's side, shut out from this great gospel offer of forgiveness, but at the same time only they who come in faith and receive it actually have it. It rests in its efficacious and cleansing power upon all that believe. The gospel message comes to you pointing to the cross of Christ, not merely saying, "Behold in the cross of Christ the paying of your debt," but "Behold in the

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Cross the condemnation of all that you are in yourself." It settles not merely the question of the guilty things you have done, but of the guilty root from which they all come. The Cross is the great Magna Charta of the believer's liberty. I see the condemnation of all that I am in myself there. If I were speaking to some believer who has never yet stepped into this happy condition, I should say, "Here you are in this distressful condition. The cross of Jesus is the loosing of you from that dreadful clinging thing—*self*." Then came the *touch*. The Lord laid His hands upon her, and the work was done. There is the union of the two things, the word and the touch. You find in Romans VI. what answers to the former. There the cross of Christ is seen not only in relation to your sins, but to yourself. Then when you come to Romans VIII. you have the indwelling Spirit, empowering us for happy occupation with God and with Christ. You can now go through this world upright and glorifying God. I look upon the word of the Lord as being similar to the word of the gospel that we have in Romans VI., and His touch as being symbolic of the blessed gift of the Spirit of God.

Well, may God grant that what has been said may be for the help and blessing of somebody. Since we have escaped the snare of the fowler, and are no longer in danger of hell,

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the adversary is set upon engaging us with something else rather than that which should normally occupy us. If he can get hold of a conscientious believer, and tie him up in a knot, if he can keep him always looking within, he has gained a victory. He has spoiled that Christian, so far as his witness for Christ is concerned. That poor bowed woman would have been no advertisement for the doctors, but a scarecrow to frighten away any likely patient. It may be that if you are a Christian of this kind your unconverted friends will say, "Look what religion has done for him ! Look what a face he pulls ! " That is no advertisement for the grace of your Saviour. You are somewhat of a scarecrow to frighten anybody away who is inclined to turn their attention in that direction. The Lord wants you to be bright and happy, to be in the enjoyment of His love, to glorify God. It is not a great mark of saintship to be in this miserable condition. Let your heart dwell on the glories of Christ and the fullness there is in Him, and the excellencies there are revealed in His word. The more you get your soul filled with these things, the happier, the brighter and more blessed it will be for you, and the more likely that those who see you will glorify God.

F. B. H.

MEETNESS HEAVENWARD AND EARTHWARD.

COLOSSIANS I. 12.

DO we sufficiently dwell on the manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us ? Do we enter into what it is to be loved of the Father and lay hold of the precious fact that it is His pleasure—nay, more, HIS GOOD PLEASURE—to have us BEFORE HIM IN LOVE ? He has taken us into favour in the “ Beloved ” and given us an inalienable title to a heavenly inheritance. We are made fit for heaven with its joys and glories purely on the ground of grace. Our part is to give “ thanks to the Father, who hath MADE US MEET.”

To be made “ meet ” means that we are fully qualified to be at home, in the Father’s presence, to share in the feast which He has spread—a feast of love indeed !

The Father Himself has made us *meet*. We are not only to know what it is to have been welcomed by Him in our rags and misery, and to have received the kiss of welcome which assured us of His feelings towards us whilst we were still a great way off, but He would have us consciously at peace in His presence.

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Hence the servants are told to bring forth the "best robe" for the returning prodigal. Like Joshua in Zechariah III. 4, his "filthy garments" are removed, and he is clothed with change of raiment. This robe is the righteousness of God. It is UPON all them that believe; every believer is clothed in a garb suited to the holy, blessed presence of God. He is made MEET by the Father.

At the Father's command shoes are put on the prodigal's feet. He now stands in all the worth and acceptance of Another. He is taken into favour in the Beloved. His standing, his unchanging place, is now IN Christ Jesus. He is ever thus before God. Then the ring on his finger is the token of a love that knows no end, a love in which every returning prodigal finds his abiding place. The love of God is boundless, causeless, and eternal.

We are not left as we were found. God our Father met us in our sins, forgave us fully, freely, frankly! He found us captives in Satan's hand, rescued and delivered us, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. We are kept by His mighty power and none shall pluck us out of His hand. We are made MEET by the Father, loved by the Father, kept by the Father, we are going to the Father, we are rejoiced over by the Father. Heaven's courts proclaim the welcome He gave us, and it is He who has "brought forth" that

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which qualifies us to be eternally at home with Him. We may well say :

“ God and Father, unto Thee
Everlasting glory be ! ”

The word “ meet ” occurs again in 2 Timothy II. 21. The word here used does not mean meetness for the light, nor is it expressive of the Father’s joy over the returning prodigal. It reminds us that we may be quite “ meet ” for heaven, and yet not “ meet ” for the Master’s service on earth. “ Very useful ” is its proper meaning. What Christian does not desire to be very useful ? Paul tells Timothy if he would be useful certain qualifications are needful. They are summed up in two words—FLEE, FOLLOW. We are to flee youthful lusts—depart from iniquity—purge ourselves from evil. This is very comprehensive. Whatever comes under the heading of lust, whether it be of the eye, of the flesh, or the pride of life, we are to flee from it with all the energy of our souls. For our usefulness to our Lord and Master is over the moment we are defiled ; we are no longer in a fit moral condition to do a good work. We must also keep clear of evil in our associations. Never was this more needful than to-day. Vessels to dishonour abound. Scarcely a corner of Christendom but what is defiled by impure doctrine or unholy practices. From these we are to escape as

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though for our life, purging ourselves from whatever dishonours Christ.

We are to *follow* as well as to *flee*. We are to set righteousness in the foreground. This means we are to render an adequate response to every claim. God's rights come first, then a right answer to every relationship in which we are set. God is to have the first place. He must be obeyed at all costs. The grace which met us, and the love which welcomed us, surely claim a fitting return on our part. Hence we are to be sober, righteous, godly in this present world. Love and peace toward our fellow-Christians are to accompany righteousness. We must seek in every way to cultivate a meek, gentle, patient spirit, even with those who oppose themselves. There is to be no hardness ; we are enjoined to follow with them who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. Peter reminds us that a pure heart is one filled with fervent and unfeigned love to each and all of our fellow-Christians. This is the spirit in which we are to carry ourselves toward others. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all.

Fitness for heaven, then, is God's gracious work ; we can neither add to it nor take from it ; whilst *fitness for Christ's service* on earth is our responsibility.

If we would be " very useful " to our Lord and Master, if we would hear Him in a coming

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day say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," we must eschew every evil thing and be separate from every defiling association. Only thus can we be fit, suited, ready, for EVERY GOOD WORK, prepared servants, VERY USEFUL, to "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. 13, 14).

H. N.

SIDELIGHTS ON GUIDANCE.

THE subject of guidance is so much an individual matter between the soul and its Lord that it is difficult to do more than indicate certain principles that help to decide the course we should take. The Bible sometimes sheds no direct light upon the problem with which we are confronted. In such cases we are practically confined to two things—the judgment and inner impulse, and the outward circumstance. Where there is no "blurring" it is safe to act, assuming, of course, that the action we propose to take is in keeping with Biblical principles.

As conditions, of a moral nature, which are essential to be observed if we are to be guided aright, we might mention a surrendered will,

prompt obedience, and believing prayer. If we are going on in a course which we know full well is displeasing to the Lord, we simply *cannot* ask for guidance. We feel that to do so would be mockery. The first thing to do is to get into touch again with the Master and walk in fellowship with Him. Prayer gives wonderful clearness of spiritual vision. "The saint on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe." Prompt obedience secures the blessing without delay; albeit even if we follow the Lord somewhat reluctantly by reason of the pain caused to the flesh by the commandment, His grace will bear with us, and we may expect to be guided aright.

The following is a useful summary of the practical attitude we should adopt when desiring to be guided—or rather, it should be the continuous attitude of the child of God: (1) Be governed by Scriptural principles; (2) obey the leadings of the Spirit; (3) keep right with God, abide in Christ; (4) be ready to use the opportunity that presents itself (alas, we often seek opportunities for ourselves, instead of using those the Lord gives us); go ahead in the courage and energy of faith, knowing that He *is* guiding and blessing you.

The following distinction may be made in matters about which we desire to be guided. In some things the initial movement of soul is *spiritual*. For instance, we have the

spiritual desire to communicate the truth of God. Several alternatives confront us. Shall we sally forth with some tracts ; or attend an open-air meeting ; or give ourselves to prayer for certain persons about whom we are exercised (and here be it noted that true intercessory prayer is a real *work*) ; or shall we prepare our lesson for the Sunday School ; or shall we visit a sick person in whose spiritual condition we are interested ; or shall we write a letter to an unsaved relative ? Here we have quite a number of alternatives, but the motive behind each is the same, and is begotten of the Spirit. Which alternative shall we choose ? We examine our hearts and resolve that if there is any fleshly reason for choosing any one alternative, we will give it no place whatever in our decision. We take it that circumstances are the deciding factor, and surely whichever alternative we do choose we may count upon the Lord to guide and bless us therein. It were wrong to stand shivering with fear, as if the Lord would send some dreadful calamity upon us if we did not choose what we imagined to be His fixed purpose, the failure to realize which would mean a grievous sin ! Might we not say that whatever alternative we chose we were doing His will ?

On the other hand the initial movement of soul—that which sets the ball rolling, so to speak—may not be spiritual, but *natural* in-

clination. We desire to change our situation, or remove our dwelling, or get married, natural and perfectly lawful desire being the determining, initial factor. In this case, are we to wait till we get some spiritual impulse to confirm the natural inclination? We do not wait for any spiritual leading before eating our breakfast or retiring to rest. We obey the call of nature. Can we expect to be guided in the circumstances we have just indicated? We think that guidance will come in such cases from the exercise of a judgment controlled and purified by habitual regard for spiritual principles. The judgment must decide (we assume that no compelling circumstances arise that *force* us to take some other course than the one we proposed) which course will prove to be for our highest good and for that of others concerned. The higher line is, generally speaking, the Lord's will for us. "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful, but all things edify not." It sometimes happens that we are unable to decide which of two courses is the better. In that case it is as well to "let well alone." On the other hand, we call to mind that God "has given us all things richly to enjoy," and that holiness is not fastidiousness or self-suppression. From these considerations we realize that guidance in many affairs of our lives is a very delicate

matter, and that some make a mistake when they declare so confidently, "I was *led* to take that step." They were led, doubtless ; but what was the nature of the leading ?

God's *decree* is one thing ; His *desire* is another. He has made *provision* for the salvation of all men, and desires that all men should be saved. But we cannot say that He has definitely *purposed* the salvation of all men. His desire for His children is the higher line. But if we fail at times to choose the higher line, let us not be dismayed as if our failure had defeated the Creator's eternal purpose and put the universe out of joint ! We may become too anxious on the subject of guidance. When our eagerness to be guided aright reaches the danger-point of anxiety, we need to beware lest we become entangled in the meshes of a bewildered mind and a falsely accusing conscience. While we act up to the light we have, and are really desirous to know and do the Lord's will, we may confidently conclude that He *is* guiding us. We *believe* where we do not *see*.

E. A.

JESUS, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea.
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal ;
Chart and compass come from Thee :
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me !

SOMETHING FOR TO-DAY.

Read Phil. iii. 17 to iv. 9.

HOW important it is that we should keep in memory the fact that our citizenship is in heaven. There is so much in this poor world to make us forget it. The apostle speaks with tears of some “who mind earthly things,” but, says he, *our* conversation—our associations in life—are all above. Here below we are but strangers and pilgrims.

Suppose you were on a visit to some distant land, having left all that you love most behind you here. In course of conversation you say to somebody, “I am only a stranger in your country and I have no thought of settling down. All that my heart loves best is over yonder.” So is it here. Our conversation—our commonwealth—our associations in life are in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour.

Mark the intensity of that word *look*. Let us ask ourselves whether we are really looking for the Saviour. Of course we all know that the Lord is coming again. That truth has long been written down as an article in our creed and we would not surrender it no matter who summoned us to do so. And if any talk to us about the grave and a dying day, we say, “Not death, but the coming of the Lord is our hope.” And yet all the while we might not be among those who *look* for the Saviour. For this looking is not a matter of clear views, but of the

state of our spiritual affections. Happy to be among those who are *looking* for the Saviour.

