

THE
YOUNG CHRISTIAN:

A MONTHLY PERIODICAL

INTENDED TO MEET THE VARIED SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF
BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

' I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF
GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.'—Phil. iii. 14.

* * * *

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THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. xx.—(*Continued from page 282*).

MANY have thought that in giving us in chap. xx. the narration of Abraham's sojourn at Gerar, and the denial of his wife there, the Spirit of God has followed a moral and not a chronological order, and that the true place of this chapter, as far as mere history is concerned, is between verses eight and nine of chap. xii. And there are various reasons for this view; the birth of Isaac being definitely fixed, we should hardly expect to find Abraham making any extended journeyings, and, added to this, Sarah was ninety years of age (xvii. 17), and would scarcely have proved an object of attraction to Abimelech. Be that as it may, the moral import of the relation of the episode in this place is sufficiently plain, as I shall have occasion later on to shew, in considering its typical bearing on ourselves.

As to Abraham, the character of the temptation to which he was exposed, appears to one somewhat different from that to which, under very similar circumstances, he had previously been exposed in Egypt. In that case he had, without first seeking the Lord's mind, left the Land, and the temptation which he met he met outside it. And, as we had occasion then to shew, the lesson which he then learnt of not leaving the Land was a life-long one, and one which he never needed to have repeated to him. But, in the case before us, the temptation befell him *in the Land*, for Philistia lay within its confines. Thus it would appear that though Abraham had learnt one salutary lesson in Egypt, and had, as a result, thoroughly judged his failure in leaving Canaan; yet that the sin of denying his wife had never been judged in God's presence, and that hence there was left an inherent weakness in his moral nature, which was destined to manifest its presence later on in his career, and to lead to a second denial of his wife.

But God, even if we are unfaithful, will not deny Himself. His watchful eye was over Sarah, not less in Abimelech's house than in Abraham's tent, and He knew how to deliver His own from the temptations into which they had heedlessly rushed. He appeared, accordingly, to Abimelech in a dream, and warned him to restore Sarah to her lord, and at the same time intimated the peculiar relation—that of a prophet—in which Abraham stood to Himself. But if God thus espouses his failing servant's cause, He will nevertheless let him be made sensible of his folly, and, for the second time, an uncircumcised Gentile administers to Jehovah's prophet a well-merited rebuke. And very lame is Abraham's excuse: "I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place," he stammers out (but if that were so the natural rejoinder is, why was Abraham there?), and then with a foolish casuistry seeks to shew that his veracity had been unduly impugned by Abimelech;—she *was* his sister—his half-sister, if not his whole; but as one of our poets sings,

"A truth which is only half a truth
Is ever the worst of lies."

The Lord keep all his prophets from these half-sister half-lies!

But God in all this was really leading His servant on, and Abraham is brought to the point where he unearths the root-failure which had brought him sorrow alike in Egypt and Gerar. The secret is torn from his breast that he had at the very outset of his wanderings devised this foolish scheme of denying his wife; but the faithfulness of God in His dealings with His servant brings it all into the light of day, and Abraham has learnt a double lesson from his double failure; never, henceforth, will he leave the confines of the Land, and never, henceforth, will he deny his wife. "Behold," says Abimelech (and surely the sarcasm must have cut Abraham to the soul), "Behold,

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I have given thy *brother* a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, *and with all other*;" thus she was reproofed.

And surely we can learn a lesson from Sarah's reproof. Our Lord Jesus should be a covering to our eyes not only unto all that are with us—it is easy to confess Him before those who are like-minded with ourselves—but with all other. If we fail to confess Him before them, the time will undoubtedly come when we shall deeply feel His rebuke for our unfaithfulness.

And now let us conclude our consideration of this episode by unfolding its typical import. Egypt, as we saw, afforded us a type of the world; but Philistia cannot typify this, for it lay within the limits of the Land; what then is the distinction between the types? It would seem to me to be this; Abraham's denial of Sarah in Egypt prefigured the denial of Christ by the Church, His Bride, before the world *without*; while Abraham's denial of his wife at Gerar prefigures the Church's denial of her heavenly Bridegroom, through the introduction of a spirit of worldliness, *within*; a denial evidenced in those who had professedly embraced His coming as an immediate hope, but from whose hearts, apparently, that hope had died away.

And that such a condition will characterize the Church just previous to the appearing of our Lord Jesus as Heir of all, is manifest from the letter to the Laodiceans; they have not, like those at Philadelphia, kept the word of Christ's patience, and they are in danger of being spued out of His mouth. And, fellow-believer, are not these days, in principle, upon us? "Blessed," says the Apostle, "is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, *for the time is at hand*." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." JOHN FORT.

HELPERS TOGETHER BY PRAYER,

2 Cor. i. 11.

I WONDER how often our young christian readers think of the above words. They were uttered by Paul, and the loved and loving Apostle well knew the value and importance of prayer. He prayed much for the whole church of God, earnestly desiring that the saints should be strengthened by the Spirit; enabled to comprehend breadth, length, depth and height; to know the love of Christ; and be filled with the fulness of God, that so the Father, the Son, the Spirit, might each have their own place in each believer in *heart, mind, and life*. To this loving prayer of Paul's we add our hearty, Amen. But Paul also valued the prayers of God's people, for he says, *pray for us*. Again, he speaks of helping together by prayer.

Some years ago I visited a large village to preach Christ and, after preaching on the Lord's day, went on to another village on the same blessed errand. A young Christian accompanied me. On the way we met a woman to whom I spoke of Jesus. She was led to see herself a lost sinner and to realize her need of the cleansing blood. And, as I spoke of the love of God, His willingness to receive every poor sinner and forgive them for Christ's sake, she was enabled to say I do believe that Jesus died for me, and at once her heart filled with joy. I passed on and on coming up to my young friend, said, "Well, dear M., what were you thinking of while I preached Christ to that poor sinner." "Oh, Mr C.," she said, "I was praying all the time for a blessing on the words you were speaking." Thus was this dear young Christian, a helper together in the blessed work of the Gospel. Dear young Christian readers, God grant you may all be helpers together by prayer.

C. G. CHANDLER.

PAUL GERHARDT ALONE WITH GOD.

(A Word of Comfort in a day of Trial).

SOME years ago there was a great preacher in Germany, whose name was Paul Gerhardt. He was an earnest Christian man, and loved to preach about the Lord Jesus. But the ruler of that part of the country—he was called the Elector of Brandenburg—did not like that kind of preaching, so he sent word to this minister that he must either give up preaching in that way, or go away out of the country. Paul Gerhardt sent back this message; “That it would be very hard for him to leave his country and his friends, and go with his family among strangers, where they would have nothing to live on; but, as for preaching anything else than what the Bible taught him, he would rather die than do that.” So he had to go into banishment with his wife and little children.

At the end of their first day’s journey they came into a wood, and rested for the night at a little inn they found there. The little children were crying with hunger, and clinging to their mother; but she had no food to give and no money to buy any with. She had tried to keep up all day, but now she began to cry too. This made Paul Gerhardt have a very heavy heart. He left his family, and went alone into the dark wood to pray. It was a time of great trouble to him, and there was no one to whom he could go for help but to God.

While he was alone in the wood praying, a text of Scripture came into his mind. It seemed to him as

if an angel had come and whispered it to him ;
*Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him ; and
 He shall bring it to pass,*" (Psalm xxxvii. 5). This gave
 him great comfort. "Yes," he said to himself,
 "though I am banished from my home and friends, and
 do not know where to take my wife and children for a
 shelter, yet God, *my* God, sees me in this dark wood.
 He knows all about us. Now is the time to trust in
 Him. He will show me through ; He will 'bring it
 to pass.'"

He was so happy in thinking on this text and so
 thankful to God for bringing it into his mind, that he
 walked up and down under the trees, and made some
 verses on it, which were afterwards written down and
 printed. Each verse begins with two or three words
 of the text, so that, when you have read through the
 hymn, you get the whole text. Perhaps you would
 like to read the verses before we finish the story.
 Here they are :—

*Commit thy way, O weeper—
 The cares that fret thy soul—
 To thine Almighty Keeper,
 Who makes the world to roll.*

*Unto the Lord, who quieteth
 The wind, and cloud and sea ;
 Oh, doubt not He provideth
 A footpath, too, for thee.*

*Trust also, for 'tis useless
 To murmur and forebode :
 The Almighty arm is doubtless
 Full strong to bear thy load.*

*In Him hide all thy sorrow,
 And bid thy fears good night ;
 He'll make a glorious morrow
 To crown thy head with light.*

*And He shall bring it near thee,
 The good thou long hast sought ;
 Though now it seems to fly thee,
 Thou shalt, ere long, be brought*

*To pass from grief to gladness
 From night to clearest day ;
 When doubts, and tears, and sadness
 Shall all have passed away.*

When he had finished making these verses he went
 into the house. He told his wife about the sweet
 text that had come into his mind, and repeated to her
 the verses he had made upon it. She soon dried up

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her tears, and began to be as cheerful and trustful as her husband was. The children were in bed and asleep. The husband and wife knelt down together and prayed, and resolved to "commit their way unto the Lord," and leave it for Him to "bring to pass" as He saw fit. Then after writing down his sweet verses they went to bed.

Before they had fallen asleep a great noise was heard at the door of the inn. It seemed as though some important person was knocking there. When the landlord opened the door, a man on horseback was standing before it. He said, in a loud voice—

"I am a messenger, I come from Duke Christian of Meresburg, and I am trying to find a minister named Paul Gerhardt, who has just been banished from Brandenburg. Do you know whether he has passed this way?"

"Paul Gerhardt?" said the landlord; "Why, yes, he is in this house; but he has just gone to bed. I can't disturb him now."

"But you must," said the messenger. "I have a very important letter for him from the duke; let me see him at once." So the landlord went upstairs and told Gerhardt, who came down to see what all this could be about.

The messenger handed him a large, sealed letter; and to his great joy, he read in it that the good Duke Christian had heard of the intended banishment of himself and family, and had written to him saying, "Come into my country, Paul Gerhardt, and you shall have a house and home, and plenty to live on, and liberty to preach the Gospel just as much as you please."

Then the good minister went up and told his wife, and they praised God for His love; and the next morning they started off with glad hearts and cheerful feet to their new home.

