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The Christian's Library.

Hints on Daniel.

“The Messiah, the Prince.”—DAN. ix. 26.

THERE is nothing more striking than the definiteness of the dates recorded in Scripture, both historically and prophetically. Rationalistic criticism, which is ever hostile, has not hesitated to impugn the correctness of some of these dates, so far as the history of the Bible is concerned, but in result has been forced to bow and acknowledge their accuracy.

We are now considering dates which are by no means vague, and it is well to remember, whatever the “higher critics” may endeavour to prove to the contrary, that Daniel was uttering a prophecy and not recording history. The communication given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel was made in the first year of Darius the Mede (chap.

XXV.

ix. 1), about B.C. 538, whereas the point of departure for the seventy weeks was, as we have seen, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. ii. 1), or B.C. 445. The very month even is stated, "And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king."

A most interesting reckoning of dates, showing the accuracy of this prophetic period, will be found in Sir Robert Anderson's recent work, "Daniel in the Critic's Den." The author writes: "The edict for the rebuilding of Jerusalem is to be assigned to the 1st Nisan, B.C. 445. From that epoch, 'unto the Messiah, the Prince,' was to be sixty-nine sevens of prophetic years.* But 483 years of 360 days contain 173,880 days; and 173,880 days, computed from the 1st day of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, ended on the 10th day of Nisan in the 18th year of Tiberias Cæsar—the day when, in the fulfilment of this, and of Zechariah's prophecy, our Lord made His first and only public entry into Jerusalem."

Whether we adopt the exact conclusions of the writer or no, there can be no doubt that the period of the advent of the Messiah is here intentionally most accurately specified. And, moreover, it is certain that godly souls in Israel

* The prophetic year has 360 days. This will be evident to any one who compares the various ways of describing the same prophetic period, viz., "time, times, and a half" (*i.e.*, $3\frac{1}{2}$ years), "forty-two months," and "1260 days."

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were led at this very time to expect the coming of Christ. Wise men had come to Jerusalem from the east to worship Him, and all Jerusalem was troubled by their visit.

Simeon, in the same city, was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke ii. 25); nor was he alone in this, for Anna, the prophetess, "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (ver. 38). Besides this, the testimony of John the Baptist rang forth in the wilderness of Judea, and in all the country about Jordan, calling upon the nation to repent. His voice was as of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

The land of Judea, and especially the city of Jerusalem, was greatly stirred; minds were in suspense, "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not" (Luke iv. 15).

Priests and Levites came from Jerusalem, and sought out the Baptist in the wilderness, in their anxiety to know who the man could be that drew such crowds to the river Jordan, and John "confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ" (John i. 20).

The Christ, then, was expected, and about this very time, in fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy that "unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks."

But not only did Daniel foretell His advent, His rejection was as clearly predicted. "And after

the three score and two weeks"—for the definite article should here be inserted—"shall Messiah be cut off." The marginal reading of the next clause is doubtless correct—"and shall have nothing." He was "born King of the Jews," "but they received Him not." Though the clearest prophecies were fulfilled at His birth and all through His life of public service, yet was the Jewish nation blind as to His Messianic glory. The gospel narrative bears ample testimony to this. Scribes and Pharisees, chief priests and rulers, yes, all the religious teachers of the people, were first and foremost in His rejection, and at length fulfilled the very voices of the prophets, read every Sabbath-day in their synagogues, in condemning Him (Acts xiii. 27). "After the three score and two weeks," that is, after sixty-nine of the weeks were ended (for seven weeks had preceded the sixty-two), Messiah was cut off, and, instead of the crown of David, was given the cross; He received nothing of His earthly glory in connection with Israel. Other purposes God had in view, purposes not revealed in the prophetic writings of Old Testament times, purposes hidden until the fitting time for their revelation had come, and until that which formed the basis of their development had been accomplished in the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost—yes, God's eternal purpose in the calling of the

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Church, out of this world of Jew and Gentile, to share the heavenly glory of Christ.

Daniel was inspired to predict the cutting off and rejection of the Messiah. Thus far the prophecy has been fulfilled; sixty-nine out of the seventy have been accounted for, but the blessings of verse 24 have not yet been realised by Daniel's people. So far from that, another prince is spoken of, a prince yet to come, whose people in the past destroyed the city and the sanctuary. If the cross of Christ has brought to the Christian infinite and eternal spiritual blessings, it has left the nation of Israel in a worse, far worse, condition than that in which they were when Daniel was a captive at Babylon.

The destruction of Jerusalem, and not its final blessing, followed the cutting off of Messiah. A people came, the Romans, under Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and ever since the people have been dispersed and trodden down. An evident break occurs here in the prophecy. The seventieth week is separated from the sixty-nine. The time of the cutting off of Messiah is clearly and accurately reckoned, then follows an undefined and lengthened period during which the city and sanctuary are destroyed, desolations are determined, and unrest, confusion, and war are prominent. How truly this has been the history of the Jewish nation since, yea, because of their rejection and crucifixion of Messiah, is manifest to all.

Notes of an Address.

(MATT. XXV.)

THERE is that (to a heart occupied with the plans of the Father based on the character of His love and grace in the gospel) which makes the coming of the Lord Jesus very sweet to the thoughts. In the world all is uncertainty, change, and death in everything, and as we advance onwards we find it more and more so. "All flesh is as grass," we have nothing to lean on but the Word of God, nothing but the company of Christ to look for as we pass through this scene and find ourselves every day mere strangers and pilgrims where there is nothing to fill the aching void of the heart that longs to see Jesus. *We are strangers.* If Jesus led a stranger-life below we ought not to expect more. How God's character revealed in His Word refreshes us by the way, enabling us to rise up as on eagles' wings to go on again and again, rejoicing in Him in the midst of all discouragements and trials from without.

Let us turn to Matthew xxv. and consider the last of the two parables it contains, and afterwards glance at the judgment seat of Christ at the end of it. In the history of the talents a principle is involved which it is important we should rightly apprehend. Oftentimes we set

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Moses to teach a class, and would put under law those who are brought into the liberty of the gospel. The grace given by God is the only antidote to evil, the only power of good. Only *one* principle for God's children, and that is *grace*. They are ever dealt with according to the principles of the kingdom. We would oftentimes set rules and tie God down to certain ways suited to our own narrow hearts, but in proportion as we understand Him, we shall have our hearts and lives moulded by grace, and not law. How in the Word we see the character of God revealed in grace!

Satan often ensnares us to think well of self, but we are to be stripped of everything connected with self; it is self that hinders God coming in, in a large measure. If the flesh is not judged God comes in, uses circumstances, family trials, losses, anything, that we may come into His presence with a full sense of our nothingness and make His grace everything. If you think of Christ bearing the cross, going to Gethsemane, crying out on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" can you think well of self that cost Him all that agony? Will you think it hard to be made to know there is nothing good in self? There is nothing, and the oldest saint knows this the best. If I have made any progress it is finding out the flesh to be worse and worse. I can't do to-day what I could yesterday. I can't

trust myself to-day. What makes the exhortation needful to be continually in prayer and watching thereunto? Nothing but my necessity! It seems when a soul is about to escape from Satan's snare it only makes him more active than ever. Our life is a conflict, a warfare, no sooner out of one trouble than we have to prepare for another.

Rest! are we to be expecting that down here? The life of a believer is one of perpetual conflict; perpetual fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil, we cannot lay down our arms until the end. Sometimes we think it hard to go on so continually engaged, and say, Would that we had wings, then would we flee away and be at rest. The children of Israel did not like wilderness trials either, their hearts continually longed after the house of bondage, because of the leeks and onions and the flesh-pots. Is it not often so with you and me?

Our blessed God in bringing us to heaven has great joy and gladness. We forget this, we are tried and get weary of the way He is leading us, we get tired of the people we meet on the way, tired of our sorrows; we say, I don't feel as if I shall ever be happy here, but God is the same God. Is He not always happy in your joy, and ought not you to be happy in His? Contemplate God's joy over us, saying, "All My love you have found out in time, but I have loved you from all eternity." Think of God's

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eternal love, is it not better to go to Him to be filled out of the fountain of His love, than to the broken cisterns of our temporal love? I know I do not love Him as I ought, no, nor ever can, but is it not better to be filled with God's eternal love to me than with mine to Him? What a thought! Before time began God had you in His thoughts and all your circumstances in His heart.

All act according to their estimate of Christ. In this parable is one who has but one talent, and this man estimates God according to his own nature. Men say they dare not work for God with but one talent. Is a child ever afraid of the affectionate mother who rejoices to urge on her child's faltering steps? Won't the child try and do its best? Do our best for God! To be sure we shall, when He has made us His *sons* and *daughters*. If we have but one talent we ought only to work the harder for Him. If you say you have no ability, take care where you put yourself, it is on the ground of nature you put yourself then. Oh! may the blessed Spirit make you sorry with godly sorrow that worketh repentance, &c. Often I have been in such sorrow I have wept my heart out, and then I have been made so glad I have wept my heart out again for joy. Oh, it is a heaven of gladness, a heaven of heavens to be glad you were made sorry! Oh, go to God to be made sorry, to know the luxury of being made glad again by Him!

Well, this man had one talent, and he did nothing for his Lord but to bury his talent. Why, said his Lord, did you not, &c.? After all what can we give Him that we have not first received from Him? Oh, the grace of that God who will receive our poor service. Think of creatures on earth who know they have sinned and yet can, by the power of the precious blood, dwell in the very presence of God. We want not man's rituals and formality of religion, there is something we *do* want, and it is a wonderful thing, and that is to be able (in virtue of the precious blood) to come into God's presence and confess our sins, and He faithful and just to forgive us. Do we want man's help for that? or what man calls the house of God? Can we expect that the heart that has never been broken by looking up will be so by looking down? God created us anew to have Christ as our great object in life. All good was in Him before it proceeded from Him. If His grace had not come down into our hearts, not a hope of salvation! Nothing for a sinner save His Christ! O blessed grace that came in when we had given all up as lost! Oh, the grace in the eye that looked on Peter, and he went out and wept out his heart!

Soon shall the place of him preaching to you know him no more, nor that of the company gathered before him. Soon all will have passed away not listening to me then, but remember all

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. II

you who have heard it, this is the very word that when we have ceased to be, shall either condemn or be salvation to us.

J. WILLANS.



The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE V.

(Chap. vi.)

IN the previous part of the Epistle we have the wonderful unfolding of the grace of God towards sinners; God, first of all bringing out in a clear and unmistakable manner the state of ruin in which man lay on account of his sins; then bringing in His remedy and unfolding the blessings which flow to every one who believes, whether Jew or Gentile, based upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then in the fifth chapter we find how the grace of God reaches to the very limits, and beyond the limits of man's need—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"—so that the grace of God was infinitely beyond and far superior to man's state by reason of sin.

But now there comes a question of all importance. The flesh says, If my sin magnifies the grace of God, well, the more I sin the more the grace of God will be magni-

fied. I have even heard Christians say that the doctrine of the free grace of God will lead people to live carelessly. Now that is the very thing that is taken up in the beginning of this chapter. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" That is impossible, it would be entirely inconsistent with the truth of Christianity for a person to argue in that way. If God's grace is made to superabound over sin, is that a reason for us to continue in it? It would be impossible, the Spirit argues here, for us to continue in sin if we once remember how we got free from sin.

And notice this, that from the middle of the fifth chapter a new subject is treated of. It is not now a question of the sins we commit; that had been taken up in the earlier part of the Epistle—the way in which God can clear the guilty has been unfolded simply and powerfully in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of Romans; the work which clears the guilty is a finished work, not a work that is going on now, not a work that takes place *in* the soul. The work that sets me before God at peace is a work that was done *for* me, and not a work that is being done *in* me. It is most important to get that clear, because there are numbers of people who are occupied with the work of the Spirit of God in them. That is all-important, but do not let us confound them. The work that enables me, as a guilty sinner, to

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stand justified before God is a work that was accomplished more than eighteen hundred years ago by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross ; nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. It is a work that has glorified God about my sins, and the moment I believe the gospel I get all the benefits of it.

But here, in this sixth chapter, we get another subject altogether. Not the sins that I have committed but the sin that dwelleth in me, the nature that commits the sins. We have that nature in us, dear friends, and the important matter is, How is it to be treated? The question which the Spirit of God raises here, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" enables the apostle to bring out a truth that had not been alluded to in the previous part of the Epistle.

In the first part of the Epistle we are taught that Christ died for us, but now we come to our death with Christ. I remember one who told me that when he learned that truth it seemed as if he had got a fresh Bible. He used to tell me that three times in his life he got a fresh Bible. The first time was when he got to see that all his sins were forgiven. Before that time he used to read his Bible as a hard, religious duty, but the moment he learned that through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ all his sins were gone, and that he stood justified from them all, the book became a new book to him ; it was food

and refreshment to his soul. After that he learned the truth of deliverance; not merely that Christ had died for him and all his sins were gone through that, but that he had died with Christ, and that, therefore, *he* was gone. That opened up to him the Bible in an altogether different way. The third time was when he got to understand dispensational truth.

The sixth chapter of the Romans brings in the truth that we have died with Christ. Because grace abounds, says the apostle, where sin abounded, is that a reason why we, Christians, should continue in sin? That is impossible. How did we get into our blessings? Through Christ surely, but through a Christ that died, and if we get them through Christ's death, it is because we are identified with Him in His death. That is the argument here. I am identified with Christ in His death. It is not only that He has died, but we have died too. "How shall we, that have died to sin, live any longer therein?" It is impossible. It is not only an inconsistency but it is an impossibility. How shall we, if we have got our place of blessing through identification with a Christ who has died, continue in that very sin to which we have died?

In Colossians iii. 2, we read, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead." Now that is the statement of a fact: it is God's side of the question, and it is true of all Christians. It is not what some

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Christians have attained to and others are struggling after ; it is true of every Christian. God says of all Christians, "Ye have died". You may say, "I do not feel it." But there are numbers of things in the gospel which are true of you though you may not feel them. You did not feel that your sins were forgiven until you believed what God said about them ; and in reference to this truth God has said, "Ye have died." Now let us take God's view of the matter, and do not let us reason about it from our point of view. Let us accept God's statement of the case and say, "Whether I feel it or whether I do not, God says it of me, and therefore it is true." I believe that the only way in which we can really have power, is by believing the truth as God states it. Do not let us reason about it because we do not feel it, let us accept the truth as God presents it.

Here, then, it says, "Likewise *reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vi. 11.) Faith is privileged to consider what God says as true. In the earlier part of the chapter the question is put, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" and the first step in our Christian path bears witness to this very truth. Have we not been baptized? Now, if we have been baptized, we were not baptized to a living Christ but to a Christ who has died. All our blessings flow to us through a

Christ who has died, and we are associated with a Christ who has died.

Then it goes on in the fourth verse, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death," but it does not stop there; the Christian is not going about the world as a dead man. I have died with Him truly, but I have a new life. Is the Lord Jesus Christ dead now? He *was* dead, but He is not dead now. This verse goes on to say, He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." And that is a wonderful statement. It is not merely the fact that Christ rose from the dead, but His rising from the dead was intimately bound up with the glory of the Father. It was, of course, due to the Lord Jesus Christ that He should rise from the dead. Look what it says in the thirteenth chapter of John. "Now is the Son of man glorified." What does that word "now" refer to? It applies there to the cross. The Lord says, speaking in view of the cross and all that was going to take place there, "Now is the Son of man glorified." And that is remarkable because we should have said it was there the Son of man was humbled; but, to the eye of God, the cross was where the Son of man was glorified, for it was there that He met all the power of sin and Satan, and, standing there alone for God's glory, He sustained the whole weight of what that glory required. We cannot go into that part of the subject now, but the Lord goes on to say that not only is the Son of man glori-

"THE LIVING GRACE OF CHRIST." 17

fied, but "God is glorified in Him." All that God was was glorified at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ—His righteousness, His love, His hatred of sin, and His love to the sinner. All that God was, came out and was glorified by the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross. And what has become of Christ? Is God going to leave Him in the grave? That would be impossible: that the One who had glorified God by His death should be left by that God in death—that could not be! He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. The glory of God the Father was concerned in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It could not be that God should leave in the grave the One—and that His own Son—who had glorified Him upon the cross! God's own glory was concerned in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," and that has a direct bearing upon us, for if He was raised from the dead we shall be raised too.

(To be continued.)

—◆—

"The Living Grace of Christ."

(JOHN XXI.)

THERE are two great objects, in regard to man, for which Scripture has been written. In regard to man, I say, because the display and accomplishment of His

own glory in Christ, is surely God's highest object in His Word, as well as in all His ways. But *as to man*, Scripture has been written, first, for the communication to dead sinners of eternal life in the knowledge of the Son of God, and, secondly, the ministration to that life when it has been received, of all the fulness of Christ Himself, He being the object on which that life is exercised, as well as the source whence it proceeds.

We have the formal statement of the first object in John xx. 30, 31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." How blessedly simple! So simple that even a child may, by the teaching of the Spirit, understand it—understand that to which the greatest human learning is a hindrance rather than a help. Numberless deeds and words of the Lord Jesus had not been recorded by the apostle, "*but these are written*"—for what end? "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

"Well," says the reader, "I do unfeignedly believe this—not because parents, or teachers, or ministers have said it, but because God has written it in His Word, and all He says is true." You, then, dear reader, are a partaker of eternal

"THE LIVING GRACE OF CHRIST." 19

life! The fact is, that the believing on the Son of God is the first pulsation of this life. The natural life received by an infant from its parent declares itself in various sounds and motions; and even if it be but the beating of the pulse, the life is thus surely manifested. Now, truly to believe in Christ is, so to speak, the pulse of the new life; so that, when any one believes *on the testimony of God Himself*, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, *he has life through Christ's name*. "This is the record," as we read elsewhere, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," so that "He that *hath* the Son *hath* life."

Every one knows, however, that a new-born babe is the most helpless creature in the world; it can neither feed itself, nor defend itself, nor go by itself, nor care for itself in any way. It has to be fed, and tended, and cared for, till, as the life is gradually developed, it grows up from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to man's estate. So does the new life through the name of Jesus need to be nourished and ministered unto. And what is its nutriment? "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Here we have the first pulsation of the new life somewhat differently expressed, "If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious." We cannot fail to know in natural things

whether we have tasted any given flavour. We may not understand the composition of the substance in which the flavour is found; but if it be salt, or sweet, or bitter, there can be no question about our knowing its *taste*, supposing we have tasted it. So in the things of God: we have all *heard* that the Lord is gracious, but have you, dear reader—have I—*tasted* that He is so? Do we know the divine *relish* of the Lord's grace, which, to be known, *must* be spiritually tasted? If we have, then are we born of God; for it is the new life alone which is possessed of this spiritual taste. It is through the Word that the Lord has made known to us that He is gracious, and it is in the reception of the Word that we have both received the new life, and become conscious of its *tastes*. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." And how else should the life thus received be nourished, but by the same Word? By the same Word, moreover, still further unfolding "that the Lord is gracious"? It is in our first tasting this that we receive life; and it is as we taste it more and more that the new life is developed and grows.

The great subject of John xxi. is the living grace of the risen Saviour—grace, which having met our need *as sinners* in the blood shed upon the cross, now meets all our necessities *as saints*

“THE LIVING GRACE OF CHRIST.” 21

in the fulness here seen to reside in Jesus as risen from the dead. These records of the intercourse between the risen Christ and His disciples, have thus a peculiar interest and charm. Who can fail to be touched by the tenderness, the sympathy of Jesus in all His relations to His disciples till the hour of His death? But death and resurrection might have been supposed to change all this. How blessed, that when, as here, we find the risen Jesus in the midst of His disciples, it is the same Jesus—tender, compassionate, full of sympathy and love, which, if it wield the arm of omnipotence, can yet enter into the most minute circumstances of the disciple's condition and wants!

At the opening of the chapter we find a cluster of the disciples gathered together. On the night of His betrayal they had all forsaken Him and fled; and they all needed the restorings of His living grace as risen from the dead. Peter had, it is true, by his rashness, placed himself in circumstances which made his fall more conspicuous than that of the rest; but all had forsaken their dying Lord and Master, and had proved that, though the spirit was willing the flesh was weak. And though Jesus had already appeared to them once and again after His resurrection, we find them here, in verse 2, in such a state of soul as readily to respond to the proposal of one always the most forward to act—“I go a fishing. They

say unto him. We also go with thee." They go, and spend the whole night in fruitless toil.

Three years and a half before they had been called from that very employment by the Lord Himself. Jesus called them to follow Him, and to such of them as forsook their nets He said, "I will make you fishers of men." From that time they had either accompanied Him, or gone at His bidding to preach the gospel, and cast out devils, He caring for all their wants, so that they lacked nothing. Now they supposed that His care over them was at an end, and that they had become dependent on their own resources and endeavours. They go a fishing: but to what purpose was their toil? "that night they caught nothing." In the morning, however, Jesus, who was cognisant of all their need, though they knew it not, stood on the shore and said, "Children, have ye any meat?" They knew not that it was Jesus, for such was the manner of His intercourse with them after His resurrection, but there He was, with all the interest in their minutest cares which He had been wont to manifest in the days of His flesh. He bids them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and now they are not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

In all this there was, no doubt, instruction both for them and for us, beyond the circumstances of the moment. It is surely the happy privilege of all who know Jesus to testify of

Him far and near ; setting Him forth, according to the ability given, to poor perishing sinners, as their only hope and refuge. But while it is happy, and of all importance, that the heart be ready for this service anywhere, and at all times, let us never forget that success depends entirely on our being in the current of God's workings. The disciples might spread the net, and cast it into the sea, but if not in the current where the fishes were, what advantage in it all? It is only in proportion as we individually walk with God, depending entirely on Christ, and guided by Him, that blessing will attend our labours. It is not on the amount of labour that success depends, but on our being near enough to Christ to have His directions in casting the net on the right side of the ship.

J. G. B.

Correspondence.

Rotherham :—“Can you tell me very simply what the error of *Christadelphianism* is?”

It would be difficult indeed to point out briefly the errors of a system so essentially unsound in all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, as the one which arrogates to itself such a high-sounding title as *Christadelphian* (*i.e.* Brothers of Christ). It has been truly said that there is nothing of Christ in it except what is found in the title.

Their belief, as regards the Person of Christ, is the same as Unitarians. To them He is a

man, but not God. They may quibble over the expression, Son of God, and so ensnare the unwary; but no simple-hearted believer should be misled by this. To the Christadelphian, Christ was the Son of God in no other sense than that all are the sons of God. They deny derisively His deity, and the eternity of His existence before all worlds.

There is nothing they so court as to entangle people in argument, but discussions as to the Person of Christ are ever to be shunned. No true believer will doubt either the perfect humanity or the absolute deity of the Son—hence for them discussion on this point is useless, rather is it a subject for worship and adoration; we tread this holy ground with bowed head and unshod feet. To discuss it with enemies of the Christian faith can only be damaging to the soul of the believer, while it produces no good result for the opposer. Hence, for my part, I turn away from every man who denies the truth as to Christ's person.

When I have reason to suspect a man of being a Christadelphian, and their speech bewrayeth them very quickly, I always take them up on this ground. Press them as to their belief with reference to Christ. Is He the Son of God? Yes, they will most probably reply. Is He the *eternal* Son of the *eternal* God? This question, when pressed, will invariably bring out their hostility to the truth.

Now, this is the test given to us in Scripture: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth [that] Jesus Christ [is] come in [the] flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not [that] Jesus Christ [is] come in [the] flesh is not of God" (1 John iv. 1-3).

Scripture leaves no room to doubt that all who systematically hold and teach error as to the Person of our adorable Lord are deceivers of an anti-christian spirit.

The Antichrist of the future will be the great opposer of Christ, but "even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (see 1 John ii. 18; 2 John 7). From all such turn away.

We need not wonder that unsoundness as to Christ's Person is accompanied by error as to the Atonement. To the Christadelphian, Christ did not die for our sins in any efficacious manner. No sacrifice of infinite value was offered to a holy God, on the ground of which the believer stands justified before God.

Christadelphians do not believe that man is a lost sinner in need of justification. With them there is no heaven and no hell, neither has man an immortal spirit. They are never tired of quoting, "The meek shall inherit the earth." Those only who imbibe the Christadelphian

belief will rise from the dead and inherit the earth when Christ comes to establish His earthly kingdom. They speak much of the coming of the Lord, but it is only in the sense of His coming to the *earth*; the heavenly aspect of His coming as the "Bright and Morning Star" is to them unknown.

ED.

Bournemouth:—I. "Is it right to quote the words of the friends of Job . . . in the same way as one would a verse from the Psalms, &c.?"

The question is one of inspiration. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," &c.; hence Job is as truly and certainly inspired as the Psalms, or the Gospels, Epistles, or any other portion of God's Word. Moreover, there are no varying degrees of inspiration, each part is inspired as fully as every other part. But this does not alter the fact that in the Bible we have recorded what wicked men said, and even what Satan said. Their words, it need hardly be said, were not inspired words; that is, they were not words put into their lips by God—nevertheless the record of those words has been given us by inspiration. The friends of Job often spoke things that were not right (Job xlii. 7). Clearly God did not put these words into their lips, though He inspired the writer of the book of Job to give us an accurate record of what they said.

Wicked men said that the blessed Lord was

“a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber”; their charge was blasphemously false, and yet God has caused that these words should be recorded for our learning. The Pharisees were not inspired to speak them, though Luke was inspired to write them (Luke vii. 34).

We must never forget that we need the Spirit of God to rightly understand what that same Spirit has inspired the servant of God “in old time” to write. Multitudes to-day reject the written Word on various grounds, even as multitudes rejected Christ, the Living Word, when He was here on earth. It speaks too powerfully to man’s consciences for them to love those holy oracles, unless through grace they are convicted of their sin, and led to repentance and confession.

2. “What could one say to a person who says that certain chapters ought not to be in the Bible, because they are not fit to be read in public?”

In reply to this, let me quote the following powerful words:—“Sins, dark and terrible, are chronicled on the page of Scripture. These foul blots on human life are not vaguely indicated; they are not distantly hinted at. They are fully disclosed. They are told in simple, plain, direct language. But, somehow, this full description never ministers to uncleanness; it never kindles or feeds the flame of lust. The thought that utters itself here pierces to the inner heart of wickedness, and we see it as we may imagine it is seen of God, who beholds it,

and whose Spirit remains nevertheless unsoiled. There may be no denunciation; and yet, under the mastery of the thoughts of this Book, we see the hideousness of the sin. And this purity of the Bible is a living force that makes itself felt whenever we open its pages. If the love of sin be in us, then that love and love of this Book cannot go on together. We must either give up the sin and hold to the Book, or we must hold to the sin and give up the Book. That is a choice which is being made daily and hourly. It is a choice which the Book imperiously forces upon all who come to it. Sin and it cannot company together. The spirit of the Bible is one of war to the death against all uncleanness, selfishness, dishonesty, and wrong. The light which is here is such that nothing which is of the darkness can live in it. It is the light of thought and character. Whose thought? Whose character? Name one name; say that God speaks here, and all is plain. Hold back that explanation, and you shroud this Book in mystery. You leave unanswered the question which rises in your heart and mine; for if the Bible is of man only, how is it that we find this purifying power only there? Do we not both know that till we speak the word 'God,' that question is unanswerable?" * ED.

* "What is the Bible?" by John Urquhart. Price 2d. 12s. 6d. per 100.

Hints on Daniel.

“The prince that shall come.”—Chap. ix. 26.

WE have followed the course of this remarkable prophecy down to the rejection of the Messiah, the Prince, after the sixty-ninth week. We have noticed the prediction, already fulfilled, of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, which took place about A.D. 70. We have seen, too, that there is an undefined period of time following upon this.

No hint is given in the passage before us as to the length of this unreckoned stretch of time, nor are we here told what special work of the Spirit of God was to fill up this interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. But the intelligent Christian will be in no difficulty. The calling out of the Church takes place during this parenthetical period.

Most readers of these pages are familiar with the thought that the history of the Church upon earth, reaching from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air (1 Thess. iv.), forms a break in God's dealings with the earth. In the portion of Holy Scripture we are now considering, this parenthesis, though not enlarged upon, is yet most clearly foreseen. But it will come to an end, and that in a very solemn manner. The Lord Jesus Christ will descend

XXVI.

from heaven into the air and remove His saints, and then once more will God take up the thread of His earthly dealings, and Israel will again become the special object of His interest.

The "city and sanctuary," then, we have seen were destroyed by the Romans. They are not mentioned by name, but it is the Romans that we are to understand by the expression, "*The people of the prince that shall come*" (ver. 26), for they it was that history informs us destroyed the city of Jerusalem.

But this expression demands a closer attention. If "the people" are the Romans, who is "the prince"? It must be evident to everybody that this cannot be the same as "the Messiah, the Prince." In no sense could the Romans have been called the people of Messiah. Nor are we to understand Titus to be that prince. Titus might have been spoken of as their prince at the time that the Romans destroyed the city, but here we are told, not that *the people* shall come, but that the *prince* shall come. He has not yet come, nor will he come until the time of the end of those desolations determined upon Daniel's people, the Jews. In other words, the Roman empire is to revive, and will yet be seen under the control of this very prince.

Those who have followed us in our study of the book of Daniel will know that the last phase of the Roman empire, that of the division into ten kingdoms, has not yet existed. Some are in

the habit of looking upon the present broken condition of what once was an undivided empire as the ten-toed period. But a passage in the Apocalypse already noticed will show that this is not the case. There we are told that "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev. xvii. 12). Here by the expression "the beast" we are to understand not so much the empire in itself as its *head*. The Roman empire of the future will be dominated by one man, sometimes called "the beast" (Rev. xiii. 4, xvii. 12), also spoken of as the "little horn,"* and here in our chapter "the prince that shall come" (Dan. ix. 26). At the time of the end the ten kings will give their power and strength to this terrible prince, and they shall make war with the Lamb. Clearly this has not yet taken place. In the early days of the empire it was undivided, now it is broken up into incoherent fragments, each seeking its own interests at the expense of the others; alliances, too, being formed to maintain "the balance of power." But in the coming day God will put it "in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast" (Rev. xvii. 17). Little does the world now guess that all is moving on to the accom-

* That is, the little horn of Daniel vii. The little horn of Daniel viii., we have seen, is a different personage altogether.

plishment of God's will clearly foretold in the prophetic word!

It is this coming prince, the head of the Roman empire, that is spoken of in the last verse of our chapter. "And he shall confirm a covenant with *the* many for one week," for thus should the verse be read. Here, then, is the last of the seventy weeks. It has not yet commenced. No clear or intelligent interpretation of this prophecy can be given unless this point is seized. Moreover, it is not until this last week begins that prophetic time will be counted again. Ever since the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ "times and seasons" have remained unreckoned; these have to do with the earth and God's dealings with His earthly people, Israel. The Church period is outside these times and seasons, and hence all attempts to calculate the date of Christ's return by reference to the 1260 days must end in failure.

Another line of things followed upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in answer to the question of the disciples, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" the risen Lord says—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power (or authority). But ye shall receive power* after that the Holy

* This is a different word from the one in the previous verse; it signifies *might* or *force*—*δύναμις* (*dynamis*).

Ghost is come upon you," &c. (Acts i. 6-9). This is the period, not of the kingdom for Israel, but of the Holy Ghost's testimony to an earth-rejected but glorified Christ; this is the time for the calling out of the Church, composed of all, whether Jew or Gentile, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

But the Jews will be restored to Palestine—they have of late been going back in large numbers—yet sad to say, their return will be in unbelief, and then for political reasons they will enter into a covenant with the chief of the Roman empire. Whether this will take place immediately upon the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord we do not undertake to say, but at any rate, it would seem to us the time will not be long.

This covenant will be made with "the many," that is the majority; the remnant will not join in it, they will suffer at the hands of the ungodly nation, and the Psalms are filled with the expressions, prophetically given, that will be suitable to them in those days of oppression and persecution.

When the Roman prince confirms this covenant for one week, the Jews will imagine that he is their friend, but "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Through his means their whole national system will have been restored, and even, it appears, their religious ceremonial.

But in the midst of the week all this will cease, and a period of most awful tribulation will follow. "The great tribulation" will take place during *the last* half of this week, it will last for three and a half years, or as elsewhere said, 1260 days.

Some may ask, Is this prince not the Antichrist? We do not think he is. The Antichrist will be reigning *in Jerusalem* as the false king of the Jews; he will no doubt be in league with this Roman prince, and it will be through his means that the covenant will be made. But it is of importance to distinguish between the three great instruments of wickedness and opposition to God and His people at the time of the end. They are all alluded to in this last verse. They are the Roman prince, the Antichrist, and the Assyrian.

No doubt all our readers are aware that since the time of the Babylonish captivity the Jewish nation have never fallen into idolatry. They are suffering now for a greater crime, even the murder of their Messiah; but since Nebuchadnezzar carried them away they have never fallen into the sin of idolatry. According to the parable of our Lord, the unclean spirit of idolatry departed from them as a nation, and has never found a place amongst them since, though their condition be but "empty, swept, and garnished," in other words outwardly orthodox, though it were but a form without reality or power. But

at the end this spirit of idolatry will return to them in sevenfold degree and their last state will be worse than their first (Matt. xii. 43-46). This will be when the Antichrist or man of sin will be worshipped as God in the temple once more rebuilt (2 Thess. ii.).

It is to this that the somewhat obscure expression refers, "the overspreading of abominations." Let us here give this verse in a slightly altered form, which will help to an understanding of the passage; it is a translation which all scholars will appreciate—"And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the overspreading (or protection) of abominations there shall be a desolator, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (ver. 27). The "overspreading of abominations" evidently refers to the idolatry under Antichrist, and "the desolator" appears to be an allusion to the Assyrian; Jerusalem herself is "the desolate."

In order to ensure themselves against this "king of the north," or Assyrian, the apostate nation will seek protection at the hands of the Roman prince and Antichrist, who will then be working hand in hand, a protection which they should have sought from God alone. They will say, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the

overflowing scourge (*i.e.* the king of the north) shall pass through, it shall not come unto us," &c. (Isa. xxviii. 15). But this their covenant will not avail them in the day of their calamity; nay, on this very account will the desolator be sent upon them—as the rod of Jehovah's anger (Isa. x. 5).

How blessed it will be for the tried and persecuted remnant in that day to prove that Jehovah Himself has laid for them in Zion, the city of their tribulation, "for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation"! (Isa. xxviii. 16). Who this precious corner stone is, we, Christians, well know, even Jesus Christ, who is to us who believe, meanwhile, God's preciousness (1 Pet. ii.).

(To be continued.)

"The Living Grace of Christ."

(JOHN XXI.)

NOR is the same service assigned to all. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord" (1 Cor. xii.). The vessels, moreover, of the several gifts differ from each other according to the wisdom of Him who doeth all things after

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the counsel of His own will. All have not the promptitude of Peter, or the tenderness of John. We, in the narrowness of our hearts, would often seek to have every vessel cast in the same mould, while, as has been said by another, "Unity in diversity is God's principle, both in creation, and in the Church."

In the chapter before us, we find in John the tenderness and delicacy of spiritual affection which was the first to perceive that it was the Lord Himself who stood on the shore ; while in Peter there is the promptitude in action, in which he no sooner understands that it is the Lord, than he girds his fisher's coat about him, and casts himself into the sea. What is recorded of each is beautifully characteristic. It was for the disciple who lay in Jesus' bosom to be the first to discern who He was, and cry, "It is the Lord!" while it was for Peter, forward, energetic, and impetuous, to plunge into the sea, and swim to shore. Neither the Johns nor the Peters can be spared ; each has his place and service, and we do well to remember that "all things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

It was not only after they had spent their night in fruitless labour Jesus appeared to them, and directed them so to cast the net as to find a full supply, but when they reach the shore, what awaits them there? A repast ready

prepared to their hands! "As soon, then, as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." Who was it that had thus been caring for them while they were toiling hard and without result? True, indeed, we are not told who it was that had kindled the fire and dressed the food; but the silence of Scripture is often as impressive as its language, and the heart needs no testimony as to whose service of love this was! But how could so touching a proof have been afforded of the Saviour's changeless, living love and care? To guide the unconscious tribes of the deep to the disciples' net was an act of almighty power, which might well impress them as it did; but for their risen Lord to be thus personally the servant of their humblest wants, was an answer to their unbelieving fears which none but He could give! And what a testimony to us that nothing which concerns us can be beneath His notice! "The very hairs of our heads are all numbered."

When, at their Lord's invitation, they had dined on what was prepared to their hand, and on some of the fish they had caught, the Lord addressed himself to Peter. But if we are to understand the bearing of the conversation which ensued, we must glance for a moment at what had previously occurred. Nothing can be more important than the restoration of a soul which has fallen into sin; and in Peter's

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case this precious work may be traced from beginning to end. His restoration was provided for, indeed, before he fell. Else how could he have been restored? Jesus knew the danger which awaited all His disciples, and to which Peter, by his impetuosity and self-confidence, was peculiarly exposed. “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: *but I have prayed for thee*, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted (or restored), strengthen thy brethren.” Peter knew not his danger, but the Lord knew it, and thus graciously interceded for him, even before his fall was consummated. What a comfort that we have One who ever lives to make intercession for us! One who intercedes in anticipation of our failing, and not only when we have actually failed.

The circumstances of Peter's fall are well known, and need not be retraced. When self-confidence had betrayed him into rash zeal, distance from his Lord, and companionship with His enemies, warming himself at their fire, the last step, the outward fall, was but the natural result of all that had occurred. Alas! what poor nothings we are when left to our own strength. There may be life—divine life; but if we do not realise that we have no strength to follow out the impulses and tendencies of this life, and so lean entirely on the strength of Jesus, we may be left, like Peter, to learn

by experience the bitter but wholesome and needed truth.

But the Lord remembers His unfaithful disciple. "The cock crew, and the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." That look broke Peter's heart. He "went out, and wept bitterly." Such is the first step in the restoration of a soul. To be heart-broken under the look of Jesus, recalling to the conscience of Peter the words by which he had been forewarned of the very sin which he thought it impossible he could commit, but in which the eye of Jesus now rests upon him; to taste the bitterness of sin in the presence of the very grace which had thus forewarned, and which now reminds; and penetrated with shame and grief to go out and weep bitterly—such is the commencement in a lapsed soul of the work by which, in the grace of Christ, that soul is to be restored.

In John xx. we find Peter in company with the disciple whom Jesus loved. Mary informs them that she has been to the sepulchre, and that the body of Jesus has been removed. "Peter, therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre."

How was this? In ordinary circumstances, Peter was not a man to be outrun, and especially by one so gentle as the beloved disciple; and even in this instance he was as ready to set out towards the sepulchre. What thought had suddenly occurred to him to cause the slacken-

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ing of his pace, and lead him to give back, and suffer John to outrun him? Ah! does not the question of itself suggest its only answer? Who can doubt that it must have been the remembrance of the last look he had from Jesus that now occurred to him, producing results so unlike the general character of the man?