Then, mark, we look for the *Saviour*, not for the Judge. We look for the Saviour, to put the finishing touch to that salvation of which through grace we are already the subjects. When the Saviour comes again He will change these bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like unto His body of glory !

Let us challenge our hearts as to how far we realize that it is to heaven we belong, and whether we are really looking for the Saviour Himself to come. And let us pray God that these well-known truths may have a larger place in our hearts and exercise a mighty influence over our life. It is easy to hold these things in the letter, but they have no power when held in the letter only.

In the early part of the fourth chapter the apostle turns from these heavenly truths and comes down to commonplace things of everyday life. First of all, he says, " Rejoice in the Lord *always*." Mark that little word *always*. And to make the exhortation more emphatic, he adds, " And again I say, Rejoice." What a word that is ! The Holy Ghost knows how to minister it in power to the soul apart from any human comment. The outlook may not be very bright and there may be much to fill the heart with sorrow. But there is always a Voice saying to us, " Rejoice in the Lord *always*, and again I say, Rejoice." *Rejoice always?*

Yes, even when the clouds gather across the sky, when some great loss seems to be imminent, when some pillar on which you lean is about to be taken away. Yes, rejoice in the Lord alway. What a word for us ! Why then should all the sunshine go out of our face, and our heads hang down like the branches of a willow tree ? Christ abides, the unchanging One. Nothing can separate us from Him, or deprive us of the solace and support of His presence.

Think of the sixth verse : “ Be over anxious about nothing.” Mark that word *nothing*. What a word ! Who sends it to us ? One who loves us perfectly, who knows our need, and the circumstances through which we are passing, who sees to-morrow as clearly as He sees to-day. “ Be careful for nothing.” It is a word for our present strengthening and comfort. Is there an anxious heart scanning these pages ? I do not know the source of your anxiety, but I beg you to listen to this word, “ Be careful for *nothing*.” What more ? “ But in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” What a word ! It comes straight down from the heart of our God and Father, who loves us—oh so perfectly and tenderly ! It comes to your heart and mine. What a privilege that we can let our requests be made known unto God. Never is His door closed against us. He is never too busy to listen to our feeble, stammering words ;

nor will He ever upbraid us for going to Him too often. Let your requests—whatever their nature—be made known to God. Does He not know them? Of course He does. But the heart finds relief in unburdening itself to God. And what shall be the result? Why, His peace which passes all understanding—deep and unutterable—shall keep your hearts and minds *through Jesus Christ*. Yes, it is through Him, our living Saviour at God's right hand, the great Priest of His people, the One who is able to succour us in our hours of trial, to sympathize with us in our times of sorrow and to save us to the very end of our pilgrim days!

Of the verses that follow we need not speak. The apostle bids them think of things that are true, honest, just, and pure and lovely. Live in the atmosphere of the good, and what shall the result of that be? The God of peace shall be with us. There was, perhaps, among the saints at Philippi a little element of discord—a something. We see at the beginning of chapter iv. that the apostle beseeches two beloved sisters to be of the same mind in the Lord. How apt we are to have our thoughts engaged with that little something, until it grows and grows. Oh, says the apostle, do not let your mind dwell on that. Live in the atmosphere of the good, and the God of peace shall be with you. Brethren, may this familiar Scripture come home to our hearts with renewed power by God's grace.

KINDLY SPEAK UP!

(AN ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.)

WE most heartily concur in all you say as to the responsibility of those who speak or pray in public, to do so in an audible voice. We cannot see the use of speaking if it cannot be heard. An *unheard* tongue is, to all intents and purposes, the same as an *unknown* tongue. Now, the apostle in 1 Corinthians xiv. insists upon edification as the result of all speaking, praying, and giving of thanks. A man speaking in an unknown tongue is to be silenced if there be no interpreter. Why? Because he cannot edify. Well, then, how can I be edified by a man whose words I cannot hear? Impossible. It seems to us that instead of edification, in such a case, one gets irritation. If a man rises to speak in an assembly, he owes it to his Lord and to his audience to do his very utmost to speak in such a voice as to be heard by the most distant auditor. It is most deplorable to find some of our young men falling into the insufferable habit of mumbling; and we would earnestly entreat all such to watch against it, and cultivate diligently a plain, audible style of speaking and praying. We do not, by any means, wish to encourage shouting or bawling, which is quite as insufferable

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as mumbling. We would give the following passage from the Book of Nehemiah, as furnishing an example which we might all profit by: "So they read in the book in the law of God *distinctly*, and *gave the sense*, and caused them to understand the reading" (chap. VIII. 8). What was the result? "All the people went their way to eat and to drink, and to send portions, and to make mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them." If Ezra and his companions had read in a mumbling style, the people could not have understood. Let us lay the lesson to heart.

C. H. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SIXTY-TWO.—We cannot understand how any one calling himself a Christian can speak of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as an idea of ignorant men. Of course, the individual who thus speaks is himself wise—wiser than the Scriptures, for these sacred and inspired writings are full of this glorious theme. But we have heard of such folks before. Their generation is not of mushroom growth. So far back as the apostles' day we hear of them, walking after their own lusts, and scoffingly exclaiming, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter III.). But if men deride our Hope, let us cling to it the more tenaciously. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37).

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Referring to a second point in your letter, we believe it to be a serious error to affirm that the Lord Jesus is a Spirit only and thus deny His bodily resurrection. It is quite true that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," but no one is entitled to quote those words to support the denial of the resurrection of the body. Indeed, the chapter in which they are found establishes beyond doubt the reality of our Lord's resurrection, and speaks of it as the sure pledge of the resurrection of all who are His at His coming (1 Cor. xv.). But to have part in the kingdom of God in heavenly glory these bodies of ours must undergo a change. "Flesh and blood"—that is, man as he is at present constituted—cannot enter there. So when Jesus comes again "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Our body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His body of glory (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

As to your remarks concerning the soldiers who have fallen on the field of battle, we hold it to be a mischievous delusion to suppose that because they have thus fallen their salvation is assured. There is not a shred of Scripture to countenance such an idea. We believe that many of the men, realizing the inevitable danger to which they are exposed, have been led to think of their spiritual state and have turned to God and found in Christ a Saviour indeed. For this we do unfeignedly bless God and fervently pray that every means used to bring the glad tidings of the grace of God to the ears of the men at the Front may be abundantly blessed. But we would have no one cherish the belief that an unbeliever is saved because his life

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has been laid down in the service of his country. Let us in all possible ways seek the spiritual welfare of these brave men by sending them good, sound, soul-saving literature, by giving them copies of the Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and by praying that Christian soldiers may strive earnestly to lead their comrades to Christ. But do not bolster them up in the thought that if they die on the battlefield, without Christ, it will nevertheless be all right. Why should we cry "Peace, peace" when there is no peace? (Jer. VIII. 11).

E. F. G.—You will find nothing in the preaching of the first evangelists to raise any such questions as "Did Christ die for *me*? Did He bear *my* sins upon the cross?" They proceed either from an imperfect way of presenting the gospel or an imperfect way of looking at it. The Lord did not bid His messengers preach the gospel to the elect or to those who had been born again, but to every creature. It was a world-wide proclamation, sent out to all nations, and no one was left in doubt as to whether the blessings of the gospel were intended for him. "Have *I* a personal interest in the atoning work of Christ?" is what no one has any reason to ask. Let that work, without which every one of us would be shut up to eternal judgment, be viewed, first of all, in its relation to God. Against whom have I sinned? At whose bar must I stand? To whom am I responsible? Whose just claims must be met ere any can be saved? To these inquiries there is but one answer. Does the grave sin question, then, find its solution in the

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cross of Calvary? Does that Cross show to the wide world what sin is, and what the holiness and righteousness of God called for ere He could forgive and justify the ungodly? It does so undoubtedly. And now in virtue of that great sacrifice God sends out to all men everywhere the good news of a free and full salvation. Whether men believe the gospel or not is another matter. It is sent to them, and in sending it, God's holiness and righteousness are upheld and not ignored or set aside. Who, then, has any reason to ask doubtfully "Did Christ die for *me*?" Such a question is excluded, it cannot be asked, it is altogether out of place, it is an affront to God.

In all this we have made no reference to the substitutionary aspect of Christ's sacrifice for sins. That side of it concerns not the world. It has reference to believers only. It is found not in the *preaching* of the gospel, but in the *teaching* of it. Let this be much observed. Enough for sinful, guilty men at large to know that repentance and remission of sins is now preached, in Christ's name, among all nations (Luke xxiv. 47). It is preached for the obedience of faith (Rom. i. 5). [Let a man hear the gospel and believe it, then does he become a forgiven man, and is justified from all things (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Blessed fact! [And his knowledge of it is not drawn from any work within in his own heart—though there is a great work—but from the sure and certain testimony of Holy Scripture. On that imperishable foundation faith rests and not on the frail, fickle, and uncertain feelings of the human soul.

CONSCIENCE REAWAKENED.

“And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.”—GENESIS I. 15.

THERE is something very touching in the little story of which this verse is but a part. Seventeen years or more had rolled away since Joseph’s brethren with their father had come down to sojourn in Egypt. And there they had seen the glory of Joseph and had received many and abundant proofs of his loving-kindness. He had nourished them in years of famine, settled them in Goshen, and poured the best of all the land of Egypt into their bosom. But now Jacob was dead, and thoughts arise in the heart of Joseph’s brethren that show how little they really knew him—their brother. The recollection of their sin, their callous indifference to his anguish and tears when they cast him into a pit and eventually sold him as a slave to the Midianites ; the lie they forged and palmed off upon their father to hide their dark deed, all comes back to them in overwhelming force. For conscience when aroused is able to call from the grave the sins of bygone days and to

set them before our eyes in terrifying shapes and threatening forms. And so they believed that the hour of retribution had surely come, and Joseph would avenge his wrongs. While Jacob lived they had naught to fear, but he was gone and there was nothing now to shield them from their brother's wrath. Therefore did they send a trusty messenger to plead for his forgiveness and to ask that their sin should not be remembered against them now, yea, they themselves "fell down before his face." Their prayer moved their brother to tears. What tears were they? Tears of sorrow that after all he had said and done their hearts should be so ill at ease. Seventeen long years and Joseph still unknown, the sincerity of his forgiveness doubted, and fear filling their hearts lest he should requite them all the evil they had done!

How many children in the family of God are like the brethren of Joseph? They have not perfect peace. Their conscience is not at rest as they think of their sins and themselves. Does God indeed love me? Am I truly His child? Are my sins actually forgiven—every one of them? These are the questions that force themselves to the front, especially at times when the soul is oppressed with the sense of indwelling sin.

And how are they to be answered? What can silence these questions so that they shall

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never more arise to trouble or disturb ? There is one thing that can do it, and only one—*perfect love*—not ours, but God's.

Have you ever read and do you understand those words in 1 John iv. 18—"There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love " ?

How could you ever allow yourself to ask the question—Does God love *me* ? Has the blessed gospel been so clumsily framed as to leave room for doubts of that kind ? Are we not told in John III. 16 that " God so loved *the world*, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life " ? Are you not one of the world's inhabitants, or is it that you believe yourself to be the only unhappy individual out of all the world's millions whom that great love does not embrace ? Is there a daisy or a blade of grass anywhere on the wide earth for which the sun in the heavens does not shine ? Has not every buttercup in the meadows and every flower that blooms in the gardens a right to say, " That is my sun, its warm beams are for me " ? And if you object and mournfully plead against yourself that you are *such a sinner*, our answer is that your very sinnership is the proof that the gospel is for you. But though we tell you this ten thousand times, though angels from heaven

were to tell you so, yea, though the finger of God were to write it in letters of gold across the midnight sky, it would not bring a grain of comfort to your soul *unless believed*. Water quenches no thirst till it be drunk and food satisfies no hunger unless it be eaten. So God's perfect love casts out no fear till we know and believe it.

The hearts of Joseph's brethren were not "made perfect in love." We should have thought that seventeen long years of unexampled goodness would have been enough to close the door against every fear. All that time they were experiencing the care and kindness of their brother, and yet when Jacob died they trembled like a criminal who knows that his guilt has been just found out! How base and groundless their fears! But Joseph bade them "Fear not," and said, "I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." Thus he sought to make their hearts "perfect in love."