PORTIONS of the Bible were written hundreds of years before Homer or Hesiod existed, many centuries before Herodotus, "the father of history," wrote his celebrated work, and the Bible exists still. It has transformed the lives of millions : it is the foundation of the greatest moral triumphs witnessed on earth ; it has given absolute certainty in life, and victory in death to myriads ; on its pure, holy, and generous teachings, hospitals, homes and countless agencies for good have been built and are being supported ; it is a book which has commanded the reverence and submission of the most powerful intellects in all ages ; it meets human needs as no other book has or professes to have done ; it addresses itself to all—king and peasant, philosopher and boor ; it pays court to none, but imperatively insists on *one* common level before God—"all have sinned." The Cross is the central subject in the book, and Christ, its Centre and Sun ; the stupendous work in which the great extremes meet of good and evil, the meeting place also of the two eternities—past and future—where Divine love strove in conflict with human enmity, where God and Satan, holiness and sin met—all in "the place called Calvary"—lifts the Book of books out of the possibility of human compilation. *The Bible is the miracle of the 19th century.*

Hell's heaviest artillery has been directed against the book, yet it lives unimpaired and absolutely imperishable. You may just as well seek to batter down the throne of the eternal God as to destroy the Bible. It "liveth and abideth for ever." We repeat, *The Bible is the miracle of the 19th century.*

Woe, woe to the leaders in the "Down-grade movement." The Bible calmly announces the doom of those men (Gal. i. 8, 9 ; Rev. xxii. 19), while it pursues its course and accomplishes its work on earth. The Bible is immortal for God is its author. It covers

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the whole range of human enquiry as to the future. The Book cannot die.

The curtains of eternity have been drawn aside; the dense clouds are broken; the awful silence is at an end and God *has* spoken to man. The Bible is not a book for the Christian only, it is *the* Book for the race.

QUICKENED, RAISED, AND SEATED.

“HATH quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 5-6). Who has quickened, raised, and seated believers in heavenly places?—GOD. Are these wondrous statements of blessings dependent on our work, or life, or service?—not a bit of it. It is absolutely God’s work. Now we ask *who* or *what* can pluck us from yonder place in yonder person? Will He who set us there in His infinite love and omnipotent power do it? No, a thousand times NO. Then no other one in heaven, earth, or hell can do it, and God will not, for that would be the denial of His own work. There is not *one* single condition, not *one* qualifying word in these verses and to insert one is direct opposition to God’s word.

The youngest believer is as certainly saved as the oldest. There are no degrees in salvation: neither is it an object of attainment. It is absolute, present, certain, and eternal “Ye are saved.” We refer now to the salvation of the soul. Now young Christians make a good start; let there be no uncertainty about it. Put down your foot firmly on “Redemption ground.” Commence your life with “I *am* saved,” then seek to bring up the life and ways to the blessed fact. Put these two things together. *Salvation* is founded alone on God’s work of grace for me: while *communion* with God is dependent on my walk and life with Him.

BIBLE WORDS EXPLAINED.

Cabul, 1 Kings ix. 13.—Displeasing or dirty.

Cain, Gen. iv. 1.—“*Cais*, which word being interpreted, signifies, *acquisition*”—Josephus.

Calkers, Ezek. xxvii. 9.—Ship carpenters.

Calves of the Lips, Hosea xiv. 2.—Praises of the lips.

Calvary—Only found in Luke xxiii. 33; termed “Golgotha” in John xix. 17, meaning “*skull*” from the skull like appearance of the mound where Christ was crucified. Calvary is from the Latin Vulgate. “Mount Calvary” is poetical, but not strictly accurate. The exact spot cannot now be identified, but it lay nigh the city, outside its gates Heb. xiii. 12.

Carriages, Acts xxi. 15.—Not what carried as with us, but what was carried, as personal luggage; see also Judges xviii. 21.

Cauls, Isa. iii. 18.—female head covering of net-work; *midriff* in Hosea xiii. 8; Lev. iii. 10; etc.

Chains, Isa. iii. 19.—*Ear-drops*.

Chambers of Imagery, Ezek. viii. 7-12.—The interior of the temple filled with objects of idolatrous worship.

Champaign, Deut. xi. 30.—Open part of the country, not hilly.

Chancellor, Ezra iv. 8, 9, 17.—A Persian officer of high rank, meaning “Master of Decrees” of the realm.

Chapiters, Exod. xxxvi. 38, etc.—The upper and ornamental parts of the pillars or columns of public buildings.

Chapmen, 2 Chron. ix. 14, or *spice merchants*; 1 Kings x. 15, generally *merchants*.

BIBLE WORDS EXPLAINED.

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Chariot of Israel, 2 Kings ii. 12.—The Divine safeguard of Israel. Elijah “went up by a whirlwind into heaven,” *not* in a chariot of fire as is generally said.

Chemarims, Zeph. i. 4, or “*idolatrous priests*” 2 Kings xxiii. 5; Hosea x. 5. The plural ending is “im” in such words as “Seraphim” “Cherubim” “Chemarim” hence omit the English “s” at the end of these words.

Cherubim, not cherubims, Gen. iii. 24, etc.—Symbolising the *judicial power of God*.

Chief of Asia, Acts xix. 31, or “Asiarchs.” This official title was applied to the presidents of the Games who were selected from the chief cities of the province.

Chief Prince, Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3; xxxix. 1, or “Prince of Rosh” *i.e.*, Russia; see the lxx. The Asiatic capital, “Tobolsk” or “Tubal” and the former European capital “Moscow” or “Meshech” confirms the reference to Russia.

Child an Hundred Years Old, Isa. lxxv. 20.—Refers to the prolongation of life in millennial times.

Children of the East, Judges vi. 3, 33.—Inhabitants of the country lying between Canaan and the Euphrates.

Chimney, Hosea xiii. 3.—Any aperture covered over with interlaced lattice-work; translated *windows* in Gen. viii. 2, etc.

Chittim, Dan. xi. 30.—Rome. “Ships of Chittim,” the navy power of the fourth Empire.

Choler, Dan. viii. 7; xi. 11.—This expressive word signifies *the great rage* of Alexander the Great.

Charity, 1 Cor. xiii.—*Love* is the fitting word. “Charity” in olden times meant “love;” its modern sense is “almsgiving.”

Christ, Matt. i. 17.—Christ (Greek) and Messiah (Hebrew) both signify “anointed.” It rarely occurs as a proper name, but designates HIM as the predicted Messiah of Israel. “Jesus Christ” is common to St. Peter. “Christ Jesus” common to St. Paul.

Cleave, used in exactly opposite meanings, as to *cut* or *divide*, Psalm cxli. 7, and to a *close* or *inseparable* union, as in Gen. ii. 24.

Coasts, Judges xviii. 2.—*Borders* of territory whether of sea or land.

Convocation, Exod. xii. 16.—This Latin word signifies a *religious gathering* duly constituted.

Converts, Isa. i. 27.—The remnants of Israel and Judah returned to their city and God. *Turned* is the root idea of the word.

Countervail, Esther vii. 4.—Could not avail against, or damage the king and his interests.

Covenant of Salt, Num. xviii. 19.—A league or agreement of an *enduring* character.

Covereth his feet, Judges iii. 24; 1 Sam. xxiv. 3.—see margin of these passages.

Cunning, Exod. xxviii. 15.—*Clever* or *skilful*, not to be understood in a bad sense as with us.

Conversation, Gal. i. 13.—The way or tenour of a man's life, not restricted to speech. In Phil. iii. 20 read *citizenship*.

Conscience, Rom. ii. 15.—An inward sense of right and wrong given after the fall. “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. iii. 5). God has set up this tribunal in every man. The conscience is spoken of as *purged* (Heb. ix. 14); as *pure* (1 Tim. iii. 9); as *good* (1 Tim. i. 5); as *weak* (1 Cor. viii. 7); as *defiled* (Titus i. 15); as *evil* (Heb. x. 22); as *seared* (1 Tim. iv. 2).

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

(Continued from page 3).—GEN. xxi.

ISAAC.—SONSHIP AND HEIRSHIP.

“If children then heirs.”

AND now the fulness of the time has come ; the weary years of waiting are to end at last, and Isaac, the object of so many revelations on God's part, and of so much solicitude on the part of his parents, is at length born, and God, who has already developed in Abraham His first great principle of *Election*, proceeds to develop His second great principle of *Sonship and Heirship* in Isaac.

Not that our friend Abraham, with whom we have journeyed through so many scenes, is at once to disappear ; his history will still occupy us ; but henceforth his acts upon the stage of life are just so far recorded as they stand connected with Isaac as his Son and Heir.

Having thus in brief set forth what the scope of the Spirit's teaching will be, let us resume our narrative. The scene at Isaac's birth, as was befitting, was indeed one of joy. A year before when the promise which had been so blessedly fulfilled had been made to Abraham, the Patriarch gave expression to his feelings in a laugh of joy, and Sarah, though on account of her unbelief her joy is for a year postponed, is now partaker of it. Once she had laughed in secret, alone within the tent ; and God alone had heard and rebuked her for it ; now God hath made her to laugh openly, and all they that hear shall laugh with her ; at least so at first she thinks in her new found joy ; but before many moments have passed away, she is doomed to find that some will be prepared to laugh

not with her, but at her. And, sooth to say, to a boy of fourteen, with Ishmael's temperament, there must have been something a little grotesque in the croonings of this elderly mother. Fully occupied, no doubt as at first she is, with her maternal duties, the amusement she was causing Ishmael escaped Sarah; but when Isaac is weaned she has now opportunity of taking note of what is going on around, and she espies Ishmael mocking.

Some fifteen years before Hagar, in self-will had essayed to flee from Abraham's house, but had been bidden to return, for in God's purpose the time for her expulsion had not arrived. But now with the coming of the Heir, God's time for her departure had come. The natural enmity which ever innates him that is after the flesh to persecute him that is after the Spirit, causes Ishmael to mock while Abraham feasts. But feasting in joy and mocking in derision, are plainly incompatible; the enmity that was in the heart of Ishmael who was born after the flesh is out, and his unseeing mockery, like the straw which shews how the wind blows, causes him to stand manifested in his proper light. All this, with true woman instinct, Sarah takes in at a glance; she realises in a moment that happiness is impossible with the son of the bond-maid and the promised Heir together in the same house, and peremptorily she calls on Abraham to cast the former out.

I am aware that Sarah is generally charged with feminine spite and needless cruelty in acting thus; indeed a recent commentator, whose work is otherwise often helpful, has permitted himself to characterise this as "one of these painful cases in which one poor creature, clothed with a little brief authority, stretches it to the utmost in vindictive treatment of another." But such a criticism seems to me to find no countenance from the Word of God. Rather it would appear that

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Sarah was guided by something more than female intuition in a case where Abraham might, through affection, have gone astray. The latter, indeed, enjoys the presence of the child of promise, and his feast is evidence of the fact, but he would fain temporise as to the expulsion of the bondmaid's son, as the Galatians did in a later day (Gal. iv. 30); but divine wisdom approves of Sarah's course and says, "In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice."