But between this journey to the sepulchre and the events of our chapter, an interview — a personal interview—had taken place between Peter and his risen Lord. In Mark xvi. 7, the angel says to the women, while announcing the resurrection of Jesus, “But go your way, tell His disciples *and Peter* that He goeth before you into Galilee.” Lest Peter, in his despondency, should deem himself excluded from a general message to the disciples, his name is thus specifically mentioned. But in Luke xxiv. 34, the two, on their return from Emmaus, find the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, *and hath appeared to Simon.*” In I Corinthians xv. 5, moreover, Paul, witnessing of Christ’s resurrection, says, “He was seen of Cephias.” Need it be asked what the object of this separate interview with Peter can have been? Ah! there are questions in the soul of a saint who has fallen as Peter did, which can only be settled between that soul and Christ. There can be no third party present at such a moment. The presence of a third party would be felt to be an intrusion. The soul needs to

hear from Christ's own mouth the assurance of His unchanged and unchanging love, and to receive from Himself the seal of full forgiveness. This is needed, not because of any change in the blessed Saviour, but to reassure the soul of His repentant disciple, restoring thus the confidence which sets the heart free and at ease in His presence. Such had evidently been the result of this interview of Peter with his risen Lord. At the Sea of Tiberias there is none of the shrinking back which we have noticed on his way to the sepulchre. No, as soon as John says, "It is the Lord," Peter plunges into the sea, that he may the more quickly be at His feet or by His side.

Was, then, the restoration of his soul complete when he thus swam to shore on hearing that it was the Lord? No, there needed a further process still. Bitterly had he mourned his sin in denying his Lord: fully was he now assured of his Lord's forgiveness and unchanged affection; but he had not yet been led to discern and judge in himself the secret root of the evil into which he had fallen. The process of restoration is not complete as long as this is unaccomplished; and it was to this, accordingly, that the Lord now addressed Himself.

Most tenderly, yet unsparingly, does Jesus go to work with His disciple. Not when they were hungry and faint, but "when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonas,

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lovest thou Me more than these?’” He first refreshes his heart with all the manifested love and care we have been tracing in this narrative, and then He puts this searching inquiry. It is not, “Lovest thou Me more than thou lovest these?” but “Lovest thou Me more than these love me?” It is as though the Lord had said, “You did think, Peter, that you loved Me more than any one besides loved Me. You said, Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I. Are you still of the same mind? Lovest thou Me more than these do?” But Peter understands Him not. His confidence, indeed, in the love of Him who was thus probing him was not at all disturbed, nor did Jesus wish that it should be. Nay, He does everything to encourage and strengthen it. He confides to His care the precious lambs of His flock as the most tender pledge of His confidence and love: but still the probing must be completed.

A second time the question is proposed; then a third; and now, as though the number recalled the thrice-repeated denial of his Lord, and the warning which his self-confidence had previously received, all seems to flash upon his conscience. He is “grieved,” not surely with his Lord, but with himself; while his third answer evinces that the probe had reached the bottom of the wound.

The root of his sin was now laid bare to his conscience, and in appealing, as he does,

to Christ's omniscience, he makes plain that he bows entirely to the warning called forth, not by his sin, but by the self-confidence which was sure to betray him into sin. Instead of protesting now that his love to Christ is greater than that of any one besides, he, in effect, acknowledges that any one judging by his conduct would not suppose that he loved Christ at all, but, as the Lord knew his heart, he could appeal to Him: "Lord, *Thou* knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." He can be trusted now, for he has learned his own weakness, and the only secret of real strength, and so he is again commanded, "Feed My sheep."

Nor was this the whole. As has been remarked elsewhere by another, there might still have remained one sting—one subject of bitter self-reproach—in the review by Peter of this epoch in his history. One can well understand how he might have said, "Ah! I once had the opportunity of dying for my Master—of actually sharing His cross—but now that opportunity is gone. In my weakness and wilfulness I have thrown it away, and it can never be restored."

"Yes," it is as though the Saviour said, "it can and shall be restored."

Grace can restore what sin has forfeited, and surely this is what was implied in the words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When

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thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death He should glorify God." Once the apostle had been within view of death *with* and *for* his Master, and in the energy of his own will he had vowed to go through it. He girded himself, and walked *whither he would*—and, alas! as we all know, he failed. So will was present, but to perform required a strength, the lack of which Peter had now fully proved. But still he was to have the honour and privilege of being crucified for Christ. Not, as before, through any energy of his own will, but in the complete renunciation of himself, and meek submission to the will of Another, he should by death, and that, too, the death of the cross, glorify God! "And when He had spoken this, He said unto him, Follow Me."

Is not this grace, beloved? What can compare with this living grace of our risen, living Lord? And it is He who says to us, as He said to Peter, "Follow Me." Not in the restless endeavour to live up to a certain standard of attainment, but the heart drawn onward by the attraction of this perfect grace, this living love! A love which, while it reaches to the lowest depths of our saddest failures, pardoning,

probing, restoring us, sets us again on our feet in the path which He Himself has trod, and says, "Follow Me."

Shall we not follow Him indeed? Can we decline to follow if His grace, as thus made known, has really touched our hearts.

J. G. B.

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE V.

(Chap. vi.)

THE Epistle to the Romans does not go on to the point of our present resurrection in a spiritual sense. We get that unfolded in the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. There we are viewed as risen with Christ already, and, in Ephesians, even as seated in heavenly places in Christ; but in Romans it merely says that we should "walk in newness of life."

Romans tells us that we have died with Christ, and just as Christ was raised from the dead so we are to walk in newness of life. It is not merely that we are clear from our old sins, and that our guilt has been put away from before God, but we are to walk through this world as those possessed of an altogether new life, and we are to manifest it with the same characteristics in which it was manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that makes it a wonderful thing to be a Christian.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 47

Of course we are all aware of that truth, that "he that hath the Son hath life," but the question is, do we enter into what it is to be living that life here on this earth? "We also should walk in newness of life." Not merely that we should know that we have life, but we should *walk* in newness of life. We are to do it under all circumstances—in our family life, in our business life, as well as in our religious life. And why? Because we have a new life and Christ is that life. I do not for one moment say that we can only walk in newness of life when we are occupied with spiritual things, we are to do it under all circumstances.

In the fifth verse it goes on to speak of what is still to be. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death"—our baptism bears testimony to that—is God going to leave us there? No! he is going to identify us with Him in resurrection.

"Knowing this that our old man has been crucified with Him," it is not merely that Christ has been crucified for me, but I have been crucified with Christ.

I was told of a Christian, who, hearing that an Englishman was living in a certain town on the Continent, thought he would go and see him. When he arrived he said, "I have come to see you because I hear you are an Englishman, and I would like to ask you if you are a child of God?"

"Well," said the other, "I hope I am."

"But," said his visitor, "I did not come to ask you if you *hoped* you were but if you *were* one. *Are* you a child of God?"

He replied, "It is remarkable for you to come to ask me such a question as that. I hope I am."

"Well," he said, "but what do you hope? Do you hope that Christ died for you? Do you hope that He was raised from the dead?"

"No," he said, "I know that Christ died for me, and that He rose from the dead, but I hope I am saved."

"But," said the visitor, "if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, what does that mean? Does the cross of Christ stand between you and your sins?"

"Well," he said, "that is a precious thought. It must be true, though I never thought of it in that way."

"Yes," said his friend, "the cross of Christ stands between you and your sins if you are a believer; but does the cross of Christ stand between you and judgment?"

"Well," he said, "I suppose that must be true too."

"Does the cross of Christ stand between you and hell?"

"Yes," he said, "that must be true, though it is a new way of putting it."

"Now," he said, "I am going to ask you one

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more question. Does the cross of Christ stand between you and *yourself*?"

He said, "I am thankful to you for asking me that question. It settles all the difficulties and misgivings I have had for years. Why, I have been looking for some improvement in myself, but if the cross of Christ stands between me and myself, *I am gone altogether.*"

That is the very thing that is brought out in this 6th chapter of Romans. "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him." This is a truth of immense importance. There is practice, of course, but the truth must come first. The truth, the doctrine, first, and the practice will follow. You cannot work yourself into this state, you must accept the truth of God about it. If you are a Christian at all, you may know this that not only are your sins forgiven, but your old man has been crucified with Him. And what follows? "That the body of sin might be destroyed (or, annulled.)" Is not that the thing that troubles us so—this old body of sin? What is the meaning of that expression? It is sin in its entirety—root, branch, stem—everything connected with this evil thing. "That the body of sin might be annulled;" not "destroyed," because we have it in us, we have the old evil thing still in us, and that evil thing has the same lusts and desires. It still exists, but it is annulled because its power is broken. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified

with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And what does that mean? It is looking at sin there as a master. Now in the unconverted state man serves sin, it leads him hither and thither. But it is not to be so with a Christian. Sin is not to be his master, and in fact it is not his master. He has an evil nature still in him, but its power is broken, because he has learned the truth that he is crucified with Christ.

Well, now it goes on in the 7th verse, "Now he that is dead (or, has died) is (not, freed but) justified from sin." And notice it does not say "justified from sins." It is speaking, not of the acts we have committed, they are dealt with in the 3rd and 5th chapters, but it says "justified from sin," the evil root or principle that is in me. Does it mean that I have to wait until I am dead, and have left this earth, to be justified? Not at all. You are dead now according to this verse if you are a believer. Those who are dead in this sense *are* justified from sin; and what does that mean? Supposing a person were lying dead upon the floor, you could not condemn him for having an evil nature. He may have done terrible things during his life, but he is dead now, and that is an end of his evil nature. And so in a spiritual sense. I am justified, not only from the acts that I have committed, but, as one who has had part in the death of Christ, I stand justified from sin.

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“Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” It goes back there to the blessed truth that we shall presently be with Him in resurrection glory.

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more.” That is a wonderful truth! Can He die again? Impossible! He has died once for all, and, just as in His case, it cannot be repeated, neither can it be repeated in mine. It is not, as I find taught in so many quarters to-day, that we have to keep dying all day long. No, it is done once and for all. Just as Christ has died unto sin once, so we have died unto sin once. Look what it says, “for in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.” And there is a depth in that which is amazing.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth, what did He come for? He came for the glory of God, of course, we know, but He came about the question of sin. He came here for that very purpose, to put away sin. He came to be made an offering and a sacrifice for sin. That has taken place, and He has done with it for ever. But He is alive now, and He is living to God. God is the one object before Him there in heaven; and this truth is applied to us here. Far short of His measure we come, but that is the pattern, that the standard, that the example. When we compare ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, we say we cannot speak

of ourselves in the same breath with Him, but that is the standard before us.

See how the next verse puts it, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." Look at the force of that, look at the power of it! There is no make-believe in that. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin." But that is only half the truth. Is Christ dead now? No, He is alive, and God is the object before Him. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." Look at the place into which it puts the Christian—Christ's place. You see these truths are wonderfully practical for us, and indeed they are, in one sense, the very truths we need for our walk. All that has taken place in reference to Christ is to be reckoned as having taken place in me. Has He died? So have I. Is He alive now? So am I—alive unto God in Him. We have a new life and a new standing before God; brought out altogether from our old position as in Adam, and our sins and all our responsibilities met by Christ's death. The link is broken between the Christian and the world, between the Christian and sin, between the Christian and all that the first Adam was, and he is brought into a new association, a new life, and that life is Christ. That is a marvellous thing to be brought into!

(To be continued.)

Christian Life in the Power of the Holy Ghost.

PHIL. II. III.

THE Epistle to the Philippians gives us very little doctrine (doctrine being just alluded to in chapter iii.); but it does give us, in a remarkable manner, the experience of Christian life in the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is full of blessing in that character: the life above seen down here in a man through the power of the Spirit of God. So much is this the case that the very word "sin" is not found in it.

When justification and righteousness are spoken of, it is not in contrast with sin, but in contrast with human and legal righteousness. The flesh was *there*. At the very time Paul wrote the epistle he had got the thorn in the flesh to prevent it acting; but it shows us one rising above the flesh and all hindrances, that Christ might be magnified in him. Whether to live or die, he did not know; he would have liked to be gone, but in love to the Church he says, Better for you to remain; and so, counting upon Christ and knowing it is better, he knows he will remain. He knows how to abound and how to suffer need; he is pressing towards the mark for the prize—it is the only thing he has to do.

The graciousness of a Christian is in chapter ii., the energy in chapter iii., the absence of care

in chapter iv., but it is all by the power of the Spirit of God. It is well for us to lay it to heart: we are the epistle of Christ known and read of all men—an epistle written not in stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart. We are set as Christians to be letters of recommendation of Christ before the world. Yet it gives us the fullest and most blessed confidence towards God if we take that ground; for, if we are in the presence of the world for God, Christ is in the presence of God for us. His work has perfectly settled that question, and He is every moment appearing in the presence of God for us.

We are loved as He is loved; in every way in which we can look at it, all is a fixed settled thing according to the counsels of God in grace; it is in a poor earthen vessel, but our relationship is settled: all that belonged to the old man cleared away, and all that belongs to Christ, the new Man, our positive portion. Not only are our debts paid, but we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, and He has obtained for us the glory which is His own. "The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them." He has given *Himself* on the cross to meet what we were, and He has obtained for us all that He has. This is the way Christ gives—not as the world. If the world gives, they have it not any longer; but Christ never gives in that way—never *gives away*, but brings us into all He has. If I light up one candle by another, I lose nothing

of the first; and such is the way He gives. I speak of blessed principles. "My peace I give unto you." . . . "That they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves." "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me." . . . "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them." He became a man on purpose to bring us as men into the same glory as Himself. *That* relationship we *are brought into already*. "I go to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God." If I look at righteousness and holiness, I am as He is; if at the Son, I am before the Father as a son; and, as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall bear the image of the heavenly.

The work that entitles us to that is absolutely and totally finished. The Spirit makes us first feel our need in order to our possessing it, but the work is *finished*.

In order to get our path clear, we must see where He has brought us. I cannot expect any one to behave as my child, if he is not my child; you must be in the place before you can have the conduct suited to that place, or be under the obligations which belong to it; and it is this last part I desire to look at a little. "You hath He reconciled," not brought half way: as to relationship, brought *into Christ*. Through the work of the cross He put away our sins, and, when He had done it, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. He finished the

work which His Father gave Him to do ; and in Hebrews the Spirit contrasts Christ's work with that work of the priests which was never finished, so that they never sat down.

We are perfect as pertaining to the conscience. A blunder often made is confounding perfection as to our state with perfection as to our conscience. When once we have understood the work of Christ, we are perfect as regards the conscience. If I look up to God, I can have no thought of His ever imputing sin to me again, or I could not have peace with God ; and this is so true that it is said, if this work was not perfectly done, Christ must suffer again. But He cannot drink that dreadful cup again, the very thought of which made Him sweat great drops of blood. If there is any sin still to be put away (I speak now of believers), Christ must suffer again, and this can never be. God has set Him at His right hand as having *finished* the work : " I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do ; now, O Father, glorify Thou Me." He will deal with His enemies, no doubt, when He rises up in judgment ; but, as to believers, He is sitting down because He has no more to do. I am not speaking now, of course, of the daily grace He ministers to them. It is *settled*, and settled with this double aspect, that the purpose of God being to bring us into the same glory as His Son, the work of Christ not only cleared away our guilt, but obtained that glory for us.

(*To be continued.*)

Hints on Daniel.

“This great vision” (chap. x.).

IT will easily be seen that chapters x., xi., and xii. form one continuous prophesy. At the close of the previous chapter the great power of the West, the Roman Empire, is specially in view. In the portion of the book that remains to be considered, other actors of the last days, no less important, pass before the prophet's mind in vision.

Daniel was one of those who had not availed himself of the decree of Cyrus, proclaiming liberty to the Jews to return to Jerusalem to build up the house of the Lord. This is remarkable, and lets us into the true state of the prophet's heart and conscience.

Cyrus had been raised up of God to perform all His pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built,” &c. (Isa. xlv. 28). The inspiring spirit had even mentioned him by name, and that about one hundred years before he had been born. In process of time, when the iniquity of God's people had reached such a pitch that there was no remedy, when even the patience of God, and such a God! had been exhausted, “to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah,” the last King of Judah, Zedekiah, was carried away captive to Babylon. The house of

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God was burnt, the wall of Jerusalem broken down, and the vessels of the Lord's house were brought to Babylon. All this had taken place, and desolations, of which Daniel was painfully aware, had swept over the pleasant land, in accordance with the solemn and unheeded warnings of the prophet Jeremiah.

But God not only spoke of judgment, He made promises of mercy, and that by the lips of the same servant through whom He had announced the judgment; and it was in fulfilment of this that "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia," to make the decree which resulted in large numbers of the Jews returning to the land of Canaan (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i.). This took place in the "first" year of Cyrus.

Daniel, as we have observed, did not avail himself of this, for "in the third year of Cyrus" we find him still with chastened soul "by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel" (*i.e.*, the Tigris). This opens up a most interesting line of thought.

There was a mighty movement amongst the Jews. Some sixty thousand wended their joyous way homeward after years of captivity. "The people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem" (Ezra iii. 1). They offered freely of their substance for the house of God, they set up the altar on its bases, they laid the foundation of the temple, and then sang together, and gave

thanks to the Lord because His mercy endured for ever towards Israel (Ezra iii.). But far away by the lonely banks of the Tigris we see Daniel afflicting his soul, and humbling himself before the Lord.

Daniel knew that however great might be the blessing vouchsafed under Cyrus, it fell infinitely short of God's purposes for His people. Long weary years had yet to run before Messiah's advent; that Messiah was yet to be cut off, and greater desolations had yet to be endured by the guilty nation than ever they had known in the past. Need we wonder to hear that "in those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks"? (Dan. x. 2).

The moral attitude in which Daniel was found well suited one who walked with God in days of ruin and declension. For three weeks Daniel continued with fasting and prayer. God was about to reveal His mind to him more fully than He had done before, and in His grace produced in him that state of soul that could receive these communications without being puffed up thereby. Not only did Daniel behold with sorrow the desolate condition of the people, but he lifted up his eyes and beheld a certain man clothed in linen, girded with fine gold of Uphaz, his face as lightning, his eyes as flames of fire, his arms and feet like brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. It was the Lord of glory who thus presented Himself before the

eyes of His beloved servant. All others had fled. Daniel was left alone; there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned into corruption. And yet was there any saint of God in those days more dear than he?

In like circumstances Job had said—"Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself" (Job xlii. 5, 6). John, too, the beloved disciple, "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. i. 17). There is but one place where we can learn our vileness as sinners, and our nothingness as saints—the presence of the glory of the Lord.

We now come to a deeply interesting subject, in connection with God's providential dealings with His people, and His government of the earth; namely, the ministry of angels, and the conflict that takes place between the unseen powers of darkness and of light.

Daniel lay prostrate before the vision of the glory of the Lord, when a hand is put forth to touch him, and a certain one speaks to reassure the trembling prophet—"O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright" (ver. 11). The reason for the apparently long delay in the answer to his prayer is then given. Daniel might have felt that God had been indifferent, but it was not so, for "from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard" (ver. 12).

It seems that the one speaking in verse 12 is

not the same as the man clothed in linen of verse 5. Here we have to do with an angel pure and simple, whereas there the Lord Himself appears to His servant in human form, as is frequently the case in the Old Testament Scriptures. Angels are closely connected with God's government of the earth, they are the willing ministers of His pleasure (Ps. ciii. 20, 21), not alone in the protection and deliverance of the saints (Ps. xxxiv. 7) but in the execution of his plans with reference to the earth.

But it is important to remember that there are evil spirits as well as good. Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), and though believers now are delivered from that power of darkness (Col. i. 13), yet he is that evil spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Satan is not yet bound, though for faith his power is annulled (Heb. ii. 14). Nevertheless the Christian's conflict is in heavenly places with wicked spirits; for this he needs to stand with all the armour of God, that in the evil day he may overcome and not himself be vanquished.

On the first day of Daniel's prayer, a messenger had been despatched from God's presence, but for one and twenty days "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him" (ver. 13). All this while that the conflict was going on between these unseen powers, Daniel continues in earnest supplication. Then "Michael, one of

the chief princes," came to help. This would seem to prove that the angel here is not the Lord Himself, for it surely would not be consistent with His glory to speak of help.

The angel then informs Daniel that he has been sent to make him understand what should befall the Jewish people "in the latter days" (ver. 14). Earthly kingdoms were to rise and fall. A long vista of time opens up before the prophet's eyes. Mighty wars and tumults of the nations were to take place before the time of Israel's deliverance, but yet "the thing was true" even though "the time appointed was long."

But the Lord would not have His servant to be overwhelmed with grief and sadness. "O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong" (ver. 19). The fight might, and would continue with the powers of darkness, and yet with confidence and peace, the saint of God, intelligent in His word, may continue his journey in calm and patient faith. "Now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth" (vers. 20, 21).

The insight that this chapter gives us as to the connection between things seen and unseen is of the deepest interest, and at the same time of the utmost importance, as leading us to seek an understanding of God's revealed mind as to

all that is yet to take place on the earth. It should lead us, too, to seek a closer walk with God in prayer and holiness, lest we expose ourselves to the power that is ever seeking to frustrate His purposes and plans.

(To be continued.)



Christian Life in the Power of the Holy Ghost.



WE are not in the glory yet ; but the work which is our title to it is finished, though we have not yet got the glory to which it is our title. We are anointed and sealed with the Spirit, and He is the earnest of our inheritance. We *are* already to the praise of the glory of His *grace*, but not yet to the praise of His glory, which will be when He comes the second time to bring us into the glory which His work obtained for us when He came the first time. And our life stands between the two—the cross and the glory.

We are here in this world, beloved friends, in the midst of temptations, snares, and difficulties, everything around us tending to draw us away ; but the power of God is in us. We know that we are sons of God, though the world knows us

not: "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; and every one that hath this hope in Him *purifieth* himself, even as He is pure." The practical effect of beholding the glory of God is to change us into the same image.

When Moses came down from the mountain they were afraid to look in his face, because the law required that which they had not to give; but now I see the glory which excels, the glory in Christ, which is infinitely brighter. But the glory in the face of Jesus Christ is the witness that all my sins are put away.

In the face of Moses it required what man ought to have been as a child of Adam, but it came to man who was a *sinner*. It required righteousness, and pronounced a curse if it was not there. *Now* I see the glory in the face of Him who bore my sins in His own body on the tree. The Christian sees the Man who died for his sins now in the glory as man, a witness that the work is done, and a testimony to the place unto which He is bringing us; and, meanwhile, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost that our souls may be perfectly clear as to this.

That is where the believer is set, resting in entire confidence upon the efficacy of the work of Christ, and, upon the other hand, waiting for God's Son from heaven, *converted for this*. "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their

Lord ;” standing here in perfect liberty, for, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

And here we get the proper experience of a Christian as led by the Spirit of God. We see in chap. iii. a Christian as to his walk, Christ having laid hold of him for that ; as in 2 Corinthians v., “ He that hath *wrought* us for the self-same thing,” &c. He has *wrought* us for that, not only cleared away our sins. He sees Christ in glory before him (Paul had really seen him there), and that was what he was going to get. “ This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” What he was seeking was to win Christ. He had not yet obtained Him, or got into the glory, but it was the only thing he was doing in the world : his whole life was that.

In chapter ii., on the other hand, Christ is looked at, not as going up to glory, but as coming down to the cross ; and here we get the graciousness of His character. By this we get our hearts and affections won, and are formed into the likeness of this graciousness. And thus we have the two great things that govern the Christian : the glory that is before him, and the grace that has been shown him.

One word as to verses 12, 13 : “ Not as in My presence only,” &c. Often this “ fear and trembling ” is used to cast a doubt upon our relations with God, but it is not this we have to fear about. We are in the midst of temptations,

everything around us, the power of Satan distracting and turning the heart from Christ ; and he presses upon them that, now he is absent, they must take care. He had worked for them when he was with them, he had met the craft of the enemy in wisdom and apostolic power ; but he was in prison when he wrote this. He says, "Therefore, now, you must fight for yourselves," but this is in contrast with his fighting for them, and they were to do it, for it was GOD that worked in them. The contrast is not between God and man working, but Paul and the Philippians. God it was who did work in them, were Paul there ; and, if they had lost Paul, God who wrought in them was still there.

But, then, what a solemn thing for us, beloved friends, if we have the sense of this, that we are left down here to make good our path to glory against Satan and all the difficulties of the way ! It is enough to make us serious. A false step will throw me into the snares of Satan. I have to be serious ; I have the promise of being kept, but I need to be serious.

I have spoken of the finished work, but there is another thing that exercises us : how far can we look at the flesh and say we have *done* with it ? And that is where the practical difficulty comes, if you are in earnest and desiring to walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son. I ought never to walk after the flesh. The existence of the flesh does not give me a bad conscience,

but if I allow it to act it does. Whenever I let even an evil thought in, communion is interrupted. It is not that the flesh is gone as a matter of fact ; nor that there is nothing in us which Satan can tempt ; but there is power in us not to let it act. The flesh is not changed. The word is as plain as ever it can be as to what the flesh is. If left to itself, it becomes so bad that God had to destroy the world. Noah, saved out of the old world, gets drunk ; the law is given, and the flesh is not subject to it ; Christ comes in grace, and the flesh crucifies Him ; the Holy Ghost is given, and the flesh lusts against it ; and we get the case of one in the third heaven, and the flesh ready to puff him up. The flesh could not be mended, but he gets a thorn in it. But that is no reason why I should ever let it act. It *never* ought.

Scripture does not speak of our being conformed to Christ *here* ; it says we are to walk as He walked. But the place of conformity to Christ is the glory, and “ he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself ; ” that is to say, he is *not* pure, he has not attained. The place where I shall be like Christ is the glory : He has obtained it for me ; and then, my eye looking upon Him by faith, I am changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

I find this the great truth which Scripture does give me : not only that Christ died for my

sins, but that I died with Christ. In the Epistle to the Romans, in the first part (chaps. i.-v. 11), you get all the *sins* dealt with, the great truth of Christ being substituted for us on the cross—bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, He is delivered for our offences ; and, in the subsequent part (chaps. v. 11-viii.), the question is taken up, not of *sins*, but of *sin*—not the fruit, but the tree, and we are shown not to be in the flesh if the Spirit of Christ is in us.

I do not live by the life of Adam, but by the life of Christ, and that is where the total difference is for the Christian. But it is not only that I have a new life as quickened by Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, nor that He has been crucified for me so that my guilt is removed ; but I am crucified with Christ.

In Colossians we read, “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God”—dead, therefore, in this world. This is God's declaration of our state as Christians. In Romans, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” “In that He died, He died unto sin. . . . Wherefore reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God (not in Adam, but) through (or in) Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is faith's estimate of it, and this is where you find real deliverance and freedom from the bondage of sin. It is not, “No condemnation” to them whose sins Christ bore, but, “to them that are *in*

Jesus Christ." God condemned sin in the flesh ; He did not forgive it, He condemned it. If I get the law, it condemns *me* ; but Christ? Does He condemn me? No ; for He has taken the condemnation for me, and in Him God has condemned sin in the flesh, and I reckon myself dead because it was in death He did so. Christ's death is, as indeed all that He has wrought, available for me, and therefore I reckon myself dead. In 2 Corinthians we get the carrying this out in practice : " Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in your mortal bodies." And then he speaks of the exercises which God sends for our good, to test this realisation in us and make it effectual : " Always *delivered* unto death," &c. We all fail for want of watchfulness, but that is what our life ought to be.

Suppose I have got a man in my house who is always at mischief : I cannot turn him out, but, if I lock him up, he can do no harm ; he is not changed, but I am free in the house. If I leave the door open, he is at mischief again ; but we are to keep him locked up, that is what we are called to do---what God calls us to do. The world will not have this ; it will mend and improve man, cultivate the old man, as if it could produce good fruit, because it does not see how bad it is. The world would dig about the old tree and dung it. This has been tried. God

cuts it down and grafts us with Christ. This condemning and cutting down was in the cross of Christ ; not, of course, that He had any sin, but as made sin for us ; and I know not only that my sins are cleared away, but that I am crucified with Christ, and my life hid with Him in God.

And this is available for power, if I carry it about in my heart. Supposing we honestly held ourselves dead ; can Satan tempt a dead man ? But, in order for this, it must not be putting one's armour on when the danger is there ; but, *living* with Christ, the heart full of Him.

Would a woman, who had heard that her child was killed or hurt at the other end of the town, be thinking of what she saw in the shop windows as she ran toward him ? No ; she would have just enough sense to find her way. If your hearts were fixed like that on Christ, nine-tenths of the temptations that come upon you would be gone : you would be thinking of something else, and outward things would only bring out sweetness, as they did with Christ ; for we are never tempted above that we are able.

Saints, if in earnest, have got to realise not only the putting away of their sins, but also the having died with Christ ; and this delivers from the power of sin.

I find in Philippians iii. a Christian with one object : knowing Christ has laid hold of him for glory, and his heart running after Christ. I am to have no other *object*, though I may have lots

of things to do. He is "in all" as the power of life, and He is "all" as the object of that life. He is in all. "Christ liveth in me" (see Colossians iii. 12). This is again summed up in Galatians ii.: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me;" and then the object: "I live by the faith of the Son of God." Then there is the sense of His perfect love: "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." The heart is fixed on Him, and follows hard after Him.

Then in chapter ii. there is another thing: the spirit and character in which we walk down here; the place a Christian is called to (a wonderful thing, I grant) is to go out from God and be an epistle of Christ. I joy in God, have got the blessedness of what He is, and go on in communion with Him to show out His character in the world.

Ought I to walk as Christ walked? Every Christian will own that: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Suppose my soul has tasted this perfect love, and it is well we should recollect it—God's love shed abroad in our hearts—and know, be conscious down here, that we are loved as Jesus was loved,—suppose, I repeat, I really know God as thus revealed in Christ, what do I believe about Him? What put it into God's heart to send Christ down here? He knew how He would be treated. Did the world suggest it to Him? It would not have Him when He came. It was all in His own

heart! Perfect love! His heart! the unsuggested origin of every blessing. What character did it take in Christ? Was it staying up in heaven and saying, "You behave well and come up here"? No! we all know that. But He who, in the form of God, in the actual same glory, thought it no robbery to be equal with God (mark the contrast with the first Adam), made Himself of no reputation; and what brought that about? Purest love, love coming to *serve*.

For Christ took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. He emptied Himself of all the glory—the very opposite of the first Adam. Divine love came to serve; a *new* thing for God—the *only* new thing. And this is what I learn! I know this love: I know that I am made the righteousness of God in Him; so that I stand before Him, and then I come out from Him towards the world to bring out this blessed character. I have learned the love, and now I must come out and show it. "Be ye followers of God as dear children." You *are* children: that is all settled. Now you go and give yourself as Christ did, in whom this love is known—a sacrifice to God, and for us. The spirit of love is always lowliness, because it makes itself a servant. I get the grace that brought Christ down. It is very difficult for us to bow; I know that, beloved friends. He "went to another village." There was perfect meekness; but it tries men—some more than others;

but the moment I get *perfect* love, it comes and takes the lowest place to serve others. Paul endured all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

And here I find what is entirely beyond law. Law tells me to love others *as* myself; grace tells me to give myself up entirely for my neighbour or for anybody. Did not God forgive you? You go and forgive your enemies. Is He kind to the unthankful and the evil? You go and be the same. It tests all the fibres of our hearts, all the pride and vanity and selfishness that are in us.

We like doing our own will. "He humbled Himself and became obedient to death;" He goes so low down that He could go no lower; "even to the death of the cross." But, then, "God hath highly exalted Him." He was the first grand example of "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Blessed be His name! He will never give up His service: it is the very thing He shows us, and in which He would that our hearts should see the perfection of His grace. It is what He was doing in John xiii. He had been their servant down here, but now they might think there was an end of His service. No. He says, I cannot stop with you, but I must have you with me: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." He does a slave's work; and that is what He

does now. We pick up dirt as we go—there is no excuse for it; but there is Christ up there, the Advocate with the Father. And, even in the time of glory, “He will gird Himself and come forth and serve them;” He will be there to minister the blessing Himself. Our hearts want to learn the perfection of that love in which He came always down, always down, till He could come no lower.

Are we *willing* to walk in that path? No one would deny we ought; but are we *disposed* to do it? Would our heart be glad of the power of that grace which, holding the flesh as dead, can say, Here I am in the power of that love to walk as everybody's servant? We are to esteem others better than ourselves. If my heart is full of Christ, I judge myself of everything not like Christ: I judge the evil in myself because I see the blessedness in Christ. But what do I see in my brother? I see Christ in him. The effect of being full of Christ is to make me think little of self and much of my brother; there is no real difficulty about this, if full of Christ.

“Do all things without murmuring,” &c. If you take every single part of this passage you will find it a statement of what Christ was here. He was blameless and harmless, the Son of God, without rebuke in the midst of this evil world; He was the light of the world, and He was the Word of life.

If I reckon the flesh dead, only the life of

Christ comes out ; if only that came out, we should be a very wonderfully blessed kind of people ! To him that hath shall more be given. If I yield myself to God as one alive from the dead, I have got fruit here unto holiness, as well as fulness of blessing hereafter.

What I would ask you, beloved friends, is, Do you propose to be *Christians* ? Are you willing to yield yourselves to God as not having one bit of will of your own ? There is power in Christ, not to say " I am pure," but, always having my eye on Him, *to purify myself*.

I am going to be like Christ in glory ; then I must be as like Him now as ever I can be. Of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts set on this.

Remember this, that the place you are in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for that, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question with God : He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. " In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." If I know He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved us with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him ; my *business* is to glorify Him in everything I do. " Bought with a price ;" that is settled : if bought, I am *His*. But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of

heart which cleaves to *Him*, especially in these last evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh! if Christians were more thoroughly *Christians*, the world would understand what it was all about! There is a great deal of profession and talk, and the activity of the Spirit of God—thank God there is; but do you think, if a heathen came here to learn what Christianity meant, he would find it out?

The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ, that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ; and, for those who do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us, and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.

J. N. D.

The Epistle to the Romans.

“**L**ET not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.” We are troubled by this very thing. We know well the truth of this. It is this that troubles a Christian, his evil nature; he thought he was going to be very different from what he is.

Perhaps you say, “I remember when I was first brought to the Lord, I was so full of joy, and could sing from morning till night; I had such a happy time, and I thought that I should

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have no more trouble with this evil nature, but I find I have got it in me. Yes, and so have I, and so has every Christian, but that is no reason why it should have dominion over me. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it." I have a new master, and that is what the next verse brings before us. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." I have a new master, and that old master, Sin, I no longer recognise. I have broken with him for ever. Death has broken the link between me and that old master, Sin, and these members, my hands, my feet, and—which is perhaps more difficult—my tongue, these are my members, and now I am not going to yield them to that old master, Sin, I have done with him, and I am going to yield my members to a new master—to God.

It is a very important word, that word "yield," and I suppose it is that which has made so many people talk of consecration, and a very good thing it is to be consecrated. We get it in this verse, "Yield yourselves unto God." How often can I do that? I believe once and only once. The moment that truth lays hold of me, that I am dead with Christ and alive unto God; I mean when it takes possession of my moral being; when I get to see the blessed truth that God has made an end of me altogether in the cross of Christ, and has given me a new life, and wants me to live in that life, I yield myself

to God. "Yield yourselves unto God," that is, change your master. I was yielded unto sin, now I am yielded unto God. But here is a thing which may go on day by day, "and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." That, I believe, is a daily thing. I yield myself to God, that is a change of master, and I yield my members to Him for service. I have broken with my old master, and I am now going to yield my members, and all that I have, to God's service.

We may fail in practice, but that is the principle. My feet, my hands, my tongue, everything that I am, is to be yielded to God to do His will. I am not left here merely to please myself. What am I left here for? I do not know a single thing that a Christian is left for but to be for God in this world. God might have taken me to heaven the moment I was converted, as He did the thief on the cross. Ah, but He left even him here long enough to do what you and I have never been called upon to do, and that was to be the solitary witness for Christ when the whole world was against Him. There was not a single one witnessing for Christ but that poor thief; not even the disciples! Rejected by the world as Christ was, God gives him the privilege of being the solitary witness for Christ in this world at that time, and, as soon as he had rendered that noble testimony, He took him to Paradise; and He might have

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taken us to Paradise long ago, but He has left us here to show to this world that we have changed our master and that we now serve Him to whom we belong.

Look at the 14th verse, "For sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law but under grace." That is a very different thing to what would naturally have come into my mind. The flesh would have reasoned that unless the terrors of the law are kept hanging over my head, I shall be doing my own pleasure. Now, let me give you an illustration of that. Suppose you had in your neighbourhood a boy who is so depraved that every time he passes your house nothing gives him greater pleasure than to throw stones at your windows and break them. You try to stop it by calling out to the boy, but he does not mind what you say. Then you threaten him, and tell him that if he does not stop you will hand him over to the police. That only makes him more careful to avoid you, but he breaks your windows just the same. And so you take a fresh way of dealing with him altogether, and the next time he passes you are beforehand with him and you say, "Look here, my boy, I see you are in poor circumstances and you do not look as if you had good food ; I will take you into my family, and I will treat you as my child ; I will bring you into my house, and will clothe and feed you." That breaks the boy down, and he says, "I cannot go on break-

ing the windows now that I am not under law outside the house, but under grace inside the house." We are brought into this relationship with God, no longer under the law but brought into a place of relationship in grace; but God cannot allow me to go on in the old sinful way now that I am under grace. Suppose the boy was to forget the relationship into which he had been brought and to begin breaking the windows again. You would say, "You must not do that, I am going to treat you as my child, I would not give my child up to the police, but I must punish him myself." Now, that is grace, and that breaks down the heart, and, therefore, sin in a practical sense shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." In other words, shall we break the windows because we are not under law but under grace, "God forbid."

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." If I have yielded myself to a person to be his servant, I am his servant. Nothing can be simpler than that. And if you have yielded yourself to God, it is to obey Him, and that obedience is "obedience unto righteousness." It does not say obedience unto life, mark, because that would make out that I have to obey in order to get life. No, I have the life

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first, then follows obedience unto righteousness, and, in the 17th verse, it says that we "have obeyed from the heart." Not obeyed from fear—that would be the law—but obeyed from the heart; it gives new motives altogether. Christianity brings me into such a relationship to God that, instead of the terrors of the law hanging over my head, I obey out of love. "Ye have obeyed from the heart."

Now, a few words on the 18th verse, "Being made free from sin." Are you free from sin? You say, "How can you ask me such a question, I have sin in me, how can I be free from it?" That is not the meaning of the word "free" here. In the English language the word "free" has two senses. Suppose a slave is set free. He is free from his master, and that is the sense in which the word is used here. It does not mean free from the presence of sin in us, but we are free from sin as a power outside us. We are free from allegiance to sin; we are free from the power of sin; we are free men. Well, what is to be done then? I can do what I like now; and in one sense that is true. "Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness." Yes, I am free from sin now, and I yield myself to God.

We get in this chapter four different reasons why we should not live our old life, I mean the old life that we lived before we were converted. The first is the *impossibility of doing it* because

we are dead, that we see in the 2nd verse, and in two or three other verses. No, I cannot go on as I did, because I am dead. Then we get the second reason in the 14th verse, How can I go on in my old way when *I am under grace?* We get the third reason in the 17th verse, *I have obeyed from the heart.* In the 22nd verse we get the fourth reason, *I am a servant to God.*

What fruit had you in your old life of sin? Did it give you any satisfaction or joy? Do you think the thief gets any satisfaction out of his thieving? or whatever it may be that the lusts of the human heart lead men to? "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Yes, how truly a Christian can say, "I am ashamed of it all! What was the fruit of it after all? Nothing but disappointment, "for the end of those things is death." That is the end of a worldly man's life; death for the body and for the soul too in a certain sense: but not annihilation. There is a "Hereafter," and that is what makes it so serious. But, being made free from sin and alive unto God, we have "fruit unto holiness;" that is to say, we grow in the knowledge of God. We should know more of God to-day than we did a year ago. If you are always living in somebody's company you get to know a little more about that person from day to day, and if you are in the company of the Lord Jesus Christ you should get to know more about Him.