And God would do the same for you. His love is perfect, ours never is. He loved us when we were enemies, and *manifested* His love in sending His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through Him (1 John iv. 9). This is love indeed, no tongue can tell it, neither can thought fathom its depths. It is immense and unsearchable,

Nor is that love content with bringing us *life*—there is more, as indeed there must be. And so we read, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John IV. 10). *Our sins?* Yes, sins that towered mountains high, numberless as the leaves of the forest, black as midnight, sins that would have sunk us into the unfathomable abyss. God is love; therefore did He send His only begotten Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins that we might be freed from that awful load. In the face of all this can one doubt remain? Shall not His perfect love release us from the fear that has held us in bondage far too long? Shall we not cease to grieve His heart as the brethren of Joseph grieved his by their needless and painful distrust?

May we henceforth fix our steadfast gaze upon the Cross of Calvary—let us look until we see inscribed thereon in imperishable letters, “GOD IS LOVE.” And looking again we shall discern in the Saviour’s sufferings, known and unknown, that “GOD IS LIGHT.” Blended, interwoven, joined so that none can separate them, are these two things—the love and the holiness of God. And there the weary find everlasting rest.

THE VOYAGE OF THE "SNOWDON RANGE."

THE steamship *Snowdon Range* had long been given up for lost. Great, though agreeable, was the surprise when it became known that the missing vessel had been found in mid-Atlantic, helpless and drifting, but still afloat. Her rudder had gone, and the gallant crew were almost worn out with their efforts to save the ship when the steamer *Welshman* hove in sight, and succeeded in taking the disabled vessel in tow. Through the Atlantic storm the rescuing vessel and the rescued proceeded towards the Irish coast. But the troubles of the storm-tossed mariners were not at an end. When off Cork Harbour the *Welshman* cast off her charge, relying then on the efforts of the Queenstown tugs to bring the *Snowdon Range* into port. A gale suddenly sprang up, and though the vessel was near to port she was almost lost, and only an almost superhuman effort on the part of her crew enabled her to reach Queenstown, where the brave men received a welcome which their gallantry had deserved.

Dear fellow-believer, we were once on the ocean of life, helpless to save ourselves or to

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reach the heavenly port by our own efforts. But in our desperate need there appeared our Saviour and Deliverer. He has attached us to Himself, not with a frail hawser which may snap at any moment, but with a link which no power on earth or in hell can sever. We are held in the hands of the Father and the Son (John x. 27-30), and who can pluck us from that place of divine and eternal security? Sometimes the storms of the world may rage, and all the powers of evil may seem to rise in a desperate effort to prevent our reaching the heavenly port. Let them rage as they will, and let men's hearts be failing them for fear. Our hope is as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither our Forerunner has gone before us (Heb. vi. 19, 20).

How long is He who picked us up in our helpless and lost condition going to carry us? Is He going to cast us off when near the end of the journey as the *Welshman* did the *Snowdon Range*, and leave us to our own efforts to reach the Father's house? No, let the feeble believer take courage. Our blessed Lord and Saviour is going to carry us all the way home. Often disabled vessels have been taken in tow, only to be lost before they reached port, but none whom our Saviour rescues shall be like these. He never lost one of those who trusted to Him for their soul's

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eternal welfare, and blessed be His name, He never will. Perhaps before His grace saved us we may have tried to do something towards our own salvation, like the crew of the *Snowdon Range*, who rigged up ten improvised rudders, only to find each of their efforts fail. When we resign ourselves into His hands, how great the security, and how great the confidence which is ours !

He is going to carry us all our journey through, and He will not be content with allowing us to merely get inside heaven at last. He is going to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Will not our joy be great in that day ? Indeed it will, but the supreme joy will be when, with all the redeemed in heavenly glory, He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

The captain and the crew of the *Snowdon Range* received many honours from representatives of the shipping industry as a recognition of their own efforts towards saving their vessel, and well they deserved them. But when we are safe in the Father's house, having weathered all the storms of this lower world, shall we wish to claim any glory or credit for our own salvation ? No, we shall ascribe all glory and praise to the Lamb who was slain. We shall join in the never-ending song, which it is our privilege to begin even now,

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“Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

I'll cast my crown before Him,
And loud His grace extol.
Thou hast Thyself redeemed me ;
Yes, Thou hast done it all.

If this should meet the eye of anyone who is feeling the pressure of things, and may have misgivings as to whether the Lord will yet cast him off, let such a one take courage, and with renewed confidence go on his way, trusting in that great all-the-way-home Saviour.

W. MC D.

TO A YOUNG LADY.*

WE meet and part. Our paths lie in different ways. Young, beautiful, and attractive, with all the charms that nature can bestow upon you, you find yourself flattered and admired. Balls, parties, and the gay flutter of the world possess delights, and you have many following after you, offering you all that earthly fame and fortune can command. But is this all ?

* This and the following paper, “The Gravity of the Moment,” can be had, each separately, for general distribution at very low rates from our publishing office, 12 Paternoster Row, London.

In time you shall find that you will have to choose the more sober paths of life. The irresponsibility of youth will have to be exchanged for the duties of life, and these again for the rest of old age. If, like Lord Beaconsfield, you come to acknowledge that "youth is a mistake, middle age a struggle, and old age a regret," how shall you pass into eternity?

Eternity you have to face, and how will you face it? With the regret of a life spent in frivolity, or with thoughts of peace and joy?

Shall you, like Lord Beaconsfield, say at your latter end, "I am overwhelmed," or shall you, like another who departed, sing:

"Glory, honour, praise and power,
Be unto the Lamb for ever;
Jesus Christ is my Redeemer:
Hallelujah! hallelujah!
Hallelujah! praise ye the Lord."

Would you be like Queen Elizabeth who cried, "A million of money for a moment of time," or the poor Cockenzie fisher lad, who died singing:

"Jesu, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

These are considerations which in all tenderness and love for your soul I would like to press on you.

The grosser enjoyments of life you would

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spurn, all works of kindness and benevolence you would delight in, but my dear young friend, there is more than these to consider. You must be born again. To enter the portals above, you must be washed in the blood of Jesus. To become a new creation in Christ Jesus you have to trust Him alone for salvation. You must confess in the language of the prophet, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. LIII. 6).

You have to set to your seal and appropriate the words of the same prophet, saying, "He was wounded for *my* transgressions, He was bruised for *my* iniquities, the chastisement of *my* peace was upon Him, and with His stripes *I am healed.*"

Once more I plead with you in all the tenderness and love that I can command, and say, "Come to Jesus, trust Him alone for salvation."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts XVI. 31).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth *My* word, and believeth on Him that sent *Me*, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

C. S. R.

THE GRAVITY OF THE MOMENT.

WHEN two leading politicians of the day declare that the nation is in great peril it is time that we should be alarmed.

But what is the nation in peril of? Is it not defeat, destruction, and effacement?

The Word of God has already announced that in the last days perilous times shall come (see 2 Tim. III. 1), so that we must be prepared for trying circumstances in every form.

I am, therefore, addressing those who have reached the period forewarned in the Scriptures of truth, and who more or less realize the solemnity of these days. I desire, however, to pass from the contemplation of earthly danger, to ask the reader to consider

THE PERILS OF ETERNITY.

Five soldiers were recently deputed at the seat of war to proceed upon a scouting expedition of great danger. "Don't send me," exclaimed one of them, "for *I am not ready to die!*" Which statement almost simultaneously brought forth the cry from another, "Send me, for *I am ready to die!*"

The second, who thus volunteered to substitute himself for the one who declared he was not ready to die, was permitted to go in

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his place. The company returned from their arduous work to tell the sad tale that he who had so willingly agreed to take the place of his friend had been killed.

This soldier was one to whom death was no terror, for he knew the Lord Jesus Christ, and instant death was to him instant glory. It meant exchange from a scene of sorrow, suffering, and death for the presence of the Lord.

What would such a change be to you, dear reader ?

You may say that you are in no worse plight than your neighbours, that you have done no injury to anyone, that you are seeking the welfare of your country, and that you are ready to die for your nation. But all these things, however true, will not bring life and peace to your soul.

“ YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN,” were our Lord’s words to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a master in Israel, and a ruler of the Jews. If addressed to him, with how much greater force must these words come to you who cannot boast of his position.

If on such a one the Lord pressed the necessity of being born again, could He say less to you than that you also require to be born again ?

These words, “ *Ye MUST be born again,*” were, however, followed by another “ *MUST.*”

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“The Son of Man MUST be lifted up.” The necessity of the new birth demanded the substitutionary death of another. “The Son of Man must be lifted up.” Lifted up on the cross as a Sacrifice and Substitute for the sinner. Lifted up from the grave by God—the proof that the work of atonement was gloriously accomplished; lifted up to glory to proclaim peace and pardon, eternal life and perennial joy to the guilty sinner, through His death and session at God’s right hand.

The soldier who died for his comrade only feebly shadowed the great love of Him who died to bear the sins of many.

“Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die, but God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 7, 8).

The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can thus turn to Christ risen and in the Father’s presence, and see in Him the One who was wounded for his transgressions, who was bruised for his iniquities, upon whom the chastisement of his peace was laid, and by whose stripes he is healed (Isa. LIII. 5).

The simple incident we have recorded illustrates the love of Christ in offering Himself as the sinner’s Substitute, and in suffering for the sinner’s sins.

The unfolding of the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ in thus meeting your soul's need is that which we would in all tenderness and affection press upon you, and invite you to come to Him and trust Him alone as your Substitute and Saviour.

That cross upon which He hung tells out God's love to you. It proclaims the depth and reality of His sufferings when He was made a curse for you, but His glorious resurrection attests His work completed, and His appearance now before God gives you ground of access in His holy presence.

Will you not avail yourself of all these rich provisions of His grace, and by accepting Him as your Saviour obtain present and eternal salvation.

"Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

C. S. R.

SCIENTIFIC INFIDELS.

NOTHING can be more miserable than to hear scientific infidels talking about Scriptures. It always reminds us of a blacksmith approaching with his tongs and hammer an exquisite Geneva watch ; or of a butcher attempting, with cleaver and saw, the anatomy of the human eye.

You must always draw a broad line of distinction between the facts of science and the conclusions of so-called scientific men. Facts are facts, wherever you meet them, either in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath; nor is there one solitary fact throughout nature's vast domain which will be found in collision with Holy Scripture.

The *reasonings* of scientific men are continually running counter to the statements of the Word of God; and, hence, we utterly reject the reasonings while we respect the facts. It seems as if the grand object of many of our scientific men is to pick holes in the Word of God. May God have mercy upon them, and open their eyes that they may see!

Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

"And so," I thought, "the Anvil of God's Word
For ages sceptic blows have beat upon,
Yet, through the noise of falling blows was heard,
'The Anvil is unharmed, the hammer's GONE.'"

C. H. M.

LESSONS FROM THE ROCK.

EMBODIED in type and symbol, figure and shadow, in the Old Testament, are those profound truths, doctrinally set forth in the New. The New sheds fresh light on those earlier records, teaching us their spiritual meaning. In Isaiah XXVI. 5 (N.T.) we learn that Jehovah is the *rock of ages*, whilst in I Corinthians X. 4 we are told that Horeb's smitten rock is Christ—"they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that *rock was Christ*."

Let us turn to Exodus XVII. 6 and seek to gather the typical teaching of the

ROCK AND THE ROD.

"Behold I—Jehovah—will *stand before thee there on the rock* in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it." Incarnation is symbolized in the identification of the self-existent, uncreated God with the created rock, as He stood upon it whilst it was smitten.

The Man—Christ Jesus, is God over all, blessed for ever! "Jesus wept"! Those are the tears of the *Man* of sorrows. "Lazarus, come forth." That is the voice of Jehovah, a

voice that wakes the dead, and declares Jesus to be "Son of God with power by resurrection."

Jesus slept—whilst the storm raged on Galilee's lake—the sleep of a wearied *man*, calmly resting in the care of His God and Father. His terrified followers awake Him with "Master, Master, we perish." He arose, rebuked the wind, stilled the waves by His word, demonstrating that in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead. A real man, perfect, sinless, spotless, He was, at the same time, Jehovah's equal and fellow, the Almighty Creator, the eternal God.