JOHN FORT.

FUTURE GLORIES.

HEAVEN OPENED.—Rev. iv. and v.

WE are dazzled as we look into those chapters. Here God has gathered "the riches of His glory," the boundless and everlasting treasures of eternity, heaping all up in the chambers of His house—in the halls and courts of heaven. See what love has provided for the eternal and loved companions of Jesus—for the joint heirs with Christ in life and glory. There are royal thrones grouped round *the* throne of the Eternal—thrones of grandeur undescribable. On these the saints of past and present times are seen seated. The throne and golden crown bespeak their royal glory and kingly dignity. The golden vials filled with the prayers of the suffering witnesses on earth tell of their priesthood. Their spotless robes of white proclaim them a holy people. Before them is spread out a glassy, crystal-like sea, to be occupied by the martyrs of Jesus (chap. xv.) while, above, the emerald rainbow spans the vault of heaven, telling its own tale of covenant goodness. In midst of all these glories and grandeur, stands the slain Lamb, the centre of these glorified and ransomed myriads. The harp and song of the redeemed, the worshipping angels, and

prostrate elders, with the crowns of the glorified cast down at the feet of Him who alone is worthy, make up a scene all too much for heart and mind. May God give us eyes to see "Heaven opened."

THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.—REV. XXI.

The public espousal of the Church to Christ is a fact duly chronicled in the sacred page (Rev. xix. 7), as also the accompanying public banquet (v. 9), but no description of either, or details, are supplied. The guests invited to the marriage supper—Old Testament saints and others—are pronounced "blessed," but not a word said about the far deeper joy and blessedness of the Bride: that will have to be experienced to be known. The Bride, the Lamb's wife is witnessed in *Millennial* glory (Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5), and then in her *Eternal* home (chap. xxi. 1-5), still as a bride adorned for her husband. For 1000 years she accompanies her heavenly Bridegroom through scenes of glory, but her affections are as bright, her love as fervent, as on the marriage morning. She enters the eternal state still adorned in her bridal attire. The symbols employed to express her glory give a language as definite as any other, and need present no difficulty to any one. The home of the saints—the heavenly city prepared for us in love, is not *the* subject of this beautiful chapter; but the Bride herself in association with Christ in the government of the earth, her royal splendour, God crowning her with His glory, and her displayed triumphs in the victories of her heavenly Bridegroom, her rest too in the rest of God are, in brief, the magnificent thoughts unfolded by the Spirit.

After her marriage, heaven opens and she comes out to show her beauty to an admiring world, but her feet will never again press in weariness the sands of the desert, nor will she mingle as before in the scenes

of earth. She rests over a redeemed and joyous world. Creation's night of agony is over, and her bosom thrills in joy as the Lamb and His Bride smooth her wrinkled brow. Many a furrow has gathered upon it during these 6000 years. But she groans on in hope, and now the hour of her deliverance is come; the epoch being the manifestation in glory of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19). The coronation robes befit her exalted position as Bride and wife to Him who is not only the Lamb—for He has loved her even unto death—but, see! many crowns rest upon *that* brow once wreathed with thorn, and she shares His heavenly and royal glory. Heaven is her home. God her source, and His glory her endowment (v. 10-11).

"The city was pure gold like unto clear glass" (v. 18). She shines out in divine righteousness, the witness of what God is as "light" and "love." The clear glass intimates her unsullied and transparent purity without and within. "The *street* of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass" (verse 21). Divine righteousness is signified in the pure gold; *now* the righteousness of God is over us or upon us (Rom. iii. 22). God has thrown His own character over us, but in the glory there will be no need of the laver and towel (John xiii.); no stain will ever rest upon the conscience, no cloud will ever oppress the spirit. Our feet will tread for ever the street of pure gold; divine righteousness will then be beneath and wrap us round and round in its plies and folds. What a future! No more sinning and grieving the heart of our blessed Lord! No more bodily weakness or night of sorrow! We shall never come in contact with a defiled and defiling scene nor will our vision ever be obscured by mist or cloud.

The city is measured and a perfect result announced (v. 16). Jerusalem on earth will be measured by a

line of *flax* (Ezek. xl.), but the heavenly city by a *golden* reed (Rev. xxi. 15). God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son in glory, and here the grand result of that eternal purpose, of the Son's love, and of the Spirit's education is witnessed. Tested and measured by divine righteousness "the stature of the fulness of Christ" is reached. No beautiful curtains as in the tabernacle of old will hide the divine glory; nor "holiest" to confine His presence to a favoured few, for "I saw no temple therein" (v. 22). There will be no tree of knowledge of good and evil, all testing of responsibility will be over; but the tree of life, of which man in innocence and in sin never partook, now however promised to the overcomer, is surrounded by the saints in glory, for all *there* are overcomers. Its rich and constant supply of fruit will never fail. Life in abundance will be theirs. The never-withering *leaves* form the portion of the nations, while we feed and revel upon the luscious *fruit* of the tree of life in the paradise of God (chap. xxii. 2). No polluted stream flows through the heavenly land. The pure river of water of *life* has its source in the throne of God and of the Lamb. Why the throne? Because of its governmental display. The *crystal*, a native production, is the chosen symbol to set forth the transparent water of eternal life, which in source, power, and character of enjoyment is divine. The city and its street of gold has the transparency of *glass*—a manufactured article.

"They shall see His face." O Lord, Thou hast kept the best wine till now! More precious by far than the heaped-up glories and splendours of the kingdom. We will draw near to Jesus. We will look upon the very face on which the disgusting spittle of man once rested; now it is radiant with the glory of God.

Will we not then sound the depths of His love, as we admiringly gaze upon His face and hear His voice

DOES SCRIPTURE SPEAK OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL? 19

—the voice of Him who on Calvary said “It is finished!” Oh, these unscaled heights, those measureless breadths! Blessed Lord, the rapturous thought that we are about to pass into Thy presence, to bear Thy name eternally on our holy brows (v. 4), to hear the tale of love from Thine own very lips, to talk with Thee about the scenes of Calvary, as did Moses and Elias (Luke ix. 30. 31), is all too much!

As Thou revealest Thyself thus, oh, enlarge and strengthen the vessel! What precious talks and walks with our adorable and peerless Lord Jesus we will have! When will Isaac and Rebekah jewelled and adorned with His love gifts meet? Why tarry the wheels of His chariot! Lord, curb our impatient spirits. But our hearts are with Him now, and at His voice and shout we shall be gathered up in clouds to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv.)

DOES SCRIPTURE SPEAK OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL?

It does. For the Lord's words are as plain as can be: “Fear not them which kill the body, but *are not able* to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell” (Matt. x. 28.) A soul that cannot be killed when the body is, is an immortal soul; and, as it is only “appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment,” that which survives this death survives forever.

Men have tried hard to make this text speak differently, but their efforts only show the impossibility of doing this. The common way is to tell us that the soul is just the life of the body—*animal life*; but to say that man cannot kill the life of the body is too plainly false. They therefore reply to this that “it is a momentary death; what he has for the time extinguished is reserved by God to shine through all

20 DOES SCRIPTURE SPEAK OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL?

eternity ; it is not, therefore, in God's eye or mind, lost, destroyed, or perished." But this is as plainly vain as an answer, for it is as true of the body, of course, that it dies but a momentary death ; God will raise it again ; yet the Lord is contrasting the body, which man *can* kill, with the soul which he *cannot*. As then whatever is true of the body in this respect would be true of its life as much ; the soul that the Lord speaks of is *not* the life. According to this, He would have said rather, Fear not them which kill *neither body nor life*.

Seeing this difficulty, others have tried to make "soul" mean the "life to *come*." But this the word never means. The word for the life to come is quite a different one ; it is *zoe*, not as here—*psuche*. These two are never confounded : no one can produce a single passage to prove them the same.

Killing means "taking life." For this reason alone, we never, and can never, speak of *killing life*. Killing the body, by itself means destroying the life of the body. Thus the soul is looked at as possessing a life of its own, just as the body does. The soul then is a living thing, which, when the body dies, does *not* die. It is not only a living but an *immortal* soul.

Some own this, but point us to the contrasted destruction of the body and soul in hell as proving the soul to be finally annihilated. But they are not said to be "killed" in hell ; and never are : judgment does not come till the death appointed "once" is passed away in resurrection. The second death is not the first repeated ; it is the lake of fire forever ; and destruction is often used where annihilation is impossible.

Here it is impossible ; for death is "once," and is passed away forever when men are raised in the "resurrection of damnation."

Reader, the salvation of the soul does not mean

making it exist forever. Exist it will, in happiness or misery, forever. But the Son of God died that eternity might speak to you of joy and peace, and not of terror. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. God preaches peace by Jesus Christ. And those who believe on Him, being justified by faith, *have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Reader, if already you have not, will you now make friends with eternity by faith in Him?—F. W. GRANT.

B I B L E W O R D S E X P L A I N E D.

Damnation, may refer to temporal judgment (Rom. xiii. 2), or to eternal judgment (Mark iii. 29.) In the following passages the word "judgment" should be substituted, Mark iii. 29, John iii. 17, 18, 19, instead of "condemnation;" 1 Cor. xi. 29, 34, and elsewhere. The Revised Version notes these corrections.

Dancing, (Exod. xv. 20; Ps. cxlix. 3.) Dancing is frequently referred to in Scripture. In the religious life of Israel it figures largely. We have instances of men (2 Sam. vi. 14), of women (1 Sam. xviii. 6), of children (Job. xxi. 11) dancing, but never of the two sexes dancing together. How Christian parents can permit their children to take part in promiscuous dancing is a marvel to us. The modern dance, in character, aim, and object is as unlike the dancing sanctioned in Scripture as light is to darkness.

Darkness, is both physical (Gen. i. 2) and moral (1 Jn. i. 5.)

Darling, Ps. xxii. 20, the life or soul as being precious.

Dark Sayings of Old, (Ps. lxxviii. 2), the true and spiritual design of Israel's early history.

Daysman, (Job. ix. 33), "umpire;" see marginal reading.

22 "HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST?"

Deal of flour, (Num. xv. 4), a part, or portion of flour.

Denounce, (Deut. xxx. 18), not its modern English meaning, but *announce* or *declare*.

Desert of the Sea, (Isa. xxi. 1), expressive of the utter desolation of the ancient Babylon.