Do the five foolish Virgins represent converted or unconverted people? Had they not some oil?

WHETHER the lamps had gone, or were only going out, makes no real difference as to the grand teaching of the parable, and, as far as this goes, either the one or the other is quite compatible with the absence of oil. The statement that the foolish "have some oil" is most objectionable; not a word implies it; nay, what is said both by the wise virgins and by the Lord would imply the reverse, even if we had not the plain and positive declaration that the foolish "took their lamps, and took no oil with them." Why might not wicks be lit and relit without oil? I agree that "are going out" is a more correct rendering than the ordinary version; but it in no way shows that the virgins had oil, or that they were more than professors without the Holy Ghost, though responsible for and designated according to the position they assumed.

As to the unconverted being called "virgins," there is no more difficulty there than in the "servant" of the preceding parable. In either case they took that place, and were judged accordingly. There are Christians who love Christ's appearing in the midst of much ignorance as to its details. There are professors who talk much of the Second Advent, and hold it to be pre-millennial. But I assuredly believe

that the former, if they are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord, will be caught up to meet Him ; and that the latter, if they abide unregenerate, must have their portion outside, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

B. W. R.

Our Conflict.

(JOSH. v. 9.)

WITH the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians before us, I am of opinion that the wars of Israel have their answer in our wrestling with the powers of darkness ; that the gradual acquisition of their land corresponds with our setting our affections on the things above, where Christ sitteth ; and that we too have our circumcision, first in Christ, in whom the flesh has met its doom ; and secondly, in the practical way of mortifying our members which are upon the earth, &c. To neglect these crosslights of the Old and New Testaments is to despise, unwittingly, the means of heavenly wisdom.

THERE is nothing in vain in Scripture, not a word from Genesis to Revelation which God wrote could be changed but for the worse. . . . The tendency of men is to take on them to judge the Word of God : did they believe that the Word of God judges them, it would be safer and more becoming.

The Happy Path.

PSALM I. gives us in a nutshell, as it were, the conditions under which saints of God in all ages can tread that happy path of communion and usefulness which is the true aim of all whose hearts are right.

Primarily applicable to the Lord Jesus Himself we all well know this Psalm to be; but, praise be to His name for the grace, He has bidden us follow in the same path; and He who has thus invited us to tread in His footsteps, we may be sure has made such an imitation possible.

Now, that part of this Psalm which deals with the subject we have under consideration—that is, verses 1-3—falls naturally and simply into three divisions.

The third section, which is also the third verse, presents to us a perfect picture, that is God's picture, of this "happy man." He is said to be, first, "like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." Could we have a more telling figure of a healthy Christian? Secondly, it is said of him that "his leaf shall not wither." If we turn to the "Song of Songs" we shall get God's own interpretation of these figures.

In chapter ii. verse 3, the bride, there speaking
XXVIII.

of her beloved, says, "I sat down under his *shadow* with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." We know these words were spoken of the Lord Jesus Himself. And how true it was and is, that He ever bore fruit, and that His leaf was always green! No poor, wearied, hungry saint ever sought shelter and refreshment beneath His shade without finding it abundantly. Precious Lord! what springs, indeed, are in Thee!

Beloved reader, if you are a true Christian, does not your heart yearn to do what He did, and to be to His wearied and tempted saints what He is to them? Nay, does He not expect it at our hands? "Comfort ye My people, saith your God." And this Psalm says, happy is the man that does this. Surely it is so. But there is a third thing in this verse that is true of this "blessed man." "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

What a complete picture of a healthy Christian! Fruit to refresh the hungry, shade to rest the weary, and success in service.

But we must look back at the two first sections to find out the *conditions* that must be fulfilled in order that we may be thus a help and a blessing; for conditions there are, and attention to them is of the very highest importance.

Verse 1 says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of

the scornful." This happy useful man is then a *separate* man. This most important truth is enforced right through Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation.

Wherever we turn, in all ages, and under all circumstances, God's chosen vessels have been *separate* men or women. The histories of Joseph, Daniel, Paul, Timothy, all teach the same lesson; and, beloved friends, you and I will never be numbered among these happy ones (for happy they were in spite of the sufferings such a path entailed), unless we be "clean vessels, meet for the Master's use."

But there is a second condition, for the first one is but a negative condition after all. It is not sufficient merely to be clear from what is harmful. We need to be built up by what is positively good. So the second condition is, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." And then the consequence of these two conditions being fulfilled is what we have above seen in the third verse.

Now, in recapitulating, do we not see how morally perfect this little picture is? You have presented to you a man who diligently avoids evil of all sorts, as diligently finds his delight in the good, and who as a natural consequence is what every earnest, true-hearted believer desires to be.

Beloved friends, nothing could be simpler.

Of details we do not get much here. But, broadly, to have before us as our earnest aim the keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, and the constant daily delighting in the precious Word of God, will inevitably result in that happy path of usefulness that brings fulness of joy to our own hearts and gives glory to God.

L. W. R.

Hints on Daniel.

“A mighty king shall stand up” (chap. xi. 3).

IT will greatly help us in the understanding of this remarkable portion of the prophetic Scriptures if we bear in mind that chapter x. forms a kind of introduction to what follows. If this be carefully noted, it will at once show us the folly of seeking to find an interpretation by reference to persons or things connected with the Christian period.

Gabriel informs Daniel, “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people (*i.e.*, the Jews) in the latter days” (chap. x. 14). In other words, not the Pope, nor the papacy, however evil they may be, nor Napoleon, nor the Sultan, are here alluded to, but Daniel's own people, the Jews; moreover, not that portion of their history now past, but more especially that which is yet to come, occupied the mind of

the Spirit, namely, "What shall befall thy people in the latter days : for yet the vision is for many days."

It is perfectly true that a considerable portion of the incidents narrated in chapter xi. have already had their fulfilment. At the time that Daniel wrote all was future, for as we are told (chap. x. 1) the thing was revealed to him during the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia, whereas the greater part of chapter xi. relates the wars and intrigues of the kings of the north and the south who sprang out of the Grecian Empire, an empire which followed that of the Medes and Persians. Now while it is true that all that is described was future at the time the prophecy was given, nevertheless all up to the end of verse 35 has since then been fulfilled. This is of extreme importance. Verse 36 is the break in the chapter. All before this verse, though undoubted prophecy at the time it was written, has now passed into history, whereas all after that verse is still distinct prophecy of events that have had no manner of fulfilment as yet.

The first verse of our chapter (chap. xi. 1) appears to be a parenthesis. We are not to understand that it was during the reign of Darius the Mede that the vision was seen by Daniel ; this happened in the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia. There is more than one Darius mentioned in Scripture. Darius the Mede was the first king of the Medo-Persian

dynasty (chap. v. 31), for, as we have already pointed out, the Median element in this composite empire came first upon the field, and gave way to the more powerful Persian. The ram, which Scripture itself informs us was the Medo-Persian kingdom (chap. viii. 20), had two horns, "but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last" (chap. viii. 3); this higher horn was the Persian. How marvellously does all this emphasise the fact of inspiration, for how else could Daniel have written all this in such brief terms before the events had taken place.

The reason why mention is made of Darius the Mede in chapter xi. 1 is to show that the angelic messenger described in chapter x. is Gabriel, who was the chosen instrument to make known to Daniel the prophecy of the seventy weeks (compare chap. ix. 1, 21, and chap. xi. 1).

"Now will I show thee the truth" (xi. 2). With what certainty does the heavenly messenger speak! How briefly, too, and with what exactitude were the events revealed to the prophet before they had taken place.

"There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia." It was during the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the prophecy was given. Three kings were to stand up in Persia after Cyrus. This was exactly fulfilled in the history which followed; the names of these monarchs were

Cambyses, Smerdis the Magian, and Darius Hystaspes. We do not, however, need to resort to profane history in this matter, for in Ezra iv. these three kings are mentioned, though under different names.

Cyrus, King of Persia, had given commandment to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God) which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra i. 3), but adversaries had been stirred up to frustrate this purpose, and the work ceased until "the second year of Darius, King of Persia" (Ezra iv. 24). This is not the same Darius as Darius the Mede of Daniel xi. 1. Now in Ezra iv. two other kings are mentioned as reigning between Cyrus and Darius, namely, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. These two are the same as Cambyses and Smerdis that we read of in profane history. All this shows the marvellous accuracy of the prophecy given before these different kings had arisen.

But there is more. "The fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia" (Dan. xi. 2). No one in the smallest degree familiar with the history of those times will have any doubt as to who this king was. It was Xerxes, whose vast riches enabled him to lead his immense host of five millions against the little Grecian nation.

"And a mighty king shall stand up." We have now left the Persian Empire behind, and

the remainder of the chapter is occupied with the description of the various alliances and conflicts that took place between certain kings that arose out of the Grecian Empire. The mighty king that stood up first was Alexander the Great. He has been already alluded to in Daniel viii. as the great horn of the he-goat (vers. 5, 8). When this great horn was broken—in other words, upon the death of Alexander—four notable horns arose toward the four winds of heaven (viii. 8). This same fourfold division of Alexander's kingdom is alluded to in our chapter (xi. 4)—“When he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided towards the four winds of heaven.” But another detail is added which confirms again the marvellous accuracy of the prophetic word; when this kingdom of Alexander's was divided, it was “not to his posterity.” In other words, it was not divided amongst his children or descendants. We know from history that when Alexander was suddenly and unexpectedly cut off whilst leading an expedition far away from his own country, his generals held a council to decide what was best to be done, and eventually agreed to divide his vast dominions amongst four of themselves. The fact is noted of the fourfold division, though as only two of these came in contact with the history of God's people and the land of Palestine, these two only are enlarged upon. The king of the north and the king of the south that we

read of in the remainder of chapter xi. were two of the divisions of Alexander's kingdom.

The object that God has in the Bible is not to occupy the mind with histories of nations, however important they may be in the eyes of men, but to narrate just so much as was needed to elucidate His ways with His own chosen nation, Israel. Those nations only were of importance that were linked up with God's dealings with that despised and oppressed people. It has been so in the past, it will still be proved to be so in the future.

India, China, Japan, Africa may absorb the thoughts of men to-day, but Palestine is the land upon which the eyes of the Lord rest from one year's end to the other.

Jude's Epistle.

HAVING been myself comforted and encouraged of late by this epistle, I desire by God's grace to briefly notice a few thoughts therefrom for the encouragement of my young fellow-believers on our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is doubtless one of the most awfully solemn portions of God's Word, and yet so full of precious teaching for even the feeblest saint of God.

At the very outset we get a beautiful threefold cord of love—

1. Sanctified by God the Father ;
2. Preserved in Christ Jesus ; and,
3. Called.

Ought not this to give strength and stability to our souls, even though we see the truth being given up around us on every hand, and find that because iniquity abounds, the love of many is waxing cold. To know that, first, we are objects of the Father's love and choice. When Peter confessed Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," our blessed Lord's reply was, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (see Matt. xvi. 16, 17, 18). Again in John. vi. we read that, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." And again in I John v. 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

Secondly, that although everything is breaking up around us, and the professing Church, like Paul's ship in Acts xxvii., is going to atoms, yet as truly as every soul was saved and "they escaped all safe to land," so is the very feeblest believer in Jesus, yea, every truly converted person, all who are born of God, "preserved in Christ Jesus," safe till that blessed moment when the Lord Himself shall come and call every redeemed one to be with Himself for ever.

Thirdly, "Called." We sometimes sing—

JUDE'S EPISTLE.

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

Our Lord Jesus Himself said, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John vi. 44); and in Romans viii. we read—“Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (see vers. 28-32).

After the salutations of “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied,” although giving all diligence to write of the common salvation, Jude finds it useful to write and exhort them to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,” and that not so much in view of opposition from without, but because of ungodly men from within—men who have crept in unawares, making no doubt a loud profession, but in whom there had never been any real work of God in the soul.

And here I would remark that it remains as true to-day as when the blessed Lord uttered those words to Nicodemus recorded in John iii., “Ye *must* be born again.”

“By their fruits ye shall know them” are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are they

not wholesome words for these last days? In writing to Titus, Paul by the Spirit says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared, . . . teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." But here we find *they* "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

We then get a threefold testimony (to their condemnation but for our comfort), that although God may bear long with evil, yet eventually He will bring it into judgment (see vers. 5, 6, and 7 of our chapter).

We read in Ecclesiastes viii. 11, that "because sentence against an evil work is not executed *speedily*, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," and how we see this verified in the professing Church to-day. But, dear reader, the same inspired portion of God's Word declares that eventually "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (chap. xii. 14).

We next get the threefold way the apostasy will take, with a solemn "Woe unto them" who take part in it. In the first place the way of Cain is spoken of. And how prevalent we find Cain's religion in the present day. An ignoring altogether of man's lost condition, because of a sinful nature derived from fallen parents, refusing

to own that "except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God," and seeking to approach God in some way other than *only* through the death and bloodshedding of a sacrifice.

Secondly, "Running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." Unconverted, ungodly men, professing to be the Lord's servants, but who are really working not from love to the Lord or His people, but for *gain*.

Thirdly, "The gainsaying of Core," who had the presumption to claim as much right to the priesthood as Aaron, who was "called of God," and who is set before us as a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Then after a vivid description, by the Holy Spirit, through Jude, of these "wolves in sheep's clothing," together with Enoch's prophecy concerning them, we are exhorted as "beloved" ones to remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, who told us that there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lust; and then adds, "These be they who separate themselves, having not the Spirit"! And here I would remark that they "separate themselves" not *from* Christians but *to* Christians—that is, they have crept in amongst them, but without there having been a divine work in the soul, and so stand in bold contrast with those who, how-

ever feeble, are objects of the Father's choice, and have been drawn by Him to the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

And now again as "beloved" ones we are exhorted—(1) To build up ourselves on our most holy faith; (2) to pray in the Holy Ghost; (3) to keep ourselves in the love of God; and (4) to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Dear fellow-believer, how we need to turn to the Word of God for strength, comfort, and guidance in these last days, to use it as the lamp to our feet and the light to our path, to remember that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

What resources are ours amidst all the darkness that prevails around us, and what comfort in all the trials that beset our path—God's blessed Word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; a throne of grace to which we may come boldly to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; the unchanging love of God for our hearts to rest in; and the "blessed hope" that at any moment the Lord may come and take us out of this scene of sorrow to be with Himself for ever in that bright home above.

Then, as a grand climax to the whole epistle,

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we are commended to One who not only died for us upon Calvary's cross, but who now lives for us in the presence of God ; One able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen. C. SK.



An Inheritance Incorruptible.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON I PETER I.,
HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.

LET us consider the last verse of this chapter for a minute—"The word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." If this word was really believed as enduring for ever, what would be the effect ?

Abel came into God's presence pleading his own need of the cleansing blood, and went out justified by faith. Men are conscious they want something with which to come before God, and oh ! the presumptuous religious quackery with which man would prop us up in the presence of the Almighty, who has declared all our righteousnesses to be filthy rags. The gospel brings man into God's presence denuded and

stripped bare, and there he finds the blood to cleanse and the wedding garment, and goes out washed and clothed and filled with the peace and joy of the Father's house. To hear God speak of the worm that never dies and the fire never quenched on the one hand, and on the other heaven open, the promise of an inheritance that fadeth not away.

How blessed that third verse, the "abundant mercy" of the Father thus revealed for our comfort in these last days; what a testimony to His much mercy and His grace, the same from everlasting to everlasting. If we turn to the twentieth verse, "Foreordained from before the foundation of the world," how this leads us to sit down in the lowest place, and learn how our little being, passing away as the flower of the field, to-day here, to-morrow gone, is set at naught. Where were you before the foundations of the world? How that verse shows God's character from eternity. God is love. Eternal life without a shadow of change. That blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 3 what a pillar for the saint, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; if raised, our faith is not vain. All our earthly hopes and projects, how vain! Their enjoyment is only in the anticipating thought, not in the reality. If we could but attain this or that object, we should surely be satisfied and happy. No sooner has the hand grasped it than disap-

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pointment comes with it. There is a hidden worm in all our gourds, bitter dregs at the bottom of every cup of pleasure, and when we lean on man, and look to those we love for something sure and lasting, alas! we find them as grass and the flower of the field, withering and falling away. But not so that inheritance that *fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven for you; not left in man's keeping; not dependent on our inconstant, varying experience and changing frames, but kept, as we ourselves are, by God's almighty power, ready to be revealed in the last times. Its character, nature, and permanency is of God.

Strengthened by His Spirit with might in the inner man, we should see more of this inheritance if we hated self more. Men working in the pits can see the stars at noonday, so when God, by His Spirit, ploughs up the heart, we perceive its blackness contrasted with the bright shining of the sun. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though . . . if needs be," and oh! how manifest are the *needs be's*, if we could see our condition, as God sees it. Oh! to know and understand the *needs be*; why this trial came, and that one was cut off; why poverty was sent, and difficulties and divers temptations. The old man breaking out again and again when we hoped he had been dead. A needs be in every smallest stroke; in everything in our walk and calling, a needs be; and for *what* that needs be? Why,

the trial of faith, and whatever God gives He will try: this is the object. Why did the Lord Jesus leave the Father's house on high and die? There was a needs be, because He would not have us rest anywhere but in that *bosom*. Hell would have been our resting-place else. Oh! what a needs be for us! Faith is God's precious gift, and having given it, He will try it. May we be willing that He should. Faith cometh by hearing, but it is God's gift. Work begins when Christ is received, but then goes on to the end. We show our faith by our works. The apostle Paul says, "I have fought the good fight; I have kept the faith."

How little is the spirit of the world withered up by our spiritual blessings. What mean these falls, these outbreaks? but because we are not keeping the faith as Paul kept it. Aye, but you say, the times are different now. Yes, but the Word and precepts of God are unchanged. What are the worst of times but harvest days for faith in God. Is not He able to stem the torrent for us? "Wherein ye greatly rejoice." There is in the believer's heart a joy unshaken by anything earthly, a peace that passes all understanding. When all has been tried, and the poor sinner feels more and more condemned, let God's Christ be tried, and the result, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Wonderful that a man should walk into the presence of the cross and there lose all his sins—that every sinner

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may come into the presence of God, looking to Christ, and go out saying *Father*. Oh, what a salvation this, into which the prophets inquired and searched diligently, and prophesied of the grace that should come unto *us*, and shall it be said we turn away from such grace? Hath no one believed our report? See you no beauty in Christ? If your eyes could but see Him, how would you loathe that which you roll under your tongue as a sweet morsel. Oh! thus to hate what we loved; to find all things become new in the sight of the cross and grace of God.

But they searched diligently—all that they saw on before as in a glass dimly has been unrolled for us. Oh! those sufferings which our hearts can dwell upon in meditation as having had a terrible *reality* in this bloodstained earth—the life of sorrow and woe, the bloody sweat, the nails, the spear, the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” all passes before the mind with dreadful distinctness, all has been fulfilled. He of whom the Spirit testified as appointed unto suffering has indeed suffered all in order that blessing might be accomplished. Blessed, blessed Lord Jesus! it would have been suffering enough to live in such a world as this, but to come, and die such a death! The mind sinks under the effort to paint as it ought that *life*, that *death*. The Holy Ghost must fill up the sketch—glory connected with suffering.

Oh! what times our lot is cast in. We hear

many say, "Not too much religion." We are told to beware of going *too far*, as if we ever could go far enough. Are there any here afraid to seek after salvation lest man should say he is beginning to be religious? Would you know the value of your soul, your precious soul? By the sufferings of Christ I know the value of mine. Your soul! You are busy and occupied with perishing things, and your immortal soul never thought of. Your soul! Look to Calvary. By all that Jesus suffered bleeding there, think of your soul. Afraid to think any should think you cared for your soul? Better break away from every one and everything so only you find time for your soul. Oh! to make Christ everything in life instead of a secondary object.

Perhaps, poor sinner, you would fain come, but you dread all the cross will show you of yourself. Oh! happy sinner, you will find He never wounds but to heal, never probes but to raise up, blessed to get into that place of deep loathing, that deep disgust at the blackness and iniquity of the heart. None but God can make the sinner so view himself as to cry out—"I loathe myself; I see all I gloried in before so withered up and blighted. What shall become of my soul. Whither shall I flee?"

Poor sinner, there is none but God in Christ that can help you. We are passing through a world of trial and sorrow—a worm is at the root of our best-loved gourds; but we are passing on

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to an inheritance that fadeth not away, and what are the sorrows of the way? "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." How utterly crowns and earthly honours and riches are withered up before that inheritance. What care we what our circumstances may be when we are rejoicing in Christ. We are redeemed with His precious blood, not with anything so corruptible as silver and gold. Shall that, or anything earthly, occupy our hearts and thoughts? Look at the early saints—they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Look at us—how we gather them together. Where are we fallen?

For what period were the Scriptures written? Alas! alas! flesh is indeed as grass, but the word of the Lord by which the gospel is preached to the saints in these last days cannot change—it endureth for ever. Beware we add not to it or diminish its strength to suit the dwarf-like and stunted Christianity of these last days. Christ gives the hope, and His resurrection sustains. This is the security for it, not all hanging on His death only, but our title to the inheritance all hanging on the living Person of the Lord Jesus; safe in His keeping, resurrection and inheritance hand in hand. We that had nothing being heirs to such an inheritance! Not like grass withering and falling; not like a portion here of earthly glory or distinction in which many a weary heart has found but vanity

and vexation of spirit; not like anything here, but undefiled that fadeth not away.

“Being born again not of corruptible seed”—what wondrous words! Incorruptible, nothing can change or alter, nothing taint it! Oh, beloved friends, we are passing away as the grass and the flower of the field, the objects of our affection fading and falling around us; soon our place shall know us no more, but we are hastening to our inheritance that fadeth not away—every passing hour brings us nearer. May we be holy in all manner of conversation, and pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.

J. WILLANS.

DAVIES STREET, 1857.

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE VI.

(Chap. vii.)

I SUPPOSE we might put as a heading to this chapter, “Life under Law without Liberty.” The apostle here is carrying on the doctrine that we were considering in the sixth chapter about our death with Christ and applying it to the law; and in the third verse of the chapter he uses the illustration of the marriage tie as showing that so long as life lasts the one who is in the marriage relationship is bound by

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the law to the other. Death is the only thing that breaks the bond, but it does break it, and breaks it effectually.

No doubt there were at Rome amongst the believers those who had been Jews; not only Gentiles, but Jews. Of course, if there had only been Gentiles, we might say that the sixth chapter was far enough to have gone. To show that we were dead to sin might have been sufficient, but there were Jews who had been under law, and the question arose, What is to be done with the law? The answer is, We are not under the law, that is to say, Christians are not under the law. Gentiles were never put under it either, but there are large numbers of people, believers even, who virtually put themselves there, and so this seventh chapter of Romans comes to be of immense importance to many whom we have to meet. Well now, the great question was how to get out of that state, because to be under law is to be in a state of bondage. There is none of the peace, there is none of the liberty, there is none of the joy that properly belongs to the Christian so long as the soul is under law. Hundreds of people that you come in contact with to-day are practically in that state. There is no real sense of the liberty with which Christ has made His people free.

It is a mistake to imagine that the seventh chapter of Romans necessarily follows the fifth chapter in the order of the soul's experience.

If you remember we noticed at one of our meetings that the break in the epistle occurs in the middle of the fifth chapter, and that these two portions of the epistle are treating of two distinct subjects. The first part deals with the question of *sins*, the acts which I have committed; and the second portion treats of *sin*, or the nature that commits the sins; and we find some who say that they passed through the experience of the seventh chapter before they knew that their sins were forgiven, and others will tell you that they passed through it afterwards.

The first portion of the epistle is occupied with the question of our sins and how we may stand before God, how we may have peace with God. That is gone into and settled through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, apart from any experimental process that the soul may pass through. It is a work that is done entirely outside of us, it was accomplished altogether by another. In that work we had no hand whatever, it was finished nineteen hundred years ago on the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the moment we get to the seventh of Romans you find experience all through it, and, further, it is the experience of a soul that is occupied with itself. The number of times that "I" and "me" occur in this chapter have often been noticed. It is something over forty times. Christ is not spoken of as the object before the soul, but it is "I" all through; and notice

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too the number of times that the "law" is mentioned. Yes, the "law" and "I" are the great subjects of the seventh of Romans.

In the first three verses of the chapter the illustration is used of the link that exists between two persons who have entered upon the marriage relationship. In the fourth verse it says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law." Death has come in to break the link between the Christian and the law. The truth of death with Christ which we were considering in the sixth chapter, with reference to sin, is here applied to the law; because if I am dead, I am dead to everything. I am not only dead to sin, I am dead to the law. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law." But how are we dead to the law? There may be some one here who has never understood it, but if you are a Christian, it is your privilege to know, not only that Christ has died for you, settling every question as to your sins before God, but that you yourself have died with Him, and that when God looks at you, He sees one who, having died with Christ, is on the other side of death with a new life. How then do I become dead to the law? It is by the death of Christ and identification with Him in His death. If I had died under the law, it would have been condemnation; but if I have died with Christ, I have died out from under the law's dominion, just in the same way as if a man condemned to

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death were to die in his prison cell before the day of his execution, he would have died from under the power of the law of the land.

Now look at the next part of the verse, "That ye should be married to another." Here again it is taking the illustration of marriage, and it says, you cannot be united to two husbands at once. What is the one? The law. What is the other? A risen Christ. You cannot be united to both at the same time. If it is to the law, it cannot be to Christ. But if death has come in and broken the link with the one, then you can be to the other. Only in this case it is I who have died, so to speak, and not the husband. "That ye should be married to another."

It is not speaking here of membership of the body. The union that belongs to members of Christ is not the subject. It is speaking of identification. We cannot be united at the same time to the law as our husband and to Christ risen. Death has come in and broken the link with the one husband, the law, and enabled us to be united to the other. "That ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead." And why does it bring in Christ's resurrection? Because it is to a Christ who has passed through death; it is with that Christ that I am linked. I am identified with Christ on the other side of death, on the other side of judgment, on the other side of the cross. It applies to every Christian

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We are identified with a Christ who has passed through death and judgment on our behalf. We are associated with Him on the other side of it all, and the moment we grasp that truth, it enables us to do that which we never could do before—to “bring forth fruit unto God.” We may do a great deal, but there is no fruit unto God until the soul is set free by seeing the truth of this identification with Christ on the other side of death and on the other side of judgment. I no longer tremble at the thought of judgment, I know through God's grace that I can never come into it. I am linked with Christ on the other side of it all.

Look at what it says in the next verse, “For when we were in the flesh.” What does that mean? It speaks of being in the flesh as a past thing. “In the flesh” does not mean the same thing as “in the body.” We are in the body; but a Christian is not in the flesh. We have the flesh in us, but we are not in the flesh. That is to say, our standing before God is not the standing of a man in the flesh. What is the meaning of being in the flesh? Well, it means that so long as we stand before God in the flesh we are on the ground that *we* have to do something and to be something in order to be accepted before God. It is very much what we get in the case of the prodigal son before he came to his father. I do not deserve much, he says, but I think I deserve a little bit—“Make me as one of

thy hired servants." That is like one who stands before God on the ground of his own responsibility. That is what it is to be in the flesh, but the Christian is not on that ground. We shall see later on what other ground he is on. The first verse of the eighth chapter tells us that. If I am not in the flesh I am in Christ. There are only the two positions to be in. Well, the Christian is not looked at as in the flesh because it speaks of it here as a past condition—"When *we were* in the flesh." It is what his condition *was*, but it is not his *present* condition. Just as a person in London might say, "When I was in Brighton," because he is no longer in Brighton.

An unconverted man is "in the flesh" in the full sense of the expression, and hence under condemnation; the Christian in the true sense of the term is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (chap. viii. 9), and in a position where no condemnation is possible. But there are many believers who, because they are such, have divine life, and yet may have never learnt the truth of being dead with Christ; now these are *in a certain sense* still in the flesh, that is to say, as to the state of their mind and conscience they are still on that ground before God. The remainder of the chapter describes the experience of such.

Divine Revelation.

WHEN a man makes his own mind the measure of his knowledge of good, he soon sinks to the level of that by which he measures it; indeed he is already sunk there morally. He judges of what God ought to be, of what a revelation ought to be if there was one, by his own mind and feelings.

A book presents itself as a revelation from God; and he judges that it is not one. By what rule is his judgment formed? By what his own mind is, independent of revelation, which he subjects to the test of his own thoughts, when the book is subjected to him as such. He can do this only in virtue of the competency of his mind to judge, before he has received it, what a revelation ought to be. That is, his own mind, and even his own mind in its present state is the measure by which revelation is to be judged of. Were it so, the mind of God must be on a level with the mind of man, and even of the particular man who judges. But the fallacy of such a principle, as well as the excessive self-sufficiency of it, is evident.

First, the measure of what the Divine Being ought to be or require (for if it be a revelation by Him, it must declare what He is, or what He requires) will vary with the moral condition or

the natural disposition of each individual who seeks to form a judgment. More than this, it will vary with the circumstances in which a man is placed, with the age of the world in which he lives, with everything through which he has passed in emerging out of the state of natural ignorance of all things in which he began his life, and which have exercised an influence in forming his character.

THE man of intelligence produces human infidelity. The man of imagination will give us human superstition, coloured over with the haze of antiquity, for fear what it really is should be too clearly seen. Both give me man. The Scriptures alone give me God. Hence the peculiar form of modern infidelity is, attack on the written Word—the Scriptures. Superstition takes exactly the same ground. The cry of “Bibliolatry!” sounds alike from the intellectual and from the superstitious infidel. Both have the same object of attack, both are infidels — one an intellectual, the other an imaginative one. Both would persuade me that the Bible cannot itself command my conscience and oblige me to faith as coming from God. Do they not both seek to do this? Is it not infidelity? Doubtless, through the sinfulness of man's will, without divine grace, he never will really receive the Word as it is in

truth—the Word of God. But is that His fault or the Word's? Infidels and superstitious persons will both tell me that the Word itself has not divine authority over my soul; that I cannot receive it as such on its own authority without something more to prove it. It is hard to say who is guiltiest here: he who denies it is the Word; or he who, not denying that it is, declares that what God has said cannot bind the conscience of man unless validated by some authority other than its own.



Hints on Daniel.

“In his estate shall stand up a vile person” (Dan. xi. 21).

WE come now to the account which the Spirit of God has given of the two kings who, proceeding from the Grecian Empire, came into very close contact with Palestine and the Jewish people.

We have observed that on the death of Alexander the Great, his vast kingdom was divided and broken into four parts, two of which are passed over in silence in God's Word. The remaining two, here called the king of the north and the king of the south, are described with striking detail. It may be well to remark that throughout this chapter (Dan. xi.) they are not

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the same kings of the north and south, but a series of them; a period of about 130 years elapsing between verses 5 and 20, namely, from about the date of the death of Alexander the Great down to the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes, the "vile person" of verse 21.

Another remark it may be well to make before proceeding, for the sake of those who have not yet given much attention to this profoundly interesting portion of the prophetic scriptures, is this, that the titles borne by these kings have reference to their position with regard to the land of Palestine, God's centre so far as the affairs of nations are concerned. The God who inspired Daniel to write in brief terms such an accurate description of vast campaigns, political alliances, and intrigues for reasons of State, and that, be it remembered, before the actors had yet come upon the stage, could with just as great ease have given the names of these various men and women had He so seen fit. Had He not already done so in the case of Cyrus (Isa. xliv. 28) already alluded to? But He would emphasise the importance in His eyes of that narrow little strip of land, the land of Palestine, hence the land of Egypt, being south of Palestine, its king is called the king of the south, whereas, for a like reason, the king of Syria and the surrounding country is called the king of the north. The fact of their position in reference to the land of God's choice was of

greater importance than the names of the various kings who were to hold sway over those countries. So accurate, however, is the description here given by the Spirit of God, that by comparing each statement, brief as these statements may be, with the facts recorded in profane history, the names may be filled in in almost, if not in every instance.

The portion of the chapter which remains to be expounded (Dan. xi. 5-45) may be divided into three paragraphs.

The first (vers. 5-21), as we have observed, covers a period of about 130 years. "The king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes" (ver. 5)—this was Ptolemy Soter, one of Alexander's generals—"and he shall be strong above him." The "he" in this clause was Seleucus Nicator, the first king of the north. Of him it is said that "his dominion shall be a great dominion," and this is important to observe, for sometimes it is supposed that the king of the north was more or less confined to what is called Syria; whereas, in point of fact, Seleucus Nicator held sway over a vast stretch of territory extending from Macedonia to the borders of India. We may refer to this later on. Ptolemy Soter died in B.C. 284, and was succeeded by his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, who is alluded to in the next verse (ver. 6).

Philadelphus reigned a long time, especially when we remember the turbulent state of affairs

in those days, hence it is said, "In the end of years" (ver. 6)—for Ptolemy had been on the throne of Egypt thirty-six years when the alliance took place which is here alluded to—"they (*i.e.*, the kings of the north and south) shall join themselves together."

The king of the north who was now reigning was named Antiochus Theus. He was weary of the incessant strife in which he was involved, and in order to put an end to this, so far as the king of the south was concerned, he entered into a marriage alliance. "The king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement;" this was Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who in B.C. 249 was brought by her father with great pomp and ceremony to Syria, and there married to Antiochus, who divorced his wife Laodice in order to ratify the alliance more firmly. But all this intriguing came to nothing, as is well known from the history here so marvellously epitomised, for Berenice, upon the death of her father, was imprisoned by Antiochus, thus fulfilling the prophecy, "She shall not retain the power of the arm;" and Antiochus in his turn was poisoned by Laodice, his former wife, and so was fulfilled what is here said, "Neither shall he stand, nor his arm."

By this time Philadelphus Euergetes was on the throne of Egypt, and made strenuous efforts to liberate his sister Berenice and her son from

their prison. It is he who is referred to in verse 7, "Out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate," that is, in the estate of "him that strengthened her in these times" (ver. 6), *i.e.*, her father. The accuracy of the description is here remarkable. All that is so briefly narrated in verses 6 and 7 was fulfilled to the very letter. Not only was Berenice slain, but her son likewise; and here it may be well to draw attention to the marginal reading in verse 6, which is the correct one, "She shall be given up (*i.e.*, Berenice) . . . and he whom she brought forth (*i.e.*, her son), and he that strengthened her in these times (*i.e.*, her father)."

Now Ptolemy Euergetes came to the throne on the death of his father Philadelphus, who being likewise the father of Berenice, it is said, "Out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up," &c. Profane history tells us of the inroad into Syria that is here mentioned. Euergetes gathered an army together in order to rescue his sister from the fortress of the king of the north where she was imprisoned, but reaching there too late, for she and her son had both been slain, he vented his wrath upon her murderers by making himself master of a large portion of Syria as far as Babylon, as it is said in Daniel's prophecy, "He shall come with an army . . . and shall deal against them and prevail" (ver. 7). But not only so, profane history tells us that he brought back to his own land vast treasures of

gold and silver, "forty thousand talents of silver, a vast number of precious vessels of silver and gold, and images also to the number of two thousand five hundred, amongst which were many of the Egyptian idols which Cambyses on his conquering Egypt carried thence into Persia," &c.

All this is here briefly and accurately described by the Spirit of God before the events took place: he "shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and gold" (ver. 8.) In passing we may observe that this verse places beyond doubt the signification of the terms north and south in this chapter, for Egypt is here given as the land of the king of the south; so true is it that Scripture is amply sufficient for its own explanation. A knowledge of the histories written by men may be of great interest for comparing with what is given in Scripture, but it is not by any means a necessity for the understanding of the latter. It is added, "He shall continue more years than the king of the north" (ver. 8). This likewise was fulfilled, inasmuch as Seleucus Callinicius, who was the king of Syria at that time, died four years before Euergetes, in B.C. 225.

The king of the south of verse 11 was Ptolemy Philopator, the son of Euergetes, and what is recorded in this verse was accurately fulfilled in the war that was waged by him against Antiochus

the Great, the then king of the north. According to profane history, Ptolemy vanquished him at the battle of Raphia, in spite of the great multitude he had gathered together. Many thousands were slain, and a great multitude were taken captive, and yet, we are told, "he (*i.e.*, the king of the south) shall not be strengthened by it" (ver. 12), and so it turned out, for all that Ptolemy gained by his victory, he squandered in his voluptuous living.

It is the same king of the north that is described from verse 13 to the end of verse 19. Some years after the conflict alluded to in verse 12, Antiochus renewed the war with Ptolemy Epiphanes, the son of Philopator. Thirteen or fourteen years had intervened. He "shall certainly come *after certain years* with a great army" (ver. 13) the prophet had before announced, and so it came to pass.

"In those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south" (ver. 14), and so indeed they did, for the kings of Macedonia and Syria combined against him, and conspiracies arose in many quarters. But not only so, "The robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision." These were apostates from amongst Daniel's own people, the Jews, who sided with Ptolemy, forsaking the law of their God, and turning their backs upon Jehovah to do so. "But they shall fall," for Antiochus gained the mastery, and all who

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helped him, these very apostates included, were cut off.

Every detail of these verses, if compared with profane history, will be found to have had a perfect and accurate fulfilment. To enter into all the details would occupy too much space, but we must draw attention to the expression in verse 16, "He (*i.e.*, the king of the north) shall stand in the glorious land." This is an additional proof that we are here in the midst of scenes and circumstances that have to do, not with Christians, but with Jews. The glorious land is Palestine. However dark the days may have been in the past, however dark and infinitely darker they will yet be, faith can reckon on God amidst it all, and call that land which He will yet choose as the scene of the display of Messiah's glory, the glorious land.

Verse 17 refers to the attempt of the king of the north to do by stratagem what he failed to accomplish by force. Once again a marriage alliance takes place between these kings, only this time it is the daughter of the king of the north, Cleopatra (not the Cleopatra of the Roman period), that was joined in matrimony to the king of the south. The object of this, in the mind of Antiochus, was that Cleopatra should betray her husband into his hands, which is what the Scripture means by the expression "corrupting her" (ver. 17). But this did not succeed, as history relates, and as prophecy had foretold.

Antiochus then turns his arms towards the isles, that is, the Grecian Isles. There for a time he succeeded until he finds himself confronted by a prince whose people had been reproached by this invasion. These were the Romans, under whose protection these isles had placed themselves. Lucius Scipio, the Roman consul, defeated Antiochus in battle, and thus caused the reproach to turn upon Antiochus himself, who returned to his own land, and soon after came to his end.

The next verse (ver. 20) describes the brief reign of Seleucus Philopator, the son of Antiochus the Great, the chief part of whose time was occupied in collecting the taxes imposed upon him by the Romans. There was nothing of any particular note during his time. His life was cut short through the treachery of one of his personal friends, and not in battle or through any sedition amongst his people.

It may seem to some a strange and unnecessary thing to spend so much time over this portion of the Scripture. But everything that God has seen fit to reveal we may well study with attention. Furthermore, no serious student of these verses can fail to be deeply impressed with the overwhelming evidence that they contain of the verbal inspiration of Holy Writ. Remembering that Daniel wrote before the events took place which we have now been describing, it would be impossible to conceive

that he could forecast the future so accurately by mere guesswork. Nothing but divine inspiration can account for this stupendous marvel. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21).