This great mystery, which none can ever fathom, is set before us in Horeb's rock.

That rock was smitten ; out of it flowed a refreshing stream. Moses' rod—the judgment rod which had once turned water into blood—smote the rock ; the answer was water abundantly. The true answer to this is Calvary. Out of the pierced side of the Holy Victim, smitten in our room and stead, came forth blood and water.

As the outcome of Christ's death, the Spirit has been given ; bringing with Him life and blessing, a living stream. But rubbish will choke a fountain, stop a well, and block a river !

A time came in Israel's history when they "thirsted again." Their unbelieving hearts,

murmuring tongues, evil ways had dammed the stream. What now is to be done? The rock again is the remedy, not to be *smitten* again, but to be *spoken* to. With the rod of priestly grace in his hand, Moses is directed of God to *speak* to the rock. He disobeyed, smote the rock twice, and in the government of God was shut out of Canaan as a consequence. He was not quick to perceive the difference between the smitten rock of judgment and the priestly rock of grace. How frequently Christians do what Moses did. Happily they are not under law, but under grace; but this second rock is to remind us that Christ has been smitten *once*. He will never be smitten again. His one offering has perfected for ever those who believe. They are ever and always justified, clean every whit, judicially cleared of all guilt, and eternally free from condemnation.

What then are they to do when their souls are dried up, their joy departed, their conscience burdened?

They must do what God told Moses to do—*speak to the rock*—confess the actual sin they have committed, take with them words, trace their failure back to its source, judge in themselves both root and fruit.

They do this in the knowledge that their Advocate with the Father has interceded on their behalf. In faithfulness and justice to

Him who has already, on the cross, borne the righteous judgment due to that particular sin, God can righteously forgive. In love and grace to us, He does so *on confession*. Let us be simple about the matter. Christians are no longer treated by God as sinners at a distance, but children in relationship to the Father. When they sin, communion is interrupted, their happy intercourse with the Father and Son marred, and a grieved Spirit produces misery. Instead of the refreshing streams of grace enlightening, cheering, refreshing, flowing freely, the living stream has been dammed up, some fleshly lust, some unholy thought and deed has choked the well.

Confession of the actual sin is God's way of restoration. Do not say, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!" Rather say, "Here I am, a child of God, I have sinned against love and light, and now with a contrite heart I come and pour out my confession." If an unhappy Christian, a wretched backslider, should read these lines let me entreat him, at once, this moment, to "confess." Tell God the whole truth, keep nothing back, pour out your heart, say with David, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." Read Psalm LI., then read Psalm XXXII. for the answer.

H. N.

GOD THE HOME OF THE SOUL.

FROM the time that Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden man has been a homeless wanderer, an outcast from the presence of God, and having no relish for the fellowship of his Maker. Throughout the ages God has been seeking to bring man back into communion with Himself, and when a soul gets right with God through Christ the living Way, he finds that he has *come home*.

We think of the earthly home as the *foundation* of society. We are told that nowadays the home does not have the place that it once did in this country, and that this is partly responsible for the unsettled state of affairs that characterizes the present time. And if the soul has no true foundation, can it be otherwise than tossed about by the winds of doctrine and bewildered by the thousand and one shibboleths and cries of conflicting parties, each of which announces that it and it alone has "the truth." Thank God if, having rejected the idolatries of the worldling, the agnosticism of the self-sufficient philosopher, and the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, we have planted our feet upon the Rock of Ages. The winds may blow and the floods may rise,

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but our souls are eternally secure, for underneath us is *the* foundation, the truth of the living God.

We naturally regard the home as a *centre* around which our thoughts and interests spontaneously revolve. In the solar system the planets and worlds all circle around one centre, the sun. Man has lost his true centre, and instead of his interests and affections revolving round God, by whom and for whom he was made, they revolve round himself. The natural man's unspoken creed is that the chief end of man is to glorify and enjoy *himself* for ever. There is in every unregenerate soul a terrible centrifugal force that is continually forcing him away from his true Centre. The evil heart of unbelief revolts from the living God. Man has become self-centred (and consequently devil-mastered); and the inevitable doom of the impenitent is to be a wandering star to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

To the believer God is the centre of his soul. The new nature ever seeks its divine source. As we grow in grace we increasingly connect the varied interests and details of our lives with the will of God, and we utter a heart-felt "Amen" to the truth: "The chief end of man is to glorify *God* and enjoy Him for ever."

The home suggests *protection* and *discipline*.

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And God is "the Preserver of all men, especially of those who believe." Far be it from us to measure the love of God to us by the temporal blessings that come to us from His gracious hand. The measure of His love is Calvary and the unspeakable spiritual blessings that flow therefrom. At the same time God has given us all things richly to enjoy, for He is the God of the body as well as the God of the soul, of nature as well as of grace. Nothing can touch us without His knowledge and permission. Every servant of the Lord, however obscure, can say, "I am immortal till my work is done." The praying, believing saint is entitled to expect special protection from the hand of his God and Father in times of crisis and danger. And what He permits to enter into our lives He designs to be either food or medicine. To the believer the world's maxim, "Bow to the inevitable, but make use of it," becomes, "Grind every circumstance of life into material for growth in grace."

With the thought of home we cannot but connect the thought of *rest*. "God's character is our resting-place." Certain errant spirits are never at home unless they are abroad. They are ever learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. They seem to prefer seeking to finding; doubt to certainty. But as for us, having felt somewhat of the sting of sin and guilt, and knowing something of

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the rest of conscience and mind that is the portion of every weary and heavy laden soul that comes to the Saviour, we love to stand on the glorious gospel and "rest on His unchanging grace." The needle of our soul has now found its true pole. The influence of business necessities may for the time deflect it from pointing to Him whom we love, but as soon as the pressure is withdrawn, it swings back and points steadfastly to the blessed One who has become to us precious beyond words.

" Now rest my long-divided heart,
Fixed on this blissful centre rest ;
Nor ever from thy Lord depart,
With Him of every good possessed."

No home is worthy of the name where *peace*, *harmony*, and *affection* do not reign. The believer has commenced an eternal friendship with his Maker. At conversion a fellowship with God was begun which will go on deepening and ripening throughout the endless ages. We are at home in the presence of our Saviour-God, for we are His children. We are His heirs. His possessions are ours. A child does not point to the various articles of furniture in the room and say to his father, "These are *yours*." Without forethought, intuitively and spontaneously, he says, "These are *ours*." And so, with the spiritual intuition begotten of the Holy Ghost, we say, "All

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things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's."

"The Lord is my portion," is the joyful confidence of every child of God. Whatever his earthly home may be like—and oftentimes what is called "home" is the most unhappy and disliked place on earth, the centre of disappointments, heart-aches, drudgery, and care—*God* is the home of his soul. There he finds his rest, his peace, his love, his joy. "Underneath are the everlasting arms"; above is the canopy of the over-heart of the God of love; around is the "wall of fire" that shields him from a thousand foes. And the words of the psalmist are the daily language of his soul:

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but *God* is the strength of my heart and *my portion for ever.*"

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. H. WELLS.—*Maleny P.O., Blackall Range, Queensland.*—Your very encouraging letter reached us in due course, and glad indeed we were to get it, though sorry that we do not know the kind friend who has been sending you *Simple Testimony* and *The Gospel Messenger* regularly for the last four or five years. So we cannot convey your

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thanks, though we trust these lines may meet the eye of the sender, who will hereby know that his service has not been in vain. We are deeply thankful that you find the Word of God more precious than ever to your soul. It is, indeed, wonderful how God can fill our hearts with joy unspeakable in the midst of the severest trials and make us more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ. May God's blessing be with you, and may He make you a blessing to many others.

Other letters from Australia have also come to hand in which the writers request us to thank "the thoughtful friends" who send *Simple Testimony* to them, and to let them know how greatly it is appreciated. From China, too, comes a similar request. All we can do is to name it in these columns in the hope that those who send magazines to near and distant parts may be greatly encouraged in their happy service.

F. H.—We are very glad that our remarks in last month's correspondence meet with your approval. It is a common notion that if a soldier falls in battle his salvation is assured, but it is not so. Should any of our readers be looking about for a booklet on the subject, there is one called *Does Death in Battle Save?* It can be had for eighteen pence a hundred from our Edinburgh depôt, J. K. Souter and Co., 2 Bristo Place. It should have a wide circulation.

ENQUIRER.—We sent your note to the writer of the paper on *Resurrection* in our August issue, and

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the following is his reply, which we trust will make the point quite plain.

However important the subject of resurrection may be, and its importance cannot be exaggerated, for without it there is no gospel, I have very little to add to the paper to which your correspondent alludes.

I would, however, draw attention to the fact that figures which are used in Scripture to illustrate great truths must not be taken in a too literal way. The great thing is to find out the mind of the Spirit of God in the figure He uses. To do this we must not stop at the end of verse 38 of the chapter (1 Cor. xv.), but read on to the close of verse 50.

The object of the figure used is to show that there is a clear distinction between that which is sown and dies in the ground and that which is evolved from it ; but we must read the rest of the chapter to see what use is made of these remarks.

In verses 39-41 we are reminded that there are many kinds of flesh, and we are not to suppose that all flesh must be of the same nature and character.

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, with their different glories ; and even heavenly bodies have not all the same glory, for one star differs from another star in glory.

Having thus prepared us for what he is going to tell us concerning the question asked by the "fool" of verse 36, he comes directly to the resurrection, and says, "So also is the resurrection of the dead." What is raised is very different

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from that which was put into the ground ; even as the seed sown differs from that which is produced from its quickening. That which is sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, is raised in incorruption, glory, and power. It was sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. This is what is meant by the statement, " Thou sowest not that body that shall be." When we come to resurrection we see that it is the identical body that was put into the ground that is raised, but very different in glory and character. By the power of God the natural is changed into spiritual, the earthly into heavenly, the water into wine ; the corruptible puts on incorruption.

It is a work similar to that which takes place with the living, by which the mortal puts on immortality. Just as truly as we shall be changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so shall those who sleep in Jesus be raised in glory and be caught up together with us. And as nothing shall be left behind of those changed and caught up, so nothing shall be left behind in the grave of those raised in incorruption, power, and glory. We shall have a resurrection like Christ's, for ours shall be after the pattern of His, and in His tomb nothing remained but the grave clothes when the stone was rolled away.

Is it so that we must ask our brethren in Christ the same question Paul asked Jews and Pagans in the presence of King Agrippa ? " Why should it seem a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead ? " (J. B—D.)

“HE BRINGETH THEM UNTO THEIR DESIRED HAVEN.”

THE beloved Editor of *Simple Testimony* has laid down his pen. The days of his earthly service are over, and he is now with the Lord whose grace he delighted to extol.

For more than thirty years he has carried on this magazine. It was a real labour of love. He made it his constant aim to build up in the great foundation truths of Christianity the young and unestablished, and to lead them into a deeper appreciation of their Father's love, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God was graciously pleased to let His servant see a large measure of fruit to his labours in connection with *Simple Testimony*. It would be impossible to number those who have borne witness to help and blessing received through its pages. Their name is legion. In all parts of the habitable earth they dwell.

It was on October 13th, after a few days of acute suffering, that the home-call came. And now the labourer's task is done, and he is at rest in the presence of Christ. “*So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.*”

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We who are bereaved do not sorrow as those for whom the future has no bright hope. We know that the separation is not for long, only "till He come." The days of His tarrying must be well nigh ended. At last, at last we shall see His face, and, together with those who have gone before, shall dwell with Him, to go no more out.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE MASTER.

[This very characteristic paper was the last written by the late Editor. It was penned shortly before his departure to be with Christ.]