Death, spiritual, (Eph. ii. 1-5); and physical, (Rom. v. 14). The death of the righteous is spoken of as "sleep" (John xi. 11-13; 1 Thess. iv. 14). Death separates the soul and body for a time, but never touches the consciousness of the "I," the responsible person (Luke xvi. 23; Rev. vi. 9-11). The bodies of all—saved or unsaved—are mortal (subject to death), and corruptible (subject to decay). The bodies of believers are to be raised in glory, immortal, incorruptible, in power, and like Christ's body of glory (1 Cor. xv.; Phil. iii. 21).

Dukes, Gen. xxxvi., not as with us a title of nobility, but simply Patriarchial chiefs or rulers.

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE FIRST BELIEVED?"

This is an unhappy question to put to young converts. It gets them occupied with themselves and not with Christ. One great snare in the religious teaching of the day is the relation of experience. "What is your experience?" "How do you feel?" are questions which when pressed on souls induce an alarming amount of chronic self-occupation. Experience is measured by experience. One does not feel so good as another and so the disease spreads.

The disciples to whom Paul put the above question were on Jewish ground—followers of John Baptist. A full, delivering gospel had never been heard by them. They were baptized in the faith that Christ Jesus was *to come* (Acts xix. 4). They were ignorant of the truth that Christ *had* come and that the Holy

Ghost too had come consequent on Christ's ascension (John vii. 39). Judaism as a system had been discarded as effete and worthless and Christianity had taken its place before God. Hence Paul baptized these "twelve" men (verse 7) to the acknowledgment of these grand and emancipating truths of Christianity:—The glorification of Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost. Now *all* whose sins are forgiven HAVE the Holy Ghost. We become sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus (see Revised Version of Gal. iii. 26). "And because *ye are sons* God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). We get the Holy Ghost consequent on the *fact* of sonship, not because of your experience of it, but because of the blessed fact, true in this age of grace, of *all who believe* in Christ Jesus.

BIBLE ALTARS.

SACRIFICES were very early, Gen. iv. 4, though no mention of an altar. Altars were to be of earth or of rough stone, Exod. xx. 24-25. Later on they were of Shittim wood covered with brass, Exod. xxvii. 1-2.

1. NOAH—Noah offered after the flood, Gen. viii. 20.

It was accepted of God, verse 21.

We receive of the blessing then, "not again."

2. JOSHUA—According to directions given, Deut. xxvii. 5.

Erected after enemies were overcome, Josh. viii. 30.

A time of covenant, verse 34.

A time of gladness, Deut. xxvii. 7.

3. AARON—The altar of incense, Exod. xxx. 1.

A continual ascent of sweet incense, verse 7.

Atonement once a year only, verse 10.

Altars were for sacrifices. Only that which were approved of God were to be offered.

Of Jesus, God said, "My Beloved Son"—He was offered "Once for all" Heb. x. 10.—THOMAS NEIL.

24 BIBLE QUESTIONS & DIFFICULTIES.

Q. Was not Exod. xii., Redemption by blood?

A. "When I see the blood I will *pass* over you" (verse 13); not, I will *deliver* you. The shed and sprinkled blood sheltered from Divine judgment, but left them in view of redemption. The blood screened Israel from just judgment, but did not set them free from Egypt, nor from their fears. Redemption is a change of state or condition and this is ascribed to Jehovah's act of power in cleaving the waters of the Red Sea and leading on and over His ransomed people (see Psalm cvi. 10; cvii. 2).

We are not aware of any passage in which the Pass-over blood is said to effect redemption.

Q. What is the meaning of 1 Cor. xv. 29?

A. Christians in these early times were baptized to step into the ranks of the noble army of confessors and martyrs. The gaps were being filled up by the baptized. As one fell another stepped into his place, but with death in immediate view the dark prospect was brightened by the certainty of a glorious resurrection.

BIBLE BIRTHDAYS.

1. SAMUEL—His name indicates a request, 1 Sam. i. 20.
He was lent to the Lord, verse 28.
He was a man of faith, Heb. xi. 32.
2. JOHN BAPTIST—Promised of God, Luke i. 13.
The Lord was with him, verse 66.
He was the Lord's forerunner. Mark i. 2.
3. JESUS—Promised in Eden, Gen. iii. 15.
Anno Domini tells us that all things centre and circle round this Birthday.
Born of a Virgin, Luke i. 27.
4. BORN AGAIN—A Divine necessity. Ye must, John iii. 7.—Two reasons ;—
Ye cannot *see* the Kingdom of God, verse 3.
Ye cannot *enter* the Kingdom of God, verse 5.
See and *Enter*, though substantially the same, give *two* aspects of one truth.

THOMAS NEIL.

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXI.—(Continued from page 15).

WE have already on different occasions, as we have studied Abraham's history, sought to point out the typical bearing of the scenes which have engaged our attention. To our interpretation of some of these types it is possible that objections might be raised; indeed to any one who has not learnt something of dispensational truth, our reading of them must seem unintelligible and absurd. But whatever view may be entertained of other passages we have considered, there can be no difference of opinion as to the typical bearing of the one now before us, for the Holy Ghost has taken care to give us His own rendering of the type. To this, as it is set forth in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, let us now turn.

But, before we deal with the type itself, it will be necessary for us briefly to review the circumstances which led Paul to take it up and explain it. The Galatians whom he addressed had begun in the Spirit; they had been truly converted to God; but being converted to God they were seeking to be made perfect by the flesh, *i.e.* by submission to legal ordinance as if Christ were not enough (iii. 3). This gives Paul occasion to point out what the true mission of the law was. It does not bless, for Abraham had not got blessing by it, but by faith; indeed, so far from blessing anyone, its office is to curse, for "Cursed is everyone who continueth not in *all things* which are written in the law to do them." Thus all of necessity, if under the law, are under the curse. And in fact, blessing is not on this ground at all, for Scripture says, "The just shall live, (not by law, but) by faith. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, *till the seed* should come to whom the promise was made: Wherefore the law was our (*i.e.*, the Jews') schoolmaster *until* Christ, (for this is what the Greek says); that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, *we are no longer*

under the schoolmaster. For ye (*i.e.*, ye Gentiles) are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

But the argument is continued in chap. iv. Let us epitomise it. "The heir," says Paul, "as long as he is a child differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of his father. Even so we (*i.e.*, the Jews, with whom, as opposed to the Galatian Gentiles Paul as a Jew connects himself), when we were children were in bondage under the elements of the world (*i.e.*, the law). But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth (the true Isaac) His Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law (*i.e.*, the Jews), that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye (*i.e.*, ye Gentiles, for the Galatians were such) are sons, God hath (equally with us Jews) sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou (O Gentile) art no longer a servant but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ. But if sons and heirs, why turn back to the weak and beggarly elements (for now that Christ has come, the Spirit of God so characterizes His own law) whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? In it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondmaid was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman by promise. Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children (*i.e.*, the Jewish nation in bondage to the law at the present day). But Jerusalem, which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Now we believers (we Jews or Gentile believers), as Isaac was, are the children of the

promise. But as there he that was born of the flesh persecuted him that was born of the Spirit, even so it was now. (How true of Rome and the Ritualist who ever persecute the testimony to free grace!) Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be Heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Thus we see that in giving us the biographies of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael, the Spirit of God was not merely writing history, but was setting forth types which have a direct application to ourselves. For the Spirit of God declares Hagar to be, in allegory, Mount Sinai, where the law was given; Hagar to represent Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children (*i.e.*, the Jewish nation); Sarah to be a type of Jerusalem which is above, which is free from the law, and mother of us all, Jews and Gentiles alike: Isaac to be a figure of Christ, the Promised Seed; while Ishmael linked with Hagar is a type of the Jews, cast out of the Land as wanderers in the world, but miraculously sustained by God.

Now up to the birth of Isaac, the bondwoman and her son found their place in Abraham's house; similarly from Sinai, till Christ came, the Jews were under law; but when Isaac was born, the bondwoman and her son were cast out; similarly when Christ the Heir came, it necessitated the expulsion of the Law, for how could Law and Grace, opposing principles, get on together? We therefore who believe, are no longer servants under law, but sons under grace, and the spirit of sonship dispels the spirit of fear and bondage from our hearts. Thus we, standing in a relationship towards God (*i.e.*, that of sons), which neither Abraham nor his posterity ever knew, for they could never individually address God as Father; they knew Him as

Jehovah, and the Almighty and Everlasting God, but no more, for they were *servants* under law, but we are *sons* under grace and are entitled to call Him Father, for we have the Spirit of God's Son, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. My servant, if he were to address me as Father, would forget what is due from him to me; my son, were he to address me as Master, would forget what is due from me to him; but, alas, how many Christians seem to forget what is due from God to them; the Spirit of bondage instead of sonship still lurks within their breasts, and finds its normal expression in the words "Almighty and Everlasting God"—the fit and proper mode for Abraham and his posterity to address Him, or for us perhaps exceptionally in some difficulty in our pilgrim career, but one which, used normally, little becomes us or God now. Entangled again, as they are, in the yoke of bondage, that nighness which is theirs as *sons*, has vanished into the respectful distance of *servants*, and in result, like the prodigal of old, their thoughts of their Father's heart never rise higher than the servants' hall, "Make me," they say, "one of Thy hired servants;" meanwhile, though they know it not, the Father has flung open to them the doors of His banqueting-house, with its dance and song, its robe and ring and fatted calf. Is not this plain? Could God have made it plainer? Indeed, were men but left alone they could not fail to understand the import of the passage, and thousands who now groan in bondage to the law, would, with Sarah, laugh in liberty. But alas, theology which puts the Gentile under law, where God most certainly never set him, binds its thousands down with brazen chains. Oh that men would rise and rend the chains they rather seem to hug, and read for themselves with the Spirit for their guide the simple statements of the Word of God! "Cast out the bondwoman, thrust out the law," says God, "and stand fast in the liberty wherewith I have made you free." JOHN FORT.

STATISTICS, FACTS, AND FIGURES. 29

TEN years ago there were not more than 12,000 Jews in Jerusalem ; now there are about 43,000 Jews, and about 100,000 in Palestine. Owing to the removal of Turkish restrictions, the Jews are returning in thousands as individuals and in families.

Think of this appalling fact : within the century now near its close about FOUR MILLIONS of heathen have professed Christ in baptism, while the natural increase has been TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS. There are EIGHT HUNDRED MILLIONS of heathen *to-day* who have never heard of Jesus and His love.

Nearly 2,000 years ago "in the place called Calvary" the Saviour of the World died for sinners. The cross has won mighty triumphs, yet but a THIRD of the human race are professedly Christian.

The Moravian Church sends out into the foreign field *one in sixty* of its members, while other Protestant bodies in general give only *one in five thousand*.

Japan has 8,000 deities and 10,000 more head priests of Buddha, than the entire followers of Christ.