The Epistle to the Romans.

THREE great facts are true of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is (1) dead to the law, (2) joined to a risen Christ, and (3) no longer in the flesh; and then the practical bringing forth of fruit to God follows. This is a blessed place to be in.

It goes on to say in the sixth verse, "Now we are delivered from the law." It is not that the law is dead but that we are delivered from it. Here the figure that has been referred to in the first three verses is changed. It is not the law that died; in other words, it is not the husband that has died, but I have died. "We are delivered from the law . . . that we should serve in newness of spirit." It is not the service of terror under the law, but it is the service of a soul renewed by God to serve, not from fear, but from love. "That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." But the flesh is always ready to make all kinds

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of objections. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid." If I have to be delivered from the law, it looks as if the law were something bad; that is the argument of the flesh here. The law was given to the Jews, and it came from God, and it is impossible that God could give anything that is not good. There is no fault to be found with the law. "Is the law sin? God forbid." Why, the law was the very thing that gave me to know what sin was. "Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." It does not say "sins" here but "sin," because the subject is not the acts but the nature.

The apostle here brings out the truth that it was by the fact that the law said, "You are not to *want* so and so," that he came to understand that he had a nature that desired these things. The law does not merely say that we are not to *take* a thing that is not ours, but that we are not to *want to have it*, and the moment we see the matter in that way it is as much as to say that we are not to be what we are. Because we have a nature that is evil, and the moment the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, is applied to one who has an evil nature, instead of giving that person power to live according to the requirements of the law, it only stirs up the desires to do the very thing that the law condemns.

The illustration often given is this. Suppose we have something in the drawer of this table, and you say that nobody is to look into it, the very fact of saying that nobody is to look at once makes people desire to do so. And so the law stirs up the desire to do the very thing that it condemns. "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Mind, it does not say, "Thou shalt not take." A person might say, I have never stolen; but the law says, you are not to want it, and people think that wanting a thing is not evil. You will find there is a kind of doctrine abroad that we may have all sorts of evil wishes, but that is not sin so long as we do not do the thing. But it is sin. It shows the evil that is in us. We may not do the thing, but there is the desire there to do it, and that is sin. Suppose somebody wanted you to eat a handful of ashes! Who would do it? Nobody! Because we do not want to do it, we do not like it. But the reason things are a temptation to us is that there is something in us that responds to them.

The apostle goes on in the eighth verse to say, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." It is all the law from beginning to end, it is not Christ; but a very needful experience to go through, and the deeper the better. It is a terrible thing to be indifferent to the evil that

is in us; it is better to be almost in despair about it than to be indifferent to it. God wants us to be rejoicing and not in bondage, that is true, but here the bondage is described and souls have to pass through it. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." That is to say, we were doing things that were bad before, but we were not troubling about them, just as you might say a child might have an evil habit. You would not like your child to be playing in the gutter with a little street child, that is a bad habit; but suppose the child was told not to do it, it becomes disobedience then. It was bad before, it is worse after the commandment comes. These eighth and ninth verses speak of it in this way. "I was alive without the law once;" I was going on in my sinful course without troubling; "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The moment the law came and said, you must not do that, sin revived. The commandment which was ordained to life became practically unto death.

In the thirteenth verse is another argument of the flesh. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." One argument of the flesh is that if we needed to be delivered

from the law it proves that the law must be bad. "God forbid," he says, "the law is holy, just and good." "Was then that which is good made death unto me?" The flesh is always finding fault with God's dealings. It is just the same as it was in the Garden of Eden—the woman that Thou gavest to be with me—accusing God of what we ought to blame ourselves for. In this verse it is that that good thing—the law—becomes death unto me. It seems a strange thing that such a good thing should have such a bad effect upon me. It is not that the good thing is made death unto me, but that that which is in me is shown up by the law—"Sin working death in me by that which is good." It is sin that is in me. Now all this is a very painful experience.

In the fourteenth verse it goes on to say, "We know that the law is spiritual." I know that it is all right—the law says that I am not to do this. The law is perfectly right. You see, it is the experience, not of an unconverted person, but of a converted one. The unconverted person does not think that the sin is evil. He does the wrong because he loves it, but it is not so with one who has got a new nature. "The good that I would I do not." That could not be said of a person who is unconverted. Why did I do the evil things before I was converted? Because I loved them. The thought of judgment will sometimes stop an unconverted man, but an

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unconverted man does the things because he loves them; but the moment I am converted I hate them, and hate myself for doing them. I love the good, and I say, I want to do that, but with the desire to do the good I find that there is something in me that wants to do the evil. The great thing which is described here is the lack of power. Life is already there, but we need power. The new nature must be there, because there is the desire for the good and the hatred of the evil, but there is no power. No, nothing but weakness.

This is an experience that quickened souls pass through, some more deeply than others. I believe I learnt the truth of this seventh of Romans doctrinally before I practically passed through it. I knew how deliverance was to be had, but for a long time in my Christian life I was enjoying the truth that I was forgiven and sure of being in heaven before I learnt what I was in myself. Even if we learn it with the sense that we are not going to be condemned, it is painful experience to learn what we are, and we have to learn it. We may learn it in communion with the Lord, and that is a blessed way; or we may learn it out of communion by a fall. Peter had to learn it in that way because he had trusted himself, and God wants us not to trust ourselves. He wants you and me to come to this, that there is nothing good in us at all. When we were first converted we thought, I was a bad sort of char-

acter before, but now I shall be something different. For a time we were filled with the love of Christ in dying for us and rejoicing in the Lord and all that, but by-and-by we found that there was still evil in us. We lost our temper perhaps, and we said, Dear me, I thought I was never going to have an evil thought again or to lose my temper or anything of that sort. I was looking for an improvement in myself, and instead of that I seem to be worse. And so it must be because we are looking at the evil now from God's point of view, and we do seem to be worse. We could not be worse in one sense but we seem to be worse.

(To be continued.)



The Queen of Sheba and the Eunuch.

(1 Kings x. ; Acts viii.)

THESE two narratives, found in distant parts of the Word, in common illustrate truths which are as dear and important to us in this distant age and place as ever they were, whether in the time of 2 Chronicles ix. or of Acts viii.

In the Queen of Sheba and the Ethiopian eunuch, who belonged, it may be, to the same

country, though at such different times—we find dissatisfaction in the best things short of Christ; but rest and fulness in Him, whether He be known to us in grace or in glory.

The Queen of the South had all royal honours upon her, and all royal honours around her. She could command the delights of the children of men, and evidently had health and capacity to enjoy them. The world was at her disposal, but the world had left her with an aching, craving heart, and she found no satisfaction in her royal estate; and, ill at ease, she took a long untried journey from the uttermost part of the earth to Jerusalem, because she had heard of the wisdom of the king there, “concerning the name of the Lord.” She reached Jerusalem, and there she found all and more than she had heard of, or calculated on. Her spirit was filled; her eye saw something in everything there that possessed her soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory—for Christ was there. He shone in those days in Solomon, who was His image and reflection, and she was brought into communion with Christ in His glory in the city of the great king, called, as it has well been, “The heaven below the skies.” The world had left her heart an aching void, and Christ had now filled it to overflowing. She counted this merchandise better than that of gold and silver, better than that of riches; and getting her questions answered, her soul satisfied, her eye filled with

visions of glory—of glory according to God—she presented her gold, her frankincense, her precious stones, the wealth of her kingdom, as a small thank-offering.

ACTS VIII.

The eunuch was a great man under Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians ; but he had long since, I may say, proved that the vanities of the Ethiopians would not do for him. He appears before us as one who had already cast the idols of that land to the moles and to the bats, and taken up the confession of the name of the God of Israel. In the obedience of this faith he had just gone where first we see him, to Jerusalem—the City of Solemnities, where the worship of the God of Israel was conducted—and he had gone there as a worshipper, but he had left Jerusalem *dissatisfied*. He was on his way home to the south country with a craving, aching heart. He was still an *inquirer*—as surely so as the Queen of Sheba had been in her day, when she left her native country for this same city, Jerusalem ; and the contrast here is vivid. Jerusalem had satisfied the spirit of the Queen, but it had left the soul of the eunuch a barren and thirsty place. These are among the things which show themselves to us in these most interesting pieces of history. But why this? Why would not Jerusalem do for the eunuch what it had done for the Queen?

Christ was not there in this his day as He had been in her day. Jerusalem was not now the city where the King of Glory in His beauty was seen and reflected, and where some image of Him and some token of His presence and magnificence might be traced everywhere. It was no Mount of Transfiguration to him as it had been to her. *Religiousness* was there, but not Christ; the observances and ceremonials of a carnal worship, the doings of an earthly sanctuary were there, but not the presence of the Christ of God. This made all the difference, and tells us why the eunuch left that very same Jerusalem with an aching heart, which had filled the spirit of the Queen of Sheba with an abounding overflowing joy.

His heart, however, is to be filled as well as hers, and that, too, out of the same fountain, Christ—only it is through the prophet Isaiah that Christ is to fill it, and not through Solomon.

In a desert spot, on the journey that was taking him back from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, Philip, the servant and witness of Jesus, is directed by the Holy Ghost to meet him. He addresses himself to him in the aching, craving state of mind to which I have already alluded. It possessed him thoroughly, so that no strange circumstance, such as that of meeting a stranger in that desert place and being addressed by him, has power to move him. The whole scene bears this character. There was the absorbing pre-

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sence of one thing in his soul. "The expulsive power of a new affection" was there. He was reading Isaiah with emotion of heart, under the convictions and awakenings of the Spirit of God. But Christ was soon to be introduced to him, and the desert should then rejoice, and in the thirsty land springs of water should flow. "Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus;" and the eunuch then "went on his way rejoicing." Joy did in him and with him now what in earlier days it had done in and with the Queen of Sheba. She trafficked for wisdom and counted the merchandise of it better than that of gold and silver and precious stones, and she was willing to part with the wealth of her kingdom for it. He now can part with Philip, since his spirit is filled with the joy of the Lord, and he has got the Christ of God, as she had got Him in type before.

Precious and beautiful illustrations of these like weighty truths! only we make certain differences. It was the *world* in all its royal splendour and resources that had left her heart a beggar, as she had tasted it in her own country. It was *religiousness* which had left his heart a beggar, as he had proved it in the city of solemnities. But whether it be this or that—the splendour of the world, or the religion of the world—the heart is but beggary and drought without Jesus.

And then again, there is this further difference—it was Christ in the *glory* that was introduced to the Queen ; it was Christ in *grace and humiliation* that was introduced to the eunuch. Solomon reflected the King in His beauty to her—Isaiah preached the Lamb in His blood to him ; but no matter, both of them were satisfied. Christ in the dispensation of present grace and blood-sealed salvation gives satisfaction and rest to the sinner : Christ in the display of coming glories in the kingdom will give satisfaction to the nations of the world and to the whole creation of God. It is Christ, whether as the Lamb of God on the altar, or as the King of Glory on the throne. His people are satisfied, their searchings and inquiries are over ; the sinner goes away with the Lamb satisfied and at rest ; the creation of God will rejoice in Him of whom it is written, “Glory and honour are in His presence, strength and gladness are in His place ;” the whole creation in all its range of manifold regions shall share in the power of that day ; the daughter of Zion, the nations with their kings, the beasts of the forest and the cattle of the hills, the floods and the woods, the hills, the vales, shall then in their several way taste and witness the universal joy and the deep satisfaction in which the creation of God shall then repose.

But once more, and I will notice another difference. In the day of the glory *the King*

must be sought—the Queen of the South comes up to wait on the King in Zion. In the day of grace *the Saviour seeks*—the Ethiopian nobleman was sought and found by the servant and witness of Jesus the Saviour. How fitting! How beautifully correct, though various, all this is! How all commends itself to our souls, telling us something of the perfections which shine in the ways of Him with whom we have to do!

J. G. B.

Letter to the Archbishop of Auch (France).

19th February 1902.

MY LORD,—Twelve years ago a priest of my acquaintance, a man of piety and learning, left the Church of Rome. “Oh, how much have they not made me suffer!” cried the poor fugitive, as he left, who, like his Master, had not a stone whereon to lay his head, and that after a life of self-sacrifice.

A little while afterwards began that exodus of distinguished priests. With all of them it has been the same cry of agony, in the midst of trials of a martyr character.

Can that, I asked myself, be the Church of Christ which I thought I was serving? What

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then has become of the Master's commandment : "Love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another " (John xiii. 34, 35).

Is it possible that a Leader so gracious, with His infallible foreknowledge, should have condemned us to seek our salvation in a religious society where such tortures reign ?

There was but a step from this first entrance of doubt to a new examination of the teaching. I have taken that step. Without partiality, and with the maturity of judgment which comes with age and experience, I have passed in review the dogmas of the Church of Rome.

This time I freed myself from the method imposed upon me in youth. I even consulted with the greatest care some most valuable books of those heretics to whom Rome refuses all hope of salvation.

These studies took me six years. In a somewhat voluminous manuscript, which I purpose publishing later on, I have traced the road that I took, noted down the results of each research, and underlined each conclusion.

I was obliged to come to the conviction that the whole Roman doctrine was of a purely human origin. . . . In place of the true mark which, amongst others, always distinguishes the Church of Jesus Christ—"Love one another"—I could only find in Roman Catholicism (1) a

unity of iron chains which took the place of living faith in the heart ; (2) the fiery reflection from stakes lighted in the name of an absolute truth which no man can attain to with his limited intelligence ; (3) a holiness which requires one to close one's eyes rather than examine into it ; and (4) an apostolic succession, which will not hold water, of Popes whose history, for the honour of their Church, it would be better to be able to obliterate.

Then, the contradiction between the Mass, and the one only and sufficient sacrifice of the cross whose efficacy abides for ever (Heb. vii. 27, ix. 12, x. 10) ; and between auricular confession and the usage of earlier times ; the infallibility of the Pope, and the very uncertain succession from Peter ; indulgences, with their money payments, which militate against a free salvation (Rom. iii. 24). . . . All this was examined patiently, and in its minutest details. O Rome! O error!

What was I to do in presence of such painful discoveries? Take to flight also? After serious reflections, I said to myself that I could begin by preaching the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel, from the pulpit that I occupied.

I thought for a time that that would allow me to counteract the teaching contained in the Romish system. I even flattered myself that I should be able to do a great deal of good in the

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future. But preaching is not everything in the work of a parish.

The more I preached a worship in spirit and in truth, the more the obligatory formalism rose up before me as an insurmountable obstacle. I had incessantly to close the Bible in order to open the ritual, which was its flat contradiction. . . .

Since Roman Catholicism cannot exist without this heavy and cumbersome machinery, I endeavoured, while retaining the outward form, to alter its meaning. But here I was vanquished too.

I was like a man born in a flimsy house, of imposing outward appearance, but undermined from within. In it he has experienced the joys of infancy ; nothing else is required to make him love it with all his heart. When he sees that it is about to crumble, he strives to the utmost to arrest its fall, and there to end his days.

But I can remain in it no longer. My conscience would be buried beneath its ruins. Every day my conscience reminds me that thirty years ago I vowed I would preach the doctrine of *Christ*.

Why should I persist in ceaselessly sowing the good seed in a wilderness where it is impossible for the pure doctrine of the Master to germinate, when God had given me to behold a promised land ?

How I bless God that after long praying to Him for guidance, He has given me to see that the soil most favourable for the seed of the

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gospel is that where there is neither Pope nor Bishops. These make themselves so important and great that they obscure the light and warmth that come from on high. . . .

After lengthened reflection and prayer I go whither God calls me.

I have lived my fifty years. At my age one cannot form great projects, and yet I have one great ambition: it is, to put at the disposal of Jesus Christ the end of a life that might have been more useful.

A labourer of the eleventh hour, I shall endeavour to work with all my energy for the glory of Him who has already bestowed upon me that peace, and placed within me that certainty of salvation which your Church never gave me.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from expressing my sincerest wish that many of the clergy may learn, sooner than I did, that Jesus only, as He has revealed Himself in the gospel, and not as the Church of Rome represents Him, that He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

No doubt it will be said that I am become the enemy of my former colleagues: it is not so. On the contrary, I shall be happy to prove to them my affection in combating henceforth, with all the energy that I possess, a system that holds them far away from the truth, perhaps, even, from salvation.

B. TEULÈRE.

(Translated from the "Prêtre Converti.")

"These have Power."

HOW very attractive to us all is the thought of power! And every true-hearted Christian longs, and longs rightly, for power. I mean for power to be a positive blessing to others: to bring into the hearts and lives of those around the peace and joy he himself possesses.

In the portion from which our title is taken (Rev. xi.), the Spirit of God shows us two who have power in a very remarkable way. The period, I need hardly say, when these two exercise their wonderful gift, is not the present period, nor is the manner of their using it that which obtains in the gospel dispensation, but that for our present inquiry is of no consequence. What I wish to point out is—

What these two are ;

Whence they derived their power ;

Why it was given ; and

How long it lasted.

Firstly, what they are. The Word tells us they are God's *witnesses*. They had a testimony committed to their trust, and their sole business was to take their stand among those to whom God had sent them, and declare this testimony. Like Jonah who was to go to Nineveh "and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

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Beloved Christian reader, is not that our business? Are we not set, as they, among those who need a testimony, and have we not that testimony put into our hands? But how often the question arises, How can I? We look at the difficulties of the position (nay, may I not say its *impossibilities!*) and, like the disciples, wonder how we can satisfy the demands of the case.

Then let us see secondly, whence our two witnesses derived their power. Verse 3 says, "And I will give power unto My two witnesses." Ah! here is the grand secret. *God* gives power, and in no other way at all is power obtainable. A man may be eloquent and have all other possible natural gifts as well, but if he is to be a real source of blessing to others, it will not be by natural might and power, "but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. iv. 6). Oh! that one could impress upon every believer the immense importance of this fact. It cannot be exaggerated, but, alas, it can be overlooked. Now, it is very plain from the Word that these two witnesses *had* power. They were not longing for it or hoping for it. It had already been bestowed, and its effect was being felt. Does not this suggest, dear reader, what every one of us ought to know, that all God's witnesses have already had conferred upon them the power to render their testimony effective? The Holy Ghost is the source of that power for us, and the Holy Ghost has been bestowed upon all true

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believers (see Acts v. 32). Then what is lacking when we have to cry out about our weakness? Simply that *we are not using what we have.** "What hast thou in the house?" says the prophet Elisha to the impoverished widow (2 Kings iv. 2). Only a pot of oil, was the despairing reply. And yet this despised "only" was the very thing that filled her house with blessing. Do not our hearts, too, often mourn our weakness when our "oil" is lying there unnoticed, and in some cases, even unknown? I ask, is not the Holy Ghost often neglected by us? He always is when we cry out about our lack of resources, for, like our two witnesses, we *have* the power we want.

The reason *why* this power was given is very simply stated. "I will give power . . . and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days." They had a work to perform, and full provision was made for the fulfilling of it. "Who goeth a warfare at his own charges?" Never yet has a witness been sent out by God without the most complete equipment being furnished. We are *not* weak, beloved friends. We are *not* lacking in resources. Everything is amply provided. Faith only is needed to use it. May we be stirred up to our privileges.

And this power remains until the end. Never

* I am taking for granted that we are sincerely trying to steer clear of worldliness, and all other forms of evil, for that is at all times an effective bar to power.

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until the last message is delivered, or the last errand run, is that power withdrawn. Up to the very last day of their testimony these two witnesses had power. And to us? "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Praise the Lord!

Then, dear fellow-servants, lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. It is only an additional effort of the enemy to deceive when it is suggested that it is impossible to stand against the rising tide. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4).

Before closing I would call attention briefly to two additional points in connection with these two witnesses, which one feels are of much importance.

The first is their own personal deportment. They were *clothed in sackcloth*. The testimony of their *ways* was thus in keeping with the testimony of their *words*. Would a gay garb suit solemn declarations of judgment? May we be watchful in this respect, dear friends, lest our conduct mar our message.

Again we are told, "These have power . . . to smite the earth with plagues *as often as they will*." Mark, it does not say as often as God will, but the will to do or not to do is left with them. Why is this? Ah! this is a very beautiful point. So close is the intimacy between the Lord and His true and faithful witnesses that He can say

to *such*, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7); and again, "He shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark xi. 23). "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." What an encouraging light this sheds upon the path of these two lonely witnesses. Beset before and behind by their enemies, but in living communion with their unseen Master.

May we, beloved, learn our lesson from these two witnesses, and, like the apostle Paul, in spite of all the opposition, persecution, and even neglect, be led about in triumph (2 Cor. ii. 14) by the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost working through us.

L. W. R.

Hints on Daniel.

"A vile person" (chap. xi. 21).

WE come now to the second of the three paragraphs (vers. 21-36) into which our chapter is divided.

The Spirit of God, though entering into considerable detail, had passed with comparative rapidity over the previous history of the kings of the north and the south. A period of 130 years had been described from verse 5 to 21, but here we cannot but be struck with a change, for in the section now before us, ten years only (B.C. 175 to B.C. 165) are under review. In the

former division, many successive kings are referred to, whereas here one king only occupies the prophet's vision. This is the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes, most appropriately named "a vile person."

The question naturally arises, Why should so much more notice be taken of the king whose reign did not exceed ten years? The answer is that Antiochus Epiphanes was to be a type of another king who has not yet arisen; and bad as Antiochus was, this other will be infinitely worse. Both the one and the other were to come into close contact with the affairs of Palestine and the Jews, and this it is that gives them importance in the sight of God, for God's heart and interest is with His people, however unworthy they may prove themselves to be.

The accuracy of the description here given, is as remarkable as what we have already noticed in the previous part of the chapter, leaving no possible doubt that the Spirit of God had Antiochus Epiphanes in view when he inspired Daniel to give this wonderful forecast of the future.

According to profane history, Antiochus, who was the brother of Seleucus, the previous king of the north, was on his return from Rome when the news of the death of his brother reached him, and also of the attempts being made by the murderer of his brother, to usurp the throne for himself. Ptolemy, King of Egypt, was likewise plotting to keep him out, and so were fulfilled the prophet's

words, "to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom" (ver. 21), that is to say, he succeeded to the throne in spite of the attempts being made to deprive him of the honour of the kingdom. But for all that he came in peaceably, for when in Greece, on his way back from Rome, he obtained the assistance of two powerful kings, by whose means the usurper was suppressed, and Antiochus himself placed on the throne. It was then that he took the name of Epiphanes, or *the illustrious*, but owing to his vile and despicable character, he was commonly nicknamed Epimanes, or *the madman*.

The character given of Antiochus by Josephus and other historians shows how well he earned the title here given anticipatively by the Spirit of God, "a vile person," for this he was in truth, but what was of more importance still, and what in the eyes of the God of Israel was greater guilt on his part, he was a wicked persecutor of the Israel of God. True, that people had rendered themselves liable to chastisement by their own unfaithfulness, but God will not allow those to go unpunished who, for selfish motives, injure and persecute His people.

In order to retain Palestine in his possession, and utilise the Jewish nation in one of his expeditions into Egypt, Antiochus entered into a league with the brother of the high priest, in order to supplant him in the office, and scattered honours and money amongst certain Jews, who

turned their backs upon the holy covenant. All this is alluded to in verses 23 and 24. At first all went well, and the Egyptians were defeated. Ptolemy fell into his hands, but instead of killing him, Antiochus received him at his table, though this appearance of friendship was a mere pretence, as is here said, "they shall speak lies at one table" (ver. 27).

But the designs of Antiochus did not prosper, so he returned to his own land, carrying thither the riches he had amassed during his expedition. A rumour had reached Jerusalem that he was dead, and this created such rejoicing there, that Antiochus was stirred with rage against the Jews—"his heart shall be against the holy covenant" (ver. 28). On his way back to Syria, he stopped at Jerusalem, and by means of the traitors amongst the Jews, he took possession of the city. It was on this occasion that he penetrated into the temple, and there in mockery offered up a sow on the altar, and caused the broth to be scattered over the sanctuary, thus defiling the holy places, and causing the sacrifices to cease. This is alluded to in chapter viii. in the parenthetic clause of verses 11, 12. We have already noticed the change from "it" to "he" in that clause. The "it" of verse 10, and the latter half of verse 12, is the little horn, or the last king of the north; the "he" is the one who typified this last king, in other words, Antiochus Epiphanes. The cleansing of the sanctuary (chap. viii. 13, 14),

we believe, refers to what took place some four years after this awful desecration, when Judas Maccabæus recovered Jerusalem out of the hands of the heathen.

Now comes the inspired account of the last expedition made by Antiochus into Egypt (chap. xi. 29-35). "But it shall not be as the former," that is, it would be unattended by the partial successes of former times; but neither shall it be "as the latter," that is, humiliating as this defeat was to be, it would be as nothing compared to the disaster that should overwhelm, in days that are yet future, the king of the north, of whom Antiochus was the type.

In verse 30, we are told what was the real cause of his defeat, "the ships of Chittim shall come against him" (ver. 30). Here, then, we have the intervention of a western power. It is the Romans that we are to understand by "the ships of Chittim," and this is the first allusion in our chapter in a direct manner to this now rapidly rising people. The circumstances under which Antiochus met the Roman Consul at Alexandria are well known, and were especially humbling to his pride. The Egyptian monarch, fearing the worst if his opponent were allowed to continue his conquests unchecked, had sent to the Roman Senate an abject appeal for assistance. In answer to this, they at once despatched their representative, who met Antiochus just as he was about to lay siege to Alexandria. Anti-

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ochus, recognising in the Roman envoy one with whom he had been on terms of great friendship while on a visit to Rome, approached him with extended hand ready to greet him as of old. This the Roman refused, saying, that before he could treat him as a friend, he must know how he stood toward those whose representative he was. He then told him that the Roman Senate bade him leave Egypt forthwith. The artful Antiochus requested time to confer with his friends, but the Roman envoy drawing a circle around him with his wand on the sand, required an answer before he stepped out of the circle.

Antiochus was forced to yield, and he returned to his own land a humbled man. "Therefore he shall be grieved, and return" (ver. 30). This, however, did not prevent him wreaking his vengeance upon the Jewish people. But the Spirit of God is careful to distinguish between the faithful ones amongst them and the apostates. It was by means of these latter, "them that forsake the holy covenant," that the wicked king manifested his hatred against God and His people.

Nevertheless on this occasion, Antiochus himself did not visit Jerusalem, but sent one of his generals, and this, we suppose, is the meaning of the expression, "arms shall rise from him" (ver. 31), for his general it was who polluted the sanctuary of strength, that is the temple, abolish-

ing the daily sacrifice, and placing an idol in the holy place.

We are not to suppose that this is what is alluded to by our Lord in Matthew xxiv. It is a very similar expression, but there is a difference. The abomination of desolation referred to in this chapter (Dan. xi. 31), was what took place in the days of Antiochus, the antitype of the last king of the north; it was a foreshadowing, no doubt, of that to which our Lord referred as immediately preceding His appearance in judgment, but the verse in Daniel that our Lord quoted, is found in the next chapter (xii. 11). In brief, Daniel xi. 31 has been already accomplished, whereas Daniel xii. 11 awaits its fulfilment.

But the state of things during these days of Antiochus Epiphanes bore a striking analogy to what is yet to take place, only that bad as has been the past, the future will be incomparably worse. Whilst Antiochus did all in his power by flattery and other means to incite the Jews to apostatise from God and His holy covenant, the Spirit of God energised a band of faithful men, "the people that do know their God" (ver. 32). These were the Maccabees and others, who by their words and actions set an example of devotedness before the rest, which God used to keep the people from completely yielding to the terrible pressure of the times.

That there will be a remnant in the future is clear, but their testimony will not be accom-

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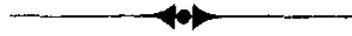
panied by deeds of prowess and exploits in the field, as it was in the days of the Maccabees; when persecuted in one city they are exhorted to flee unto another, and not to take the sword. In short, while the points of similarity between these days of Antiochus in the past, and of the future under Antichrist, are sufficiently clear to make it evident that the Spirit of God was applying the one in an antitypical manner to the other, yet the differences are sufficient to prove that the same period is not described.

The point of chief importance for the intelligent understanding of the chapter is this, that the break between the past and the future occurs just here (ver. 35.) Even if there were no other reason, it is suggested by the verse itself, "it is yet for a time appointed" (ver. 35).

From verse 5 right on to this point we have been able to follow step by step the details of past history. No one reading the profane history of those times can fail to perceive the exactness of the description given by the prophet *up to this point*. But from verse 36, all is vague. Blind unbelief—for what else is the so-called higher criticism?—has argued from this that there was no Daniel living at the time of Cyrus, King of Persia (chap. x. 1), for it would have been too great a miracle that any one should have been able to describe so accurately the events of history before they happened! The writer of the book of Daniel, say they, must have lived

during the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, for he was able to record with perfect exactitude the whole history up to that reign, whereas he could only guess as to what followed! How sad to find such men as Dean Farrar joined with the heathen writer of the second century, Porphyry, in this glaring infidelity. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. xxii. 29).

When Daniel wrote, all that is in this chapter was future, it was prophecy pure and simple. But up to the end of verse 35 has now passed into history; from verse 36 all is yet distinct prophecy.



The Lord's Supper: Its Object and Meaning.

(I Cor. x., xi.)

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING.

MOST Christians understand the *object* of the Lord's Supper, but the fulness of its *meaning* is not so generally apprehended. *Significance* has to be distinguished from *object*, as for instance in the case of a royal salute. Few fail to understand that guns are fired in honour of royalty, but are there many who know why twenty-one guns are let off on such occasions? Why not twenty-two?

In contrast to the numerous symbols of the Jewish system, Christianity has only three—water, bread, and wine. The last two are used in the Lord's Supper. After giving thanks, the Lord broke the bread and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is for you" (1 Cor. xi. 24; "broken" is supposed to be an interpolation). The bread, therefore, is a token of the Lord's body. Likewise, He took the cup after He had supped, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood," &c. (vers. 25, 26). The cup, therefore, speaks of the shed blood of the Lord, and the partaking of both the bread and the wine is an announcement of the Lord's *death* in this world.

It does not appear that the actual *breaking* of the bread represents the death of Christ, but rather the bread being separate from the wine and being taken in separation. If a Jew were brought to the Lord's Day morning meeting, and told that the bread on the table was a symbol of the Lord's body, and the wine of His blood, he would at once understand that the Founder of Christianity had *died*. For how could the blood be separate from the body except in death?

1 Corinthians xi. 26 gives us, then, the great primary meaning of the Lord's Supper. However unworthily souls may partake, and however dull their affections, yet wherever the bread is eaten and the cup is partaken of, there is in

that act a pictorial announcement of the Lord's death till He come. This is true even in the Greek and Roman Churches, where, alas! the object of the Supper is lost. For it is for them not a memorial but a sacrifice. Still, the meaning remains indestructible through grace.

Our taking the bread (the body) before the cup (the blood) may be called reversing the natural order of a sacrifice in which the blood was always first dealt with, for the shedding of the blood slew the victim. In "the Lord's death," God's Lamb, it was not so, for He "laid down" His life of Himself, and after death His blood was shed. His death was as miraculous and divine as His birth, yet He was very Man in both.

The object of the Supper, therefore, is to recall to the hearts of the saints the Lord's death. It is His own means of reminding them of Himself, and of His infinite love displayed in His death.

What is the qualification to partake of the Lord's Supper? That of being a true Christian and walking godly. The title consists in being children of God, though soundness in faith and walk are necessary. A parent takes his meals at certain hours, and his children in taking their places at table, will first see that their hands are clean. But the fact of having clean hands does not in itself entitle them to present themselves at table. So *all* Christians should come to the

Lord's Table, but they should first remove any disqualification, such as sin on the conscience, by confessing it. "Let a man examine (prove) himself" (ver. 28).

Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper is a condition of salvation, but are they not both binding on all believers? It was the Lord's expressed desire that His saints should remember Him, and should not His word bow their hearts to fulfil it? "This do in remembrance of Me," said the Lord. It is reported that an invitation from a royal person is looked upon as a command, and must be obeyed. What Christian would do otherwise than accept the gracious invitation of the Son of God?

The tenth chapter of Corinthians adds another and very important point to the *significance* of the Supper, and brings in the Lord's Table. It would thus come under the notice of the reader before the *object*, which, as we have seen, is stated in the next chapter. It thus appears that God presents the truth in an order the reverse of that in which it is learned in the experience of the saint. In Leviticus the burnt-offering is described before the sin-offering, yet who can apprehend the burnt-offering aspect of the death of Christ before he has discerned Him as the antitype of the sin-offering?

In chapter x. the truth of the Lord's Table seems to be given in support of the apostle's injunction to "flee from idolatry." To eat a

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thing offered to an idol was to have fellowship with the idol—to be identified with it. The Jews of old, who partook of the sacrifices, were fellow-partakers with the altar (ver. 18). Similarly he who drinks the Lord's cup, expresses his fellowship in Christ's blood, and to partake of the Lord's Table is to have communion or fellowship with His body. This seems to be the meaning given in Scripture to eating and drinking. Those who eat the Lord's Supper or "partake of the Lord's Table" express their fellowship or common interest in His death.

But in addition, the one loaf signifies the Church, the aggregate of all Christians, for it is written, "For we being many are one bread, one body." Hence any system which does not allow all Christians, not otherwise disqualified, from partaking of the loaf, denies this truth, and surely is in nature sectarian, however little it may be so intended. It overlooks this aspect of the Lord's Supper, under which all Christians are displayed as members of Christ's body, and thus members one of another.

The passover feast, though it had to be eaten in the place where Jehovah put His name, was a family feast. Not so the Lord's Supper. It would lose the true *significance* of 1 Corinthians x. if individual families were to celebrate it in their own houses, though they would attain its *object* of calling to mind their precious Saviour and His death for them. So in the sects of Christendom,

piety attains the object of the Supper in remembering the Lord; and the meaning as presented in 1 Corinthians xi. is also seen, for the death of the Lord is announced visibly; but the significance of the one loaf before it is broken, as picturing the one Church (1 Cor. x.) is lost.

The Epistle to the Romans.

“**I** KNOW that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. vii. 18).

How individual and personal this is! I believe if we were to learn more of what we are ourselves, we should not be so ready to accuse others of what they are. Let us find fault more with ourselves than with others. Here it is, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) there dwelleth no good thing.” That is a terrible thing. We are all ready to admit that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwell all sorts of bad things. I asked a man once if he were a child of God.

He said he did not like to make any profession, because he saw all sorts of people making profession, and he thought he was every bit as good as they were.

I then asked him if he had found out that he was bad at all.

“Well,” he said, “I suppose I must face that, there is bad in me as well as in others.”

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“Now, have you found out that there is no good in you? Will you admit this, that there is absolutely nothing good in you?”

“Well, no,” he said, “I do not think I am as bad as that.”

Now that is just what we must learn or there will be no deliverance.

I remember somebody once at a Bible Reading turning to another and saying, “Are you ever disappointed with yourself?”

And the other said, “Oh, yes, indeed I am very often disappointed with myself.”

“Well,” said the first, “I am not, because I know there is no good in me at all.”

Now it is a great thing to learn that, and to learn it in communion with God. We may say it glibly without much believing it, but it is a great thing to come to that before God, that there is in me absolutely nothing good. It is a terrible thing to have to say, and it goes on, “For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.” And now look what it says in the nineteenth verse, “For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do.” What a terrible state I am in! I want to do what is good, and I do not do it; and I hate that which is evil, and I do it. But there is a ray of light comes into the soul in the twentieth verse, “Now if I do that I myself would not, it is no more I myself that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

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There is a stress to be laid on the "I" in this verse which does not appear in the Authorised Version. That is a grand discovery; it is not I myself. What is it then? It is sin that dwells in me. That is a ray of comfort, though perhaps not a great one, to find out that if I hate the evil, then it is not I myself that is doing it, but it is the evil principle within me that is doing it. But then, thank God, I can reckon it to be something different from I myself. And what does that mean? That I am taking sides with God against it. But so long as I am looking upon it as part of myself, I am looking how I can stand before God with it, and I am mixing it up with my acceptance and justification.

Let us go on further now and look what it says in verse 23. Carrying on the reasoning, "I find then a law," or principle—for that is what it means there, it is not "the law" but a general principle—"that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Now that brings out that we are dealing with one who has a new nature, because an unconverted man could never speak like that. "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." That, you may say, seems to be a climax, and the most terrible climax in this experience, for the ray of comfort that I saw in verse 20 seems to be altogether gone by this,

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that the sin that dwells in me is stronger than "I myself," and it brings me into captivity. That is awful to think that I must live and die in captivity. But you need not. There are three stages here, "No good thing in me" (verse 18); secondly, "It is sin in me, and not I myself" (verse 20); and "The sin that dwells in me is stronger than I" (verse 23). Now what is to be done? I have been trying to do better all along, and that is no good, and I find that it is hopeless work, for I am always in captivity. The terrible thing is that this evil which is in me is always stronger than I am, and I cannot get myself out of this miserable state. Do you give it up? Yes, that is just where I have got to, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" That is a great change; "who," it is no longer "I." "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I have come to the end of "I." I cannot deliver myself, but is there anybody who can? That is the point we have reached now; the vision of my soul is turned away from myself, and looks around to see if there is anybody who can deliver. "Who shall deliver me?" I needed a Saviour at the start for my sins, and now I need a Deliverer from the power of sin. I give it up myself. I have striven and done the best I could, I have done everything I could think of, and I find that I am still a captive, and I cannot extricate myself from this terrible condition. "Who shall deliver me,"

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miserable man that I am? Plenty of people say that they are miserable sinners, but this is a miserable saint—one who has life, but no liberty. It is not the experience of an unconverted man, neither is it the experience of a man in the full Christian position. Then you say there is something between the two? Well, practically, there is. There is the experience here described of one who has life but who is under the law, and he has no liberty. And you will notice that throughout this chapter there is not a word about Christ as an object, and not a word about the Spirit as power. It is the law and self.

“Who shall deliver me?” And what is the answer to this? The last verse of the chapter. The soul passes from a state of bondage and misery into bursts of praise. “I thank God.” That is a very different thing to misery and the law. At one moment it is crying out from the depth of the heart, “Who shall deliver me?” The next it is, “I thank God.” That is, I find that God is my Deliverer. “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The apostle has described this, but you must not think he was passing through this terrible experience when he was describing it. Supposing you had been in a morass or quicksands, and you tell a person what your experience was, you say, “There I was in that terrible morass, I was sinking.”

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And your friend might say, "Why did you not try to get on to a bit of firm ground?"

And you say, "I could not, for the more I tried the further I sank."

But you must be out of the morass before you can describe it. It is not, then, that the apostle was at that moment going through this experience. He had been in it, but he had learned the way of deliverance from it, and I believe that comes by applying the truth contained in the sixth chapter. We have died with Christ, and further, we are associated with Christ on the other side of death and judgment, so that there is no condemnation possible for us. There is no condemnation, for we have been taken out of the place that we were once in, as "in the flesh;" we are no longer there before God, but we are in Christ Jesus, and there is no condemnation. "I thank God."

Atonement and Advocacy.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS ON
I JOHN I., HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.

THERE are two great branches of the Lord's work for us, the knowledge of which is necessary for the enjoyment of settled peace and the maintenance of communion.

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1st. What He has done for us in atonement.