I AM going to invite the reader's attention to a fact that seems to me full of significance, and one which, I venture to say, claims more than a passing thought. Briefly stated it is this: *It is easily possible for any of us to stand in the most favoured of all Christian associations and yet to be out of fellowship with our Master in feelings and sympathies and spirit and ways.*

No one will doubt that when the Lord was on earth the twelve men who were chosen by Him to be His companions and messengers

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were privileged beyond all others. They were with Him all the days of His public ministry, and if in His teaching there were things they did not understand they had every opportunity of asking Him to pity their ignorance and to explain His meaning. They were with Him also in His private life, seeing, hearing, and observing things that could only be known by those who were admitted to His dear and hallowed companionship. "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see"—said He to them on one occasion—"for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them " (Luke x. 23). Yes, beyond all doubt they enjoyed unequalled privileges, and yet their thoughts and wishes and ways often jarred upon their Lord and Master and had to be corrected by Him. Let me give you some examples.

"And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them : and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God " (MARK x. 13).

We may be sure it was the best of motives that led them to bring these dear babes to Jesus. They prized His blessing and believed that His touch would do them lifelong good.

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Therefore did they come and ask that His hands might be laid on their little ones. But this wish found no favour in the eyes of His disciples. *Their* Master was not to be troubled about a matter of such trifling moment! Other and more important concerns engaged His time and attention, and so they took it upon themselves to bid them go away. Oh, how little did the twelve understand their Master! How little they knew His heart! This they were soon to see. For when Jesus saw it “He was much displeased”—*indignant* is the word—“and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” And instead of touching them only, He laid His hands upon them and took them in His arms and blessed them. Now that word *bless* is a strong one and means that He blessed them abundantly. How ashamed should these disciples have been at the rebuke of their Lord and Master! They learned in that hour that His thoughts were not their thoughts, neither were their ways His ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so were His ways higher than their ways, and His thoughts than their thoughts.

And He who abundantly blessed the little children when on earth is still blessing them. The years may come and go and the centuries may roll away, but there is no change in His

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love. He is always the children's Friend. And they are most in the secret of His mind who are earnestly striving to bring the little ones to Jesus. To this end they labour in fervent prayer. To this end they seize every opportunity to tell them of the Saviour's dying love, of His precious blood that cleanseth from every sin, and how He longs that they should know and love and follow Him.

Strange to say there are those—followers of Christ in some things—who frown upon Sunday-school work and have given it up as not being in accord with the mind of heaven for to-day. Thank God their number is not large. Possibly they think that parents are responsible to teach their own children and that they should not be encouraged to pass on their duties to others. But if I am a Christian parent may not my children sometimes hear the story of redeeming love from other lips than mine? And then the children of our Sunday-schools, for the most part, come from homes where the Bible is never read and where the children are never taught to pray. Oh, it is Christlike work, let others say what they will, to gather the children together by twos or tens, by hundreds or thousands, if possible, to tell them, for one brief hour a week, of Him, their best Friend, who came from heaven to save them, and who, saving, will be their Guardian and Guide through life.

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“Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not : for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part” (MARK IX. 38).

Who this man was we cannot tell. Nor does it matter. Enough that he was one who hated the devil and all his works, and when he met one possessed of demons he cast the demons out in the power of the name of Jesus. But the disciples forbade him. Had they been in a right frame of mind they would have been glad to see one able to spoil the “strong man’s” goods in their Master’s name. And more especially as they themselves had just failed to cast out the evil spirit from the son of the sorrowing father who had brought his afflicted boy to them. It is a sure mark of singleness of eye and largeness of heart when we rejoice unfeignedly in seeing others possess a richer measure of spiritual power than ourselves, even though they follow not us, and it is an equally sure sign of a narrow spirit when we do not. But in the eyes of the disciples the fact of his not following them was a fatal flaw. It seemed intolerable that he should cast out demons in Christ’s blessed name and yet not be of their company. So in their mistaken zeal they bade him cease. And in returning to their Master John made haste to tell Him what they had done. Instead of commending,

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the Lord corrected them and bade them never to do it again, saying, "For there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part."

How we need to guard against the same sectarian and ungenerous temper. We are too ready to suppose that spiritual power can only be found along the lines on which we move, and to criticize and find fault with the devoted service of another because it is not cast in our mould and carried on according to our methods. *He followeth not us* is reason enough to condemn him root and branch. True, he is winning souls for Christ, he is seeking by devoted labour to feed the flock of God, and he is waging unceasing war with the forces of evil. Yes, all true, but *he followeth not us*. Our thoughts are not his thoughts, and our ways are not his ways, and that is an offence which cannot be overlooked. So we shut up our sympathies, we give him no words of cheer, and brighten his life with no kindly deed. We leave him severely alone, and in acting thus sincerely believe that we have our Master's mind. But it is not so. We are as completely astray as were the disciples on the occasion of which we have spoken. Oh, let us jealously guard against such a spirit. Let us ungrudgingly recognize all the good we can in another even though *he followeth not us*.

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“And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face : and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did ? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village” (LUKE IX. 51).

These Samaritans made a great mistake in refusing to receive the Saviour even as a passing guest. Strong religious prejudices were at the bottom of it. They profoundly differed from the Jews as to the place where men should worship. Mount Gerizim was their sacred spot and Jerusalem was that of their rivals. Now the face of Jesus was steadfastly set towards Jerusalem, and they, knowing this, would suffer Him to tarry in their village, no, not for an hour. They were wrong, very wrong, but their refusal serves to show how religious prejudices darken the understanding and lead to sorrowful results. It is always so. We have, even in our day, to beware of the Samaritan spirit. It steals into the heart and takes possession of it all unawares. And under its influence it becomes easy to close the door against those who should be warmly welcomed. It is not that we are insincere. Far from it. Deep down in our

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hearts we think that we are doing God service and caring for His glory. Doubtless the Samaritans thought the same.

And this affront to their Master was more than His disciples James and John could endure. That the despised Samaritans should treat their Lord thus was an offence that deserved signal punishment, and they were ready to inflict it. Should they command fire to come down from heaven and consume them even as Elias did? How gladly would they have done it and how vehemently, and with what plausible reasons, would they have justified their act had it been challenged! But these disciples did not know their Master! Nor did they know what manner of spirit they were of. He had not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. And they went to another village. Here is the meekness and gentleness of Christ!

Alas! how many un-Christlike things have been done under the plea of faithfulness to Christ. Possibly we have done them ourselves. And when we did them our zeal for our Master's honour sprang from the very same spirit that made James and John eager to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans. And if there was a voice that would have restrained us, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" our ears were so filled with the clash of tongues that we

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did not heed it. We *would* vindicate our Master's name, we *would* uphold His rights, regardless of all consequences, and we called down the fire !

But we need go no further. These examples show the truth of what we said at the beginning: *It is easily possible for any of us to stand in the most favoured of all Christian associations and yet to be out of fellowship with our Master in feelings and sympathies and spirit and ways.*

Perhaps you believe that the immediate circle in which you move is the most favoured of all circles. You are constantly receiving—so you suppose—fresh light from the Word, and you complacently regard yourself as standing on a spiritual elevation from whence you can look down with feelings akin to pity on your fellow Christians who have no eyes to see what you see. But take care that you are not out of harmony with your Master's mind. It is easy to be far, far astray and utterly unconscious of it—easy to be filled with a zeal for His honour and rights which instead of receiving His approval only meets with His rebuke. What need there is ever to pray the Psalmist's prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm cxxxix. 23). Have you ever prayed it? May we ask you to pray it once more.

“IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.”

WE naturally like to be remembered. It would pain us to know that our friends never think of us when we are absent from them. “*My people no longer remember me,*” said the late Queen of the Belgians; “*it is time to go.*” The words were the last she ever uttered. Her heart was broken by the forgetfulness of those who were dear to her.

What sorrowful depths there are in the pathetic words that close the narrative of the “little city” and its deliverer in Ecclesiastes ix.: “*No man remembered that same poor man.*” The city had been in great danger. A mighty monarch had laid siege to it and had built fortifications round about it. There were no forces in the city that could withstand the besieging armies. But a certain man, poor and despised, wrought deliverance by his wisdom. The city was saved. No doubt the joy-bells clanged upon the Eastern air; no doubt there were ringing shouts of triumph. But what of the poor, wise man? Nobody thought of him. They owed their all to him, but he was completely forgotten. “*No man remembered*” him.

There is a parallel to this in the story of

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Joseph. He had been able to render a great service to one of his fellow-prisoners. This man, Pharaoh's chief butler, was subsequently released, and restored to the royal favour. Before he left the precincts of the prison Joseph made a very simple request of him. "*Think on me,*" he said, "*when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me.*" We should have thought that the chief butler would have been eager to grant this request. Evidently, however, other things took possession of his mind. It was well with him, and once again he moved in the high circles of the Egyptian court. "*Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.*" Sad words, telling once again the story of human forgetfulness and ingratitude.

Has it ever struck you, Christian reader, that your Lord and Saviour has made of you a request similar to that of Joseph? He does not want His people to forget Him. Why? Surely because He loves us so tenderly! If we were not ever in His thoughts He might be indifferent as to our remembrance of Him. But the fact that He has expressed the desire that we should remember Him speaks volumes. It is an overwhelming proof of His love.

It is well that we should note the exact terms of His request. It was on the night when His familiar friend had lifted up his heel

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against Him and betrayed Him into the hands of those who sought His life. Gathering His loved disciples around Him, He partook with them of the passover supper. This being finished, instead of rising at once from the table He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and handed it to the disciples, saying : “ *Take, eat . . . in remembrance of Me.*”

Observe that He does not say “ in celebration of your blessing,” or “ in remembrance of the benefits conferred upon you,” but “ in *remembrance of ME* ” (1 Cor. XI. 24). He counts upon our grateful and loving remembrance of *Himself*.

How can we explain the indifference of many Christians to this touching request of their Lord ? I can understand any one saying, “ There are so many sects and companies with divergent views that I am puzzled where to go to join in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus.” But it is difficult to understand that one who owes his all to Christ should be content to let the years slip by without being concerned as to partaking of the Lord’s Supper at all ! Does such a one understand that it is the way He Himself has appointed for His people to show that they do not forget Him, but cherish His memory and desire His company ?

At a certain place in the northern regions of Canada, where everything is frozen for the greater part of the year, some Christians had

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arranged to meet on one of the rare occasions when such a meeting was possible. Their purpose was to partake of the Lord's Supper together. One old brother from a place 275 miles distant was present. He had trudged all those miles, absolutely alone, dependent upon his gun for food, in order to join in the remembrance of his Lord and Saviour. He was not able to return by land; he had to strike right out on to the solid ice of Hudson's Bay. He went on during the first day, and when night fell, wrapped himself in his deer-skin cloak and lay down on the ice. The second night he did the same and then got ashore and reached his home. That dear man had tramped 550 miles for the one purpose of remembering the Lord in His own appointed way, in company with others like-minded. Should not such earnestness and love serve as a stimulus to our less zealous souls? Can we not look up into the face of our blessed Lord, and give a new meaning to the prophet's words as we say: "*O Lord . . . the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee*" (Isa. XXVI. 8).

There is nothing that can so touch the heart and renew the affections as this remembrance of the Lord Himself, in all His undying love, proved at the cost of so much suffering. No wonder that those who most deeply value the privilege of gathering with others of "His own"

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for this remembrance are often melted to tears as their thoughts are led afresh to the way He has expressed His love amid the darkness and woes of Calvary. A friend of the late Colonel Gardiner says : “ Often have I had the pleasure to see that manly countenance softened . . . and to discern, in spite of all his efforts to conceal them, streams of tears flowing down from his eyes, while he has been directing them to those memorials of his Redeemer’s love.”

And thus it may be with us. Our cold, forgetful hearts may be warmed, our affections renewed and fixed afresh on Christ, as we are gathered, even if only two or three in number, for the remembrance of Him.

I do not, in this paper, refer to the order or method of it, or to anything connected with the subject save the object of the Supper, and the effect it should have upon the hearts of those who partake.

Miss Edgeworth relates, in one of her books, an anecdote of a Spanish artist who was engaged to depict on his canvas the never-to-be-forgotten scene of “ The Last Supper.” He put forth the utmost of his skill into every detail of the picture, and he placed in the foreground some chased cups of exquisite workmanship. When his friends came to see the painting, every one said :

“ What beautiful cups ! ”

“ Ah ! ” said the artist, “ I have made a mistake ; these cups divert the gaze from the Master.” And, taking his brush, he rubbed them from the canvas.