There are more objects of idolatry and false worship in India than there are inhabitants. Hinduism alone has thirty-six million gods—the majority being of the most disgusting nature.

During this century more than 160,000,000 copies of the Word of God have been printed in more than 350 different languages and dialects.

The population of China has been estimated at 386,000,000. To meet this sweltering mass of pagan misery and darkness, there are about 1,600 missionaries—male and female—with the result that there are now about 50,000 professed Christians in the Celestial Kingdom. But what is 50,000 as against 386 millions!

On the authority of the Rev. Maurice Phillips, who has laboured for 32 years in India, the population of that vast Empire is 300,000,000. The "professed

Christian community of all classes is 750,000. There is one labourer—native and foreign—to every 100,000 of the population. It is only about 70 years since the modern evangelization of India commenced and during that time the Bible has been translated into all the languages and dialects of the Empire. It is stated that there are thousands of towns with populations of 5,000 and upwards without a single Gospel worker. One district alone with a population of 1,000,000 has not a single missionary. The number of converts last year was 24,000. India is a noble and tempting field for the consecrated energies of Christian women, as there are 50,000,000 females shut up in the Zenanas and, of course, only accessible to those of their own sex. There are also 25,000,000 widows, 77,000 of these being ten years of age and under. The life of these child-widows is one of unspeakable misery. During the last ten years the population of India has increased 29,000,000.

The heathen are dying at the rate of about 40,000,000 a year.

The rapid increase of Bible translation and circulation is a cheering sign. In one year, 1892, the three great Bible Societies of America, England, and Scotland sent out at home and abroad 6,000,000 copies of the Bible whole or in parts.

Sixty thousand copies of the Bible are sold annually in the Turkish Empire.

Korea has but one missionary to every 800,000 people.

South America has a population of about 35,000,000. Romanism in its most corrupt forms is rampant. There are only about 15,000 protestants—we wish we could add, children of God. There are no missions in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador. In all there are only about 200 missionaries—male and female. “Along the base of the Andes, a strip of country

3,000 miles long, from Ecuador to the Argentine, is peopled by 3,000,000 Quichua—speaking Indians, *to whom no protestant missionary has ever attempted to go.* South America has been truly termed “the neglected continent.”

“We have opened in our country 40,000 houses of prayer to lead men up to God, and 190,000 drink-selling houses to drag them down to hell.”

“In Apia, the port of Samoa, well called ‘the hell of the Pacific,’ every third building is a grog shop.”

Opium and strong drink are ruining millions in India and China and yet the christian government of Great Britain forces these poisons on unwilling millions for the sake of gain. May God have mercy on this country when the day of reckoning comes, *for come it must.*

On the authority of “REGIONS BEYOND,” we are informed that the population of the Congo Free State is estimated at 42,000,000, of whom about 1,300 are professing Christians and only about 150 missionaries, and yet the Congo basin is 1,500,000 miles square, considerably larger than India, which is 1,471,277 square miles.

From the same foregoing authority we learn that there are on the earth: of Heathen, 874 millions; of Roman Catholics, 195 millions; of Mohammedans, 173 millions; of Protestants, 135 millions; of Greek Church, etc., 85 millions; and of Jews, 8 millions. We add, of true children of God—“*a little flock.*”

Within the area covered by Christianity there are about 1,300 different religious sects, and yet Scripture knows of but “*one flock*” and “*one body.*” Ecclesiastical strife is rampant, and the cry of the heathen unheeded amidst the Babel of sound. The use of the trowel at home is greatly in demand, and the Gospel of peace amongst the heathen abroad.

We have carefully compiled these facts and figures from various sources and in several instances have

been at some trouble to verify their correctness. We want these statistics to sink into our souls; to weigh their moral force in God's presence. As figures they are a mass of hard, dry detail scarcely worth perusal. But what do they represent? What of sin? What of bleak, black, and utter despair of millions of Christless souls? What are we doing by prayer and effort; with time, talent, influence, and money on behalf of this seething, surging, agonizing mass of Christless humanity? Christ died for these unevangelized millions of fellow-beings, which are included in God's great love to the World, and "to *every* creature" the Gospel was to be preached.

We have no desire whatever that Christians should either initiate or join in a crusade against any special form of iniquity. The remedy for every kind of evil is the grand old Gospel of God's salvation. The removal of evil here and there—strong drink in this country, slavery and gin in Africa, and the opium curse in India and China—leave men as ever exposed to the wrath of God. "Ye must be born again," exposes the *root* of all evil. Why waste time at the branches when you ought to apply the axe to the root of the human tree? All evil in the world springs from *one* source, the irremediable and innate character of man's nature. Hence patch-work at which most of Christendom is working is worse than wasted time. Go to the *root*. "Ye *must* be born again"—a new nature is needed. The old nature is fruitless and in a chronic state of insubordination to God and which He has condemned—root and branch (Rom. viii. 3, 7).

We are not surprised at the natural increase of the heathen populations so vastly exceeding the ratio of increase of Christian missions. We are *not* looking for the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel. God is calling *out* of the world a people for His name. We are looking for the Lord to come

and instead of expecting a converted world to meet Him, it will be just the reverse. Previous to the Lord's coming we read, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples." Not a converted world therefore, but the Lord's coming is our happy hope. Why then, it may be asked, have you presented us with the foregoing grim array of figures? We readily answer, that the awful condition of many millions *without Christ* may oppress the heart; may lead to a passionate longing for the salvation of souls; that our readers may individually, in their households, and in assembly gatherings send up to God a cry which will open the windows of heaven and nerve the weary toilers in all parts of the vineyard to fresh and consecrated service. Exercise and prayer before God may lead some to answer to the appeal of the first and *only* missionary society which we fully own: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *us*? Then said I, Here am I; *send me*" (Isa. vi. 8). We cannot all go forth as missionaries, but we can *all* share in the work, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." O Lord, stir up Thy people *thus* to pray.

BIBLE QUESTIONS AND DIFFICULTIES.

E. S. F., *Cornwall*, is troubled about his not having been baptized and yet for some time he has been breaking bread with God's people.

Baptism was the badge of discipleship in Apostolic days. E. S. F., should have been baptized *before* breaking bread. Our friend occupies an abnormal position towards Christianity. Unless it was an overlook, the Assembly who received him greatly erred. An unbaptized person breaking bread is contrary to church order and apostolic practice. Any one unbaptized would not have been owned as a disciple, much less as a member of the body of Christ, for it is in this latter character, we break bread (1 Cor. x. 17). Our friend should be baptized without further delay and as quietly as possible so as not to needlessly disturb the minds of any, even of the weakest.

SEVEN STEPS OF PROGRESS IN THE DIVINE LIFE.

(For all the Children of God).

1. **FORGIVENESS OF SINS** (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Col. i. 14). The work of Christ is the righteous basis on which God forgives. The Cross is where sin was put away from before the throne. The blessing becomes ours the moment we accept Christ as a *personal Saviour*. By faith in God's testimony, sin is then put away from the conscience.

2. **DEAD TO SIN** (Rom. vi. 2). Sins were not only atoned for but "our old man" is crucified with Christ. Our sinful, guilty past has been closed up in death—"dead with Christ." This is true of every believer.

3. **SIN CONDEMNED** (Rom. viii. 3) in the flesh is a further lesson and when learnt is the secret of a life of holiness. Sin (the root) is not forgiven, but condemned. Thus three things, true of each believer, took place at the Cross:—Sins were put away; our old man crucified; and sin condemned.

4. **RECKON YOURSELVES DEAD TO SIN, (THE ROOT)** (Rom. vi. 11). Reckon is by faith on the believer's part in accepting God's judgment on ourselves (not realization) and is the secret of the full enjoyment of the three former blessings and the key which unlocks the door of deliverance out of Rom. vii., and puts one in the green pastures of Rom. viii.

5. **BEARING ABOUT IN THE BODY THE DYING OF THE LORD JESUS** (2 Cor. iv. 10). Here we get experience, realization, the giving up my will to that of another; owning His perfect claims over me, thus yielding ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead (Rom. vi.)

6. **DELIVERED UNTO DEATH** (2 Cor. iv. 11). God comes in to assist us in this work; is fully with us in our desires, etc., and permits trials to come across our path as Jesus had when here, thus we share His path, have fellowship with Him; all this for His glory, and for our help and blessing.

7. **THE LIFE OF JESUS MANIFEST IN OUR MORTAL BODIES** (2 Cor. iv. 6-11). God's purpose is now complete as regards us on earth. The end is reached. "The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We commence at the cross (the basis); faith (the opened hand which receives the blessing); practical experience in our path: and then last, but not least, Christ seen and manifested in us (partially of course), when He comes, this last will be perfect. This is what we are saved for.

A. E. BOOTH.

OUR BREADTH.—Augustine said "I need a whole Christ for my salvation, a whole Bible for my study, a whole church for my fellowship, a whole world for my parish, that I may be a true Catholic and not a sectarian."

BIBLE CITIES.

ANCIENT cities were generally walled, Num. iii. 28. One writer describes Nineveh as having "walls void and empty," 150 feet high, 50 feet wide, $22\frac{1}{2}$ miles round. Houses on walls, Jos. ii. 15.

There are three Cities named in Scripture.

- 1.—The City of Destruction, Isaiah xix. 18.
It is of Egypt, typical of the World.
It is acquaint with the language of Caanan.
It is doomed, Rev. xxi. 1.
This tells of our *Natural* Condition.
- 2.—Bethlehem, David's city, Luke ii. 4.
God's promises began to be fulfilled there by the birth of Jesus, Matt. ii. 6.
There Christ began to rule, v. 11.
This tells us of *Grace* and God's *Salvation*.
- 3.—New Jerusalem—the Holy City, Rev. xxi. 2.
Death gone, so sorrow passed, Rev. xxi. 4.
Serve Jesus—seeing His face, Rev. xxii. 3-4.
Contrast "Inside" and "Outside," verse 11.
This tells us of *Glory*.

Escape, Salvation, Enjoyment are the *three thoughts* from the *Three Cities*.

BIBLE DUTIES.

DUTY arises out of relationship to God or man. "England expects every man to do his duty."

The whole duty of man in Eccles. xii. 13.

- 1.—To commit our way to God, Psalm cxliii. 9.
Because of wicked men—Malice.
Because of the enemies' craft—Devil.
- 2.—To honour parents, Exod. xx. 12.
By obedience, Gen. xxii. 8.
By helpfulness, Prov. xxiii. 22.
- 3.—To remember the Lord's Day.
Because our Lord rose, Matt. xxviii. 1.
It is a type of heaven, Heb. iv. 9.
- 4.—To prize God's Word, Psalm cxix. 105.
It is God's voice to us.
It is a faithful companion.
- 5.—To trust Jesus for salvation now.
Because of the price paid.
He is the door to Eternal joys.