2nd. What He is doing for us in intercession and advocacy.

The understanding of these two will be the basis of settled peace and uninterrupted communion for the believer.

Many of the children of God are not clear as to the first, many more as to the second—many even, who, know the real truth of their condition and the place into which they have been brought. They have not got in the depths of their souls settled peace, they are clear in their intellectual perception of the fundamental truths of Christianity, but I am speaking of the enjoyment of settled peace which it is the privilege of the child of God to possess. Carelessness, worldliness, legality, indulgence in evil, are so many causes which operate to hinder settled peace and unbroken communion. Do not separate them if you would know practically what it is to be in the light—to walk in the light.

What has Christ done for us? Into what are believers brought through His work on the cross? The answer is that we are brought into the presence of God by the blood of Jesus, as purged, living worshippers. It is due to the excellency of the blood of Jesus—it could not be what it is—the blood of God's Son, if it did not give a purged conscience. Were it not for this, where should we be? By the blood of a goat the intelligent Jew had his matters settled with Jehovah.

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He would not say, "I hope it is, but I do not feel sure of it." No, the sacrifice has been offered, and the blood has been taken in by the high priest before Jehovah. If the Jew could have certainty, can I have no assurance? The vain heart calls that humility. Humility to doubt! Presumption to trust! Is that the order, I ask you? A Jew can have confidence, and I can have none at all! I ask, is that the gospel? Shall the believer in Jesus wander through the dark corridors of legal gloom, along which are re-echoing the groans and sighs of so many who have trod that way before? The whole soul rises in indignation to repudiate the insult to the value of the blood of Christ! I start on my career of personal holiness with a purged conscience.

Many confound two things that are obviously distinct—sin and sins. Because they feel the working of sin within, they do not fully understand "No more conscience of *sins*" (not, consciousness of sin). Because Christ had all my sins on Him when He died upon the cross, He put them away and they are gone. Not three-quarters, not nine-tenths, not my sins up to my conversion—*all* put away. God says they are put away, and I believe Him. Is it presumption to believe God? Remember that all my sins were future when Christ bore them on the cross. There is no such thing as past, present, and future with God. All is *now* with Him. An

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eternal sacrifice gives eternal peace. It breaks upon the heart in all the power of a truth that flows to us from the bosom of God. If you have a single doubt, fear, or misgiving, come and see that you do not any longer dishonour Christ. I have got a risen Christ, and I am justified before God—Christ did it all for me. He bore my sins, all my sins.

In John xiii. the Lord says to Peter, "Ye are clean—every whit." If Peter had looked within, could he have found reason for that word? or back on his career, could he see a single basis for such a statement as that? But where is the basis. *He* tells me, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Do not suppose for a moment that it is a matter of attainment: it belongs to the babe, to the veriest babe in Christ, as fully as to the apostle himself—there is no difference. Our capacity, our attainment, our experience, may differ; but the title is the same.

And mark! it enhances it exceedingly to know that the very one on whose ear those words fell was upheld by that same Jesus, when in the weakness of flesh he denied the blessed One who had said, "Ye are clean every whit"—"clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." In terror of his life, before a maid, Peter denied his Master, and the enemy takes advantage of such a condition to sift the soul. You are a nice Christian! You don't mean to

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say that you are a Christian! *You*, clean every whit! You are under a delusion; it's a mistake, a mere imagination. What sustained Peter? "*I have prayed for thee,*" Jesus said, "that thy faith fail not." Christ's advocacy kept Peter fast when in that awful moment he was sifted by Satan, and so thoroughly was his conscience purged that he could afterwards say boldly to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye denied that Just One." But did not Peter do the same thing under the most aggravated circumstances? It is not that he forgot. As eternity rolls on its course through countless ages, it will only lead Peter to sweep with more vigorous hand the chords of that harp of praise, as he remembers how much he has been forgiven, and knows how much he owes to the precious blood of Christ.

The ordinary evangelical teaching is astray on this point. It is a mistake to plead it in this way—that when we have committed sin, we must come again to the blood for cleansing. The light is the very place where you want the blood. The very same light which, were it not for the blood, would only reveal my unfitness to be there, now makes manifest the inestimable value of that which has brought me into it. I could not be in the light if there was a spot on my conscience, if my eye were not on the blood. I know that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." If Christ has purged me, it is for ever.

A deeply practical point with your soul is this. If you have something on your conscience,

what are you to do with it? "If any man sin," it does not say, go to the blood of Jesus to be washed again. The blood of Christ brings me into the light; the advocacy of Christ keeps me there. Then what am I to do? "If we confess our sins" (not if we pray for forgiveness), "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Christ died to make me clean; Christ lives to keep me clean; and I am made as clean as the death of Christ can make me, and I am kept as clean as His life can keep me.

If, however, you say you have something on your conscience, confess it, judge it. If my child breaks a pane of glass, it comes to tell me of it. I want you to have your conscience clear, never to know what it is to groan for a year or a day under the agony of a bad conscience. You may pray for forgiveness for a month, and never know that you have it. God's way is different. "He is faithful and just." To whom? To Him who was judged for all when on the cross, and who is now in the heavens. It is in faithfulness and justice to Christ that God forgives us. We might have written "merciful and gracious," but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Thus our communion is unbroken, and our peace undisturbed.

Christ is the material of my communion, the Holy Ghost is the power, and it is with the Father.

C. H. M.

“I am with You.”

HAGGAI I. AND II.

IT is commonly held at present that, so far as the Church on earth is concerned, we are in the wreck and ruin of things. But if so, is that to imply that the collective thing is impracticable and impossible? Far be the thought. There is a collective witness still, though it be of a remnant kind or character. We see a witness of this even in the early days of the Church in the address to Thyatira, where a remnant is specially singled out by the Lord. “But unto you I say, *the rest* in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine,” and so on. Nor was this a new thing in Scripture. When the Lord Jesus was born into the world there were found in the midst of prevailing confusion in that day, a faithful few in Jerusalem, such as Simeon, Anna, and others. So also at the close of Old Testament times there was a like residue, which the Spirit of God notices in the book of Malachi: “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to the other.”

But in the days of Haggai a remnant is very fully brought before us. Released captives from Babylon had come back to Jerusalem, but only a fragment of the chosen people of God. They were a despised generation and the taunt of their adversaries, whose boast it was that a fox could

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break down the wall they were building. A people with no outward or visible clothing of authority to inspire respect from those outside themselves. Even the outward unity of the nation was broken, for the ten tribes were gone. The temple, the ark of the covenant, and the Shechinah glory—all were gone! So none of those imposing witnesses were there to accredit these people in the eyes of others. But were they left without hope, or help, or divine resource? According to the prophet Haggai they were not.

Allow me to recall a few of the facts, as well as the way in which a ministry of grace wrought on behalf of this remnant.

After they had returned from Babylon, as recorded by Ezra, they had laid the foundation of the temple, and that in the midst of praise and thanksgiving. And here I would pause for a moment to notice something deeply instructive. Before they began the work of the temple they erected the altar of the God of Israel on which to offer their burnt-offerings. That is to say, worship came first, taking precedence over work. Such was the order then, however much departed from to-day. The Lord Himself came first before their hearts, and they then devoted themselves to His work. Man's order is the reverse, because he attaches so much weight to his own actings.

But to resume. In course of time the adversaries oppose the building of the temple, and

finally the work is stopped. The people then seek their own things, attending to their own houses, and neglecting the house of the Lord. At this time the ministry of Haggai intervenes. He reminds them of their self-seeking and ease, pointing out as the result of this how little they were obtaining from their toil for temporal things, and urging them to consider their ways.

Four things are recorded which are deeply significant.

The first is the important principle of obedience. They were instructed as follows:—"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord." And they act upon this—may I not say?—according "to the obedience of faith." For we are told they "obeyed the voice of the Lord their God."

What followed their obedience? Nothing short of the presence of the Lord. "I am with you, saith the Lord." A plain and precious pledge, and one prized by true believers in every age. As an instance of this see Moses in Exodus xxxiii. Does he want to go up to the land without the Lord? He would rather not go at all than do so on a condition such as that. So he can say to the Lord, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." A choice and welcome utterance of the renewed nature!

To the company in Haggai's day what an encouragement this pledge must have been. It

was not merely a promise that the grace and goodness of God would be with them. The pledge, we know, carried that, for "I Am" was with them. All which is included in that great, holy, and excellent name was to be with them as their all-sufficient resource.

The third thing is work. "The Lord stirred up the Spirit" of the people, and they "did work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God." There was in point of fact a general awakening, or as we should say now, a revival.

Fourthly, there was an exhortation to "be strong," and "work." And who does not covet strength, and what right-minded Christian is there who does not wish to work for the Lord? But let us notice on what the exhortation is based. "For I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts, according to *the word* that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." So here there was a threefold portion—the Lord's presence, His Spirit remaining among them, and the infallible, faithful word of God spoken a thousand years or so before.

Therefore these obedient workmen had every reason to be sustained and cheered in heart.

All this is surely suggestive at the present time. There is a remnant now, which is also a witness of ruin, and in itself without inherent strength. It may be, as of old, the taunt of adversaries. But the "I Am" of Haggai's day

who pledged His presence then is Jesus now, and the same who said when here, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The same Lord Jesus, who spoke these words when parting from His own, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." Then as regards the Holy Spirit He has spoken the well-known words, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And besides, there is the priceless treasure of the whole canon of Scripture which we have in our hands; so that now there is much to encourage the hearts of believers.

But one word more. The remnant in Haggai's day was pointed forward. "The Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." Their hearts were directed to the coming of Christ, and the glory which is to fill His earthly house.

And are we behind them in this respect? We happily know we are not. The "blessed hope" to-day is the coming again of Him who loves us, and has given Himself for us. Nor do we fall short of the privilege of casting glances forward to coming glory as we listen, say, to such wondrous words as those spoken to the Holy Father, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them."

But a practical word in conclusion. "Go up to the mountain and bring wood" is uttered in many, though varied, forms in Scripture. There

is wood still on the mountain top for workmen, and it is for them to go up there, and bring it down to build into the house. Uninstructed effort may busy itself with material got, not on the mount, but on the plain, or other unauthorised place. But why this waste for want of attention to instructions? And these are amply supplied in Scripture. What is needed so much now is true-hearted obedience to them. May the words written by Haggai so long ago be suggestive now, "All the remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God," bearing in mind as well that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

W. J. M.

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE VII.

(Chap. viii. 1-11.)

I SUPPOSE that it would be impossible to find two portions of Scripture which are a greater contrast to one another than the close of the seventh of Romans and the opening verses of the eighth. The seventh chapter describes the experience of a quickened soul under law, in bondage, struggling, defeated and miserable; whilst the eighth of Romans brings before us the full, complete Christian state as in Christ and not in the flesh, and winds up at the

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end of the chapter with a song of deliverance and praise. The seventh of Romans closes with a groan of bondage and misery (except the last verse, which really describes the delivered soul), and the eighth finishes up with a burst of praise. There could not be a greater contrast.

Now, it is important to see that the seventh chapter does not describe the experience of an unconverted man. Evidently in that chapter there is a new nature, for we read: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." An unconverted man would never use such an expression as that. He may sometimes fear the consequences of his sin, he may sometimes dread the judgment to come, but he loves his sins. He never troubles himself about the law of God except for the fear of judgment. It could never be said that an unconverted man delighted in the law of God after the inward man. He does nothing of the kind. So that evidently there is a new nature there; but the one described in the seventh of Romans is, in his experience, under the law. Is that the Christian state? Certainly not. The sixth of Romans tells us so: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace." So that the seventh of Romans, whilst it is the experience of one who has a new nature, is not the experience of one who is in the full Christian place. You may say, "That seems a great puzzle to me; it seems neither one thing nor the other, if you say

it is neither the experience of a Christian nor yet of an unconverted man." It is the experience of one that has the new nature, but as to his conscious standing before God, is still in the flesh. Now a Christian is not in the flesh.

What are we to understand by being in the flesh? It is not the same thing, of course, as being in the body. We are all in the body so long as we are on the earth, but the seventh of Romans in the fifth verse says, "when we *were* in the flesh." There are people, then, alive in their bodies on the earth but who are not in the flesh. Look what it says in the ninth verse of the eighth chapter: "*Ye* are not in the flesh." That is, ye Christians. What, then, is the meaning of being "in the flesh?" It is evidently here put in contrast with being "in Christ Jesus." What are we to understand by being "in the flesh" and being "in Christ Jesus"? I believe that to be "in the flesh" means that we stand before God according to the responsibilities of the first Adam; and to be "in Christ Jesus" means that we stand before God according to the acceptance of Christ Jesus, the last Adam.

Now, the Bible is just the history of these two men; the first Adam and his failure, and the last Adam and His perfection; and every man, woman, and child stands before God connected with one or the other. If I stand before God connected with the first Adam, the distance from God of the first fallen Adam is the

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measure of the distance in which I stand. If I stand before God in Christ Jesus, His acceptance is the measure of mine. And so, when we come to this eighth chapter, we find these words: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Have you ever been struck with that word "therefore"?

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." It does not say, "There is no condemnation to them for whom Christ died." That is perfectly true, but it is not what is said here. Nor does it say, "There is no condemnation for those whose sins have been blotted out." That also is perfectly true, but that is not what is said. "There is therefore now," and mark that word "now"; it is a truth which a believer may apply to himself while in this world. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus.*"

There are three things told us in verse 2. The Christian is in a new position, he has a new life, and he has a new power. These three things belong to every one who is a Christian in the full sense of the word; and, as I said at the beginning, the eighth chapter of Romans unfolds the full Christian position in contrast to the state of bondage under the law. Three things, then, are stated of the Christian, and, if you are a Christian, these three things are true of you.

Perhaps you have not yet laid hold of them, and so much the more reason why you should do so now. First of all, you stand before God in a new position. What was your old standing? In the flesh. What did that mean? That the measure of your distance from God was the distance of fallen Adam. Now you are in Christ, and what does that mean? That the measure of His acceptance is the measure of yours. You are brought by God into a new place. Taken out altogether from the old Adam state and brought into a new one. Not merely your sins forgiven, that is blessedly true, but it is not all the truth, sins forgiven, transgressions blotted out; true, but beyond and above all that there is something added, "in Christ Jesus." A new place, a new position, brought out of the old standing, brought into a new one; and is there any possibility that there should be condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus? None whatever. Before any one who is "in Christ Jesus" could possibly be condemned, Christ Jesus must be condemned. You see it puts the Christian into a place where condemnation is out of the question. Who can condemn? The accuser may roar of "ills that I have done," but he cannot condemn. My own heart may sometimes condemn me, but God does not. Before God could condemn a single one who is in Christ Jesus, He must condemn the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and

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that is impossible. We are taken out of the old position and standing, and brought into a new one. He has put the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ into a new position before Him, and He says that, in that position, in Christ Jesus, condemnation is out of the question.

But not only are we in a new position, we have a new life and a life that is not under bondage; a life that is connected with a Christ who has died and risen. The life that we have as Christians is not a life struggling under law, but it is linked up with a risen Christ, and all that is behind Christ is also behind us. And what is behind Him? Death and judgment, and the whole question of sin. You see what it brings the believer into.

In this connection we might look at the twentieth of John. When the Lord goes into the midst of His gathered disciples, He says, "Peace be unto you." Now that is the portion of every child of God since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. But not only that, He breathed on them, and that recalls to us the scene when God, having made Adam, He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." It is only one who was God who could do what is described here; He breathes upon His disciples to whom He had just spoken the words, "Peace be unto you"; and having so done, He says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy

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Ghost as a Divine Person, did not come until the day of Pentecost, forty days afterwards; what was it then that the Lord communicated to His disciples at this time? I believe it was His own life in the power of resurrection. As we see it in the tenth of John, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." There is a difference between "life" and "life more abundantly." The life itself, I need hardly say, is the same in each case, for it is Christ; but it is seen in different conditions. Just the difference that we see between the struggling, the bondage, and the misery of the seventh of Romans, and what we get presented in the second verse of the eighth chapter, life in liberty and power. For not only has the Christian a new life, but he has also a new power. There was no power in the seventh chapter, nothing but weakness; the very thing described there is lack of power; there is desire to do good, but never the power to accomplish it. But the moment we come to the eighth of Romans we get a thing of which we have not even a mention in the seventh chapter. Read through the seventh, and you will not find even once any mention of the Spirit of God; come to the eighth, and in the first sixteen verses you find it mentioned fifteen times. And this is the very power of which we find the need in the seventh chapter. In the seventh chapter, weakness; in the eighth

chapter, power. And what is the power? The law? The law has power to slay or to condemn, but no power to deliver; but here we come to a truth which brings us into liberty. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Here is liberty, and in that verse you get these three great truths brought together—the new place, the new life, and the new power.

Hints on Daniel.

"The time of the end" (chap. xi. 35).

WE have now reached that important part of the prophecy to which all that precedes has been leading step by step. The period of Antiochus Epiphanes has been especially dwelt on, for he it was that typified the last and yet future king of the north. His history has been described down to the end of verse 32.

But now a break of a most distinct kind occurs in the chapter. The next three verses (33-35) describe a long and protracted period of Jewish history extending from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes right on to "the time of the end." During this period the prophetic word foretold that the Jewish people should be persecuted and scattered, "They shall fall by the

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sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil many days." The protracted nature of their dispersion and suffering is here predicted. Nevertheless they were not to be utterly abandoned, "they shall be holpen with a little help."

Besides this a band of faithful men were to be raised up, "they that understand among the people," and these were to "instruct the many." These men of wisdom and spiritual understanding for the times are referred to in chapter xi. 33, 35, and in chapter xii. 3, 10. Doubtless the Maccabees of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes were men of this nature, even as there will be faithful men in the time to come, who will be used of God to encourage and strengthen the persecuted remnant. Some even of these "wise" ones will be allowed to fall, which will put the faithful remnant to a terrible test. It will seem to them as though God Himself had forsaken them, and indeed it is this mocking taunt that their enemies amongst the ungodly nation of Israel will throw in their face. During the time of the great tribulation this will be specially the case. Psalms xlii. and xliii. give a vivid description of it. Driven out of Jerusalem because of the fearful idolatry under Antichrist (see Matt. xxiv.), oppressed by their enemies, apparently forgotten by God, the taunt of unbelief, "Where is thy God?" will be as a sword in their very bones. But this great tribulation will immediately precede the moment of their deliverance. We shall

not continue this subject here, but merely point out again the striking parenthesis in our chapter, separating the days of Antiochus Epiphanes from the last days under Antichrist. The whole of the present period of Israel's dispersion is included in verses 33, 34, and 35.

The next four verses (vers. 36-40) introduce with remarkable abruptness an individual who may be truly said to exert the most baneful influence upon the affairs of Palestine, and indeed of Western Europe, "The king shall do according to his will" (ver. 36). The king here spoken of must not be confounded with any of the kings of the north or south which we find mentioned in our chapter. Verse 40 clearly proves that he is distinct from these, for "at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him;" evidently then he is not the king of the south, inasmuch as that king attacks him. But further it is added, "And the king of the north shall come against him," &c., so that here we have a king distinct from those two who hold sway over the regions north and south of Palestine. He is one dwelling between the two who becomes the point of attack by each of them. In other words he has the land of Palestine itself as his kingdom. Further proof of this will be given as we proceed.

In Isaiah we find the same individual introduced in the same abrupt manner. In chapter xxx., after a description of Israel's desolate con-

dition, the bright day of Jehovah's intervention on their behalf is foretold, He who "bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Jehovah in that day will take up their cause, and will deal in a summary manner with all their enemies. "A song as in the night" and "gladness of heart" will then be the portion of His repentant people. "The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard," and through that voice that then will speak in judgment upon their foes shall the Assyrian be beaten down, who once had smitten them with a rod. The Assyrian is the same as the king of the north, and in these chapters of Isaiah we find described the judgment of the last king of the north. The devouring fire shall be his portion (Isa. xxx. 30-33, xxxi. 8, 9), but not his only, "For Tophet is ordained of old; for the king also * it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it." "The king" shares the same awful fate as the Assyrian. He is the same individual, we believe, as is elsewhere spoken of as the false prophet (Rev. xix.), who is cast alive into the lake of fire.

Again, in Isaiah lvii. this same terrible king of apostate Israel's choice is referred to. The unclean spirit of idolatry (Matt. xii. 43-46) will

* This is the correct translation.

yet take possession of the nation, and in that day the Antichrist, who will be reigning in Jerusalem as the false Messiah, will be the chief object of their idolatrous veneration. "Thou wentest to the king with ointment"—this same wicked king—but this acknowledgment on their part of one so evil, will in the eyes of God, be as though they debased themselves unto hell (Isa. lvii. 9).

One chief characteristic of this king is that he "shall do according to his will." It was this doing of his own will that was the essence of man's first fall, and ever since then has been the cause of his moral ruin and departure from God. It is the snare into which every son and daughter of fallen Adam is constantly liable to fall, and against it every one should watch, be they old or young. It may seem but a slight matter, but it is the root principle of sin, for sin is lawlessness* and not merely the transgression of the law. Lawlessness is simply man doing his own will, and nothing is more terrible than an unbridled will. In this the Antichrist will be the direct opposite to the Christ of God, who came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x.).

That this wilful king is none other than the

* This the proper translation of this passage. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4).

man of sin or Antichrist is manifest from a comparison of what is said of each in Daniel xi. 36. and 2 Thessalonians ii. 4 respectively. Almost the identical words are used by the Spirit of God in each case: "He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." Here, then, we have one who seeks to usurp the place of God Himself. Some of our readers might be disposed to say that this must be the papacy, if not the Pope of Rome personally. Now while it is true that this latter does assume a place that belongs to God alone, yet there are weighty reasons why he and the man of sin are two separate individuals.

It is evident that "the king" here described, as well as the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians, are in close connection with Palestine and the Jewish nation. Of the latter it is said that "he sitteth in the temple of God." This is not St Peter's at Rome, but the temple at Jerusalem, which, according to the prophetic word, is to be rebuilt, while of the former we read that he "shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." This is the time so repeatedly spoken of by the prophet Isaiah in connection with the Jews (Isa. x. 5-25; Dan. viii. 19).

Further evidence of his Jewish connection is afforded by the verses that follow: "Neither

shall he regard the God of his fathers ;” for a godly Jew this was of all moment, his confidence was in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, but the Antichrist will not regard Him, “nor the desire of women.” This latter phrase points to the true Messiah who was the object of hope for all who waited for redemption in Israel, and of whom pious women amongst the Jews desired to be the mother. More than this, “the king” will be utterly infidel, for he will not “regard any god,” whether the true God or any of the false gods of the heathen. “He shall magnify himself above all.” What a terrible thing is man without God !

The next verse at first sight seems a contradiction of what has just been said, for we are told that “in his estate shall he honour the God of forces,” that is, instead of regarding the true God, the Antichrist will have an idolatrous object of veneration, here called “the god of forces.” This is a somewhat obscure expression, which seems to point to something of a military character. Some have thought that the word here used (*Mahuzzim*, see margin) signifies *hidden* forces, and in this case there may be an allusion as well to the forces of spiritism and the occult sciences, so-called. At any rate, we know from 2 Thessalonians ii. that the man of sin will be possessed of a power to work miracles, and we can easily understand how this may produce a spirit of superstitious veneration amongst those

who have given up belief in the true God, as revealed in Christ, His Son.

In this passage (Dan. xi.), as we have before observed, the reference is to matters purely Jewish, "He shall divide the land for gain"—*the land*, this is Palestine, for none other would so be spoken of by the Spirit of God in this connection. At the same time other Scriptures show that the Antichrist comes into close contact with apostate Christendom (see 2 Thess. ii.).*

It is a solemn thing to see at work to-day all the influences that are so soon, it may be, to produce the veritable personage here described. Infidelity is rampant, spiritism is on the increase, the Jewish people are moving Zionwards in a spirit of unbelief, ready to accept the false king, who will be revealed as soon as the Lord removes the Church to heaven, and the Spirit of God, the hindering power, is taken out of the way.

We are not here (Dan. xi.) informed how "the king" comes to an end, for in the verses that follow (40-45) it is the king of the north, and not "the king" or Antichrist that is described. The New Testament tells us that it will be at the manifestation of Christ, when He comes in glory, that "the wicked one," this very king, will be consumed.

* The reader is referred to a little book entitled, "The Man of Sin : Who Will He Be?" James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C. Price 1d.

Short Papers on the Church.

I. THE BODY OF CHRIST.

SAUL of Tarsus, as he tells us himself, was a terrible persecutor of the Church of God, forcing the disciples of our blessed Lord to blaspheme, giving his voice against them to put them to death, and persecuting them even unto foreign cities (Acts xxvi.).

On his way to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to seek out the Christians (or Nazarenes as the Jews called them) and bring them bound to Jerusalem to be punished, Saul of Tarsus was suddenly stopped on his wicked path by the Lord Jesus Himself speaking from the glory of heaven, to learn (as he expressed it afterwards) that he was the chief of sinners. "Howbeit (he says) for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth *all* long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 15, 16). He calls himself less than the least of all the saints (Eph. iii. 8); "the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 10).*

* Not that he was the least in the Lord's work, for he laboured more abundantly than they all, "yet not I (he says) but the grace of God that was with me."

Let us read together the words in which Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul, relates how the Lord met him, struck him down, and convicted him of sin by showing him Whom he was really persecuting in the person of the disciples. "At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' And I said, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest'" (Acts xxvi. 13-15).

Thus was Paul convicted of sin in his conscience, and through his conscience was he taught what the Church is for Christ.

So, too, do we need to learn, beloved reader, in our conscience before God, what is the Church, the body of Christ, the house of God. (Of this latter aspect of the Church — God's house or habitation—we hope to write in another paper.)

The Church, the body of Christ, is united to Him by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The ministry of unfolding this truth was specially committed to Paul, who began to learn it, as we have seen, at his conversion. It is, therefore, in the epistles of this apostle that the truth of the Church is specially revealed.

The Church is precious to Christ.

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The Church is united to Him.

So Ephesians v. tells us, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it . . ." What love is His! He gave not any thing however great, but He gave *Himself*. He laid down His life, no one took it from Him; He laid it down of Himself (John x. 18). . . . "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." He must, such is His love, present the Church to Himself. He cannot leave her in the world away from Him. She must be fit for Him, glorious, holy, without blemish. His love is working all this in His Church, and soon we shall be with Him, bearing His perfect image. Do our hearts respond to this? Do *we* desire that Christ should have the full satisfaction of His heart in His redeemed ones?

Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church as His own flesh; "for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

Christ in heaven is the glorified Head of the Church, His body. God wrought in mighty power "in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (or age), but also in that which is to come; and hath put

all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things, to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 19-23). When the Lord Jesus was in this world He was not Head of the Church, for the Church had no existence then, except in God's counsels before the world was (Eph. i. 3, 4). Raised from the dead and glorified by God at God's right hand, He is, at the present time, Head over all things to the Church, His body.

None but believers belong to the Body of Christ, mere professors have no place there. *Sinners* are saved by grace, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. ii. 8). *Believers* are sealed by the Holy Spirit, "In whom (Christ) after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13, 14); and are united to Christ by the one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 4).

Christ is in the supreme glory of heaven, the Body is on earth, but such is the real, living, union of the Head and the Body, that the *unity* and *growth* of the BODY is entirely *from* its invisible Head, working in every part in its measure. "Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16).

What a rest for the heart, beloved brethren,

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to consider the Church, His Body, even as He considers it! To meditate on it as composed of all true believers throughout the whole world, members of the one body, a unity that man can neither make nor unmake, growing by a growth which is entirely from Christ the Head, by means of every part and joint in the body, to the edifying *of itself* in love. True ministry alone has any place here, for it alone conduces to the *growth* of the body. May the Lord exercise us each and all before Him, that we may not be a hindrance to the growth of the body by lack of communion with the Lord or by occupation with anything in our walk or doctrine which is not of the Head!

May our conscience be under the power of God's Word respecting His Church, the Body of Christ, and may our affections flow out to Christ Himself, and to that Church so dear to Him who gave Himself for it.

May we that "hear" the Spirit and the Bride saying to the Lord Jesus, "Come," join in the full fellowship of that word "Come"! "Surely I come quickly," says the Lord. "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 17, 20).

The dispensing of the mystery of the grace of God to us Gentiles, was specially confided to Paul; "the mystery" of which he speaks in several epistles, "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons

of men, as it is *now* revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be *fellow* heirs, and of the *same body* and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. . . . Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the *administration* (fellowship) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world *hath been hid in God*, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places *might be known* by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 1-10).

This mystery is no longer hid, but is now revealed to the saints. But the opposition to this truth was great in the days of Paul, and it is still the special effort of the enemy to deprive the saints of it. Paul had great conflict in prayer for the saints respecting it: "For I would that ye knew *what great conflict* I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be *comforted*, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the *mystery of God*, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 1-3).

What do *we* know of this mystery, beloved brethren, and what part do *we* take in this conflict? No words of ours can express what it is, but our hearts bow to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in praise and glory to that One whom the Father has glorified, and whom He has made Head of the Church, His body!

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

Worcester.—Will you please explain 1 Samuel xii. 19-22; and how would that meet the Christian, and what Scripture in the New Testament for the present day?

IT can be seen, from this chapter, what a deplorable condition Saul and those with him were in. He was rejected because he had not done what the Lord had commanded him. A number compared to the sand of the seashore are gathered against them and none in Israel had a sword or a spear to defend themselves, except Saul and Jonathan. The natural state of these people suggests a picture of the state of Christendom. Thousands of real Christians have not the full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22); not one in fifty are taught the true meaning of the full assurance of hope (Heb. vi. 11); and not one in a thousand understands the truth that Paul connects with the full assurance of

understanding (Col. ii. 2; Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7; Eph. iii. 3, 9; Col. i. 26, 27). Israel were without the carnal sword (2 Cor. x. 4), and Christians in general are so little acquainted with the teaching of the Sword of the Spirit, that they cannot "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

W. H. B.

FRAGMENTS.

ALTHOUGH not addressed immediately to believers, one feels, when thinking of *our own* ways, how searching are the words:—

"He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Luke xi. 23).

But when thinking of the ways of *others*, how forbearing one becomes at the thought—

"He that is not against us is on our part" (Mark ix. 40).

MARY MAGDALENE got the honour of being the messenger of Christ in resurrection because the purpose of her heart, her mind was fixed on Himself.

UNLESS you get into communion with God about the truth, you know it will be powerless to you. Do look that you have not only the understanding of truth, but that that truth is connected with faith in the living God.

Short Papers on the Church.

2. ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT.

“**F**OR as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is [the] Christ” (1 Cor. xii. 12).

The “one body”—its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ in glory—the members, true Christians on earth indwelt of the Spirit.

“There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. iv. 4).

This Body is formed by the Spirit, all the members are thereby united to Christ in glory and to one another on earth. “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (whether Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. xii. 13). Not only “baptized,” or made part of this body by the Holy Spirit, but also “drinking” of the living fountain which springeth up unto everlasting life (John iv. 14).

“Now are they *many members*, yet but one body” (1 Cor. xii. 20). One member cannot say to another, “I have no need of thee” (ver. 21). Each member has its place in the body—the place where God hath set it, “as it has pleased Him” (ver. 18).

Let us ever remember that this Body is not merely an assemblage of believers, bound together by common ties, nor even the entire company of believers *as such*, it is more than that, for it is the *Body of Christ*. How that truth applied in the soul by the Holy Spirit lifts us far above all thoughts of man's blessing and what might suit redeemed men; it gives Christ His true place both in the individual and the collective blessing. The Body is *Christ's*. He is the Head. Every believer sealed by the Spirit is a member—the members are many, and their functions are diverse. To each a gift of the Spirit is given. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." "He divideth to every man severally as He will" (vers. 7, 11; compare Eph. iv. 7).

God is sovereign in the Church (as in everything). "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou did'st not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 7). The members "which *seem* to be more feeble are necessary," those "which *we think* to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour." "God hath tempered the body together . . . that there should be no schism in the body; that the members should have the *same care* one for another" (vers. 21-26). Such is the body in its unity. Gifts differ according to the grace given to each (Rom. xii. 5-8). There is no question of equality, according to human, socialist, or

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radical ideas of it. Objects of the same grace redeemed by the same precious blood, one Saviour and Lord, one God and Father, one Spirit; each perfectly blessed, each made partaker of the divine nature, each to be perfectly conformed to the image of His dear Son.

Yet gifts differ, as we have seen, though all are conducive to the edification of the body. The gifts are *gifts of grace*, unmerited favour of Him who is Sovereign. "To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith . . . to another prophecy," &c. (vers. 8-10). "God hath set some in the Church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all teachers?" &c. (vers. 28, 29).

Some of these gifts have remained in the Church from the beginning, others are no longer given, though He who gives the gifts is ever in the Church (Eph. ii. 22, iv. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 13; John xvi. 16, 17, &c.). There are no more apostles, they founded the Church (1 Cor. iii. 10; Eph. ii. 20); they communicated and completed the Word of God (Acts xv. 7; John xv. 27; Col. i. 25). Their personal service is ended, though their ministry is secured to us till the end, by means of the written Word. Prophets can no longer claim to reveal new truth, but those that

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use the Word "to edification, exhortation, and comfort," are so denominated (1 Cor. xiv. 3, 29). "Tongues," "miracles" are no longer distributed. They served at the beginning to confirm publicly the mission of the apostles and the testimony of the Church (1 Cor. i. 6, 7, xiv. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Acts ii. 4, 6, x. 46). In the present state of the Church, gifts of power would ill accord with the ruin and disorder which reign throughout Christendom. Evangelists are still sent forth by the exalted Head. Pastors and teachers too. Ephesians iv. speaks of those gifts whose ministry goes on till Christ shall come (vers. 10-13). We have the ministry of the foundation-gifts (Eph. ii. 20), apostles and prophets; and the bodily presence of evangelists, pastors, and teachers. How few, alas! in one sense they are, for "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. ix. 36-38).

Let me ask you, and myself too, beloved brethren, if we, members one of another, have an equal care one for another? Jealousy and want of zeal are foxes which spoil the grapes (Song ii. 15). Jealousy must disappear if we have in our hearts and consciences a real sense of the sovereignty of the Lord, as regards the place in the body of each member, and as regards the gift He chooses to give to each. If all our sources are in Him, if we hold fast the Head, we

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shall become willing, happy channels of communication in His body (Col. ii. 19). Instead of seeking organised help from our fellow-members to carry on the special service or work the Lord has committed to each one of us, dear brethren, we shall be content to be used of Him according to the measure of His grace to us, while we gladly enjoy the communion of the saints in the path of faith.

Let us remember, too, that as the unity of the Body is not formed by us, neither can we break it. It is entirely formed and maintained by the Holy Spirit. What we are exhorted to do is to "endeavour to keep the *unity of the Spirit*; in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). Our privilege and our duty is to act according to that unity which the Spirit has formed; to have our thoughts and conduct formed and guided by the truth of the *one body and one Spirit*; to allow nothing which is contrary to the blessed, practical, present truth concerning the Body and its glorious Head.

Sometimes earnest Christians fear to diminish their usefulness, and to shut themselves off from their fellow-believers. It is well to remember that the only really large ground practically for the Church of God on the earth, is that of the one Body. The path of faithfulness will be narrow, for so many, alas! prefer to enclose themselves within human barriers and to turn aside from the fulness of the truth; but

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on true Church ground alone is it possible to have the heart fully enlarged (2 Cor. vi. 12, 13), and to comprise in faith all those who are Christ's. Only there can all the truth be maintained.

The gifts of grace are distributed by the Spirit, their exercise should be in full dependence on the Lord; the operation, the effect produced, is of God. Read 1 Corinthians xii. 4, 6. May we therefore, brethren, be diligent to use the gift in dependence on our Lord, knowing that God worketh all in all.

How sweet to hear the Lord's word of commendation to His servants at His coming, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; *enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*" (Matt. xxv. 21, 23). May they be addressed to you and me, dear fellow-pilgrim!

We are "members" not of any local assembly, but of the one Body; there is, however, a true expression of the one Body shown in the local gathering of believers who meet to break bread together at the Lord's Table, and in whose midst the Lord is present. Thus we read in 1 Corinthians x. 16, "For we being many are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." It is also written in this epistle (xii. 27), "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Locally the Corin-

thians were such, but not to the exclusion of all other saints on earth. This truth is guarded by the epistle being addressed not merely "to the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints," for with them are associated "all that in *every place* call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (I, 2).

"Not Now."

(JOHN xiii. 7, 36.)

I HAVE often thought that John xiii. is better understood practically by us, if we take the scene at the close of the chapter as a kind of introduction to the former portion. Of course the order of the chapter as it stands is divine, but God often deals in His Word with a subject from *His own* standpoint, while we habitually apprehend things as they affect *ourselves*. In a certain way this is very natural and just. The thing that troubles us as sinners is not "How can *God* be just and the justifier," but how can a man be just with God (Rom. iii. 26; Job ix. 2); not how is God's glory affected by my sins, but how I can get pardon for them.

As an example of what I mean, look at the opening chapters of Leviticus, which set forth

in type the different aspects of the work of Christ. God starts with what has (if we may so speak) the first place with Him, the "burnt-offering," which expresses the devotedness of Christ, the holy Victim, even unto death for God's glory. From this we touch the meat offering, the "peace offering," and the sin and trespass offerings, which speak respectively of Christ's perfect life, tested to the uttermost, but ever rising in sweetest perfume to God; Christ's work as bringing believers into communion with God and with one another; and His work as sin-bearer. But you will notice that in 1 Corinthians xv. when the apostle Paul states the gospel, he begins, as we should say, at the end. He says (ver. 3), "I delivered unto you first of all . . . how that Christ died *for our sins* according to the Scriptures," for this is what meets my need as a sinner. Elsewhere he touches upon the other aspects, Christ "our peace" (Eph. ii. 14), and Christ "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2).

If another example be required, 2 Corinthians v. comes to mind, where the last verse of all is the key to the chapter, the truth of which received into the heart, enables the believer to say "we know," and gives boldness in view of the "judgment seat."

To return, however, to our chapter (John xiii.), if we look at the end we find that in partaking with His own of the passover supper, Jesus

plainly refers to His death. He gives this, too, a special character as the glorifying of the Son of man, God being glorified in Him (ver. 31) for if man has *dishonoured* God by bringing sin into the world, a blessed Man has *glorified* God about this very question. God has therefore *straightway* glorified Jesus without waiting for the display and glory of the kingdom, so impatient (if we may use the expression with reverence) was His heart to respond to such devotion in the "Son of man."

In speaking of this aspect of His death He says to His disciples, "Whither I go ye cannot come" (ver. 33). Peter therefore inquires, "Whither goest thou?" and Jesus answers, "Whither I go thou canst *not* follow Me *now*." The dark stream of death and judgment lay before Him, death and judgment which was the desert of poor Peter, but which Jesus only could enter and exhaust. "Not now," is the Lord's word to Peter. It is, as it were, the Jordan overflowing all his banks at the time of harvest; when the ark of the covenant went before the people of Israel, two thousand cubits by measure were to be observed between this precious symbol of God's presence and the people. "Come not near unto it," says Joshua (iii. 4). The waters of judgment and of death must be cut off by the ark *alone*, before the foot of an Israelite could presume to pass over into Canaan's promised land. None could "follow" Jesus in that mighty work, or endure

death as "the wages of sin" and the judgment of God. Jesus has not only borne it, but has exhausted it for the believer, so that, when He is risen from the dead, even a poor Peter could "follow" Him; not in the sense of bearing judgment due to sin, but in going through death for the sake of that precious Saviour, who had loved him and given Himself for him.