So let it be with this paper. Let it recall your thoughts, Christian reader, to your Lord and Saviour. Let it appeal to you in His name. Let it awaken, or re-awaken, within you the desire to show, in this world where He has been betrayed and set at naught, that *you* do not forget Him, but that you prize His Name, and cherish the remembrance of Himself.

H. P. B.

GRACE REIGNS.

GRACE is a common word upon our lips and deservedly a favourite. Well would it be were we duly impressed with its wealth of meaning. It is said of the late D. L. Moody that after studying the meaning of the word from the Bible, he became so deeply absorbed in his blessed theme that he rushed out into the street and, stopping the first man he met, asked him, “ Do you know grace ? ” “ Grace what ? ” was the astonished reply. “ The grace of God that brings salvation to all men,” answered the evangelist with fervent enthusiasm.

We like to think of grace as *the eager love of*

God that stoops to bestow mercy and favour upon us sinners who deserve nothing but His displeasure. Grace distinguishes Christianity from all human religions. No religion could have invented it, for it is foreign to human nature. The gods of heathen mythology were simply beings clothed with the passions and vices of men ; jealous and revengeful. The human heart unaided cannot rise higher than itself. It was reserved to the gospel of the God of grace to reveal divine favour to the undeserving and love to the unlovely.

And grace is strong as it is beautiful. The Puritans used to speak of “irresistible grace,” to denote the mighty constraining power exerted by the sovereign Lord God upon the objects of His eternal choice. “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Payson, when dying, was much affected by his sense of the grace of God to one so ill-deserving as himself. “Oh, how sovereign ! Oh, how sovereign !” he exclaimed. “Grace is the only thing that can make us like God. I might be dragged through heaven, earth, and hell, and I should be still the same sinful, polluted wretch, unless God Himself should renew and cleanse me.”

Grace forgives *righteously*. God will never be merciful at the expense of His justice.

He will never deny His justice in order to give free play to His mercy. He cannot suppress His righteousness in order to be free to express His love and favour. If we are to be saved it must be on a righteous basis. Before we can be saved the honour of God's throne must be upheld. But now that Christ has died the believing sinner can be justified.

“Payment God will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.”

Now His very justice is on our side. We rejoice in the very attribute which used to fill us with dismay. “Grace reigns through righteousness.”

Grace forgives *freely*. The natural heart prefers the law that condemns to the grace that saves. And by reason of the fact that the Pharisee in us is a long time a-dying it may take us years to realize the freeness with which the grace of God lavishes its favours on us undeserving, though forgiven, sinners.

God does nothing by halves. His grace has forgiven us *fully*. All the sins of the entire lifetime were made to meet on the head of our adorable Substitute, and now there is no such thing as condemnation to those who are in Christ and the recipients of the grace of God. Christ has settled for ever the sin question as far as it relates to the vessels of mercy.

Grace forgives *eagerly*, and *with joy* to God's own heart. We should beware of being taken up solely with the work of atonement to the forgetfulness of the love that prompted it. To understand and to rely upon the finished work of Calvary gives rest to the mind and peace to the conscience, but we find satisfaction for the heart as we contemplate the infinite and eternal love that gives Jesus to die, and that finds its own satisfaction and delight in the objects of its saving choice and power. Grace is the eager love of God. Our salvation is not a matter of indifference to God as if His attitude were, "Redemption has been provided ; choose it, and you are saved : reject it, and you are lost ; I have done My part, now do yours ; your acceptance or rejection is a matter in which I have little interest : see you to that." A thousand times no. With loving eagerness our gracious God has saved us, saved us righteously, and without reserve, freely and fully.

And now we are to live daily upon His bounty. As sinners saved by grace we deserve nothing. This should be an encouragement rather than a hindrance as we come to the throne of grace, for since we live upon His unmerited kindness and favours, we have as much right to ask for great things as for small, seeing we do not deserve the one more than the other. We can now understand Carey's

motto, "Expect great things from God." It honours our gracious God to give largely to the recipients of His bounty. Let us then come boldly and bring large petitions with us, and learn to plead that grace has committed itself to give us all things needful for life and godliness.

Grace has saved us, and is saving us, and will save us until there is nothing left to save us from. But this does not exhaust its treasures, for "in the ages to come" God will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." His interest of love in us will never cease. Our souls will ever be enlarging to know Him better. And our eternal theme will be the eager love of our Saviour God that has stooped to bestow mercy and everlasting favours and blessings upon us who were by nature children of wrath, even as others. For the grace of God has not only provided salvation for us undeserving sinners, but it included the very faith that appropriated salvation, secures every blessing in this life, and will be the never-failing source of bliss throughout the countless ages that are to come.

E. A.

It has been well said, that the moment we lose the sense of GRACE in our souls, that moment we are out of communion with God.

THE OUTSHINING OF CHRIST.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 COR. IV. 6).

IT is well to call a halt sometimes, and challenge ourselves as to how far we are in the present power and enjoyment of those great truths that were so dear to us when we started on our Christian course. It is not meant by this a process of morbid introspection which would only throw you in upon yourself ; but a good, healthy, wholesome, and honest overhauling of ourselves in the presence of God, so that the Holy Spirit might bring to light anything that may be retarding our soul's progress, robbing us of our joy, and interrupting our communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We all know how easily we are affected by the influence of things around, particularly that which appeals to our natural tastes and inclinations. Unless we are watchful and prayerful, there is ever the danger of our spiritual sensibilities becoming deadened, thus paving the way for the great trinity of evil : the world, the flesh, and the devil, in their deadly crusade against all that is of God.

So insidious are the ways of our great enemy, and so subtle his wiles, that almost before you are aware of it, the freshness and fervency of

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first affection for Christ is lost. This is why we would plead with the beloved Christian reader, to keep SHORT ACCOUNTS WITH GOD (Phil. IV. 8). And diligently to cultivate habitual intercourse with our Lord Jesus Christ (John XV. 7-11).

For let us remember, that God has taken hold of us, not simply to relieve us from the pressure and bondage of sin and Satan, under which we lay, but for His own pleasure : “ that being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life ” (Rom. VI. 22).

The Holy Scriptures have been given to us that we might learn what God’s will is for us in our journey through a hostile world. Not only so, but He there reveals His great thoughts and purposes for us, who are livingly united to Christ by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Our God would have us know how fully He has endowed and equipped us for the homeward journey.

It is good that we test our foundations, for if we are faulty there, no true spiritual advance can be made. Notice, first of all, the attitude God takes, and the way He acts, when a contrite sinner puts in his plea for mercy, on the ground of what Christ has done at the cross. Most of us will remember that red-letter day in our history when we first heard the Saviour’s voice : when the heavy burden of guilt rolled away : and peace and joy took

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possession of our hearts. But *all heaven* was moved when that transaction took place, for we read that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one sinner that repenteth*" (Luke xv. 1-7).

It may be, however, that the reader has not quite apprehended the great blessing which was brought to him when he "received Christ." Note, first, his sins are forgiven him for Christ's name's sake (1 John ii. 12). This is true of the youngest believer in Jesus. But what does it mean? If some one were to put the question to you: "Why did God forgive you your sins?" perhaps you might say: "Because I came as a repentant sinner and pleaded for mercy"; or, "Because God saw me in my wretchedness and guilt, and took pity upon me." Both would be true: but this verse in John's Epistle puts the forgiveness of sins on far higher ground: it was *for Christ's name's sake*. That is, it was due to Christ, because of what He accomplished on the cross, that God should forgive you your sins. Let your soul ponder it well, and *remember* that this is your *starting-point* in the Christian course. For the forgiveness of sins is really a means to an end. You are cleansed from your sins that you might be brought into the family of God. In John's Gospel, chapter i., it is said of those who have received Christ that they are *born of God*: and are consequently entitled to all the

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privileges of the redeemed family. Mark, it is not merely that you are adopted into the household, as a waif might be taken from the slums and cared for by a nobleman as one of his own ; but, as one born of God, you have a nature and capacity that can enter into and enjoy the things of God. So we read in John's Epistle, chapter III. : " Beloved, *now* are we the sons (or children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but *we know* that when He shall appear, we shall be *like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is."

It is a great moment in our soul's history when these truths dawn upon us : when in the faith given to us of God we can take up the language of the Apostle John and say : " Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *children of God*." Moreover, there are *family secrets*, which the Holy Ghost would gladly make known to us. See, for instance, John I. 18 ; III. 35 ; XIV. 2, 3 ; XV. 9, 26 ; XVI. 25, 27. The Lord Jesus, speaking of His own to the Father, could say : " They are *not of the world*, even as *I am not of the world* " (John XVII. 16). What does that tell us ? That the death of Christ has ended for ever our history as children of Adam, and God views us now *in* Christ risen and glorified, and the measure of Christ's separation from the world is the measure of ours. But it follows that if all

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this is true of us, our God and Father looks for a suitable response. He claims our affections, and He would have us walk through this world in all the grace and dignity of those whose origin, citizenship, and destiny are heavenly, at the same time exhibiting the meek and lowly spirit that was seen in all its perfection in the life of our Lord upon earth. If the Holy Spirit is ungrieved He will engage our hearts with the glories and beauties and excellences of God's beloved Son. In result responsive affection will be created ; and in some measure, at least, there will be the OUTSHINING OF CHRIST and a showing forth of the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter II. 9). G. F. E.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. M.—“ THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT—THE INFILLING OF THE SPIRIT.”—A great deal of what has been written on this subject furnishes abundant proof that the writers have not had their thoughts formed by Holy Scripture. Their speech bewrayeth them. We say this in no unkindly spirit. Nor is there the least disposition on our part to question what they say when they testify to the great change that has come over them since receiving what they call “ the baptism of the Spirit ” or His “ infilling.” But we believe that in many instances it is the experience of a soul that passes from the misery and bondage of Romans VII. into the liberty and joy of Romans

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VIII., which indeed is *the normal Christian state*. They speak of heart-breaking defeat, repeated relapse, and constant backsliding as having characterized their previous Christian course, while now they know what it is to live a life of victory, of rejoicing, of successful service. This is a great change indeed! But are we to suppose that heart-breaking defeat, repeated relapse, and constant backsliding is Christian experience? It may be the experience of many Christians, but true Christian experience is a very different thing. The former is the painful confession of Romans VII., the latter is the blessed experience of the soul who, having learned experimentally that it has no strength to free itself from the bondage which it loathes, turns in its helplessness to the great Deliverer. What a change from Romans VII. to Romans VIII.! An exultant strain runs through the whole chapter. No condemnation—freedom from the law of sin and death—the indwelling Spirit—the cry of “Abba, Father”—children and heirs of God—co-heirs with Christ—to be glorified together with Him—predestined to be conformed to His image—God for us, who having given His own Son will, with Him, freely give us all things—Christ making intercession for us in the heavenly courts—loved with a love from which nothing shall ever separate us—such are some of the notes in the triumphant song of Romans VIII. All this every Christian should know.

Certain conditions, it is said, must be fulfilled in order to our receiving this baptism or infilling of the Spirit. What are they? All known sin must be confessed and abandoned, the will must be

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surrendered, and we must be ready to obey and follow our Lord wherever He may lead. Against these things not a word can be said—they are good and admirable. But what sort of life can that be where known sin is *not* confessed and forsaken—where the will is *not* subject to God, and where the soul is *not* prepared to obey and follow? It must be a dark and dismal life indeed. For the Holy Spirit is grieved and becomes a constant Reprover, the link of communion with God is broken, and the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is utterly unknown (John XIV. 23). Now it is easy to understand that when this sad state is judged and confessed, when the will is subdued and God's will becomes the governing principle of one's life, when the Holy Spirit, no longer grieved and hindered, is free to lead the soul into the sunshine of divine love, and into the ever-growing knowledge of Christ, there is an immense and a blessed change. But, we repeat, this is the normal Christian state.

Since the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the indwelling of the Spirit is never set forth *in Scripture* as a blessing to be prayed for and claimed. Its invariable teaching is that the believer is one in whom that Spirit dwells. Even to the Corinthian saints, whose everyday practices caused the Apostle Paul so much sorrow of heart, he said, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. VI. 19). It is in believing the glad tidings of our salvation that we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. I. 13). Hence

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we are exhorted not to grieve Him by unholy ways (Eph. iv. 30).