Duties are sweet when viewed as privileges. THOMAS NEIL.

[We do not endorse all the statements of our esteemed Contributor—Ed.]

GOD HOLDS THE KEY.

God holds the key of all unknown,
 And I am glad.
 If other hands had held the key,
 Or He entrusted it to me,
 I might be sad.
 What if to-morrow's cares were here
 Without this rest?
 I'd rather HE unlock each day,
 And, as its doors swing open, say,
 "My way is best!"
 The very dimness of my sight,
 Makes me secure,
 For, groping in my misty way,
 I feel His hand, I hear Him say,
 'My help is sure.'
 I cannot trace His future plan,
 But this I *know*:—
 I have the smiling of His face
 And all the refuge of His grace
 Whilst here below.
 Enough! this covers all I want,
 And here I rest,
 For what I cannot, *He can* see,
 And in His home, I soon shall be
 For ever blest!

VESSELS ON THE DEAD SEA.

THERE are now two sailing vessels navigating the Dead Sea for the purpose of removing its mineral wealth of salt, sulphur, etc., which abound on its shores. The smaller of the two vessels carries passengers. It is not generally known, perhaps, that the Dead Sea forms part of the Sultan's private property. Palestine nominally belongs to Turkey. Immanuel will yet claim His land (Isa. viii. 8). "The land shall not be sold for ever, for *the land is mine*" (Lev. xxv. 23). The political outlook is a dark one, but God's order ever is; first judgment, then glory.

Those salt and turbid waters are yet to be healed and the banks to be clothed with luxuriant vegetation. Fish in the sea and fruit on its banks will transform a region bleak and impressed with the stamp of death, into a scene of life, fruitfulness, and beauty (Ez. 47).

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXI.—(*Continued from page 28*).

BUT to return to Abraham. No doubt it was a bitter trial to him to dismiss Ishmael, and not the least bitter part of his trial was the thought that he alone was to blame for the sorrow which had thus entered his house. But it was a time for action, not for vain regrets, for God's commands were explicit and would brook of no delay ; and so it came to pass that early next day Hagar and Ishmael were dismissed, and wandered off into the wilderness. Ever they wandered on, until their last crust eaten and their water spent, the lad sank down exhausted and his mother went a bowshot off so that she might not behold his sufferings, nor see him die.

Die? Was not his name Ishmael? "Whom God hears." Was there no comfort for her in that name? Had she not ever wandered in the wilderness before, only to find the living God watched over her? Had not God just said, "Of the son of the bondmaid will I make a nation?" Die? Had not God said in reference to this very son, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly?" But apparently her brain is too much numbed by sorrow to recall these facts, and in her utter helplessness she lifted up her voice and wept. But will God hear her cries? True, once before, in somewhat similar circumstances we read that it was said to her, "The Lord has heard thy affliction ;" but there is no such heavenly message now ; for were not her distance from her child, and her cries, wrung though they were from a mother's heart, the very expressions of her unbelief? But, if for such cries God, as a faithful God, can have no ear, nevertheless, as a merciful God, and one who would be faithful to His own word, He heard the voice of the lad. And do not His words, "What aileth thee, Hagar?" shew that her cries were uncalled for? It was not for the mother of one on whom prophecies had gone, to stand apart, but, casting away her needless fears, to be up and doing for her son, for God had

other purposes than death for him, and had determined to make of him a great nation.

And is it not often so with us whom God has pledged Himself to bless? Do we not too often lose faith and faint when we should be fighting? And have not we often found that relief we despaired of lay at our very doors. So Hagar perceives that the water she despaired of was close at hand. Like Elisha in 2 Kings vi., she needed but to lift her eyes to see God's reserves. Oh that God would give us grace to keep our eyes up, instead of looking down at our circumstances, like the beasts that perish!

And God was with the lad, and he dwelt in the wilderness outside the Land, and his mother took for him an Egyptian bride.

Let us now consider the typical import of this scene. Hagar and Ishmael as we have seen, typically represent law and Israel under it, or as Scripture expresses it, Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children. They must therefore be cast out to make room for Christ, the promised heir, who introduces grace. But if Ishmael be cast out, it is not in the purpose of God that he should die; but when, as an outcast in the wilderness, earthly resources have failed he is brought very nigh to death, God intervenes and miraculously sustains him, and he becomes at length a great nation;—so Israel who scoffed at and rejected Christ, are themselves rejected and cast out from the Land of their fathers, and brought very low. But if other nations spring into existence, flourish and decay, or are absorbed by their conquerors, it is not so with Israel. God's hand is over them, and they can neither be annihilated nor amalgamated with the Gentile world; but, preserved by Divine interposition they shall yet become a great nation in whom God will fulfil all His prophecies in the coming day.

But in the interval while Ishmael, the son of the bondmaid, occupies the wilderness, wedded to his

Egyptian bride, the law Isaac, the son of the free—ourselves in fact—occupies Abraham's house, where Abraham feasts and laughs. A God-given joy and liberty belongs to those who occupy the place too long usurped by fear and bondage.

But is there no danger that joy may deteriorate into selfishness? There is; but it was not so in Abraham's case; his was a self-sacrificing, not a selfish joy, for in the next chapter he offered up his Son. And may not liberty in them become license? It may; but it was not so with Isaac; his was a liberty which would not take a liberty, for he would not make affinity with the world by choosing thence his bride. And hence we learn that the joy and liberty which God gives us as sons of God when rightly apprehended, beget in us at once the Spirit of self-sacrifice for others and of separation from worldliness for ourselves.

Such then is the portion which is ours, a portion such as Israel never knew, nor will ever know. Ours is sonship instead of servanthship; ours is joy and liberty instead of fear and bondage; ours is the intimate knowledge of the Father, instead of the more distant knowledge of the Almighty; ours is to be the bride of Christ above, instead of being the bondmaid cast out below. And soon, we know not how soon, the scene will change from earth to heaven; soon the heavenly bridegroom will appear to take His heavenly people home, and the earthly people—Abraham as representing Israel—will be courted by the Gentiles and their kings (Abimelech and Phicol), the Land will be formally taken possession of by Israel as betokened by the planted groves, and the altar of the everlasting or millennial God (verse 33) will be erected while a covenant of peace will bind all the families of earth together (verse 32). But we, in that day of blessing on the earth, will be occupying our Father's house on high, as the bride of the true Isaac, Christ, and heirs with Him of His estate. JOHN FORT.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY A SERVANT OF CHRIST.

QUESTION 1.—Is “fire” always a symbol of divine judgment? What fire consumed the offerings for Aaron and his sons before the fire came out from the Lord?

ANSWER.—Fire *on the altar* consuming the sacrifice was a symbol of divine judgment, that fire, after all was in order, having come down from heaven (Lev. ix. 24; 2 Chron. vii. 1). But fire in itself is not always a symbol of divine judgment. It may symbolise trial or suffering at the hand of man (1 Peter iv. 12-13). So the meat offering, baked before being brought to God’s altar, typifies the Lord as man experiencing trials before the cross, who, of course, did not bear divine judgment till on the cross. I suppose the fire was ordinary fire before the sacred fire came down.

Q. 2.—With reference to the “carcase of the sin offering,” if you say that eating or burning served the same purpose, viz., the removing from sight the sin transferred to it, what do you think is the difference between the two?

A.—None could eat of the sacrifice offered on their own behalf except it were a peace offering. Hence those sin offerings, in which the priests were concerned were burnt. Lev. x. 16-20 shows me that the burning or the eating served the same purpose. Moses was content that it was burnt. Could that have been the case had the burning of it expressed something different from the eating of it?

Q. 3.—The carcase being holy, why was the man who burnt it thereby rendered unclean?

A.—The carcase was holy, because it typified the Lord. But sin is a defiling thing; so every one who had to do with the carcase or with the scape-goat to which sins were transferred had to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh.

Q. 4.—Why was the red heifer completely burned without the camp? Was this divine judgment? Was it such in Lev. xvi.?

A.—The red heifer was a sin offering, but of an abnormal character. No part of it went on God’s altar. But as that part of every sacrifice which did, thereby typified the Lord bearing divine judgment, and seeing that the red heifer is called a sin offering, I conclude the burning of it outside the camp served two purposes, symbolising in an informal way the bearing of divine judgment, as well as the putting out of sight completely of the sin. In Lev. xvi. the two are distinguished. What typified divine judgment was the part burnt on the altar; what symbolised the putting out of sight of the sins was the burning the carcase outside the camp.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED. 41

Q. 5.—Is it proper to say that Christ was made sin outside the camp, and that God came out of His place to take vengeance on sin?

A.—The Lord suffered without the *gate*. The Hebrews were exhorted to go outside the *camp*. Speaking carefully, I do not think I could say, He was made sin outside the camp, because Judaism was maintained by God till He had died.

Q. 6.—Why was it necessary to burn what remained of the bread (Exod. xxix. 32), or the remainder of the sacrifice of peace offerings instead of eating them (Lev. vii. 15-18)?

A.—They were burnt that they should not be put to any common use (Exod. xxix. 34). In the case of the peace offering, God would not accept as expressive of communion with Him what was really not so. It would be abomination to the Lord.

Q. 8.—Could Aaron have entered the Holiest without blood before divine judgment fell on Nadab and Abihu? Did he in Lev. ix. 23?

A.—I do not know that Aaron ever entered the Holiest except to make atonement. There is no hint of it in Lev. ix. 23.

Q. 9.—Is "holy place" in Exod. xxviii. 29-43, etc., the holiest of all? What is it in Lev. xvi. 17, 20, 27, etc.?

A.—In Exod. xxviii. 29-43, the outer chamber is clearly meant by the holy place. In Lev. xvi. 17, 20, 27, the holy place as verse 2 shows, is the inner chamber, "the holy place within the veil."

Q. 10.—In what sense did Aaron bear the iniquity of the holy things (Exod. xxviii., 38) and also bear the iniquity of the congregation (Lev. x. 17)? Does Christ bear the iniquity of our holy things?

A.—Aaron was to bear the iniquity of the holy things, in that he was liable to punishment if anything in the work of the sanctuary went wrong. The Lord bore our sins.

Q. 11.—"Bearing the iniquity of the congregation to make atonement for them before the Lord" seems to have connection with "eating the sin offering in the holy place." Would you say that "eating the sin offering" or "burning it" was an essential part of atonement? If so, would you say that atonement was really effected ere the carcase was taken outside?