The beginning of the chapter shows us the affecting truth, that He who died for us on the cross lives for us in the glory. The service of water-washing by the Word is that ascribed to Christ as preparatory to presenting His Bride to Himself (Eph. v. 26, 27). In the verses before us we see the process going on in individuals, and the end proposed by the Lord—part with Himself—is the maintenance of communion, and so of service, for service springs from communion. Peter objects to the process, for to him it seemed unsuitable to the dignity of his Master to assume an office usually entrusted to a menial. How patiently the Lord teaches that impetuous, self-confident heart. "What I do thou knowest *not now*" (ver. 7). If you only knew, Peter, the voice seemed to say, none other than Myself can undertake this service. The day will come when you will understand why—the day of the Holy Ghost—the day when you have learnt more of the unreliable, deceitful character of your heart. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part *with me*," the Lord adds, when Peter, going to the other

extreme, after having said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," rejoins, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

If he had understood the action of the water of the Word in new birth (John iii. 5, xv. 3) he would never have made such a reply to Christ; but still, in all love, the Lord explains, "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

What occupied the mind and heart of Christ was not the new birth, but communion, and it is in order that this latter might be maintained that the lowly ministry of water-washing is undertaken by the blessed Saviour. Thank God this is still going on, for without it preservation in the path of faith and confidence were impossible. As the feet become soiled in treading the dusty Eastern roads, even so the believer, by reason of infirmity, contracts defilement in passing along his pilgrim pathway in this world, and nothing but the Word brought to bear upon us by Christ Himself is sufficient to keep us in the secret of the Lord's thoughts, and in communion with Him.

May not the same reproach, beloved brethren, often be brought against us, "What I do thou knowest not now?" Are we not sometimes unmindful that we are the objects of such unceasing care and service? And does not our unwatchfulness make it requisite that the blessed Saviour should assume the position of Advocate,

which He does, "if any man *sin*," rather than that priestly service on high, which keeps us in the path of faith, where there is simple-hearted obedience and devotion of heart, and when the "mind of the flesh" does not actuate us?

The Lord exercise our hearts as to these two points—the necessity of His death on the cross for our pardon ; the need of His life on high for our communion.

F. L.

Hints on Daniel.

"The land of Egypt shall not escape" (chap. xi. 42).

FOR an intelligent understanding of the closing verses of our chapter, it is essential that we should clearly distinguish between "the king" of verse 36 and the king of the north of verse 40.

In this chapter the description of "the king" or Antichrist terminates as abruptly as it commences, and from verse 40 he is lost sight of completely. In the New Testament we are clearly shown how and under what circumstances he meets his end (see 2 Thess. ii. 8, and compare Isa. xi. 4 ; Rev. xix. 20). The king of Daniel xi. 36, the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians ii. 4, and the false prophet of Revelation xix., are

all one and the same individual under different titles and in different connections.

At the time of the end, a time to which all things appear to be rapidly tending, the Antichrist will be reigning in Jerusalem as the false king of the apostate Jewish people. He will have as his ally in Western Europe the revived Roman Empire, called in Revelation "the Beast." The Beast, as we saw from Daniel ix. 27, will in the end make a covenant with the mass of the Jews, through the instrumentality of Antichrist. It is this that is alluded to in Isaiah xxviii. The proud and scornful rulers of the people in Jerusalem are there described as saying, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement," their object being to protect themselves against a most powerful adversary that Jehovah will use as the rod of His indignation. "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet" (Isa. xxviii. 2, 3). In order to protect themselves from this impending danger, the Jewish people make their agreement with the Beast, and boastfully exclaim, "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come into us," &c. (Isa. xxviii. 15); but all is in vain, for the stone laid in Zion, as a sure

foundation of peace and security for the tried and faithful remnant, will fall in overwhelming power upon the apostate nation, and their covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with hell shall not stand; the overflowing scourge shall pass through, and they shall be trodden down by it. Isaiah is here announcing by inspiration the very invasion of Palestine by the last king of the north, that Daniel two hundred years after was inspired to foretell with other and greater detail.

If the idolatrous king in Palestine has an ally in the Beast, he will also have two powerful adversaries in the kings of the north and the south. "At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him." Jerusalem will be at that time—and oh! how near the time may be—the focus for mighty events. Not much is said here about the king of the south. In this same chapter the king of the south is unmistakably identified with Egypt, though it would be going too far to confine his sphere of authority to that region which now goes by the name of Egypt. Indeed, we gather as much from verse 43, where we are told that Libya and Ethiopia as well as Egypt come under the conquering sway of the king of the north. Libya, we know, extended right across Northern Africa, in fact, it seems to be a term almost synonymous with Africa, or at any rate of as much of that continent as was known at that time. We are all aware

of the events that have recently transpired in South Africa, and of the aspirations of politicians to make of that vast country one united empire. Might not the whole, "from the Cape to Cairo," be included in the scriptural designation of the king of the south? If the territory of the king of the north extends far beyond the immediate borders of Palestine on the north, why may not a similar extension take place in the case of the king of the south? For ourselves we may say that the thought has been gaining strength, that the king of the south will be a much more important factor in the future development of the affairs of this earth than many are aware of. Nothing is of any real importance to God except what directly concerns the glory of His beloved Son and His people, whether earthly or heavenly, in connection with Him. Africa may be the all-absorbing topic of the present moment in the eyes of men, but we may be assured of this, that all the feverish activity of nations is only preparing the way for the carrying out of God's plans in reference, not to Egypt, Africa, Europe, or Russia, but to Palestine and Jerusalem. This is not the fitting occasion to dwell further upon this most interesting subject, but we commend it to the attention of the Christian reader, and later on hope to discuss it more fully.

Not only will the king of the south push his armed hosts against the king in Jerusalem, but "the king of the north shall come against him

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like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships." Here, then, we have a vast military and naval power sweeping down from the north upon the land of Palestine. "He shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over;" that is, the countries adjoining Palestine fall into his hands. "He shall enter also into the glorious land," that is, the land of Palestine, glorious not so much in the eyes of men, for this Babylon was (Isa. xiii. 19), but glorious in His eyes, who long years ago had brought up His people from their land of bondage into a land which He "had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands" (Ezek. xx. 6).

While everything seems to give way before the victorious progress of this mighty king, the Spirit of God enumerates three of the countries in close proximity to Palestine who will "escape out of his hand"; these are, "Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." An indirect evidence of the inspiration of Scripture, and that of the most striking nature, is here afforded, as well as one of the numerous instances with which the Bible is full, which show how all Scripture hangs together. Many hands were used of God in producing the volume which Christians receive as the Word of God, and these living in countries far removed from one another, and at times separated by long distance one from the other, even centuries, as in this case,

and yet each part is in perfect consistence with all the others. Isaiah had mentioned these same three countries, and had prophesied that at the time when Israel should be restored to their own land, the very time here under review, they, that is Israel, should "lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa. xi. 14). Ezekiel also was inspired to write of these three countries about the same time as Daniel (Ezek. xxv.), and he likewise announces their judgment at the hands, not of the king of the north, but of Israel. "I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel," &c. (Ezek. xxv. 14).

But more than this, Ezekiel declares the reason of this exception. "Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them; and say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God; Because thou saidst, Aha, against My sanctuary when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity," &c. It might be, and it was, perfectly true that the desolations of that land, and the captivity of that beloved people, were inflicted by the chastening hand of Jehovah Himself, but they were His people for all that, and God will not permit the fleshly heart of unbelief to rejoice over the afflictions of His people. "Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and re-

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joiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; behold, therefore, I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and I will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen . . . and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xxv. 6, 7). These are solemn words, and we do well to ponder them deeply in our souls, for there is ever a tendency for the flesh to find pleasure in the troubles that may befall those against whom, for some reason or other, we may be at variance. This spirit is not pleasing to the Lord.

Moreover, God does not pass over the violence of man against His people (see Obadiah), and in the end will execute the judgment which lingers long.

Grace affords a means of escape to each individual who repents, and turns to God in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the judgment upon Edom nationally is one of the most solemn instances in Scripture of the doom that awaits unrepentant sinners. In the day in which it will be said that "upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance," then, too, there "shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau (Edom); for the Lord hath spoken it" (Obad. 17-19).

With the exception of these three nations, which for reasons we have been considering are reserved for punishment at the hands of Israel when back in Palestine, nothing seems to be able to withstand the impetuous onslaught of the king of the north. "He shall stretch forth

his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape" (Dan. xi. 42). This latter clause seems to imply that the king of the south will be no mean antagonist from a military point of view, while from verse 43 it is plain that there will be a most marvellous development of commercial prosperity in his territory. We have all heard of the goldfields and diamond mines of Africa, and of the rich fertility of great tracts of land in that vast continent; and there are not wanting many who foresee a brilliant future for that great country. Scripture has long since foretold it in this marvellous forecast of the future.

Man's heart is set upon the acquisition of wealth, and the gold and silver that perishes with the using; but all these earthly riches fail to satisfy those who possess them, and stir up the cupidity of others who long to obtain them for themselves. So will it be with the king of the north, who, according to this striking prophecy, will for a time succeed. "He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt" (ver. 43).

Happy are they whose portion is not of this world, and who have provided themselves "bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke xii. 33). Where the treasure is the heart will be also.

The Epistle to the Romans.

(Continued.)

“**W**HAT the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). There we get a description of the seventh chapter. In the seventh chapter it was the attempt to get liberty through the law; but, “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh,” &c. Why is the law powerless? Is there any fault to be found with the law? No, the law is holy, just, and good. Why, then, could not the law do this? In what did the weakness of the law consist? In the flesh. Suppose you have a cabinetmaker, a man who is a perfect workman, and you give him a piece of wood, and you say—

“I want you to make a fine bookcase out of that piece of wood.”

He tries for some time, and then he says, “I cannot do it.”

Then you ask, “Why not? I thought you were a good cabinetmaker?”

He says, “So I am, but that wood is rotten, and every time I touch it, it crumbles into powder.”

That is what we have in the third verse. “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.” As the cabinetmaker, so

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the law. But God has done what the law could not do, and so it goes on to say, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." But it was *only* "in the likeness of sinful flesh" that He came; for in Him was no sin.

Now this brings us to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as we touch on that I want just to refer to three verses that speak of Him. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him was no sin" (1 John iii. 5). If He was manifested to take away our sins, it could not be that in Him was any sin. Had there been in Him, and with all reverence let us say it, one trace of sin, it would have incapacitated Him to take away our sins. He was manifested for that very purpose, to take our sins away, and "in Him was no sin."

Then in 1 Peter ii. 22, speaking of the same blessed Person, it says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," and in the twenty-fourth verse, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "Who did no sin." It was impossible that He could; but had there been on Him so much as a single sin of His own, He never could have borne our sins in His own body on the tree.

Lastly, "For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

Three things are stated about Christ :—

“ In Him was no sin.”

“ He did no sin.”

“ He knew no sin.”

And all that put together and added to it—not only that as man He *had* no sin, and not only that as man He *did* no sin, and not only that as man He *knew* no sin—but that He was God, and you get the infinite character of His atoning work.

Plenty of people rob themselves of their chances of salvation by making light of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. God made Him who knew no sin—not only to be the bearer of our sins but—to be sin. He made Him sin for us. That is to say, that the Lord Jesus Christ when He was in the likeness of sinful flesh at the cross, not only bore the sins of believers, but took upon Him the judgment of sin itself—all that we had done and all that we were—the branch, the fruit, and the root of the tree. He was made sin, and He suffered as a sacrifice for sin, and that is why God can do what the law could not do. And what has God done? Condemned the sinner? No, but the sin. “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.” The condemnation of all that the sinner was, and of all that he had done, was effected in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the believer is free. But he is free in a double way ; he is

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free before God, he is at liberty in His holy presence, but he is also free from himself and from the power of sin. A double freedom, a two-fold liberty! We are free before God and at perfect peace in the knowledge that no condemnation will ever come to us because Christ has borne the condemnation in all its depth and reality when He was made a sacrifice for sin. But we are also free from the law of sin and death in a practical way. We have been taken out of our old standing and brought into a new one, and we have a life of liberty and power, and the Holy Ghost dwells in us.

Then look at the fourth verse: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Yes, but is it only that? Much more certainly but inasmuch as it was the law, which was the subject, and the seventh chapter had proved the inability of man to keep the law, here we are told that the righteousness of the law *is* fulfilled in us "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." But undoubtedly more than that is fulfilled. The law says, "You are not to kill." Of course a Christian does not wish to kill another, but he is told to lay down his life for the brethren, which was more than the law required. It is well to observe that the last clause of the first verse should not be there, it would be inconsistent with the teaching of the passage. The fact that there is no condemnation depends not upon my walk in any sense what-

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ever. My walk should be consistent with this, but the *fact* that there is no condemnation depends upon my being in Christ Jesus. But not only am I in Christ Jesus, but I have a new life and I possess the Spirit, and hence the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now the fifth and sixth verses describe a thing that is easily understood. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The flesh has objects of its own and the Spirit has objects—different objects—and if I have the Spirit I have these new objects that the Spirit puts before me. The objects that the flesh puts before me are self and sin, the object that the Spirit puts before me is Christ Jesus. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This verse does not tell me how to obtain life and peace. It is telling me what life and peace are in a practical sense. If I want to know how to obtain life, I go back to such a verse as "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Or if I want to know how peace is to be possessed, I go back to such a verse as "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." But if I want to go through this world with my heart filled with the sense of that peace, I must be led by the Spirit, I must be under the influence of the Spirit, I must allow the Spirit

to occupy me with "the things of the Spirit." That is the path of joy and happiness in this world, and that is the only path of joy and happiness for the Christian. A person may have life in his soul, but so long as he is half-hearted he is robbed of the joy and peace in a practical way which is his portion in Christ.

King Jehoshaphat ;

OR,

"Be Careful in your Choice of Companions."

UR readers will know that Jehoshaphat was King of Judah at the same time that "Ahab, the son of Omri," was King over Israel. While David and Solomon reigned, "Israel" included the twelve tribes. After Solomon's death, the kingdom came to Rehoboam his son.

The young reader will remember that "all the congregation" of Israel came to Rehoboam, and complained that Solomon had made their "yoke grievous"; they desired a gentler rule. So the "old men" of experience were consulted, the young men also were asked to give counsel. The advice of the aged men was to act tenderly, and with consideration towards the people, adding, that if the king acted in this manner

“they will be thy servants for ever” (1 Kings xii. 7). This advice was good. On the other hand, the young men advised Rehoboam to say to the people, “My father chastised you with whips; but I will chastise you with scorpions,” a cruel instrument of punishment, a long and heavy scourge armed with numerous knots and with spikes of metal. As people grow older they generally become kinder and more thoughtful for the sorrows and afflictions of others.

“Speak gently, it is better far
To rule by love than fear ;”

and we have read that “you do not alienate men by allowing them opportunities of improving their condition, and a slack chain is less easily broken than a tight one.” Well, Rehoboam drew the chain so tightly that it broke. In other words the people revolted. “So Israel rebelled against the house of David, unto this day.” It was only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin that clung to Rehoboam; the ten tribes, now called “all Israel,” made “Jeroboam, the son of Nebat,” their king.

Accordingly from this time, we read of kings of Israel and of kings of Judah, and of these kings on both sides, some were good and others were bad kings.

Among the kings of Israel you will remember Ahab, the son of Omri, of whom it is said that “he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all

that were before him." While of Jehoshaphat who reigned over Judah at the same time it is written, "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the ways of his father David." As Israel was going on badly, Jehoshaphat strengthened himself against them. In those days riches were a sign of the favour of the Lord, but it does not follow that those so favoured made a right use of the riches with which they were entrusted. It is to be noticed that Jehoshaphat's having "riches and honour in abundance" is connected with his joining "affinity with Ahab," and we shall see what trouble this affinity or fellowship brought him into, though he did not get into trouble all at once, people seldom do. "After certain years he went *down* to Ahab to Samaria" (2 Chron. xviii. 1).

In the fable of the owl and the moth, the latter inquired of the owl, how she should act with regard to the candle which had singed her wings; the owl counselled the moth to keep away from the candle, saying, "Don't so much as look at the smoke." You scarcely know where the first wrong step in bad company will lead you, but certainly it will lead you away from God, and from happiness. Ahab was evidently very much pleased to get Jehoshaphat down to Samaria, and as people say, he made a good deal of him. Young reader, be careful of those who would make a good deal of you, for when this is the case we are inclined to make a great

deal of ourselves, and Satan then often entraps those who are filled with self-importance. Would you not rather be like the violet than the showy poppy? It was easy enough for poor Jehoshaphat to be "persuaded" to go up with wicked King Ahab to Ramoth Gilead, after being so feasted and fêted. And now, he who had strengthened himself against Israel and refused to walk in their godless ways, says to one of their wickedest kings, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and we will go with thee in the war."

This was just what Ahab wanted. Ahab may have said something like this, "Now you are what I call large-minded and liberal, not like those narrow-minded people who will not join with one in well-intentioned schemes." Yet, however Ahab might flatter, Jehoshaphat was far from feeling comfortable. He had been in the habit of seeking the Lord's mind before engaging in any enterprise. "Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day." It was serious that Jehoshaphat had not done this before he went down to see Ahab. Let us learn to do the right thing at the right time. How many mistakes in life are made because young people do not inquire "at the word of the Lord" first, but perhaps think of it when too late.

Of Ahab's four hundred false prophets we hope to speak another time.

Responsibility and Privilege.

IN Titus ii. there is a very striking and forcible illustration of each of the above. May the Spirit of God drive them home to the conscience and heart of every reader.

In verses 4 and 5 the aged women are exhorted to teach the young women ; and I want you to notice *what* they are to teach them, and *why*.

What they are to teach them is how to behave in their everyday life ; the life in the home and before their neighbours. It is summed up in a very few words. They are to be sober (not light and giddy), to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet or wise. Keepers at home and obedient to their own husbands. "Oh! that's what everybody knows!" some one may exclaim. "There's not much in that!" No! these prosy everyday things are apt to be despised and overlooked simply because they are everyday things. But look at the second point : *why* these things are to be taught. "*That the Word of God be not blasphemed.*"

Did you know that such fearful consequences were wrapped up in these everyday things? Have you remembered that your neighbours and acquaintances know you are a professed follower of Jesus, and that when they see you coming short in these simple practical, everyday matters, it

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causes them to reflect upon and speak against that "Word" that you profess to obey? And thus through your carelessness in little things, God's doctrine is blasphemed. Oh! what a responsibility is ours! Just as upon the pillars of the court of the tabernacle were hung, in the sight of everybody, those spotless curtains of fine-twined linen, so upon *us* is hanging, in view of the world, the spotless character of pure and undefiled religion. And if we stain it, what then?

Oh! be faithful, young believer, in every little detail of life, for everything counts.

So much for *responsibility*. But there is another side in this chapter, and it is enough to make one leap for very joy to know our glorious *privilege*.

In verses 9 and 10 we have again some exhortations concerning everyday life. This time it is to servants (bondsmen); and they are urged to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not appropriating their masters' goods to their own use, but to be faithful to them in all things. And the reason now given is, "That they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things." Is not this a privilege? Think of being an *ornament* to the doctrine of our Saviour! People often speak of ornaments in the Church, but they generally mean some talented and gifted person whose name is known everywhere. But God takes up the very humblest, even a

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bond-slave, and shows how he, in the very commonest everyday actions may be an ornament to His doctrine.

Now, isn't this real encouragement? And it is not merely that he *may be* this or that. No! each one of us *is* either the first or the second. That is, we are all either causing the Saviour's word to be blasphemed, or we are an ornament to it. Which is it? L. W. R.



The Epistle to the Romans.

(Continued.)

NOW look what it says in the eighth verse, "So then they that are in the flesh" (the seventh of Romans state) "cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." What distinguishes the Christian is this, the fact that he has the Holy Ghost; and one who has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him is no longer in the flesh. In the seventh chapter of Romans you do not get the Spirit mentioned, but the eighth chapter is full of it; and thus we clearly see that the fact that the Spirit dwells in him is the distinguishing feature of the full Christian position. He is not praying for the Spirit, he knows that he has the Spirit. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Now look at the last part of the ninth verse. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." These are startling words. How many a person prays for the Spirit! What would they think of such a verse as this, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"? Then you say, "If I have not got the Holy Ghost, I am not a Christian?" That is exactly what it says. We must make a difference between being born of the Spirit and being indwelt of the Spirit. It is possible to be quickened without having the Spirit dwelling in you, but the full Christian state is not only to be quickened by the Spirit, but to be indwelt by the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." That is, he is not, as to the experience of his soul, in the complete Christian place. I believe that is the meaning of the passage. It does not say, if any man have not a Christian spirit. The apostle is not speaking of that, he is speaking of the Spirit of Christ, a divine person dwelling in me, and if I have not this, I am not in the full Christian place before God. A Christian is one for whom there is no condemnation, because he is in Christ Jesus, and a Christian is one who is indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Now it goes on to say, "If Christ be in you" (ver. 10); that is very different to what we saw in the first verse. In that verse we are in Christ, in this verse it is *Christ in us*; and is not that

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exactly what we get in the fourteenth of John, the twentieth verse? "At that day"—what day? The day which is now present. The Lord Jesus Christ was here on the earth, and He was looking forward to a day that was then future, namely, the day of the Holy Ghost's coming, the very day in which we are now living. It had not begun when He spake the words, but it is a day which has been going on ever since Pentecost. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and I in you." That is just bringing before us Christianity in its two-fold aspect. First of all, our place before God, and secondly, our place before the world. "In Christ" is the measure of my acceptance before God; "Christ in me" is the measure of my responsibility before the world. It is just as true that Christ is in the Christian as it is true that the Christian is in Christ. It is the double aspect of the one truth; it is Christianity from two points of view; first, as to our place before God of acceptance, and secondly, our place before the world of responsibility. My acceptance is to be measured by one thing—Christ; my responsibility here below is to be measured by one thing—Christ. How practical that is!

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." You say, "That has often been a puzzle to me, what does it mean?" I believe this is to be understood in a practical sense, that if Christ is in you the body should be held for

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dead, because every movement of the body apart from Christ would be sin. That is a high standard of Christian life. But you say, "Who comes up to that?" Well, that is the standard, and we shall never raise the practical state by lowering the standard. Let us keep our eyes fixed upon the standard, and aim at it! That is the standard of practical Christianity in this world—the body not to be used for sin but for Christ. Now the other side. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." The only power for life, the only power for practical righteousness in this world is that of the Spirit. As we noticed before, the law and self are the two objects that fill the vision in the seventh chapter. It is nothing but "I," "me," "my," which occur about fifty times, but not once "Christ." Here in the eighth chapter the law is done with, I am gone. What is the object before the soul? Christ and the Spirit. What a change! That is the only real way of practical holiness; and the true secret of joy and happiness is to have the Spirit occupying our minds with Christ.

Then it goes on to say, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you." If that is true, and it is true, then "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." That is to say, that not only the *start*, not only the *course*, but the *end* of the Christian life is all characterised by this great

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truth—the possession of the Spirit. I begin my Christian life with that, for I am not in the true Christian state until I have the Spirit. I am to carry on my life in the power of that Spirit, and even if my body should lie in the grave, God is going to raise it up from the dead by His Spirit that dwells in me, and not merely as an act of His power. The wicked will be raised by His power. But is the Christian going to be raised from the grave only by the power of God? If he should die, God will quicken his mortal body by His Spirit that dwells in him. So that the future resurrection and our present conduct are linked up with the blessed truth that the Spirit of God dwells in our bodies. Never let us forget it! Oh, may we go through the world in the power of it!

Short Papers on the Church.

3. THE HOUSE OF GOD—THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD.

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“**W**HEN the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto

them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance " (Acts ii. 1-4).

Thus was accomplished for the disciples the promise of the Father, " which ye have heard of Me," said our Lord (Acts i. 4). The Comforter was now with them, sent by the Father, in the name of the Son, " to teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you " (John xiv. 26). Sent by Jesus glorified " from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me," said our Lord (John xv. 26). Come in tongues of fire, and yet not consuming those on whom He came, for their hearts were, by sprinkling of the blood of Christ, purified from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed by the pure water of the Word (Heb. x. 22).

Jesus, who was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His earthly ministry (Acts x. 38), having now been " exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear " (Acts ii. 33). Such were the words of Peter to the multitudes who came together to hear the wonderful things of God, every man in his native language on that same day of Pentecost.

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The House of God was that day formed on earth by the Holy Spirit come down from heaven, and who remains in the Church till it be caught up to meet the Lord at His coming. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16, 17).

That day many believed at the preaching of Peter, "And they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved," *i.e.*, the remnant of Israel (Acts ii. 41, 42, 47).

When the Church was dispersed after the martyrdom of Stephen, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Afterwards, the apostles, who had come down from Jerusalem, "laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii.).

The unity of the Church was thus preserved by God's care, and Samaria could claim no independence of the Church at Jerusalem, nor of the apostles.

Peter, to whom the Lord had given the keys

of the kingdom of heaven, and who had opened to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, is sent to Cæsarea to open the door to the Gentiles, in the persons of Cornelius and his friends (Acts x.). He preaches the gospel to them—the person of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all (both Jews and Gentiles), His life, His death, His resurrection, His appointment as Judge of living and dead; and then, as he proclaims the remission of sins through His name to whomsoever believeth in Him, . . . “While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” Peter, in giving account of the matter to those of the circumcision, said, “As I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, *as on us* at the beginning” (Acts xi. 15).

It is therefore clearly established that Gentile believers were admitted into the Church of God on exactly the same footing as the Jews. Peter's part was to preach Jesus to them, and to command them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (x. 44-48).

The second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, verses 11-22, teach this truth, and the blessed fact that by the cross Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body, and that He has come and preached peace to both those far off and those nigh, and that “through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” “Now therefore,” adds the apostle, “ye (Gentiles) are no more strangers

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and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord."

Access to the Father by the one Spirit, such is the privilege of those who are of God's house. Jesus glorified above is the chief corner stone, while the foundation here below is the apostles and New Testament prophets to whom the truth concerning the Church has been revealed (Eph. iii. 5). The building is growing now in the Lord by the addition of living stones (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5), and is prophetically seen in glory, "having the glory of God," as the holy Jerusalem, the Bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. xxi. 2, 9-11, 22, 23).

Now, upon earth, in the Lord, believers "are builded together for a habitation of God through (or by) the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22).

God's house on earth: what a solemn privilege, and how our hearts and consciences, beloved brethren, should bow under the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit amongst us! But alas, we too often act as if we were in our own house instead of God's, and the authority of the Holy Spirit present (Acts v. 3, 4, 9, xiii. 2; 1 Cor. xii. 11); the authority of Christ as Son over God's house (Heb. iii. 6) is ignored and practically set aside by us.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "That thou mayest

know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). Alas, how far is the Church practically from this position! The Church is not said to be the teacher of the truth, but responsible to maintain the truth—the pillar and ground (or stay) of it. The unfaithfulness of the Church at large in no wise takes away the duty and responsibility of those who serve God and wait on Him, to maintain His truth in every respect. Man's unfaithfulness in no wise changes the faithfulness of the Lord: "He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13).

Faithfulness in the most thorough dependence, and not strength, is what the Lord looks for in His own, and what the Spirit produces in those who wait on God. *We* may therefore well take courage, dear brethren, and count on God.

This complete failure of the Church to uphold *the truth* leads us naturally to consider the part God has committed to man's responsibility in His Church. The third chapter of the first epistle to Corinthians instructs us. "We are labourers together with God," says the apostle. "Ye are God's husbandry, God's building." The foundation is perfect, laid by a wise architect; the building reared on this foundation is of various kinds, of which only part is fire-resisting. Read the whole passage, and weigh seriously before God the responsibility, and, alas! failure of the

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workmen. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"; perfect and eternal, altogether of God, never to be moved. Sure repose of heart for all who are on it, and for all who build according to God. "But let every man *take heed how* he buildeth thereon." Gold, silver, precious stones, built in divine righteousness, redeemed by the precious blood, beloved and precious to God, such are His saints, and such the day revealed in fire will have no power to destroy. Wood, hay, and stubble, mere professors (here looked at as the workmanship of the builders), will be burnt up.

There are three kinds of builders—1st., true servants who do good work: "He shall receive a reward" (ver. 14); 2nd, real Christians who build with bad, burnable materials: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (ver. 15); 3rd, the mere professor who defiles the temple of God: "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy" (ver. 17). "For the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. xciii. 5).

In the first three chapters of the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, is seen in the midst of the seven churches as the One who searches the reins and the heart. The Lord, the faithful Witness, is the divine resource, at the disposition of every hearing ear. Failure

is written on the whole, while a special reward is promised to him who *overcometh*, to him who in simple dependence on God maintains the faith God has committed to the saints (Jude 3).

We hope in another paper to examine the path of the faithful in the present day. Our object here has been to trace the outline of the Church from its foundation on earth as the house of God, with the desire that each one of us, beloved brethren, may learn by the Spirit and from the Word of God what no one can teach another.

Hints on Daniel.

“Tidings out of the east and out of the north”
(Dan. xi. 44).

IT appears from the prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah, as well as from the Psalms, that Jerusalem is destined in the future to be twice besieged. The first time the city will be taken by the nations that come up against her; these will be especially from the north and east, and will be in league with the king of the north; but the second time these nations will themselves be destroyed, and Jerusalem will be delivered by the Lord, who will interfere in person to this end.

If we turn to Isaiah xxviii., xxix., we shall find a prophetic outline of what will yet take place in and around Jerusalem, which entirely coincides with what we have already seen in the closing verses of Daniel xi. In the first place woe is pronounced upon Ephraim ; this appears to be the outlying portion of the land which the king of the north will enter on his last invasion of Palestine and Egypt. As a "flood of mighty waters overflowing" will he come down upon them, Jehovah using him as His rod of anger for the punishment of the rebellious and hypocritical nation, which at that time will be in a prosperous condition, so far as material affairs are concerned (Isa. x. 5, 6, xxviii. 3, 4).

From verse 14 it is Jerusalem in particular that comes before us. In order to escape this "overflowing scourge," the apostate rulers of the Jews make their covenant with powers so evil that they can be described in no other way than "death and hell." This covenant is the one we have already had mentioned in Daniel ix. 27 ; it is the chief of the revived Roman Empire, of Western Europe, who makes it with "the many," that is, the apostate portion of the Jews, who will recognise "the king," or Antichrist, in Jerusalem. The covenant is made for a period of seven years, or the last week of the seventy mentioned in Daniel ix., but in the midst of the week a great crisis is reached in connection with the Jews ; their restored sacrifices will be made

to cease, and the fearful idolatry of Antichrist will be set up. It is on account of this that the Assyrian, or king of the north, is introduced as the executor of Jehovah's anger against the idolatrous people. If Daniel ix. 27 be read with care, it will be seen that these three persons are distinctly alluded to. "He (*i.e.*, the Roman emperor) shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the overspreading of abominations (*i.e.*, Antichrist's idolatry) there shall be a desolator (*i.e.*, the king of the north) even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (*i.e.*, Jerusalem)."

If now we turn to Isaiah xxix., we shall see that so far from this artifice of the scornful rulers of Jerusalem succeeding, the city will be besieged, and at first brought down to desolation (vers. 1-7). It is this that is referred to in Psalm lxxiv., "Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary," &c. Again in Psalm lxxix., "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps." Evidently in these scriptures the city is taken by the besieging confederate nations.

But in the remainder of Isaiah xxix., from verse 7 to the end, a very different state of

things is described. There, Jehovah takes up the cause of His people, and all the nations that fight against Mount Zion melt away as a dream of a night vision. It seems clear from this that there are two distinct sieges of Jerusalem in the future, the first successful so far as the nations are concerned, but the second the very reverse: "So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion . . . defending also He will deliver it. . . . Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man"—for it will be through the direct intervention of Jehovah—" . . . and he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Isa. xxxi. 4-9). The next chapter (Isa. xxxii.) goes on to describe the day of millennial blessing which will follow.

The prophet Zechariah gives the same outline with further details. The last three chapters unmistakably point forward to Israel's future. After referring to Messiah's rejection (Zech. xi. 12, 13), we find introduced upon the scene him who will be His direct opposite; the idol shepherd is no doubt the Antichrist that we have been considering under the title of "the king." "I will raise up a shepherd in the land," this can be none other than the land of Palestine. But this false shepherd will not be like the Good Shepherd that layeth down His life for the sheep, for he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their

claws in pieces. The whole Church period, from Pentecost to the rapture, is thus passed over in silence, and we step from the nation's rejection of the true Christ to their acceptance of the Antichrist, as was said by the Lord when here on earth, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). The idol shepherd of Zechariah xi. is the other one here spoken of.

This brings us down to the circumstances of the last days, and those especially of which Jerusalem will be the centre. Many nations and peoples will be gathered together against it, and Jerusalem will be by them besieged. These are the nations in league with the king of the north, in other words, the north-eastern confederacy, not the Beast or Roman Empire of the West. But they will find Jerusalem and the affairs of Palestine and the Jews to be like a burdensome stone. It might seem an easy thing for vast and overwhelming numbers to sweep away the small and feeble people of Judæa, but in that day shall Jehovah open His eyes upon His beloved people, and defend their cause against their enemies, "And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zech. xii. 6).

But along with this we are shown the moral work that will take place in the heart and conscience of the people themselves. "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," &c. There must be on their part a judgment of themselves in the sight of God, and a deep abhorrence of their sin in the rejection of their Messiah (vers. 9-14). Then, and not till then, will the fountain be opened for the practical cleansing of the nation. It is not a "fountain filled with blood," but the washing of the water of the Word. The idols and false prophets will be cleansed out of the land.

Next we are again reminded of that which Messiah passed through, first at the hands of His own people, and then at the hands of Jehovah. He was wounded in the house of His friends, scourged, smitten, and spat upon; but at the cross it was Jehovah's sword that was stretched out against the man that was His fellow. The immediate effect of the smiting of the Shepherd was the scattering of the sheep (Matt. xxvi. 31), though it was at the same time that that mighty work was accomplished which secured their eternal blessing.

Here again we see how in the Old Testament the whole present period of the Church is passed over in silence; the mystery of the Church, the body of Christ had not been made known in those ages before Pentecost and the calling out of Paul to be the special vessel for communicating this

unique and wondrous truth. We pass at one step from the scattering of the Jewish sheep which immediately followed upon the cross (ver. 7), to the judgment that will befall the nations "in all the land" in the last days just before they are recognised once more as Jehovah's people, and their Messiah will come again, not this time in humiliation, but in power and majesty (vers. 8, 9).

It will be a time of unparalleled trouble. Two parts in all the land shall be cut off and die, and the third part shall be brought through the refining fire. The opening verses of chapter xiv. bring together the two future sieges of Jerusalem. All the nations are seen gathered together against it to battle. These are again the nations in league with the king of the north. At first they are successful, for the city is taken, and half its inhabitants go forth into captivity. But after that, and evidently distinct therefrom, the Lord Himself goes forth to fight on behalf of His people against these nations, and all is changed. He is seen coming in person to the earth; His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives; it is the day of the Lord when He will come, not into the air for the Church, but to the earth for the deliverance of Israel and the judgment of their enemies.

All this throws a flood of light upon the close of Daniel xi. We have seen the king of the north entering into the glorious land and obtain-

ing a measure of success. This no doubt will be the time of the first of these two future sieges of Jerusalem. But he will pass on into Egypt, possibly with a view to crippling the power of the king of the south, which he may think would stand in the way of the accomplishment of his designs upon Palestine and the Jews.

While in Egypt events of the most unexpected nature will be taking place in and around Jerusalem. "Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him." Some may inquire what the tidings could possibly be that produce such a startling effect upon this hitherto victorious king. They may be twofold ; firstly, the commencing movement amongst the ten long lost tribes to return to Palestine ; secondly, the overthrow of the armies of the West, the beast and the kings of the earth who will be gathered against Jerusalem, to make war upon the Lamb, Who, between the two sieges we have been considering, will have come as Redeemer to Zion (Isa. lix. 20).

The direction from whence come these startling tidings should be carefully noted, "out of the east and out of the north," exactly where Palestine lies with reference to Egypt, where the king of the north will at that time be !

With great fury he returns to Palestine little thinking Who he will have to face. He plants the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, that is, between the Mediterranean and the

Dead Seas, in the glorious holy mountain. Here the curtain drops upon all this military magnificence: "He shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

There is nothing in the estimation of the world so glorious as a vast military display, but all this is destined to wither and melt away like Sennacherib's great host, gleaming with purple and gold, which was in truth the type in Isaiah's day of the very scenes here described by the prophet Daniel. How blessed is the portion of those whose kingdom is not of this world. An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away is theirs, when all the glitter and pomp of this poor world lies in the dust.



King Jehoshaphat ;

OR,

"Be Careful in your Choice of Companions."



HOW distinct and how serious is the difference between what is said of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles xvii. and xviii. In the one it is said that he "strengthened himself against Israel," and in the beginning of the other it is stated that he "joined affinity

with Ahab." This signifies a fall, and is not without its warning to ourselves. In chapter xx. Jehoshaphat is assailed by enemies. "The children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle." The king is cast upon God — his language breathes a true spirit of dependence and real humility. He prays thus, "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee."

All this teaches us that we have greater reason to fear Satan as a flatterer than as an open foe. The serpent is subtle, the lion ferocious, and Satan is likened to both. He *deceives*, and he also seeks to *devour*. King Ahab did not come against Jehoshaphat as an enemy, but rather as a friend. It is here that we need to be on our guard. Jehoshaphat is by no means comfortable, however liberal he was in offering to be one with Ahab in retaking Ramoth-gilead. Who had ordered Ahab to undertake such a service? He was like certain prophets of whom we read, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (Jer. xxiii. 21). Jehoshaphat felt this. Moreover, Ahab was for madly rushing into battle with the Syrians without asking counsel of God or of any one else. Now we come to a solemn matter for considera-

tion. When men have made up their minds to do evil, like Ahab, "who sold himself to do evil," God in His judgment may allow them to be deceived. Our Lord said in His day, "I am come in My Father's name and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Blindness from God is terrible indeed. Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel had four hundred prophets—they were numerous, but false—and the Lord permitted an evil spirit to deceive them all. "There came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, and the Lord said, . . . go out and do even so" (chap. xix. 21).

One might have supposed that what was said by so many must be true, but this shows how we may be misled by the Devil with a cloak of sanctity. The four hundred prophets prophesy before the deluded king and say, "Go up; for God will deliver it unto the king's hand." This is, as I have said, very serious, and shows the need of prayer and acquaintance with the mind of God as revealed in His holy Word. The writer remembers reading of a servant of the Lord who had been preaching to a somewhat indifferent congregation of people. He returned home weary and discouraged, and retired to his study. It seemed to him that if he preached

of eternal judgment, people sat unmoved, and if he dwelt upon a sweeter theme, even the love of God to sinners, it was the same thing. As the preacher sat thinking of these things he fell asleep and dreamed. He dreamed that he was in the council chamber of hell, and Beelzebub was at the head of the council. The arch-fiend asked who would go into the world and deceive it. "I," said one. "And what will you tell the people." "I will tell them there is no hell; they can eat, drink, and be merry." "That won't do," said Satan. Then another spoke, "Let me go and deceive the world." "And what will you tell the people?" "I will tell the people that there is a hell, but I will whisper in their ears, 'There is plenty of time yet.'" "You may go," said man's enemy. The preacher woke and saw how Satan blinded people by helping them to put off day after day, year after year, the salvation of their souls. Young people are not always so alive to Satan's deception as older people are, and therefore are more likely to be deceived.