No doubt in connection with service, to which a man is called, there is a special fitness given and the Holy Spirit empowers the servant for the work. And we believe that were there more thoroughgoing devotedness to Christ—He and His glories filling the ever-expanding vision of the soul—many gifts, now latent, would be called into exercise. The gifts are here but they are either wrapped in a napkin or buried in the earth. Fervent love for Christ would change all that, and unseen but eternal things would shed their powerful influence upon the life. Many a one awaking thus from sleep would count it a high honour to be an ambassador for Christ, and placing his life at the Lord's disposal, would receive His command to go forth into some part of the wide harvest-field. And for that service he would be specially equipped by the Holy Spirit.

Be filled with the Spirit is a Christian exhortation, addressed first to the saints at Ephesus, but spoken to us all. In what relation does it stand? A reference to Ephesians v. 18 will show us at a glance. In the old days of their heathen worship it was a common thing to be drunk with wine in honour of their deities, but now as Christians they were to be filled with the Spirit. This they would be, if the Spirit were ungrieved. He becomes then the source of their thoughts, feelings and desires, and as His mission is to glorify Christ so would He lead them to make much of Him in every way: "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

GOD CARES FOR YOU.

READ I PETER V. 7, 10, 11.

HOW happy it is to remember all along our pilgrim way that we have to do with the God of all grace ! I say our " pilgrim " way, for most of us know the light in which the Apostle Peter regards the saints. He speaks of us as strangers and pilgrims ; strangers because our citizenship is elsewhere, and pilgrims because we are journeying on to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. Happy it is then to remember that whatever we may find in our pilgrim way, its lights and its shadows, its ups and its downs, its summer days as well as winter ones, we have to do with the God of all grace. It is the grace of God that has brought us salvation. It is the grace of God that teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. It is the grace of God that encourages us to lift up our eyes, and to look forward, and to think of that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The God of all grace is the one who has called us unto His eternal kingdom and glory by Christ Jesus. What a calling that is ; how

high ! how wonderful ! None but the God of all *grace* would have called such unworthy creatures to a portion like this. And there could have been no call to everlasting glory apart from Christ Jesus. Through Him alone could that call be made effectual.

It is well for us to remember, moreover, how we are kept. The inheritance is reserved for us in heaven, but as we journey on to it, with dangers of every kind surrounding us, we are kept by the power of God, not apart from faith but through it, God keeping faith alive in our hearts, that faith which lays hold of Him and which enters into unseen and eternal things.

So then I would like to charge your heart and my own to remember all along the way that we have to do with the God of all grace. It pleases our God and Father to make Himself known under that sweet and blessed title. How this should embolden us to face the unknown future with calmness. We do not know what to-morrow has in its hand for any one of us. If we look beyond the horizon of time all is clear, for that is filled with the purpose of God, which no power can bring to naught, but as regards our earthly future we do not know what a day or an hour may bring forth. But whatever the future may disclose we shall have the God of all grace as our help and our resource.

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The God of all grace in verse 7 encourages us to cast all our care upon Him, to roll upon Him that care, that burden, that sorrow, that source of anxiety, that fear, that anxious foreboding. We are invited to cast all our care—not a part of it, but all—upon Him. Then that word is added—the sweetness of which who can tell?—“*For He careth for you.*” How much there is in these simple words! Let them sink into your hearts. God cares for you. He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, He cares for you. He who long ages ago gave you to the Lord Jesus Christ that He might bring you safely home to glory; He who wrote your name in life’s eternal book, *He* cares for you all along the way. “He careth for you.” Do not carry your cares, roll them all upon Him. In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Instead of groaning and staggering, like an overburdened man, with that load of care upon your shoulders, roll it over upon the God of all grace—He cares for you. So shall His peace which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind.

Brethren, this is the God with whom we have to do. He has helped us hitherto. Here afresh we can raise our Ebenezer and bear witness that this is so. And if with a mighty, gracious hand, He has brought us thus far on

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our journey, how it should encourage us to have no fear as to the future !

We leave it to Himself
To choose and to command.
With wonder filled we soon shall see
How wise, how strong His hand.

He may let our little boat sail across a summer sea, or lead it across a tempestuous one. We leave it to Himself, to choose and to command. The God of all grace cares for us. "Put your future," He says, "into My hand. Leave it to Me to order, guide, and control." There is no room for us to give way to anxious thought or forebodings. Of course we have not to go through the circumstances in which we find ourselves as if our hearts were made of granite. We rightly have our exercises and feelings, but we are kept by the power of God through faith, that faith that trusts Him, that casts all care upon Him, and that listens to those gracious words, drinks them in, and finds sweetness and strength in them—"He cares for you."

He who rules in heaven and earth, who has His way among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, and to whom none can say "What doest thou?" HE CARES FOR YOU.

W. B.

KINGSLAND, *August 7th*, 1915.

GOD.

THE year 1915 is now drawing to a close. What a year it has indeed been, the blackest in living memory ! The storm that so suddenly burst upon Europe in the summer of 1914 has increased in fury as the months have gone past. Tens of thousands have fallen on the fields of battle ; the soil has been drenched with the blood of rich and poor, seasoned soldiers and raw recruits. The pall of death has spread over half the world, and the cry of the desolate has gone up to Heaven.

Thus this memorable year ends under the blackest of clouds. It may be asked, " Is there no silver lining to the cloud ? Is there not a glimmer of light on the horizon ? Is there no ray of hope in the darkness ? Is there no one to whom we may turn, on whom we may lean, in whom we may confide, and who we may be sure will not fail us ? " To all these questions we can give an affirmative answer, an answer that frames itself in one word, the word that stands at the head of our paper—GOD !

We are told that by the happenings of these times the faith of some is being rudely shaken. This we confess ourselves quite unable to

understand. If the faith is in anything, or in any person other than God, then we are not surprised, *i.e.*, to be quite frank, are we sorry. But to lose faith in God is incomprehensible.

God—Brought the world into being.

God—Maintains the universe.

God—Is infinite in power.

God—His very name is “Love.”

Lose faith in *God*? Never!

We can quite understand, however, that what is occurring is proving

A CHALLENGE TO FAITH,

but the child of God is ready to accept the challenge; in divine strength to rout the enemy who alone would offer it; and to emerge victorious from the conflict, stronger than ever in his confidence in God.

Let us now open our Bibles and read the forty-second Psalm. This is the first of a charming group that concludes with Psalm XLIX., and which were nearly all, if not all, written “for the sons of Korah.” This man, it will be remembered, perished under the judgment of Jehovah, but Numbers XXVI. 11 tells us that “the children of Korah died not.” We should like our readers to carefully study all these psalms, though the space at our disposal only permits us to deal, and that briefly, with the first.

The opening stanzas express the aspirations

of the Psalmist's soul Godward. Passing evidently through deep waters, realizing that he was surrounded by difficulties, and under the shadow of death, his soul cried out for God, "the living God." As has ever been the case with God's people, the time of his affliction gave opportunity to the enemy to instil doubts into his already troubled mind. So we read in verse 3, "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me

'WHERE IS THY GOD?''

Here was a challenge to his faith. Satan whispered, "If God exists at all, and if He is what He claims to be, and what you have believed Him to be, why should you be in such circumstances, and why should you pass through such sorrow? where is your God?" He faced the question in verse 4, he answered it in verse 5, first by rebuking his own soul, and incidentally meeting the adversary; secondly, by professing his unbounded confidence in God: "hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." Then he turned to God (verse 6), acknowledged his condition, recalled God's power, owned God's hand (verse 7) in all that through which he was passing, and got the assurance that instead of his tears being his meat day and night he would have the loving kindness of the

Lord in the daytime (verse 8) and His song in the night, therefore his prayer would be, as well indeed it might be, "*unto the God of my life.*"

These last six words are pregnant with meaning. If we can each take them upon our lips and say "God is 'the God of my life,'" our faith can never be lost, and if it is challenged, as it will be, the challenge will but serve to demonstrate our unswerving trust in God.

The great enemy is tireless in his vigilance, and so it happened that he varied the nature of his attack. In verse 9 the cloud seemed to gather again, and in verse 10 we learn that this was because the enemy said daily unto him "Where is thy God?" We can understand how, as he pursued his way, the Psalmist was assailed day after day by foes on every hand. We can imagine them saying, "*If God exists, if He looks after everything, if He possesses the power that you attribute to Him, if over and over again He worked such wonders as you say He did, then why are things as they are? why does He not put a stop to all that is going on? why does He not put things right? Where is your God?*"

Again the Psalmist rebuked his soul; again he protested his faith in God, and this time spoke of Him as "MY God." So that while he was not indifferent to what was transpiring, nor unaffected by the repeated challenge of

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the enemy, his faith was not shaken. On the contrary the deeper the trial, and the greater the temptation, the more invincible was his faith in the living God.

This is what marked the heroes of the Bible. "Abraham believed God" (Rom. IV. 3). "I believe God," said the Apostle Paul in a moment of great difficulty (Acts XXVII. 25). It was in one of the darkest periods of David's history, when all appeared to be against him, that he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (I Sam. xxx. 6).

Dear fellow-believer, whoever, wherever, and in whatever circumstances you may be, let us say to you in the name of the Lord, "Be of good cheer!" The bud may be bitter, the flower will be sweet; the cloud may be black and to all appearance impenetrable, but soon the sun will pierce it, and "Afterward" (Heb. XII. 11) you will say that you would not have missed the bitter, nor would you have escaped the cloud, because thereby you have learned God as you would not otherwise have known Him.

GOD LIVES !

He is working in His own way to secure the glory of His beloved Son, and the greatest good of all His dear children. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His

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purpose," and that purpose is that we should be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. VIII. 28, 29).

Moreover, God is our Father. What joy it brings to His heart, what glory accrues to His name, and what a heritage of blessing comes to us as with the unquestioning confidence of children we simply pillow our head upon His bosom of eternal love.

As to the future, we know only that the Lord is coming quickly. We may be permitted to enter on a new year or we may not. If we are, we may not see its close. There is quite a general consensus of opinion among the Lord's people that His coming is imminent. That will be "exceeding joy" for Him, and "joy unspeakable" for us. Then our testing will be over, and as from yonder shore we review the path it will be to recall the unchanging love, the unwearied care, and the unceasing goodness of our God and Father. So let us raise our "Eben-ezer" (I Sam. VII. 12) and on bended knees send up a song of praise; then, ere we face the world again, let us pray that no matter where we are, or what may be our circumstances, no matter how ceaseless or severe may be the assaults of the enemy, we may at all times glorify GOD.

W. B. D.

A LIVING SACRIFICE.

ROM. XII. 1-3.

VERY full of meaning are these opening verses of that part of the Roman Epistle which instructs us concerning our walk, after the marvellous unfoldings of the earlier chapters of the book. Surely in them "the mercies of God" are to be found in abundant measure; and these mercies are to be the incentive to that "living sacrifice" to which the Spirit of God here exhorts.

These three verses form an introduction to the succeeding part of the Epistle. It is divinely perfect, being a sevenfold statement of principles which lie at the root of all true practical Christian walk. Let us mark them in this way, and briefly consider each.

I. "I EXHORT YOU, THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD." This is the basis of all. His mercies, how rich! The glory and blessing of our place in Christ is the highest expression of the mercy in which God is so rich, and of which He has made us the recipients. He has brought us from the place of condemnation into that of being perfectly and freely justified by God. Thus His righteousness is not against us but *over* us. This is possible only through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And flowing out of this we have

peace, and access, and standing, and hope of the glory of God ; and the Holy Spirit Himself is given to us. Our enmity is gone, reconciliation being made through the death of His Son, that all-powerful witness to the love He had toward us while we were yet His enemies. In that death, too, we learn the truth of what God has effected, and this, apprehended by us, becomes power to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

And so we go on to find that it is the law of the Spirit, life in Christ Jesus, which sets free ; and the way of fruitfulness is not through self-occupation in any form, but the fact that it is in Christ we live. We belong to another, even to Him who was raised from among the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God in the power of the Spirit. All this goes with the knowledge of sonship as to position, heirship as to our portion, and finally, as to our state, perfect conformation to the image of His Son. " What shall we say to these things ? " " His merciful kindness is great toward us : and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord " (Ps. cxvii. 2). Thus it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy. He saved us (Titus III. 5). These unfailing mercies are the basis of the apostle's appeal.

2. " TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING

SACRIFICE.” The accomplishment of this is what will give character to all else in our Christian lives. There are two words to lay stress upon—“*bodies*” and “*living*.” The body is the vehicle of expression for us, and it is these bodies of ours in the activity of life which are to be made a free-will offering to God. This then is an intensely practical thing, affecting every department of our day to day life. It is our bodies he speaks of—our feet, our hands, our ears, our eyes, our tongues, in their varied activity, all to be in subjection to the will of God ; and their use to be denied for the accomplishment of *any other will* in the least thing of life. To this end the Word of God alone can furnish us, for from it alone can we get light as to the will of God, and know how in all things we are to be followers of Him as dear children and walk in love.

3. “*HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD,*” indicate the character of this sacrifice. We are to be holy even as He upon whom we call as Father is holy, and are to know and do those things which are well pleasing to Him. Clearly this involves close and continual intercourse with Him, the learning His mind from the perfect revelation of it which He has given to us. Sweet it is to remember how these things characterized the life of our blessed Lord. Intimacy with Him cannot fail to produce the same in measure in us.

4. Then, this is our "REASONABLE (OR INTELLIGENT) SERVICE." The word, rendered "reasonable," is used in only one other place in the Scriptures, viz. 1 Peter II. 2, "desire the sincere milk *of the word*." This seems quite suggestive. This sacrifice which is to be holy and acceptable to God is no blind obedience to set commands, but is service in the joy and power of divinely given intelligence through the Word. It is service rendered in fellowship with the One we serve, service growing out of the knowledge of His mind, His desire, His love.

5. "AND BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD." This service which we are to accomplish must be carried out in a scene which lies in the Wicked One, and is thus in positive opposition to the God we serve. There must not be conformity to such a world. The very intelligence in which our service is to be rendered forbids it. We cannot be intelligent without being aware of the true character of this age of which Satan is the god. It is by maintaining in our hearts the true estimate of it, as God has given it to us, that we shall be kept from all conformity to its ways and principles.

6. We are, instead of being conformed, to be TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND. This word "transformed" seems at once to suggest that as those who once were children

of wrath, even as others, we had our part in "this age"; but as those who are now the recipients of the manifold mercies of God we are not to conform ourselves to it. We are to be transformed,—entirely changed from all that would mark us as belonging to this evil age. This by the renewal of our mind, the mind of the flesh set aside, and the mind of Christ formed in us.

7. Thus shall we be able "TO PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD." Blessed climax! in reaching which we reach the fulness of blessing in our Christian pathway. Taking forth the precious from the vile, we shall be as His mouth (Jer. xv. 19). We must bring everything to the test of the Word that in its light all may be seen, all proved. In this way we are set free from what is not His will, and find what is; ever, also, to find that it is good, well pleasing, and perfect. What blessed knowledge grows out of this testing, knowledge of the love of God. For "whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him."

May these precious principles mark and characterize us, especially as it is so evident that the time is short in which to lay up treasure in heaven against that day when we shall appear before Him, and He shall dispense His reward to every man.

JNO. B.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR.

IN an office in London two gentlemen might have been seen engaged in earnest conversation. They were talking about the second coming of the Lord when one of them incredulously exclaimed, "What! do you really mean to tell me that you are looking to be taken to heaven bodily at any moment without dying?"

To this the other replied that he was indeed expecting the Lord to come, according to His word, to call all His people everywhere away, and that this blessed event might take place that very day.

"I never heard of such a thing in all my life," said the first with looks of mingled pity and amazement; "how any one can entertain a notion so foolish and so wild I cannot tell," and so saying he walked away as if the subject were too ridiculous for sane people to discuss.

Is it not a fact that most of us have been taught from our childhood that the path in which we all are found leads to death and the grave? That we must all die, every one of us, is the prevailing belief. That a Christian *may* die is true, that he *must* is not true, and if any contend otherwise we would ask, What, then, is the meaning of those words in 1 Corinthians xv. 51? "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall *not* all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Dare you say "we shall" in the face of God's "we shall not"? Is it safe? Is it right? Is it becoming to speak thus? Is not Scripture wiser than we?

Of a truth very little is said in the New Testament about the dying of a child of God. Enough surely to comfort us concerning those who have "fallen asleep" and to sustain our hearts should we be called to die. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" were the words of the dying Lord to the malefactor at His side. "To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better," was Paul's intense desire, and in writing to the Corinthians he speaks of being "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Stephen too in the hour of his martyrdom called on the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit. "With Me"; "with Christ"; "with the Lord" suffices for any who know who and what Christ is and what the glorious and eternal results of His death and resurrection. Thus it is certain that if the body go into the grave the spirit goes to be with Christ; it passes into the "far better." And the reason Scripture is comparatively silent on the subject is that not death but the coming of the Lord is the proper hope of the Christian.

(Fragment found among the papers of the late W. B.)

PRAISES.

“ But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”—PSALM XXII. 3.

THE Psalms are full of mingled experiences, with the praises which result from such experiences. They show how God produces that which He loves from the human heart, that harp with its thousand strings.

The deep underlying basis of all praises is in the verse cited at the head of this paper. In that psalm the Chief Musician passed through experiences which enabled Him to sing the new song. He was not heard when He cried unto God in the hour of His abandonment, in order that the Holy God might continually receive the praises in which He lives. Christ Himself, when all was over, begins and leads the praise, saying, “ In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.” This forms the basis of the continual praise which His people take up as following His lead.

But we too have to pass through such experiences, as with God’s blessing deepens the sense of His love in our hearts and produces praise from our voices. The Psalms give the seas of trouble through which God passes His people, Christ being with them in all, that their hearts may be made to answer to His touch ; and though quivering and vibrating under His hand, to turn to Him

with the harmony which delights His heart. Thus the voice (flute) is raised in praise to God, giving expression to the deeper heart (harp) tones produced in such a way.

The thousand strings of the human heart, over which all the joys and sorrows known here sweep, are better than David's harp of ten strings with solemn sound ; as the human voice is better than a flute with all wind instruments. Our God, who is the living God and must have living praise, is glorified when His people can join in such language as :

“We sing Thine arm unshortened,
Brought through each sore temptation ;
With HEART and VOICE in Thee rejoice,
Thou God of our salvation.”

May it not be that the psalm in New Testament language represents experience, with its resulting praise produced in the same way as those of the Old Testament ?

The Hymn : a direct expression of praise and worship to God for all His love now made known. This we could hardly have in the Old Testament, though anticipatively referred to in Psalm xxii. 22.

The spiritual Ode* : an ebullition of thanksgiving for every fresh deliverance by the way, such as our God delights in accomplishing on our behalf. Moses and the children of Israel sang an Ode in Exodus xv., and Deborah and Barak in Judges v.

G. J. S.

* Or spiritual Song. See Eph. v. 19 and Col. iii. 16.

“WITH CHRIST,—FAR BETTER.”

THE body of the late Editor was laid to rest in the Lewisham Cemetery, London, on October 18th. A very large number of Christian friends gathered from far and near. A service in the cemetery chapel would necessarily have excluded the greater part of these friends, so the meeting was held at the graveside.

It was opened by singing :

“ Oh, happy morn ! The Lord will come
And take His waiting people home
Beyond the reach of care ;
Where guilt and sin are all unknown :
The Lord will come and claim His own,
And place them with Him on His throne,
The glory bright to share.

“ The resurrection morn will break,
And every sleeping saint awake,
Brought forth in light again ;
Oh, morn too bright for mortal eyes !
When all the ransomed church shall rise
And wing their way to yonder skies,
Called up with Christ to reign.

“ O Lord, our pilgrim spirits long
To sing the everlasting song
Of glory, honour, power ;
Till then when Thou all power shalt wield,
Blest Saviour, Thou wilt be our Shield,
For Thou hast to our souls revealed
Thyself our Strength and Tower.”

After this, prayer was offered by Mr. Frank B. Hole (Melton Constable). Very fervently

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he thanked God for all His grace to the one who had been taken from us. Mr. Hamilton Smith (Sutton) then read Acts VIII. 2 and 8 :

“ And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made *great lamentation* over him.”

“ And there was *great joy* in that city.”

He said :

“ In this verse, the second in the chapter, we find a sorrowing company burying the body of a beloved servant of the Lord. His spirit had passed to be with Christ, and now the brethren take up the body and carry it to the burying with great lamentation. And surely to-day we can say, I think, that never have we borne to the grave one over whom we sorrow more. We sorrow because we loved him. We valued him for his gift, but we loved him because of what he was, and we remember this afternoon his Christ-like spirit, and when we think of it, and think of all that he was, we cannot mourn for him. We mourn for ourselves, but we rejoice when we think of our beloved brother. He has passed out of death into the presence of the Lord, while we are left here in the valley of the shadow.

“ Now I want to call your attention to what follows in this chapter. In the eighth verse we read, ‘ There was great joy in that city.’ That is to say, immediately after passing through a scene of great mourning we pass to one of great joy. Has not this a voice for us ?

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What was it that brought great joy into this city? It was that *Christ* had come into the hearts of some there. It was this that caused the great joy. On the one hand there was great sorrow because a saint had passed away to be with Christ, and on the other, great joy because Christ had come to dwell in the hearts of some on earth.

“ The Lord has been taking away one after another of His aged and honoured servants, but does not this in Acts VIII. encourage us? They mourned with great lamentation, but they did not hang down their heads. They did not say, ‘ Stephen has gone, a devoted man, one full of faith and power, and of the Spirit of God, and who and what are we who are left? What can we do?’ They went, those sorrowing people, from the graveside to preach the glad tidings everywhere. Amongst them Philip went forth to preach Christ, and great joy is brought to the hearts of many in Samaria.

“ On this occasion it is we who are left behind. The older ones are being called home, and I pray that the effect of this meeting may be that we may all be stirred up to preach and live Christ. Thus only can we bring any joy into this world of sorrow.

“ But notice what happens afterwards. We read later in the chapter of Simon and his great bitterness, and then we find the eunuch

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filled with great joy. ‘ *He went on his way rejoicing.*’ The chapter opens with a sorrowing company. It goes on to a company full of joy. It then refers to a man full of bitterness, and again it passes to another full of rejoicing. That is just like this world : sorrow and joy, storm and sunshine, day and night, until at last there will come that day of clear shining, that morning without clouds.

“ In contrast to this, may we turn to a verse in the Book of Revelation, the twenty-first chapter, fourth verse : ‘ *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*’ What a comfort to think there is a time coming—and soon coming—when God will wipe away all tears. To-day the Lord with gracious hand may wipe away our tears and comfort us, but as long as we are in the world we shall have to face fresh sorrows and fresh tears (again to get fresh comfort, I know), but there is a day coming when at last He will wipe away all tears, and when that day comes it is GOD HIMSELF who will do it. No angel will do it. No saint can do it. A saint may comfort a saint. An angel may say, as the angels did to the women at the tomb, ‘ Weep not ! ’ But it is only God Himself who can finally wipe away all tears, and He will do it. The time is coming when we shall shed our last tear, when we shall have faced our last sorrow. The sorrows and the tears will be left behind,

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and there will be no more death, no more night, no more crying, no more pain, for the former things will have passed away.

"Beloved brethren, again I say, may we take courage ; may we go forth from this place greatly stirred up ; may we be awakened out of our ease and go forth to serve Christ until the day dawns, when we shall be with Him and like Him, and God shall wipe away all tears !"

Mr. James Green (Norwood) then prayed, and two well-known verses of Montgomery's were sung:

"And though there intervene
Rough seas and stormy skies,
Though by no mortal vision seen,
Thy glory fills our eyes.

"There shall all clouds depart,
The wilderness shall cease ;
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace."

The meeting was then concluded with prayer by Mr. Arthur F. Pollock (Muswell Hill), who earnestly sought God's gracious blessing for those who were experiencing the grief of bereavement, and prayed that they might know the reality of His sustaining grace.

U.S.A. AND OTHERS.—Answers to Correspondents held over till January.