A.—If you take the whole sentence of Lev. x. 17, it will, I think, be clear to you. "Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord." Atonement by blood, which alone deals with sins before God (Heb. ix. 22), had already been effected for the people with the blood of that goat (Lev. iv.

42 INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

35); and Aaron first and then Moses and Aaron had together blessed the people (ix. 22-23) on the ground of the accepted sacrifice. Now in this verse (x. 17) there is not a word of atonement by blood, but of the duty of the priest to eat that goat, for they were responsible for the people to God that all the sacred rite should be properly performed, that *wrath in government* should not break forth against the congregation. It is of this character of things that Moses speaks, not of atonement by blood. See Numbers viii. 16-19. Eating the sin offering or burning it, you will see, therefore, is not an essential part of *atonement by blood*, but either the one or the other was the right way of dealing with the carcase, that if the victim could not be afterwards found, the sin transferred to it must be gone. No imputation of guilt could rest on the person or persons on whose behalf the sacrifice had been offered. I think you will find atonement, as we have part in it, *i.e.*, by blood, was not dependent on the disposal of the carcase, but was always connected with the service at the altar, or in the holy place, so that the offerer could depart knowing that his sin was forgiven before the carcase was disposed of. See Lev. iv. 20-21; vi. 24-30; xvi. 27-28. Could the offerer have had forgiveness before atonement was completed? Atonement, we must remember, in the Old Testament, is spoken of at times in connection with government, and then blood is not necessarily called for. Atonement, as we needed it, is not effected without blood. It is of the former character of atonement Lev. x. 17, I take it, speaks.

Q. 12.—What is the difference between the scapegoat “bearing iniquities” and the carcase of the sin offering being burnt?

A.—The dealing with the scapegoat was an essential part of atonement by blood (Lev. xvi. 10), and answers to the Lord’s bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Where the burning of the carcase is mentioned, as I have already stated, we have not a word of atonement. If it were part of atonement, how could we feed on the sin offering as Heb. xiii. 10-12, teaches us? Of the portion of the sin offering by which atonement was made, none could eat. That was for God.

Q. 13.—Is there anything in the offerings that symbolises our old man crucified with Christ?

A.—I know nothing which does that.

Q. 14.—Is it in the burnt or the sin offering, either or both, that the basis is laid for the putting away of sin and the bringing glory to God?

A.—The putting away of sin is by the sacrifice of Himself. This comprises both the burnt offering and the sin offering really, for both are needed fully to express the sacrificial death of Christ

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

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(Lev. xvi. 3-5). But you cannot draw the distinction, as it is sometimes drawn, *i.e.*, the one for *sin*, the other for *sins*, for both speak of atonement (Lev. i. 4), which is for *sins* and not for *sin*. The burnt offering was not brought because of the person's sins, yet atonement for sins was not duly effected without it, for it set forth in the fullest way the Lord bearing divine judgment for us, inasmuch as all of it was consumed by the fire on the altar.

Q. 15.—Of what was the Passover a type?

A.—Shelter by blood from judgment.

Q. 16.—What is to be understood by “redemption by power?” What difference is there between “salvation” as seen by Israel (Exod. xiv. 13), and the “redemption” by an outstretched arm and strong judgments?

A.—Redemption by power for Israel was displayed at the Red Sea. God promised it (Exod. vi. 6). He accomplished it at the Red Sea (xv. 13). Psalm lxxvii. 15, refers to it. Redemption delivered them from the slavery of the Egyptians and made them God's people. Salvation speaks more of their state as delivered, but does not imply necessarily that they were God's people.

Q. 17.—What is embraced in the term “redemption that is in Christ Jesus?”

A.—Redemption that is in virtue of or by Christ Jesus, embraces forgiveness of sins (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14) and justification likewise (Rom. iii. 24).

Q. 18.—Is there a difference between a “sinful” and a “guilty” man? What is it?

A.—*Sinful*, *i.e.*, tainted by sin, is what we are by nature; *guilty* is true of those who have sinned.

Q. 19.—What is meant by “he that is dead is freed from sin?”

A.—Against a dead man no charge of sin could be laid. His condition, dead, shows he could not have acted, so is a complete answer to the charge. It is an abstract statement in Rom. vi. 7, an illustration taken from every day life for *practical* instruction for us.

Q. 20.—What is the force of “dead to the law by the body of Christ?”

A.—The Lord has died to the law actually. We in Him have died to it. We have died to the law through the body of Christ.

Q. 21.—Explain “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

A.—The law, or uniform action, of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law, or uniform action of sin and death.

44 THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

AN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY.

THE history of the remnant of Israel who returned from Babylon after the seventy years captivity, as it is related in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah with the incidental notices of the times and the people found in the post captivity prophets is full of instruction for us in this day.

To the godly Israelite the centre of all his hopes in this earth was Jerusalem, "The City of the Great King;" the place which Jehovah had consecrated by His own name; and the Temple which had been sanctified by His presence and His Glory.

Psalm cxxxvii. describes in the most pathetic language the feelings of the captives—separated from the land and city that they loved, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." Their enemies asked them for a song, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." How should they sing the Lord's song in a strange land? And then we get the expression of the Psalmist's love for the Holy City, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And so in Psalm cii. the psalmist, anticipating deliverance expresses his delight in Zion, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come, for Thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof."

But if the heart of the captives was set on the holy city, their God had not forgotten either them or it. Zion might say, "The Lord hath forsaken me, my Lord hath forgotten me," but He, by reference to the tenderest and closest tie that nature knows, assured them that forgetfulness on His part was impossible.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. I have engraven thee on the palms of my hands." What a striking figure is this of the constant thought of Jehovah for His people at the time they were removed from their own land. "Thy walls are continually before me" (Isa. xlix. 14-16).

The first portion of the book of the prophet Isaiah ending with the xxxix.th chapter closes with the prophetic word to Hezekiah, which announced the approaching captivity. The xl.th chapter opens with words of comfort to the people while they were still in captivity. That they look on to a still future day is manifest, but that they had a primary application to the Babylonish captivity is evident from passages from chapters xlv. and xlv. we shall shortly notice.

The period of the captivity had been limited by the announcement of the prophet Jeremiah, at its very commencement to seventy years, (Jer. xxix. 10), and the godly Jew looked forward to the expiration of that period with full assurance that the word of God would be fulfilled. And so we find Daniel, as that period was near its expiration, having "understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem," set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes; and prayed and confessed the sins of the people, making supplication for the city Jerusalem and the Holy mountain" (Dan. ix. 2-3).

I purpose to have shortly from scripture, the return of the captives: their difficulties and encouragements; and to note one or two of the lessons we may learn from their history.

C. BLOOMFIELD.

To be continued.

Eagles or Vultures, gathered together (Matt. xxiv. 28), the instruments of judgment upon apostate Judah in the future. "Eagle" is rendered "ravenous bird" in Isa. xlvi. 11. This unclean bird (Lev. xi. 13) is frequently alluded to both in a good and in a bad sense.

Ear bored, (Exod. xxi. 6), digged (see margin Ps. xl. 6, compare with Heb. x. 5), the life-long and voluntary obedience of the Blessed Lord in accomplishing the will of His Father. "Itching ears" (2 Tim. iv. 3); "ears heavy" (Isa. vi. 10); "ear uncircumcised" (Jer. vi. 10), are terms easily apprehended.

Earing-Time, (Exod. xxxiv. 2). This is one of those old English words preserved for us in our venerable authorised version of the Scriptures. *Ploughing* or *tilling* is the modern signification. "*Eared* nor sown," (Deut. xxi. 4), should be "ploughed nor sown" and so elsewhere.

Earnest of our inheritance, (Eph. i. 14). The Holy Spirit given to indwell the believer is the seal or mark that He belongs to God, but the Spirit given thus is also the *earnest* of future enjoyment and of glory. The Holy Ghost in the believer is the pledge or guarantee of future blessedness (2 Cor. i. 22).

East, geographically, according to Hebrew sacred and profane writers, those nations and countries beyond or bordering on the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The "East Sea" (Ezek. xlvi. 18, etc.), is the Dead Sea, or "Sea of the plain" (De. iii. 17). Help, blessing, deliverance comes from the *east* or sun rising (see Concordance).

Easter, (Acts xii. 4), or *Passover*: see Revised Version.

Eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood (John vi. 53-56). This does not refer to the Lord's Supper: indeed, John nowhere in his writings refers to

that great and distinguishing Christian feast. As what you eat and drink become part and parcel of yourself, so the *death* of Christ must be spiritually partaken of, entered into for life. The foundation on which eternal life is bestowed is His death and ere we can have it, *i.e.* life, His death must be spiritually apprehended by us. Sacraments as ground of blessing are absolutely excluded in this chapter.

Elders, of a city (Deut. xix. 12); of Israel (Num. xi. 16); of a church, (Acts xx. 17), signifies men of age and of ripe experience. Local Government and general oversight are characteristic of elders whether under Judaism or in the church. Elders are termed Bishops or overseers in Acts xx. 17, 28. The former designating the person, the latter term pointing to the office filled when ordained by apostles (Acts xiv. 23), or their delegates (Titus i. 5).

Elohim, God (Gen. i. 1), the plural form for God and which occurs about 2,700 times in the Sacred Scriptures. *Eloah*, singular, occurs nearly 60 times in the Bible.

Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani, (Mark xv. 34). The Lord's cry was in the sacred tongue of the Jews, the Syro-Chaldaic. There are other two recorded instances of our Lord speaking in the same tongue (Mark v. 41; vii. 34). In each case the sacred historian interprets in the passage as the language was not spoken or understood by the mass of the people; this is in beautiful accord with the church rule established by the apostle at Corinth (1Cor. xiv. 27).

Euroclydon, (Acts xxvii. 14), a tempestuous wind peculiar to the Mediterranean: from its force and uncertain course it is exceedingly dangerous. It is now spoken of in nautical language as a Levanter.