But to return, Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with the four hundred prophets. Poor Jehoshaphat, one cannot but pity him; he was in a false position from which it was not easy to escape. He was like the poor fly that gets entangled in the web of the spider. "Is there not here a prophet besides, that we might inquire of him?" said Jehoshaphat. Yes, there was one more—

Micaiah, true, but persecuted. Ahab says, "But I hate him." He was hated because he was faithful. Wicked men and women do not like to be told the truth, they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. But soon it was shown that this solitary and persecuted prophet was right, and the four hundred fawning prophets were wrong. Ahab went to battle (and Jehoshaphat with him), but not to prosper, as the false men had said he would. God did not deliver Ramoth-gilead into his hand. On the contrary, a man drawing a bow at a venture sent the arrow unerringly through an opening in Ahab's armour and fatally wounded him, "and about the time of the sun going down he died."

Poor, but true-hearted, Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord ; he knew where to look in danger and distress, and of his deliverance and restoration we will write (D.V.) next month.

Schism in France.

THE conversation between Leo XIII. and Mgr. Mignot, Archbishop of Albi, is truly suggestive !

"What is your opinion of the schism ?" asked the Holy Father.

“I believe,” the Archbishop replied, “that under existing circumstances a schism is improbable.”

“Do you realise,” interrupted the Pope, “that it would be a terrible thing at the present juncture to have a schism in France such as that of Luther or Henry VIII.?”

“For a schism to be possible,” said Mgr. Mignot in conclusion, “the people require to be deeply religious, and capable of taking an interest in questions of that nature.”

Such is the conversation reported by the press, and which neither of the interested parties has denied. We may therefore take it for correct. If I insist on its authenticity, it is because of the importance it has in my eyes.

Here then is a Pope, and one whom we must call a prince of the Church, an Archbishop, giving as the rampart of their faith, the indifference and scepticism of the people! The (Roman) Catholic Church, in the person of its chiefs, takes refuge in the absence of all religious feeling which she has herself produced. She has slain the conscience as well as the moral and religious sensibilities, and in presence of this ruin, the worst of all ruins, she raises her head triumphantly and exclaims—“Now, I am secure, I may slumber in peace. For a schism to be possible, the people must be deeply religious, and God be praised! they are so no longer.”

We prefer to believe, for the honour of Mgr.

Mignot, who has not, as Leo XIII., the excuse of old age, that these words were a severe and solemn lesson, directed to his august interlocutor. Taken in this sense—and all that we know of the eminent Archbishop would authorise us to interpret them thus—they are a protest against that Catholic immobility which persists in presenting to the people a religion of forms, of rites, of debasing devotions, and which prefers the spiritual death of the Catholic nations to the loss of its own supremacy and pride. . . . It is faith which produces schism, it is infidelity which protects Rome. Ye Bishops of France, ye priests, you who are entrusted with the task of stifling religion, and destroying it in souls! It is for this that Rome has consecrated you, for this that she has sent you forth.

You have performed your task, and yet not quite sufficiently in the eyes of the Pope. You are aware, are you not, that he is trembling on his throne, and before dying the spectre of schism haunts him. He sees it everywhere. True, Mgr. Mignot tried to reassure him—"The people are not religious," he told him, "you may rest content, a schism is not possible." But the old man trembles still. He sees schism at work in France, he sees it at Rome. Only the other day he declared that schismatic bodies were corrupting his people with foreign gold!!!

From "Le Chrétien Français."

Short Papers on the Church.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE.

IN the First Epistle to Timothy, we are taught how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground (or stay) of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 15). But in the Second Epistle the language of the Holy Spirit changes profoundly. Denial of fundamental truths, such as saying the resurrection is past already (2 Tim. ii. 8); forsaking of Paul and his special ministry by all in Asia (i. 15); the Church no longer upholds the truth practically.

Only what is of God remains firm. Man has failed, as he always does, to maintain what is committed to his responsibility. "Nevertheless the foundation of God remains sure; having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His, and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity" (ii. 19). The foundation of God, even Jesus Christ: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

But what a change! In the early days of the Church (Acts ii. 42-47, iv. 31-35), the disciples were publicly manifested as one company in the

faith of the Lord Jesus, in heart or brotherly affection, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Iniquity was at once purged out, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.). The Lord's prayer (in John xvii. 21), "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me;" this prayer was then accomplished in the Church.

But at the time of Paul's second letter to Timothy, error, false doctrine, iniquity, self-will had so prevailed in the Church, professors so abounded, that the words, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," are the resource of the faithful in a time of ruin so complete that *in the Church* iniquity had reared its head almost unchecked, and it became the duty of the faithful to separate, not indeed from the Church, but from iniquity in it, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

As "in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, some to honour and some to dishonour," so also in what bears the name and has the profession of being the Church of God, there are likewise "vessels" of precious value and others burnable in the fire. But whatever the intrinsic value of the "vessels," in a day of ruin none is "unto honour," unless it be purified, separated from those unto dishonour. "If a man purge himself *from these*, he shall be a vessel unto

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honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

"Meet for the Master's use," is not that, beloved brethren, the heart's desire of every one who says by grace, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me"?

"Meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work." Many a sincere Christian who has not learnt from God what the Church is for Christ, to whom the unity of the Body of Christ is a doctrine rather than a reality, who is occupied with Christians and with souls rather than with Christ, fears to narrow his circle of service and of usefulness by a too thorough obedience to the divine Word. He prizes the Word of God, and yet to escape from the force of it on his conscience, he reasons it away, till he persuades himself that separation should not be so thorough from all vessels to dishonour, as the Word of God specifies.

The number of those thus purged may be small, but in the Lord's faithfulness a few will always be found till He come (Rev. ii. 24, 25, iii. 7-11). Their path is not only separation from evil in the Church, they are to "follow righteousness, faith, charity (love), peace, *with them* that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Righteousness, faith, love, peace are the path, the pursuit of those who are become vessels to honour. The Master's yoke, true peace of heart, is the portion of those who walk therein,

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“Take *My* yoke upon you, and learn of *Me*, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. xi. 29). The Lord’s grace is ever there to cheer and to encourage, “Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. ii. 1). “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude, 20. 21).

Such is the *path* in a day of ruin for the man of God.

Just as Elijah built an altar of twelve stones, “according to the *number of the tribes* of the sons of Jacob,” when Israel was serving Baal; just as Hezekiah, King of Judah, commanded that the burnt-offering and the sin-offering should be made for *all Israel*, at a time when the ten tribes were being carried away from their land, and only a few were left; just as Joshua and Zerubbabel at the time of the return from the captivity of a few Jews and Levites, built the altar of the God of *Israel*, so at the present time, “the faith which was *once* delivered to the saints,” is what we should earnestly contend for, the whole faith and not merely a part of it (Jude 3).

“Hold fast that which thou hast,” is the exhortation for a time and state of weakness. And what have we, beloved brethren? Have

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we not everything which depends on the Lord's faithfulness? What the Lord is to His Church, His presence in the midst of two or three gathered to His name (Matt. xviii. 20; Rev. iii. 1); the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who distributes gifts in the Church to every one severally as He will (1 Cor. xii. 11): the gifts of the glorified Head, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; *till we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*" (Eph. iv. 10-13).

Dependence on the Lord, confidence in His grace to maintain the full character and testimony of the Church of God; without the slightest pretension to be the Church of God; no truth discarded, no power in ourselves, but faithfulness in weakness and dependence on God.

For discipline, faithfulness is required. To "put away from among yourselves that wicked person," is a matter of obedience and purifying from evil (1 Cor. v. 13). To "turn away" from any who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof (2 Tim. iii. 1-5), is the duty of those who fear God in perilous times. To refuse those who bring not the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11), is the responsibility even of sisters, as of every one who loves the Lord.

The Son of man, in the first chapter of Revelation, holds in His right hand the seven stars, the fulness of government in His assembly, and thus He presents Himself to the assembly at Sardis, in conjunction with the fulness of the Spirit. "He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars" (Rev. iii. 1). Nothing is lacking which depends on Him.

May we therefore be encouraged, beloved brethren, to walk in the path of separation and true dependence on the Lord.

The Epistle to the Romans.

Continued.

IN the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of Romans we find the complete answer to the question, Who shall deliver me? The seventh chapter had described the hopeless struggles of the quickened soul under law, but now, as we have seen, the Christian learns the true secret of deliverance in Christ.

We are brought into a new standing before God. We are in Christ risen from the dead, and no longer in the flesh. The life which we have as Christians is not a life struggling under the bondage of the law, but it is life in Christ Jesus, and in the power of the Spirit. It is a life which

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has a constantly working principle of its own— for this is the meaning of the expression in verse 2, “The law (or principle) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” The principle constantly at work in the flesh is sin and death, whereas the principle constantly at work in connection with the new life of Christian liberty and power is righteousness and peace. Failure there may be, because the flesh still remains in us, notwithstanding that we are no longer in the flesh. The two natures remain in us so long as we are in this world, and these two natures never lose their distinctive characters: “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” But it is our privilege to walk according to the new principle and power which belong to us as being in Christ, mindful of the truth that all condemnation for us is passed, for in all its full extent it was borne by Christ when He was made sin for us, and was forsaken of God on the cross. The Spirit, too, which is the energy of this new life, has things of its own wherewith to occupy the mind: “They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (ver. 5). So that in a practical sense we may know the life, peace, and joy of deliverance from the power of sin, while waiting for the day of resurrection glory when we shall be free from its hateful presence. Then indeed will be the complete answer to the question, Who shall

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deliver me? Free from the power of sin now, free from its presence then, when our mortal bodies shall be quickened by His Spirit, and all trace of sin shall be eternally removed.

In these opening verses of the chapter the Spirit of God is brought before us not so much as a distinct person indwelling the Christian, as the power and energy of the divine life: "The Spirit is life because of righteousness" (ver. 10). They present more that aspect of the subject unfolded in John xx., "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," than the fact of the Spirit's actual presence as at the day of Pentecost. Not but what the expression occurs, "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (ver. 9), but we speak of that which characterises this part of the chapter (vers. 1-11), and the difference is an important one.

In the second portion of the chapter (vers. 12-28) the doctrine is clearly unfolded of the actual presence in the Christian of the indwelling Spirit, with its divine consequences.

But first of all we are shown our complete deliverance from the flesh, as a principle that can have any possible claim upon us: "We are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh" (ver. 12). What possible claim can the flesh have upon us? To live after it can only end in death, and after death the judgment. The only fruit it ever yielded are things of which the Christian is now ashamed (chap. vi. 21). It has proved itself to be incorrigible even under the influence of the

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law, which was holy, just, and good. The flesh is an evil principle, hopelessly and irrecoverably bad. The Christian has done with it in Christ's death, he no longer stands in it before God, and he is no longer a debtor to it in any wise. The Christian has the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and this is a power greater than that of the flesh, so that the flesh need never overcome him, for by the Spirit he may mortify the deeds of the body. This is liberty; liberty of the soul before God, and liberty from the power of sin. We all, alas! fail in carrying out these blessed principles of divine grace, but this is the privilege that belongs to us. May we learn to live up to the height of our privileges!

But if the Spirit of God dwells in us, we are the sons of God. Here a fresh truth is brought before us. Not only are we in a new standing or position before God in Christ, but we are introduced into a new relationship, we are the *sons* of God (ver. 14). For the Spirit we have received, the Spirit that indwells us, and by which we are led, is not a spirit of bondage. Bondage and fear was our state under law. But the Spirit of God which is given to believers is the spirit of adoption. Possessing this spirit we are led into the conscious sense of a new relationship with God: "We cry, Abba, Father" (ver. 15). "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (ver. 16). God has brought us into a new relationship by grace,

and has given us the seal and power of that new relationship : " Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father " (Gal. iv. 6). In other words, Christ's position is ours, for we are " in Christ Jesus," and Christ's relationship is ours, for we have the Spirit of His Son in our hearts. In all things it is true He has the pre-eminence—this every fibre of our moral being acknowledges with adoring worship ; and yet, blessed be His name ! He has said, " I ascend unto My Father, and your Father ; unto My God, and your God " (John xx. 17).

But blessed results flow from this great truth of the Spirit's presence in us. Not only are we children, but we are heirs (ver. 17). It could not be otherwise. If God by divine grace has introduced us into His family, it is that we might share and enjoy all that properly belongs to that family. We are " heirs of God " ; but not only this, we are joint-heirs with Christ. Having given us Christ, He with " Him also gives us all things ; " this is true for faith now, but presently we shall enter into the full manifestation of it all in glory. For here we suffer with Christ, but presently we shall be glorified together with Him (ver. 17), and then as His loved co-heirs we shall share with Him all that as Man He Himself possesses. His Godhead glory is His alone, but the glory given Him as Man by the Father He deigns to share with us : " The glory which Thou

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gavest Me I have given them" (John xvii. 22); and yet in all things, be it remembered, He has the pre-eminence: "For God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Heb. i. 9).

But what is suffering here when compared to the glory of that day? Paul had an abundant share of it (2 Cor. xi. 23-29); but calmly viewing it all in the light of the coming glory he declares, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (ver. 18). For that glory we wait with quiet and confident assurance. The whole creation, too, waits for it, for in the day when the sons of God shall be manifested in their glory with Christ, and not before, will creation's groan be hushed. By Adam's sin, and not of its own will, was the creation made subject to vanity. But a glorious hope awaits it; the creation itself shall be delivered from the thralldom of corruption; no more creature tears and groans and suffering when once the children of God are introduced into the liberty of the day of glory. The liberty of grace belongs now to the guilty sons and daughters of Adam who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but even they, through their bodies, are linked with the groaning creation. Our souls are now at liberty in Christ; we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, but we wait for the adoption, the redemption of the body. In other words, we wait

for the moment when we shall be ushered, in bodies of glory, into that condition which will manifest the full results of Christ's redemption work. For that day creation waits, and while it waits it groans. And we, too, albeit that we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, as the earnest of coming glory, groan within ourselves. This is not the groan of bondage under law as in Romans vii., but the groan of sympathy with Christ.

Patiently we wait for His coming again, when the hope in view of which we are saved will be realised. We do not hope to be saved, but we are saved in hope (ver. 24).

King Jehoshaphat ;

or,

**“Satan himself is Transformed into an
Angel of Light.”**

WE cannot conceive Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, saying to another king outside of Israel, “I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and we will be with thee,” &c., as he so blandly replied to Ahab. No! it is an easier matter to discern evil in its open form and character in the world, and thus unhesitatingly to shun it.

Was not Ahab a King of Israel? Could he not say, "Know ye not that Gilead is *ours*, and we be still?" Is it not our common enemy who has taken Ramoth-Gilead from us? It is here, we repeat, where discernment is needed, for while evil in its true and undisguised character is avoided, evil in its untrue character, so to speak, is often fallen in with. Albeit, Ahab was King of Israel, the people of the Lord, yet for all that he was a very wicked man indeed. It is recorded of him that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal the King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him" (1 Kings xvi. 30, 31).

Who would suggest that it was a proper thing for Jehoshaphat to have fellowship with such a wicked man even if he were King of Israel, the favoured people of God? Could anything be more shocking than to go on with wickedness, because pursued by those who bear the Lord's name? Far be the thought!

But here it is, alas, that we are so often deceived. Look for a moment at another striking example of how the world in its open form was avoided, while in its disguised form it was fallen into.

The "man of God" was proof against the

offers of reward and refreshment of "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin," but proved vulnerable to the deception of the "old prophet in Bethel." Doubtless if Jeroboam had declared to the man of God that "an angel spake" to him, he would not have been believed, but he believed the prophet, and he an old one, and believed him to his ruin too. This, my dear young brethren, is a serious matter, yet we need not be discouraged or afraid. If—

"Sin, Satan, Death appear,
To harass and appal,
Yet since the gracious Lord is near,
Backward they go and fall.

Before, behind, around,
They set their fierce array,
To fight and force me from the ground
Along life's narrow way.

I meet them face to face,
Through Jesu's conquest blest,
March in the triumph of His grace
Right onward to my rest."

No less a number than four hundred prophets had assured Ahab and Jehoshaphat that it was not only the Lord's mind that they should go to Ramoth-Gilead, but that He would deliver it into the king's hand, yet it is not to be wondered at that Jehoshaphat was dissatisfied with their flippant statement, for had not the Lord permitted a lying spirit to put the words into the

mouth of these flattering prophets? If it be asked why the Lord put this lying spirit into their mouth, it must be answered by saying that it was done judicially, and has an analogy to the terrible statement respecting Ephraim, who was "joined to idols," and meant to go on with them at all costs. "Let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17). God could not go with Ahab in his undertakings, however commendable they might appear to be, even if Jehoshaphat would accompany him.

One is led to wonder why King Jehoshaphat did not use means to extricate himself from the mess he had got himself into. Ah, herein lies a grave cause for consideration, which is, that the result of an evil alliance and position is to blind the eyes, and to enervate the spiritual energies of the soul. Look what a dragging it took to get Lot out of Sodom! Something of the seductive power of sin must have been known by the poet when he states—

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen ;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

The bell in the tower which when struck alarmed the young birds, alarms them now no longer ; they build their nest there, they are used to it. Oh, may our good Lord preserve the reader and writer from becoming accustomed to

evil! It would appear that there was an abundance of false prophets in Ahab's time. Not long before the faithful Elijah had caused four hundred and fifty to be put to death (1 Kings xviii. 40).

Besides these there were four hundred more "prophets of the groves" which did eat at Jezebel's table. It is ever so: more false than true. Four hundred false prophets to one. It is a striking disparity, and tells its own story. Yet, blessed be God! He has His precious piece of gold, where there is so much brass. His faithful Micaiah, as distinguished from the faithless, flattering, time-serving four hundred. Micaiah, of course, must suffer, but he has God with him, is in communion with Him, and it has been asked, "What can compensate for the loss of communion with God?" It might be said that the four hundred prophets all spoke the same thing, they were unanimous. They were, but it was a unanimity with Satan as its author. Their counsel was taken, but it was not the counsel God would have been pleased to give, "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but *not of Me*" (Isa. xxx. 1).

Doubtless it often proves trying to be singular, but if faithfulness to God is the cause of being singular, may we have grace singular to be.

Ahab escapes not, notwithstanding his cleverness in disguising himself, "for a certain man

draws a bow at a venture (in his simplicity) and smote the King of Israel between the joints of the harness . . . about the going down of the sun, he died" (2 Chron. xviii.). W. R. C.

Zeal.

I WAS one day walking along a road at what I thought at the time was a good pace. Presently I heard some one overtaking me, and in a moment or two a man, much smaller in stature than myself, caught me up, and easily passed me. Seeing one so small making better progress than I was immediately stirred me to put forth more energy, and of course, being the taller of the two, I quickly overtook the little man, and as quickly left him behind. He had not slackened his pace, *but I had practically doubled mine.*

"Your zeal hath provoked very many" (2 Cor. ix. 2).

Is there not a lesson for us in this, dear fellow-believer? Of prominent gift we may have but little. We may be *small in stature*. But if what we have is made the most of, we are bound to be, not only a blessing ourselves, but an encouragement to others who have perhaps far more ability, but who are faltering through

discouragement. We never know how far-reaching our influence is. "Your zeal hath provoked *very many*." Many eyes are upon us, dear friends. Let us be zealous, therefore, in everything, and our reward will be great. Our opportunities will soon be gone. To-day is all we have. May we be stirred up then to increased energy in the interests of our Lord, of His saints, and of poor perishing sinners.

L. W. R.

Hints on Daniel.

"A time of trouble" (chap. xii. 1).

AT the close of the previous chapter (xi.) we have brought before us the circumstances of the last days, in so far as they concern the earthly powers that are connected with the land of Palestine. Three kings will be especially in view. In the first place there will be "the king," reigning in Jerusalem, in other words the Antichrist; he is the one described in verses 36 to 40. As we have before pointed out, we get no account here of his end and terrible doom, when he will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming (2 Thess. ii. ; Rev. xix. 20, 21).

Besides this king there will also be the kings of the north and the south, whose actings have been so vividly depicted from verse 40 to 45. It is the last king of the north who is seen to come to his end with none to help him. He falls upon the mountains of Judæa by the hand of the Lord Himself (Isa. xiv. 25, xxx. 31, xxxi. 8, 9; Micah v. 5, 6).

Now this brings us down to the time of the end, that is, the end of the age spoken of in Matthew xxiv. 3 and elsewhere. This expression has nothing to do with the Christian period which, as we have often pointed out, is a parenthesis in God's earthly dealings; it specially refers to the Jews. To these, God's earthly people, there were two ages or dispensations, namely, "this age" and "the age to come" (see Matt. xii. 32), and the expression which we so repeatedly find, for instance, in Matthew xiii. and xxiv., "the end of the age," refers, not to the end of the world as a material system but, to the end of that age in which the Jews then found themselves, namely, the age of *law*, as distinguished from "the age to come," or the time of Messiah's presence amongst them; "this age" will still continue to run its course, after the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord, for a brief interval until Christ appears in glory.

The Spirit of God now reveals what will be the condition of Daniel's own people, and the

circumstances through which they will pass at the close. "At that time," namely, the time of all the occurrences we have been considering at the end of chapter xi., "shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (chap. xii. 1). Here we get angelic interference on the behalf of the Jews. It is not yet Messiah's direct and personal appearance on Mount Zion, but Michael, one of the chief princes specially deputed to watch over the interests of that people, who stands up to help them, though unseen by either them or their enemies (compare Dan. x. 13-21; Rev. xii. 7, &c.); there are invisible, as well as visible, principalities and powers (Col. ii. 16).

At this same epoch "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation"; this is the great tribulation spoken of elsewhere, or the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. xxx. 7). It is a mistake to suppose that this has anything to do with Christians, or that the Church will pass through this period of tribulation. So far from this being the case, a distinct promise is given that, "because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from (or, *out of*) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10). In other words, the Church will not be found on earth whilst this time of trouble exists. The whole world will feel it, but the Jews will experience it in an

especial degree, and that because of their guilt in crucifying their Messiah.

To this period our Lord refers in Matthew xxiv., "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," connecting it with this very chapter in Daniel we are now considering: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," &c. It is this time of unparalleled sorrow that awaits the Jewish people when back in Palestine, and so awful will it be that, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." That is, God has His eye upon the remnant of His people, and in the midst of judgment He remembers mercy.

Immediately after this terrible period of tribulation, signs and wonders take place amidst the heavenly powers (see Isa. xiii. 10; Amos v. 20; Acts ii. 20), and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, who will be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." This is "the day of the Lord" so repeatedly mentioned by the prophets of the Old Testament. It will be the time of deliverance for the godly remnant of Jerusalem, and of destruction for their enemies, gathered together as they will be at that time to make war against the Lamb.

But another question arises here—What has become of the long lost ten tribes? Have they been forgotten entirely? The answer is given in verse 2 of our chapter: “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” We must not suppose that *this refers to the resurrection of the body*; it is the time of Israel’s national resuscitation, which is spoken of elsewhere in the prophets under the symbol of resurrection (see Isa. xxvi. 12-21; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-15). The ten tribes are destined to pass through their time of trial before they reach the land of Palestine. “I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face . . . and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me. I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel” (Ezek. xx. 33-45).

Next we are informed that a special reward will be bestowed upon those who amidst this time of trial not only remain faithful themselves, but who exert their influence towards instructing their fellows in that line of conduct which is well-pleasing to God: “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many (or *instruct the many*) in righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever” (ver. 3).

But the time of the end was not yet, and Daniel is told to "shut up the words and seal the book, to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." We cannot but be struck with the contrast between this and the Apocalypse, where John is distinctly told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of the book for the time was near (Rev. xxii. 10). For the Church the coming of the Lord is an immediate hope, whereas for the Jews certain prophecies *must* be fulfilled before He can come as their Messiah to take His place amongst them in power to reign.

After this Daniel looks and sees two standing by the banks of the river, besides the man clothed in linen (chap. x. 4-6). One of these asks, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" in other words, How long should this time of great tribulation last? The answer was plain, "It shall be for a time, times, and an half." This is the three years and a half, or the last half of the seventieth week alluded to at the close of the ninth chapter. We are not left therefore in the smallest doubt as to when this takes place, nor to whom it all refers. It refers to the Jews (not to Christians), during the last half of the seventieth week, when they will have sunk so low as to allow the awful idolatry of Antichrist to be set up in the temple.

Daniel further asks, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" but the time was

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not come for a much fuller revelation. Here again the contrast is emphasised between the condition of the saints of that dispensation, however godly as surely Daniel was, and the Church. We "have an unction from the Holy One," says the apostle John, "and know all things" (1 John ii. 20); this was addressed even to the babes in the Christian family. Piety there was in Old Testament times, and none can make light of the need of it now, nevertheless what specially characterises the saint of the present time is the actual possession of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Spirit. But in the time to come "the wise shall understand." It is remarkable what a place these "wise" ones hold in this forecast of Israel's future. "None of the wicked shall understand," no matter how intelligent in earthly matters they may be; the intelligence here spoken of is a moral and not a merely intellectual one.

The man clothed in linen had announced that the duration of the time of tribulation would be $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, or 1,260 days. But now two further numbers are given, namely, 1,290 days and 1,335 days. What, we may ask, does all this refer to? In the first place it is of the utmost importance to understand that these days have to do with the period that follows the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord. It is vain to attempt any application of them to the present time, or to any portion of the Christian

age. It is here where so many have got astray in their endeavours to fix the time of the coming of the Lord for His saints.

What is the starting point of the calculation? This is clearly stated in verse 11, "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up." But when will this be? It has nothing to do with the Turks or the scourge of Islamism. It is undoubtedly what is referred to in Daniel ix. 27, namely, the breaking off of the covenant which the Roman emperor will make with the Jewish people in the time to come, and the setting up of Antichrist's idolatry in the temple at Jerusalem. The tribulation which God will send upon the Jews on account of this fearful idolatry will last for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, or 1,260 days.

But the complete and final blessing of Israel does not take place immediately. The Antichrist will then be destroyed, no doubt, but other wicked powers have to be disposed of after that, such as the king of the north, Gog and Magog (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.),* and others of less importance. This will take a certain time, brief no doubt, for it is clear from Scripture that the king of the north comes to his end after the destruction of Antichrist, for this latter

* See "Russia's Destiny according to Prophecy," by the author. James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C. Price 6d.

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is destroyed by the appearing of the Lord, and the former returns from Egypt to Palestine *after* the Lord has come to Zion. The judgment of Gog and Magog is later even than this. We do not mean to say that the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days allude to these two in particular, but enough has been said to suggest the reason for a prolongation of the days. Full blessing is reached after the 1,335 days. It has often been observed that Daniel does not enlarge upon the millennial period. No description is given by him of this blessed time, for it was his special business to write of "the times of the Gentiles." Nevertheless he is assured that he shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. He will not be absent when that glorious scene is unfolded.

For us better things are provided, but this is no reason why we should in the smallest degree minimise the promises made to the fathers, which, seen even afar off, made them start forth in faith towards that better country, and that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

With greater privileges and higher blessings do we not oftentimes exhibit a colder and more indolent spirit?

"O kindle within us a holy desire,
 Like that which was found in Thy people of old,
 Who tasted Thy love, and whose hearts were on fire
 While they waited in patience Thy face to behold!"

Settling Down.

THE Hebrew believers were in danger of seeking to make themselves at ease and comfortable here. The First Epistle to the *Corinthians* shows that they were not alone in this. It is a very natural snare to the heart of man, even to those who have found the Saviour.

After there has been doubt and anxiety, the soul knowing what the judgment of God on sin is, and its own utter guilt and condemnation, when deliverance in the Lord Jesus is once found, there is often a danger of reaction. The soul is apt to settle down, thinking the campaign is over, because the great battle has been fought, and the victory is given through the Lord Jesus Christ. They flatter themselves that there can be no more trouble because the deep soul-distress is past. It is sufficiently plain that these Hebrews were in some such state, and the apostle not only reminds them how joyfully they took their early spoliation and sufferings, but here instructs them that they are not yet after the pattern of Israel settled in the land, but like Israel passing through the wilderness. Accordingly we find that the whole argument of the epistle supposes not the temple, but the tabernacle, from first to last; and thus hails from the camp, not from the throne or kingdom set up after the conquest of Canaan.

Hence he says, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (chap. iv. 1). We see at once that the apostle is not speaking of believing in the Lord Jesus for present rest of conscience. Had this been the point before him, he would have boldly assured them that there was no need to fear.

If we speak of the blood of Christ, and then should exhort to fear, it would be the denial of Christianity. The gospel is the declaration of full remission, yea, of more than this, of justification, of reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus. If forgiveness through Christ's blood was the question, he would rather call on them to vanquish every fear; for, as the apostle John says, in discussing that point, "Perfect love casteth out fear," not "perfect love" on our part (the law asked for that, and never could get it), but the perfect love of God, which is only revealed in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. What are we to be afraid of then? Not of the blood of Christ failing, not of losing the remission of sins through any change of mind on God's part. But be afraid of settling down in this world, and coming short of the true outlook of pilgrims and strangers on the way to a better land. To have rested in the wilderness would have been fatal to an Israelite; and so we have to remember that this is not our home, and that to settle down would be virtually to deny the rest of heaven.

Short Papers on the Church.

5.—GATHERED TO HIS NAME.

THE Lord promises His presence in the midst of those thus gathered: "Where two or three are gathered together in (or unto) My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20).

In the 16th chapter the Lord Jesus asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" The reply shows that He was unknown in spite of His words and deeds. Simon Peter, taught of the Father, confesses Him: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord replies, "I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it."

The Rock is Christ known according to the confession Peter had just made of Him. Jesus Himself is the builder, but the Church was then future, "I will build." Built in resurrection, the power of hades cannot prevail against it. Hades is the state of separation between the soul and the body, which are reunited in resurrection. The Church is founded on the risen Lord, and will be glorified with Him.

The 18th chapter presents this assembly during the time of the Lord's absence from this

scene, endued with authority from Him, and characterised by His presence in the midst.

As soon as our Lord is risen from the dead, He begins to fulfil His promise to be present in their midst. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" (John xx. 19). He was there, in their midst, and His presence was *Peace*. He occupies them with Himself, with His sufferings for them: "He showed unto them His hands and His side" (ver. 20). Eight days later they are assembled, and again Jesus came and stood in their midst (ver. 26).

Do we know, beloved brethren, what it is to *meet the Lord* when we are gathered to His name, and to be occupied with the memory of His sufferings, of Himself? (1 Cor. xi. 23-26). Nothing should be allowed in our hearts which puts Him on one side, when we are thus gathered in His presence. Judgment of ourselves in His cross, in His death, that His life may be practically the life we live; His love enjoyed unhindered in the soul, that our heart's affections may be fully set on Him, is that our daily portion? If it be, when gathered in His presence, He Himself will be our object, and we shall show forth His death till He come. What He is to the Father, how He has glorified God, His

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perfection in lowliness, humiliation, and death, His present glory, what subjects of praise for the child of God !

Every company of believers who meet as such, are they gathered to His name? Is the Lord Jesus Christ present in their midst? Is it sufficient to meet as Christians to have the Lord's presence?

Let me remark before continuing further that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and the presence of the Lord in the midst of those gathered to His name, are two distinct blessings. The presence of the Holy Spirit is *continual* ("Ye *are* the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," 1 Cor. iii. 16 ; Eph. ii. 22). The presence of the Lord Jesus is *conditional* on being gathered to His name. His presence is of course spiritual, for He is thus present with every such company, while He is bodily glorified at God's right hand in heaven.

The name expresses what the Person is. *Lord Jesus Christ* expresses what He is as Lord, as Christ, and as Jesus, this latter being His personal name. "The *Christ*, the Son of the living God," is Peter's confession of Him, the Rock on which He builds His Church.

The truth concerning His person must be maintained, or there is no gathering to His name—only the false pretension of it. There may indeed be ignorance on the part of many of those truly gathered, for it is not a question

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of knowledge or attainment, but of the truth confessed and maintained.

Lord Jesus Christ is His full title as risen and glorified Man, He who is the Son of God (Eph. i. 2 ; 1 Cor. i. 2, 3, &c.).

Jesus—He is Jehovah Saviour: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save *His* people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). For this He died and rose again. By this name He is glorified on high (Phil. ii. 10).

Jesus Christ—He is the only foundation of God's house: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

Christ—He is the Head of the Body, the Church (Eph. i. 20-23 ; Col. i. 18 ; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27).

Lord—His authority over His own is expressed by this title, "No man can say that Jesus is *Lord* but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3, 5 ; Acts xx. 24).

These are but a few examples to show what is involved in His *name*. Every truth concerning His person, His work, His lordship, His Church, both as the Body and the House of God, must be maintained in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in dependence upon God.

The truth of the oneness of the Church, His Body, when realised in the soul before God, should keep us from that practical independence which is one of the many forms of unbelief.

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His presence in the midst of His gathered saints is the authority to which we are all bound to bow: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." It is not merely a question of submitting one to another in the fear of Christ (Eph. v. 21), but of recognising practically the Lord's presence in the midst of His gathered saints, and of submitting ourselves to Him who is there.

May we have, beloved brethren, a sense in our conscience and heart of what the Lord's presence is, in the midst of His gathered saints. We shall then bow to Him, be jealous of His glory, and humbly seek from Him grace wherewith to serve Him, and to maintain what is due to His name.



The Epistle to the Romans.

THE closing verses of the chapter (Rom. viii. 28-39) bring before us the blessed theme that God is for us. No matter what the circumstances of our pathway may be, we are on our road to glory. Glory with Christ is the Christian's eternal portion. For the obtaining of this glory God called us by the gospel (2 Thess. ii. 13). We are not in it yet, but we are saved in the hope of it (Rom. viii. 24, 25).

Meanwhile we are walking through an undelivered creation; it groans and travails in pain, and every groan that rises up from it to God tells of the sin of the first Adam which brought about the ruin. God sees it, and "we know" it (ver. 22).

As we have seen, believers are already delivered from sin's guilt (chap. v.) and power (chap. viii.), they are not yet delivered from its presence, nor will they be until the bright morning of Christ's coming, when the new creation will be ushered in in power and glory. Of that new creation, Christ risen from the dead is the beginning (Rev. iii. 14), and believers now quickened and risen with Christ are a kind of firstfruits (Eph. ii.; Jas. i. 18). With the old and fallen creation they are still linked through their bodies of humiliation, but with the new creation they are already linked by the Spirit. They have the firstfruits of the Spirit now, the earnest of what is theirs in hope, for the Spirit will yet be poured forth on all flesh in the day of millennial blessing. Linked in their bodies with the groaning creation, and feeling all according to the mind of the Spirit that dwells within them, they groan in sympathy with the mind and thoughts of God.

When Christ was here He groaned in spirit at the sight of all the misery and wretchedness that filled the scene as the result of man's sin. With Him all was in perfection; we, too, in our

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measure groan in sympathy with His heart. Ofttimes we know not what to pray for as we ought. It may even be that no remedy may be possible; but then the Spirit within us makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Creation groans, believers groan, and the Spirit produces groans that cannot even be expressed in words. What a blessed circle of divine sympathies have we here!

And God searches the hearts of His people; and what to find? The mind of the Spirit. How often, alas! may He not find other things, and for this we need to judge ourselves; but in the connection in which the truth here stands, God searches the heart to find there the thoughts and feelings and desires produced by the mind of the Spirit. How entirely the saints are here looked upon as linked in God's mind with the Spirit already given, and who makes intercession for them according to God!

But if sometimes we know not what to pray for as we ought, this we may always know, that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (ver. 28).

In God's love we may have perfect confidence. He may not change the circumstances, but He will bless them, and His people passing through them. He did not quench the flames of the fiery furnace, nor diminish their intensity in the smallest degree, but He walked with His people through them. He did not prevent the

stripes falling upon His beloved servants Paul and Silas, nor deliver them at once from the dungeon and their chains, but He enabled them to sing songs of triumph and praise in the midst of their trials.

And so we may be always sure that all things will work out God's purpose for those whom He has called. For it was in fulfilment of God's eternal purpose that He called us by the gospel. His foreknowledge of all that we should prove ourselves to be did not hinder His predestinating us according to His sovereign and electing mercy. But He predestinated us for a special object, not merely that we should be happy and safe in heaven for eternity, but that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. Nothing short of this would satisfy His heart. He might have given us an angel's place, but He has been pleased to destine us to share the glory of His Son, to be like Him, conformed to His image. We shall surround Him in that glory as His brethren; He, blessed be His name! being the First-born, the chief and centre of that glorified throng.

Called, justified, and glorified—what can we say to such things? Did we deserve them? No. Had we done ought to merit them? No. But "God is for us," and who can be against us? It was God's purpose that guilty sinners should be in glory with His Son; and to carry out this purpose, He did not spare His Son, His own

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Son. Such was the measure of His love, if we can speak of measure in a love which is infinite.

Believers, then, are the objects of God's choice; they are "God's elect" (ver. 33). Shall any charge be brought against them? "Guilty before God" had been the verdict, and "every mouth stopped" was as true of God's elect as of all others; but God Himself has justified them. Who then is he that would condemn them? What has become of their many sins? They are gone for ever from before a holy God, for Christ was charged with them all at Calvary, and Christ has died under the judgment that those sins deserved—sins not His own but ours. And where is Christ now? He is risen again; and not only this, He is at the right hand of God, and faith can turn the eye upward and see Him there crowned with glory and honour.

Not only so; but that risen, living and loving Saviour intercedes for those for whom He died, and nothing will ever separate them from His love. Should tribulations rise or sore distress for Christ's sake; should fiery persecutions seek to overwhelm the saints of God; should famine or nakedness, peril or sword beset their pathway here below; even should they be killed all the day long "for Thy sake," or counted as sheep for the slaughter; yet in all these things more than conquerors they shall be "through Him that loved us." The whole army of martyrs from Stephen onwards stand boldly out in the

page of history as more than conquerors through that love of Christ, from which no power of earth or hell, of men or devils, could separate them.

If we compare the use made by the Spirit of God in this chapter with the Old Testament Scripture from which the words are quoted, a flood of light is thrown upon the subject. In Isaiah l. 7-11, the prophet is speaking of Christ Himself: "He is near that justifieth Me (*i.e.* Christ); who will contend with Me?" Again, "The Lord God will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me (*i.e.* Christ)?" But what is said of Christ in Isaiah is applied to the saint of the present dispensation in Romans. This is a point of great importance, for in the Old Testament times the Church was hidden, a mystery not yet revealed; nevertheless Christ and the Church are one—what is true of the Head is true of the members; hence it is that the Spirit of God applies to the members of Christ in Romans what that same Spirit applies to Christ Himself in Isaiah.

Bearing this in mind, we may learn by referring to Isaiah l. the contrast between the portion of the saint of this present dispensation and that of the remnant of Israel in the time that follows the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord. In verses 8 and 9 we see what is true of Christ and the Church in Him, the conscious assurance that there can be no condemnation. But what will characterise the spiritual relations

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of the saints in the period that will come after the Church is removed is found in verse 10. They will fear the Lord, they will obey His voice, but they will be walking in darkness, and have no 'light. Their experiences are depicted in the Psalms. Passing through their time of great tribulation, fears and troubles of every kind surrounding them, their enemies ready to swallow them up, and God apparently leaving them alone, darkness and no light will indeed be their portion. We walk in the light, they will be walking in the darkness, but nevertheless they are exhorted to trust in the name of Jehovah, and to stay themselves upon God. Dark though their path may seem, it is better far than that of the ungodly nation of Israel described in verse 11. Space will not admit of further enlarging upon this deeply interesting scripture, but we would briefly recapitulate the three divisions:—

1. Christ and the Church (vers. 8, 9).
2. The remnant of Israel in the last days (ver. 10).
3. The ungodly nation of Israel at the same period (ver. 11).

And here we close this section of the epistle. What a marvellous unfolding of man's lost and ruined condition through sin, but of God's rich provision in grace, and the way His love can reach to the lowest depths, and bring the guilty thence, justifying them now, and setting them at peace before Him, and presently to complete

the story by putting them in glory. *All* had sinned, whether Jew or Gentile, and had come short of God's glory, but the gospel was God's power unto salvation to every one that believed, "to the Jew first and also to the Greek." "No condemnation" to those who are in Christ Jesus, and no separation "from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."



Christ and Criticism.

"For Truth is fallen in the street" (Isa. lix. 14).


THERE need be no apology for lifting a voice, however feeble, at the present moment, in warning to Christians, old and young, as to the almost universal departure from faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God. Recent utterances from leading men in the great denominations, once regarded as sound in the faith, are sufficiently plain and distinct to show definitely where they are as to this all-important question, which is not now one of doctrine or interpretation, but simply and solely whether the Bible be inspired or not.

The chairman of the Congregational Union, in his recent address on "Christ and Criticism," says: "The contention is no longer tenable that 'Thus saith the Lord' means that every message

with this *imprimatur* upon it, came directly from the Most High. . . . No longer is it maintained that inspiration guaranteed the subject of it against all inaccuracies of thought and conception, and secured for his words absolute truth, historical and scientific, as well as moral and spiritual." He says again: "That Rabbinical subtleties may have crept into the argument of even the chief of the apostles; that every statement attributed to each New Testament writer, may possibly not be absolutely exact: that the truths they taught may be coloured by their prepossessions and personal idiosyncrasies; that there may be divergence of opinion about such truths, arising from difference of standpoint, of emphasis, and other causes—*all this is now conceded.*"

Alas! is it so, dear Christian reader? But there is one strong contention in the said address to which we would particularly refer. The writer says, speaking of a certain given time, "the atmosphere of reverent earnest inquiry, which, during the years which have elapsed since then, has gathered round the person of our Lord, has brought closer than ever to the heart of His followers Him who 'though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.' *That* life, no question of books and their authors, of manuscripts and texts, can injure."

Again we ask, is this so? Can the Old Testament or the New Testament be attacked as to

their divine origin, their inspiration, their truthfulness, and the words of Christ Himself be left unassailed? Can it be conceded, as this author says, that the writers may not be whom they are stated to be, and that their communications may be affected by traditionary legends, personal idiosyncrasies, and such like—may not be absolutely exact even, and yet that the person and word of Christ stand unassailed? Impossible! Not only do the Old Testament and the New stand or fall together, but Christ and the Scriptures stand or fall together, and if we mistake not, this is more than the thin edge of the wedge, that shall eventually bring down the tree, as far as faith in the written Word of God as such is concerned.

In another of the great denominations, it is proposed to supersede a certain professor in the headship of a college, because of his heterodox opinions and writings, and this may be thought to speak well for that denomination, but it is a matter of common knowledge, that those upon whom the unpleasant task fell of counselling his resignation, have been denounced as narrow-minded heresy hunters, and it is openly stated that over one hundred ministers of the denomination have written to the said professor, sympathising with his position, and declaring that they hold the views expressed in his papers.

It may be asked, Why comment on these things? and our reply is, that they are matters

of vital interest to every Christian, far above any question of individuals or denominations. They are commented upon in the daily newspapers, freely discussed at various meetings, and cannot but be regarded as indicating the trend of opinion in Christendom. They are indeed a sign of the times, serious and appalling. We would ask the serious attention of the Christian reader to a few only of the many places in which the Lord Jesus Christ has unmistakably set His own Divine approval on the books and writers of the Old Testament, quoting again and again from some of the very books most frequently assailed by critics. It is the Lord Himself who says in John v. 45-47 : " There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust ; for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me ; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words ? " Again in Luke xvi. 29-51 : " Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. " But not only on the books of Moses as such, but on the Scriptures, the sacred writings as we have them, and as the Jews owned them, and in the the three great divisions so well known to us all, does the Lord set His seal in the most emphatic

way. "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke xxiv. 44).

Into the general question of inspiration we do not pretend to enter, as it has been so well and ably done by the Lord's servants, past and present, but would direct attention to the phase of the matter suggested in the before-mentioned address, as to the possibility of retaining the great central figure of Christianity, and our faith in Christ, as these men say, while we yield to critics our contention for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and we emphatically say that this is impossible. Both during His lifetime, and after His resurrection, Christ affirmed in the most solemn and absolute way, over and over again, that the Scriptures as a whole, and in all their parts, are of God Himself, given through Moses and the prophets, as they themselves affirmed; and He owned and insisted on their divine authority in a way that leaves us no other resource but to accept them in all their entirety, or to receive the blasphemous suggestion that the blessed Lord has set His seal in such a way upon a "*spurious compilation.*" A pious fraud (as people say), unworthy even of an honest man, and a suggestion against which the soul of a lover of Christ revolts, and yet this

and much more of the same kind, too bad for repetition, has been freely asserted by professing Christians.

If proofs were wanted of the effect of this kind of reasoning, we have it in a letter recently published in a religious magazine, in which the writer (apparently a Christian minister) asks for something more definite as to what is really meant by criticism, and if the contention as to Christ is—that He was *misinformed* or *uninformed*. Think, of this dear reader, of our Lord and Saviour, and the holy, spotless, undefiled Son of God.

Think of such a question being asked even, and then assert, if you dare, that the Christ has been unassailed and unattacked. We are thankful indeed for such as the late C. H. Spurgeon, who wrote in righteous indignation when the march of criticism had not reached its present stage:—

“The Church of England seems to be eaten through and through with Sacramentalism, but Nonconformity appears to me to be almost riddled with philosophic infidelity. Those of whom we thought better things are turned aside from the fundamentals of the faith. At first it was the doctrine of the eternity of punishment that had to be given up; now it must be the very doctrine of the Fall—first one and then another, the whole must go. They treat our doctrines as though they were all to be knocked

down at their good pleasure when they choose to amend our theology. Through and through I believe the very heart of England is honey-combed with a damnable infidelity which dares still to go into the pulpit and call itself Christian."

Let us then take heed, and if the reader be a young Christian, we would affectionately warn against the insidious workings of unbelief, and the specious arguments of pretentious learning. These sad departures are not confined to one section of the professing Church only, everywhere the leaven is spreading, and bodies of Christians once regarded as "undoubtedly orthodox," have forsaken what was contemptuously styled "the flowery paths of orthodoxy," to wander in the seductive byeways of human reasoning and philosophy.

The good old rule of "*chapter and verse* for everything" is despised, and well-known generally accepted expressions of the orthodox faith are dropped for newer and more modern terms. We do not plead for "party shibboleths," but desire to "hold fast the form of sound words"—"to continue in the things that we have learned, knowing of whom we have learned them," and "that we have not followed cunningly devised fables" as these men would have us believe. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. xii. 6). "Thy word is true from the beginning," or as also rendered, "true from the

first word" (Ps. cxix. 160). The case of the professor of theology before referred to has been concluded with the unsatisfactory compromise by which he retains the theological chair at Richmond College and his heterodox opinions, on condition that he keeps the latter strictly to himself. But may we ask where is *the truth* in this? Is it any wonder that those who look for guidance to such men are found wandering in the mazes of unbelief, and "concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. i. 19)?

So anxious are many of these men to keep abreast of the times, and not to be thought behind the advancement of science, that they have forgotten the difference between the *facts of science* and the *deductions and reasonings* of scientific men. With the *facts* of science Scripture does not conflict. "A man was famous according as he lifted up axes upon the thick trees" of the growth of evil. "But now they break down the carved work thereof"—the precious doctrines of grace—"with axes and hammers" (Ps. lxxiv. 5, 6).

Dear Christian reader, let us remember, then, that in giving up the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures we lose Christ, and that if it be a question of *His word*, in distinction from those of the writers of Holy Writ, He said more as to the eternal duration and the nature of the punishment of the wicked than any of the sacred writers. "If a man love ME, he will keep MY WORD" (John xiv. 23).

T. R.

King Jehoshaphat ;

OR,

“ Be Careful in your Choice of Companions.”

THROUGH the mercy of the Lord, it is written of Jehoshaphat that he “returned to his house in peace,” although not without rebuke, for “the son of Hanani went out to meet him,” and put this important question to the erring, if repentant, king, “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord” (2 Chron. xix. 2, 3).

God had been very gracious to Jehoshaphat. He always is gracious ; while rebuking the king, He did not forget that there were “good things” found in him. God in His holiness judges wrong-doing, but does not overlook any good in His people. It is said, “and by Him actions are weighed” (1 Sam. ii. 3). God in His grace forgives, but then His ways in government must continue all the same.

Our readers may have heard of the little boy whose conduct so displeased his father, that he said he would drive a nail into a post in the garden every time he was naughty in future. A considerable number of nails were driven in, alas ! After a time, however, a difference became apparent in the boy's behaviour ; there were kind acts

instead of cruel ones, obedient ways instead of disobedient ones, and the father promised to take a nail out of the post every time that he observed these altered and better actions.

Accordingly, one bright day the happy parent took his boy into the garden to see the last nail taken out of that tell-tale post. The boy was not so pleased as his father expected, and being questioned, he answered, "Father, you have taken away the nails, but you have left all the holes behind!" If the withdrawing of the nails told of the father's forgiveness, the holes showed where the nails had been. So was it with Jehoshaphat; he "returned to his house in peace," but "wrath was upon him from before the Lord" for being unequally yoked with the ungodly.

When King David exclaimed, "I have sinned," the confession was met with "the Lord hath put away thy sin," but we know if grace puts away the sin, government must decree that the sword shall not depart from the house of David. Repentance to be effectual must be heartfelt, yes, and conscience felt too; and then the fruits of repentance will be seen. Jehoshaphat was now not only desirous of being right with God Himself, but we observe that he was desirous of bringing back those he had led astray, for had he not said to ungodly Ahab, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and we will be with thee in the war"? But now "he went out again through the people from Beersheba to

Mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers. And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor "taking of gifts." This sounds wholesome. Jehoshaphat has learnt a deep lesson; he now knows what a valuable thing is the fear of the Lord, and how serious a thing it is to act without the sense of that fear. We fear that a good deal of so-called repentance is very superficial and shallow. It is refreshing to read what the apostle Paul says of the Corinthians: "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation. . . . In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor. vii. 11).

Have any of our readers lost their first love, or are they in danger of losing it? or are they unequally yoked with unbelievers? Cry to the Lord, for only He can deliver. Jehoshaphat might have used on his restoration, and after having nearly lost his life through backsliding, the words of the Psalm: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of

darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands asunder.”

“O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder” (Ps. cvii.).

W. R. C.



FRAGMENT.

ALTHOUGH it require the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience, from which it cannot escape. The light detects “the breaker up,” though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny its truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like you and me

might be with Him, know Him—deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy. The word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.



Walking in the Spirit.

THE place we are brought into should be the expression of our acceptance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard," &c. The Christ of God is the only channel, the only source by which we are blessed, and the Holy Ghost the only power by which our blessing is reached. To recover truth is a blessed thing, but the acknowledgment of truth does not give the power of walking in the truth. Far better to acknowledge the weakness in which we are found, for when truth is accredited that weakness constitutes our power, "when weak then strong," gathered together in the name of Jesus, the power that united will lead us on.

The Corinthians had manifest gifts, but the

apostle came in on their weakness, in on their anxiety to appear something when they were *nothing*. When we feel we are really nothing we become something the Spirit can use. If guided by the reality of the Spirit of God in our midst, by the reality of God's presence here, we can go out filled without the need of anything else. The Corinthians were intoxicated by their gifts, led away by them into division and diversity of judgment, so that they needed rebuke. Paul judges everything in the light of the cross.

We who were linked with eternal life in Christ before the world was, oftentimes lightly esteem the things of God; we judge things in our own light. If we looked at everything in the light of eternity, we should say with Paul, our light afflictions are not for a moment to be balanced against the eternal weight of glory. Are we sensible of the blessed distinctness of our position? Do we take this position by faith, not looking for any display of gift, but the realisation of God's presence forming all our joy and blessing as we gather around this table in the name of Jesus?

Some call those happy meetings where there are some to teach, but have you entered into the thought that we are here, in such a wonderful place that our *weakness* is strength, a place that shuts out man, in the presence of God? Are we honouring God's presence? Do we bring expecting hearts quietly resting before Him in

the sense of His goodness as empty vessels expecting to be filled? This is to honour God in worship. If we let it down to the mere gathering, no wonder it is nothing but weakness. He invites us to a feast to-day. We gather around the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to show forth the death through which the power of Satan was destroyed.

We have our feast because of having been sprinkled by the blood and delivered from Egypt. If low enough, there is no end to our blessing. Alas! how often it is that the pride of having and of knowing something better than others comes in, but it ought rather to be a source of humiliation to think how little we know in comparison with what we might know. We have our full joy in redemption, but it is the question whether we can testify to the full stream of what the Spirit shows us afterwards, that is what we should covet after. Is there any state of ruin or weakness where God cannot come in to bless? We may be talking of the altered times and evil days we are cast in, but is not the God of Elijah our God? Is He ever taken by surprise? Ours is the God whose thought is to take us up and bless us out of the fulness of His heart of infinite love in Christ Jesus.

Ah! who shall tell us save the Spirit the deep things of that God, and what He has prepared for those that love Him? Oh! if His people

did but come together simply in the name of Jesus, bowing down, saying, Lord, we bring nothing, but wait on Thee to be sent away filled, blessing He would bless. Is He ever weary of blessing the people He has given to His Son? He acts toward them according to His estimate of that Christ. Ah! as if any partakers of the life of that Christ, and united to Him, could ever know what it is to lose the favour of that God towards the people accepted in the Son of His love.

First, the large thought of redemption, and next the Spirit freely given to lead on and to reveal the depths of love that it could never enter the heart of man to conceive of. Have you the Lord's appreciation of this first day of the week? Do you come round this table as saints realising your entire weakness in self, but gathered according to the power of Christ that no flesh should glory before God?

Whence comes the lack of divine unction? Is it not because saints look for something in one another instead of looking above for blessing and waiting on the Spirit for it? Paul could say, "We have the mind of Christ." Shall we be straitened when we think what a large place we are set in?—a fountain for ever flowing to which we may go and get refreshing, knowing that in the flesh there is no good thing, living and walking in the Spirit.

J. WILLANS.

Ministry.

THERE is no royal road to fruitful ministry of the truth. Ezra showed that he had learned in God's school when he prepared his heart to **seek** the law of the Lord, and to **do** it, and to **teach** in Israel statutes and judgments (Ezra vii. 10), and these principles always abide good. In Proverbs xii. 23, we are told that a prudent man *concealeth* knowledge. Why so? Why, having sought knowledge, should he hide it? Because, being wise, he knows that knowledge is granted to him in order that he may himself *practise* it. The preaching comes later on. "Thy word have *I* hid in *my* heart that *I* might not sin against Thee" (Ps. cxix. 2). Then, as the apostle instructs Timothy, when you have yourself *profited* by the knowledge *you* have got, thy profiting shall appear to all. *That* is the *preaching*.

Note the order:—**Seek—do—teach.**

Mark the "**do.**" It is the keystone of the gateway to real ministry. Take away the keystone and all is deplorable ruin.

L. W. R.

The Epistle to the Romans.

THE next three chapters (ix., x., xi.) form a kind of appendix to what has preceded.

The doctrine of free salvation to all through faith on the ground of grace would seem to conflict with the special promises made to Israel.

On the ground of law the Jew was excluded from all blessing, for he had broken it. But not only did the Jews boast in the possession of the law; to them also belonged the promises made to the fathers, unconditional promises; and the rebellious heart of man might reason, that if the gospel let in the Gentile to blessing, then, "the word of God hath taken none effect" (chap. ix. 6).

First the apostle earnestly defends himself against any possible charge of slighting his own "kinsmen according to the flesh." He loved them with an overflowing heart. It is evident from a careful study of the chapter before us (chap. ix.) that the apostle had in mind the solemn incident in Israel's history recorded in Exodus xxxiii., xxxiv. The people had turned their backs upon Jehovah and were bowing down before the golden calf. "Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them," said the Lord, "and that I may consume them; and

XXXVI.

I will make of thee a great nation." But such was Moses' care for the honour of Jehovah, whose people they were, spite of all their stiff-neckedness; such, too, was his love for that people, that he pleads on their behalf, and even asks that himself might be blotted out of Jehovah's book rather than that the people should be destroyed. Well, says Paul, such, too, is the love that I bear you, that I had wished myself accursed in your stead; will any, then, accuse me of lack of love, or indifference to your welfare?

But further, no charge can be brought against the Word of God, "for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (ver. 6). In other words, the blessing comes not merely on the ground of natural descent, but upon that of God's sovereign and electing grace, and if on this ground it may reach to the Gentile as well as to the Jew. This is the great subject of the chapter now before us. There is such a thing as election, whatever man in his pride and rebellion of heart may say. And the Jew was forced to admit it. Nay, he could not gainsay it, for the history of his nation proved it.

Promises had been made to Abraham, unconditional promises, apart altogether from any question of law, but because they are the seed of Abraham does not necessarily make them children of the promise (ver. 7). For had not Abraham two sons, Ishmael as well as Isaac. Is Ishmael to be admitted into the blessing as

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well as Isaac? Oh no, cries the Jew, for "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." It is not enough to be of the seed of Abraham then; "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." No, with one consent the Jew would exclaim, the seed of the bondwoman, Hagar, must be shut out; "Sarah shall have a son," Isaac is the vessel of promise.

But "not only this" (ver. 10), for the Jew might still have reasoned that the child of a slave could have no pretension to attain to the promises; the matter is narrowed down still further. Rebecca had two sons, and both were of the same father, Isaac. Shall Esau be admitted as well as Jacob? No, again cries the Jew, the Edomites have no claim to the blessings of the promise. It is from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that all our blessing comes, and it is in that line alone that it descends. True, reasons the Spirit through the apostle, "the purpose of God according to election" must stand. Moreover, it is not by any means on the ground of works, but solely "of Him that calleth," for before either Jacob or Esau were born, hence before they had done either "good or evil," God had said, "The elder (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob)." This was said before their birth; but not till hundreds of years after their death, and after their lives had proved what their characters were, did God say, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Mal. i. 2, 3).

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Again, the flesh would raise its voice in rebellion against God, for the carnal mind is always enmity against Him. "Is there unrighteousness with God?" (ver. 14). God forbid, says the apostle, and proceeds to demonstrate the folly of the charge from undeniable facts in the history of the Jewish people. When the people had made the golden calf, they cut themselves off from all claim to blessing by reason of their sin. God, had He acted in righteousness, would have cut all off except Moses and Joshua. But on the intercession of Moses, God declares that He will act in mercy; righteousness would have cut them all off, sovereign mercy alone will bless any. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (ver. 15). Blessing comes, not on the ground of man's will or activity in works, but it is "of God that showeth mercy" (ver. 16). So the lost sinner must accept salvation on the ground of God's mercy, and not on the ground of his own merit of whatever sort. This humbles man's pride to the dust, but there only can God meet the sinner. On the other hand, the case of Pharaoh proved God's power to harden if He saw fit so to do. It must be carefully noted that nowhere in Scripture is there any such thought as election to perdition. God did not will that Pharaoh should be a sinner, and should perish; He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; but then man must repent or be

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lost, and here comes in the truth that man is responsible, at the same time that God is sovereign.

Pharaoh was a sinner already, and had defied the God of Israel. "Who is the Lord," he had said, "that I should obey Him?" Well, says God, you shall know, and all the earth shall learn through you what My power is, and how vain and useless it is to fight against God. Pharaoh was obliged to bow, and so must every man either in grace or judgment.

"Why doth He yet find fault then?" (ver. 19), cries stubborn and wilful man. And who are you to reply against God? Has not God more power than man? Cannot the potter do what he pleases with the clay? Mark, it is not said that God ever makes a vessel to dishonour; but the right and power of God to do what He pleases is here stated, and this is a truth that man must bow to. Sin need never keep any out of heaven, no matter how great the sin may be, for the blood of Jesus can cleanse from all sin, but man's will of rebellion against God will infallibly do so unless he yields before the judgment day. "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40), said the Lord Jesus to the self-righteous Jews.

What is here taught us is this—all through sin are lost; both Israel and Pharaoh had terribly sinned; righteousness would have cut all off without exception; but God in His

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sovereignty has mercy on some, and others He hardens, not to make them sinners, for that they were before, but to demonstrate before the eyes of all the folly of resisting His will.

Observe, too, the patience of God, His long-suffering ; He does not cut off these "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," without giving them ample opportunity for repentance ; He endures them with much long-suffering. It is not said that He fitted them to destruction ; their own sin and unrepentant hostility against God did this ; but in the end He must make His power known. On the other hand, there are vessels of mercy, and upon these He will make known the riches of His glory. How did they become such ? By their own goodness or will ? No, but through sovereign mercy, and according to purposes of grace which were before the foundation of the world. God Himself had before prepared them unto glory.

Having thus clearly demonstrated the truth of God's sovereign mercy in election, the apostle applies it to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. If sovereign mercy was needed by the Jew, it is available also for the Gentile ; "even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (ver. 24). And this is borne witness to by the prophet Hosea. Doubtless the prophecy will be fulfilled in a coming day for Israel, but the Spirit of God here applies it to the present time in connection with those who

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believe the gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles. It would appear that verse 25 has reference to the Jewish believers of this present dispensation, for so Peter uses it in his epistle (1 Pet. ii. 10), where he is dealing with Jews; but verse 26 takes in believers from amongst the Gentiles, who, having no claim by nature or any other way to be the people of God, through grace are "called the children of the living God." A similar application of Old Testament prophecy is found in Galatians iv. 26-31. The present is the time of Israel's desolation, and yet she has now many more children than during the period in which she was recognised by Jehovah; for such is God's grace to us, that the rejection of Israel for a season has opened the flood-gates of His mercy to the Gentiles, and "now we, brethren, after the pattern of Isaac, are the children of the promise" (Gal. iv. 28). This application to the present time of prophecies which will yet be fulfilled literally is of the deepest interest.

Having shown from Hosea that the admission of Gentiles into blessing had been foretold, the apostle next proves from Isaiah that not all Israel but only a remnant therefrom would be saved (vers. 27-29). And he concludes by showing that the reason of the rejection of Israel nationally was twofold; first, their vain effort at attaining righteousness through a broken law; and secondly, their rejection of Christ—"they stumbled at that stumbling stone." But the

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Gentiles, equally sinners with the Jews, and all unworthy as they were, had attained to righteousness, not a human and legal righteousness, but one which was divine, "even the righteousness which was of faith."

Thus is proved the very doctrine with which the epistle opens: "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (chap. iv. 16).

Jottings at a Bible-Reading.

IN Revelation iii., in the address to Philadelphia, it is, "I have set before thee an *opened* door." The spirit of the world, and especially in religious arrangement, goes to shut the door against God, hence the need of the *opened* door, He having "right of way" to every soul—"My sheep hear My voice." In verse 11 it is not, "*Behold*, I come quickly," but "*I* come quickly." We have the word "behold" elsewhere, a warning, or to call attention, which Philadelphia (seeing the state they were in) did not need, but they needed much the encouragement of "I come quickly."

The Philadelphian state and that of the poor

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widow who cast into the treasury her two last mites is somewhat analogous. This act of devotedness is found at the end of Jewish failure and ruin. There is this one that gives her all. Her gift, though little, draws forth the Lord's approval.

Philadelphia presents a phase of the Church found at the end of its history here. First love left in Ephesus ends in Laodicea spued out or disowned as God's witness. The last four churches go on together to the end. Philadelphia and Laodicea are very opposite states. In Philadelphia, Christ is everything to them. In Laodicea, Christ is nothing to them; there is inside a big self-complacent "I," and Christ outside. This shows how things are to-day.

I want to speak a little of the foundation of the hope of the Church, *i.e.*, the Lord's coming. In the writings of Luther and many other Christian writers we find no mention of it. But in the last sixty or seventy years it has been taught, and brought into great prominence. God has been at work to revive the hope which had been lost.

The foundation. If you and I are not established in what Christ did at His first coming, His coming again will be little thought of by us. "Jesus our Deliverer from the coming wrath." He has become our Deliverer by putting Himself under the whole weight of God's judgment when on the cross.

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Read Galatians i. 3, 4. Have we bowed to what the will of our God and Father is for us? We learn Himself in what He has done for us. Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (ver. 4). He Himself is our hope.

The widow (Luke xxi. 2) and Philadelphia—the widow has at heart God's interests at that time. Her whole soul is bound up in the temple. She has before her what the temple is in God's unchanging thought for Israel's blessing. *They* made it "a house of merchandise." *She* had it before her according to faith's estimate of it—God being faithful—and she cast in all her living. This was under His eye. He sees the value of her act, and at such a moment of failure and ruin that shortly after this He says, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "As some spake of the temple," &c. (ver. 5), the Lord said it should all be thrown down. They were looking at the outward thing—the "goodly stones and gifts." Are we trying to keep up the outward thing? The temple, as the widow apprehended it in faith, was to stand. The inner state seen by the Lord in the widow, and the outward and visible thing seen by the disciples, are in great contrast. Philadelphia is something the same as the widow. The widow is seen at the end of Jewish apostasy and ruin—Philadelphia at the end of the Church's ruin.

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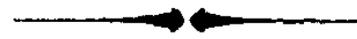
Have we understood the total ruin the Church has become in man's responsibility? But God is active in grace above all the failure, and directs the hearts of His people to Christ who is all, and who is coming. "Hold fast that which thou hast." The encouragement for this is, "I come quickly." You will see the value of "that which thou hast" when you notice the state Philadelphia was found in, viz., devotedness to Christ: "Thou hast not denied *My* name." This marks attachment to Christ. "*My* patience"—it is association with Him in *His* patience in waiting. Philadelphia thus did not need the word "behold." "I come quickly" expresses His heart's desire to have His people with Him, and "quickly" is as fresh and true to-day as ever.

"That which thou hast"—it is having Christ, and devotedness carrying one on against a Christ-rejecting world. What the widow had would be of little value before men, but of great value "in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. i. 3). What she did would not be found put in a newspaper, or made much of in the world, but it drew forth His appreciation.

Let us see to-day what we have. Every bit of truth you have, have you got it so taught of God? We live in a day of intellectuality. Nothing so tends to destroy spirituality. We need to possess truth in spiritual power. . . . May the Lord encourage us to-day by seeing His un-

changing faithfulness. . . . They had a little strength—positive strength though little. Let us take home the word “*I come quickly,*” and “*Hold fast,*” &c. The very fact of being told to hold fast shows the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil at work to rob me of it. He says, “*Hold fast,*” showing it can be done. The power is with Him.

W. J. C.



Simplicity.



WE may be quite sure that the enemy of souls is ever seeking to turn aside God's people from the truth; and we need to be constantly on the alert lest he should catch us, and hinder our joy and communion, as well as our usefulness.

The fear of this filled the apostle Paul's heart in respect of the saints at Corinth; and his words to them in his second epistle (chap. xi. 3), when he speaks of this, furnish instruction of the very greatest importance. May the Spirit of God, as we meditate upon it, awaken us both to the danger and to the remedy provided against it.

What the apostle feared was that their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Another translation renders this latter part “simplicity as to the Christ,” which, I think,

helps us to see that there is a simplicity connected with the doctrine concerning Christ (that is, the truth generally), the loss of which is infinitely serious. The apostle's words tell us how serious when he speaks of their being *corrupted* from this simplicity, for it shows us that the moment a child of God is turned aside from this simplicity, *corruption has set in*. All will admit that this is serious indeed.

Let us then inquire what this simplicity consists of, for it is evident that a right understanding of that is most necessary. The apostle himself furnishes us the clue when he illustrates his point by a reference to the beguiling of Eve. The illustration is most apt, for he has just said that like as a bride is prepared for the bridegroom, so he had espoused them to one husband, that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ; and his fear is that *they* should be corrupted like as the first bride was.

If we turn to the story of this first beguiling, we shall easily see what this simplicity consisted in. When the serpent first approached Eve with his subtle suggestions, she answered him promptly, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Now it is in this very answer that the simplicity is seen. God's mind had been communicated to Eve in words

which presented no difficulty, and they had been received without question, and, up to that moment, obeyed. Could anything be simpler than that? Nay, for it is precisely the same principle upon which we deal with the tiniest child that has any understanding at all. We leave a little one alone in a room for a while, but before going we give some simple instruction that it shall not touch a certain article before our return. Does the mite understand? Certainly! And what remains? Only that it shall *obey*. It may not understand *why* the command was given. That is not always necessary. The authority of the parent answers for that. And in the same way Eve's attitude towards God's communications was, at the moment the serpent approached, characterised by the greatest simplicity. God had spoken, and she had without question believed and obeyed, and the effect of this was complete happiness. Now note what the serpent suggested—*that God did not mean quite what His words seemed to convey*. And here is the critical point of the whole question. It is what has been suggested thousands of times since, and what is being pressed with increased energy in our own day, **BUT IT IS FALSE**. It cannot be too strongly pressed, and pressed again, that God's words mean exactly what they say. We may not always understand why He commands this and that, but (and I would appeal especially to the young believer, although it is equally ap-

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plicable to the old) let us plainly understand that every word means just what it says, and nothing else. And in the putting down of our foot firmly upon this lies all our happiness.

Brethren, I appeal to you, don't be robbed of your treasure. Cling to the Lord's precious legacy, and your happiness and welfare will be intact.

Eve was corrupted. She had enjoyed perfect bliss as a consequence of simple unquestioning obedience, but she surrendered her simplicity, and immediately reaped its terrible consequences.

Friends! God always speaks in language we can understand. We do not grasp everything at once. We *grow* in knowledge. But we grow most when we simply take God's Word as it stands, whether we understand it or not.

Look again at what the apostle says, "*I fear . . . lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*"

Ponder it well, for once the believer starts upon this corrupt path, there is no knowing how far he may depart from the truth; whilst, on the other hand, the simple clinging through all to the Word as it is given, although entailing suffering for the truth's sake, as it assuredly will, brings a happiness and peace that nothing else can. May you and I be preserved, dear reader! L. W. R.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"
(Rom. xiii. 12).

Short Papers on the Church.

6. THE COMING OF THE LORD FOR HIS SAINTS.

THE Lord's coming is the *hope* of the Church and of each individual believer.

“ I Jesus . . . am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come* ” (Rev. xxii.).

To David the promise of a son—the Christ—was given ; of a son who should be also the Son of God, “ I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son ” (1 Chron. xvii. 11-14). David's son is David's offspring, but being also the Son of God, He is the one from whom David drew his being and his blessings : “ The *Root* and the Offspring of David.” The One who should accomplish all the promises made to David, whether as regards the house or the kingdom.

The Lord announced to Peter (Matt. xvi. 18) His intention of building His Church—God's house. In the Book of Revelation, the throne is seen in heaven (iv., v., &c.), and the kingdom is on the point of being established on earth (xi. 15, &c.).

But before the kingdom is set up in power over the earth, the Lord will take His own to be with Himself, to bear His image and to come

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with Him in His glory (John xiv. 2, 3 ; Col. iii. 4 ; Jude 14, 15 ; Rev. iii. 10, 11).

The "day of the Lord," the power of the kingdom, will be inaugurated by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 1, 2).

Before the day breaks in its glory, the bright and morning star is seen shining in its solitary brilliancy. Thus is the Lord the Hope of the Church, thus are suitable affections formed in the Bride by the Spirit. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

When Jesus was on the eve of leaving the disciples to go to the Father, by the way of the cross, He told them of His earnest desire and intention to have them with Himself in the Father's house (John xiv. 1-3). In His prayer to the Father, breathed in the hearing of those whom the Father had given to Him, He says, "Father, *I will* that those whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory that Thou hast given Me ; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24). Think, beloved, of the place in the Lord's heart, occupied by His disciples, that He should say to the Father, "I will," respecting those whom the Father had given Him.

On that same evening, He said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (John xiv.). He presents Himself to them during the time of

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His absence, as an object of their faith like the invisible God. Then He adds, "In My Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you ; I go to prepare a place for you."

The Father's house, not the earth, will be the place of eternal blessing for believers. None but the Son could reveal the *Father's* house, His own dwelling-place ; none but the Son could prepare a place therein for any one. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, ye may be also."

"I will come," says the Lord—not, I will send an angel to fetch you—"and receive you unto Myself." "The Lord *Himself* will descend from heaven" (1 Thess. iv. 16). "Thus shall we ever be with the Lord," is the revelation on this subject "by the word of the Lord" to Paul (1 Thess. iv.).

All this shows the place in the Lord's affection occupied by His beloved, and thus are the hearts of believers formed to wait for their beloved Lord, and to say, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

The Thessalonians (only converted a few weeks), when some of them died, feared that their dead companions would be deprived of the blessings to be introduced by the Lord at His coming to reign. The fourth chapter of the first epistle (vers. 15 to 18) is a special message to them "by the word of the Lord," to set their

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hearts at rest respecting their departed brothers and sisters, and to reveal to them that which the Lord had made known to His disciples in John xiv. 1-7, and what the Lord had prayed the Father in John xvii. 24, "To be with Himself for ever."

These Thessalonians had been converted to God from idols "to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come" (i. 9, 10). They *waited for* their Lord, but they had yet to learn that at the Lord's coming God would bring with Jesus those put to sleep in Jesus: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again," even so, *with Him*, God will bring "them which sleep in Jesus" (iv. 14). But if they too come with Jesus, is it not evident that they must first be raised from the dead and go to Him (ver. 16).

But, you may ask, do not the souls of those who die in the Lord go at once to be with Him? Did not Paul say, "To depart and to be with Christ is far better" than to remain here (Phil. i. 23); to be thus "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8)?

The state of departed souls, however blessed, is not, dear brethren, the full and final blessing God has in store for His saints. Even as Jesus died and *rose again*, so must the bodies of believers know His power and bear His image. The body (as well as the soul) must share

adoption and redemption (Rom. viii. 23). "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who will change our vile (or mortal) body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 20, 21). "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). It is this hope which produces practical holiness in the waiting saint: "And every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (ver. 3). Read also Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv.

"Fashioned like to His glorious body," "like Him" in the body, as well as conformed to Him in the soul, to Him who is ever the only-begotten of the Father, alone in His divine glory and sonship, and yet the "First-born among many brethren."

The whole Church, composed of sleeping and of living saints, will obey the Lord's command, the trumpet sound, and meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17), being caught up together by His power, in the twinkling of an eye.

Christ will present the Church, the Bride, *unto Himself*, a glorious Church (Eph. v. 25-27, 32).

To be with Him, to behold the glory of the One whom the Father loves (John xvii. 24), is the recompense which appeals to the affections of those who love the Lord, and which shows at

the same time how the Lord Jesus counts on the love of His own, knowing that our supreme joy, beloved, will be to be *with* Him, to behold His glory, the expression of the Father's love.

What then is the effect produced on those who thus wait for Him? "Every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). According as this hope burns brightly in our hearts, beloved brethren, so are we exercised, so do we purify ourselves as He is pure. The *hope* produces this effect. How is it with us practically? Are we occupied with Him? Are we waiting for Him? Are our hearts filled with Him as we journey to meet Him; the ear, the heart ever listening to His voice by the Holy Spirit and *expecting* His coming?

May the hearts of all His redeemed be awakened to wait for Him, that none may be ashamed at His coming, but that His satisfaction respecting His own may be complete at His coming!

F. M. H.

Correspondence.

"Ritualism and the Reformation" and the Second Commandment.

When writing the above pamphlet I had before me the Prayer-Book used by Romanists in France, entitled "Le Paroissien." It is quite possible that in the Catechism for Romanists,

published by Burns & Oates, the second commandment has been inserted, for that Catechism is intended for English people, many of whom, alas! have been Protestants. To have omitted it there might have done more harm than good to the Romish cause, as it would at once have awakened the suspicion that they were tampering with the Word of God.

To know what Rome really does teach, you must come to countries such as France, Spain, and Ireland, where the people are completely under the power of the priests. Here in Ireland the "Maynooth Catechism" is in very general use, and there the true second commandment (vers. 4 and 5 of Exod. xx.) *is left out*, and the tenth (Exod. xx. 17) is divided into two in order to keep the number up to ten. Most people are aware that there are, or should be, ten commandments, and their suspicions would be immediately aroused if they discovered that by some means or other these had shrunk into nine!

The same remarks apply to another book largely used by Irish Romanists, "A Manual of Christian Doctrine," by Rev. Daniel Terris.

But this deceitful handling of the Word of God has placed Rome in a difficulty even here, for the terms of the tenth commandment are given in a different order in Exodus xx. 17 and Deuteronomy v. 21. In Exodus the *house* comes first, the *wife* second; whereas in Deuteronomy

the *wife* is first and the *house* second. To get over this difficulty Rome has united the ninth and tenth under one heading.

And now what will your friend say when I tell you that in all the National Schools in Ireland the ten commandments are hung up on the walls, but the words "thou shalt not *bow down thyself* to them" have been deliberately cut out. Now this has been passed by a Protestant (!) censor! Rather than give offence to a people wholly given to idolatry, the Word of God must be mutilated. The above two Catechisms are published by Gill & Sons, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin.

H. S., Sheffield.—In reading your remarks *re* the two Jewish dispensations, "This Age" and "The Age to Come," in "Hints on Daniel" (October issue of *Christian's Library*), Luke xxi. 32, 33 was brought before me. Is "this generation" the same as "this age"?

As in English so in Greek, the words in each case are different, and mean two different things. The "age" means a *dispensation* during which God acts according to certain definite principles; the "generation" means a *race of people*. In the passage you quote, as well as in many others, the term has a *moral* signification rather than a chronological one. We are not to understand a generation of some thirty or forty years' duration, but a race possessing certain moral characteristics of unbelief and hardness of heart. (Compare Deut. xxxii. 5, 20.)

Jehovah-Jireh—The Lord will Provide.

(GEN. xxii. 14.)

THE saints should never be dismayed,
Nor sink in hopeless fear,
For when they least expect His aid
The Saviour will appear.

This Abraham found : he raised the knife ;
God saw, and said, " Forbear !
Yon ram shall yield his meaner life ;
Behold the victim there."

Once David seemed Saul's certain prey,
But hark ! the foe's at hand ;
Saul turns his arms another way
To save the invaded land.

When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,
He thought to rise no more,
But God prepared a fish to save,
And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine
That meet us in His Word !
May every deep-felt care of mine
Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for His seasonable aid,
And though it tarry, wait :
The promise may be long delayed,
But cannot come too late.

COWPER.