WHAT a rush of thought to our minds as we think of them. What blessings have they dispensed! what mischief have they wrought! In Gen. xxvii. 16 we read of deceiving hands: how sad to think that a mother should teach her son to deceive his father, and how the fruit of that deception followed the deceiver thro' life! Be sure your sin will find you out. How great a contrast are the hands of Joseph—made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 24). Happy Joseph! out of weakness made strong (Heb. xi. 34). But we also read of *Heavy Hands* (Ex. xvii. 12). Israel delivered from Egypt encounters a mighty foe, and Moses their leader and pleader too is on the hill top, praying with uplifted hands for them; but his hands were heavy, so Aaron and Hur stay up those pleading hands, and Israel prevails. And we have one on the Eternal hills who pleads for us, His arms will never grow weary, His love never grow cold. He needs no stone to sit on, His seat is the throne of God and He is God's Living Stone. *Lean hard on Him.* In 1 Tim. ii. we read of holy hands lifted up to God—how few of us have observed this—do we realize our weakness, our need, then lift up *Holy Hands*. Hands, eyes and heart unite in pleading with God, but Heb. xii. 12 tells of hands that hang down. What does this show but an opportunity of doing good in lifting them up. Again, the Psalmist says, he that hath *clean hands* shall be strong. A dear little boy heard this text and was constantly running to the tap to wash his hands for he wanted to be strong. Oh how many an older one has mistaken the exterior for the interior, careful as to outside, careless as to the heart. The priest of old must have *full hands*. Yes, full of that which spake of Christ. So as priests let our hands be full of Christ, as servants may they be full too, ever prescribing that blessed and soul satisfying, heart-resting peace-giving Christ to a poor hungry world.—C. G. CHANDLER.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

THE DECREE OF CYRUS.

(Continued from page 45.)

DURING the latter part of the captivity the Chaldean Empire had changed masters. We get this change very briefly, but very graphically described to us in the two last verses of Daniel v. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom, being about three score years old."

If the reader would like to know the way the change was effected at that eventful period he will find it portrayed, I believe, in few but striking words in Jer. li., verses 28 to 32.

The reign of Darius was but short, and he was succeeded about the year B.C. 559, by his nephew, Cyrus, under whom Persia first appears amongst the nations as a great Empire. The Chaldean head of gold of Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. ii.), had been succeeded by the breast and arms of silver.

Cyrus had been indicated by prophecy as the instrument in the hand of God for the deliverance of His people. Let us turn for a moment to Isa. xlv. and xlix. Chapter xlv. closes one of the most vivid illustrations of the folly of idolatry, with a gracious announcement to the people ending with these remarkable words, "That saith of the deep, Be dry and I will dry up thy rivers" (alluding, I believe, to the way in which Babylon was taken by diverting the waters of the Euphrates), "That saith of Cyrus he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid," and we should read on to verse 6 of chapter xlv. This is a most interesting Scripture. Here Cyrus is indicated as anointed of Jehovah, more than a century before he was born. Those who would undermine the authority of the

Word of God, point to this circumstance to call in question the genuine character of this prophecy, asserting that it must have been added after the event. This need not detain us: but it gives occasion for a word of caution to our readers against listening for a moment to such a suggestion. A reverential study of the whole passage with the context will be sufficient to shew the folly of the suggestion; but it is interesting to notice a variation in the reading of verse 5 in chap. xlv. in the Revised Version, "*I will gird thee,*" instead of "I have girded thee;" while in verse 4 we have still "I have surnamed thee" that is by this prophetic Scripture. The variation in the sense is in perfect harmony with the scope of the passage, and is a strong proof, if proof were needed, of its genuineness.

There is a tradition connected with the early life of Cyrus to the effect that his grand-father, Astyages, for some superstitious reason desired to put him to death, but that he was hidden and brought up in obscurity and so spared to fulfil the purpose for which he was indicated by this prophecy.

From the prophetic announcements of Isaiah and Jeremiah we turn to their fulfilment as related in the book of Ezra (Ezra i.) The Persian monarch is no sooner established in his throne than he recognizes the Divine mission entrusted to him by the promulgation throughout his dominions of a proclamation to give effect to that mission.

The terms of the proclamation recognize the Lord God of heaven as the One who had given all the kingdoms of the earth to the king, and that it was His house that Cyrus was to build, "the house of the Lord God of Israel."

This decree of Cyrus was deposited with the State archives at Ecbatana as we learn from chap. vi., where we are told that in the decree of Darius search was made in the house of the rolls (in the margin, books).

SEVEN PRECIOUS GEMS OF TRUTH.

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This was a matter of great importance as we shall see hereafter. To the keeper of the State documents it may have appeared but a small matter to be made an affair of state, but of all the records there deposited, was there another of so much importance? The return from Babylon was an essential link in the chain of the purposes of God that connected the past with the future; the promise to the seed of the woman announced to Eve in the garden of Eden; to the seed of Abraham announced to that patriarch; and to the royal seed of David; with the coming of the son of God; the sacrifice of Calvary; the setting aside of Israel for the calling of the Church; the ultimate restoration of Israel; and finally the blessedness of the Eternal state, when God shall be all in all. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

C. BLOOMFIELD.

(To be continued if the Lord will).

SEVEN PRECIOUS GEMS OF TRUTH.

(For all who are children of God).

1. The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity whose name is Holy—each believer can say of Him "*He is my Father*" (John xx. 17; Gal. iii. 26; iv. 6-7).

2. He *by* whom all things were created and *for* whom all things were created, and *by* whom all things consist, and who is *before* all things—the same who was always the Father's delight, is *my Saviour* and *my Lord*. Prov. viii.; Matt. iii. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 3; Col. i. 16, 17; Titus i. 4.

3. Christ's blood (Atonement) is the righteous basis on which God *washes, sanctifies, justifies, saves, and blesses* with all spiritual blessings each believer, Lev. xvii. 11; Rom. iii. 25; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. ii. 13; Heb. x. 19.

4. Christ's Life of love and grace in lowly service when here on earth, is my *pattern* and *rule* of life in contrast to the law—Israel's rule. Matt. xi. 29-30; 2 Cor. x. 11; Rom. vi. 14; 1 Pet. i. 2; 1 Cor. ix. 21.

5. The Holy Spirit indwelling each believer (in this dispensation). The *earnest* of our inheritance; our *teacher* and *guide* in the word of truth. Our *comforter*, *advocate* and *intercessor* on earth. 2 Pet. i. 13-14; John xiv. 16-17; xvi. 12-15; Rom. viii. 26-27; 1 John ii. 27.

6. The Word of God our *guide-book* and *chart* till we reach the end of the wilderness pathway; also my *food*, my *mirror*, my *light*, and *water* to cleanse from defilement on the way. The sacred Scriptures given by inspiration (God breathed); is profitable too for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction* and *instruction* in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Jer. xv. 16; Ps. cxix. 9, 105; James i. 22-25; 2 Tim. iii. 16.

7. The Lord's Coming my *hope*. His truth is our *girdle*. If we are walking in communion with the Father and His Son we will shine. In service He desires us to be faithful and wise, and in view of His near return we ought to *wait*, *watch*, and *long* to see and be with Him for ever. Luke xii. 35-42; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18; Rev. xxii. 20-21. A. E. BOOTH.

BIBLE EXAMPLES.

EXAMPLES ARE MODELS WHICH CAN BE SAFELY FOLLOWED,
AS DRAWING, WRITING.

1. LOVE. Jonathan to David, 1 Sam. xviii. 1-4. He gave up his hope of being king. He submitted to be under David.
2. PIETY. Josiah, King of Israel, 2 Kings xxii. 1-2. He remembered God's eye, v. 2. He followed the example of David, v. 2. He went on for God against idols, c. xxiii.
3. FAITH. Moses in Egypt, Heb. xi. 24. Refused to be of the world. Choose God's people in affliction. Made count for eternity.
4. SUFFERING. Christ for us, 1 Peter ii. 21. Without complaining, without threatening. To save us from hell to heaven.

THOMAS NEIL.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY A SERVANT OF CHRIST.

Q. 22.—What element of the sin offering symbolises the condemning sin in the flesh?

A.—Atonement was effected by the sin-offering. There is no atonement for the nature. God condemned sin in the flesh by the incarnation and death of Christ. As to the latter, nothing but His sacrificial death could enable God righteously to put away sin. If it has to be put away it must be bad indeed. Thus His death condemns it.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the Spirit of life which is in Him. Now, that is in us who are in Him, hence makes us free from the law of sin and death. I do not see any connection between that and John xx. This last was the bestowal of His Spirit on the disciples *collectively* to act for Him while He would be on high. But it clearly was not the gift of the Spirit (see Acts. i. 4), which is given to saints *individually*, and by which it is that we come to be in Christ.

Infants are born sinful creatures, but are not by nature guilty. The Lord's sacrificial death on the cross was needful for them, for His sacrifice alone enables God to put away sin (Heb. ix. 26). Strictly speaking atonement is for *sins*, not for *sin*.

As to the offerings, whatever was burnt on the altar betokened the Lord bearing divine judgment, it being consumed under the law by the fire which came down from heaven. Not one of the five kinds of offerings appointed by the law was lacking in this, for a portion of each was consumed on the altar. So no one of Adam's race can really approach God with acceptance unless He owns that the Lord bore divine judgment.

Before the law was instituted there was no sin offering distinct from the burnt offering. Job offered burnt offerings for his sons for sins he feared they might have committed. God told Job's three friends to offer burnt offerings for what they had done. The institution of sacrifice under the law introduced, as distinct from the burnt offering a sin offering, and a trespass offering. The sin offering was *chiefly* for sins unwittingly committed, the trespass offering was required where God or man had been defrauded of their rights, whilst the burnt offering set forth especially the self-surrender of the Lord in death voluntarily to do God's will in making atonement. The making atonement refers, as I have said, to sins, not to sin. The sin offering looked more at the sinner's need, the burnt offering at the willing surrender of Him.

who is the sacrifice. So both together were required on the day of atonement to typify the one sacrifice of Christ; and by that one sacrifice sin will be put away. So Abel's offering spoke of the Lord's sacrificial death needed to deal with the question of the nature. But where that death is before us, I take it, both the burnt offering and sin offering are really represented.

Q. 23.—In Rom. vii. 14, we have the expression "Sold under sin" and in Eph. ii. 5, "dead in sins." What is the difference between these Scriptures?

A.—1. I take to be the *result* of the creatures' will.

2. The fallen creatures' condition from both. Man's will must be in exercise to become a *slave* to sin (Rom. vi. 16-19)—but he is born dead. He must yield himself to it to obey it. He is by nature a child of wrath.

Q. 24.—Please explain Rom. v. 16?

A.—This Scripture states the condition consequent on the act of the head, in which all connected with that head are liable to share in *condemnation* or *justification*. But *when* the condition is made good is not there stated. As to *condemnation*, it is future, thus leaving open a door for grace to work, that justification of life, the other condition *may now and for ever be enjoyed by those* under the headship of Christ.—*made* sinners, is a condition of man's race. Dead, too, all were—another condition common to all his race. The *condemnation* however of any of them was always future.

Q. 25.—Is discipline connected with the Assembly or the body?

A.—Discipline is binding on all as being, to speak correctly, members of one *Assembly*, for it is the Assembly, not the body as such which then acts. This is manifest, since the body could not put away from its midst (1 Cor. v. 13). The authority to act at all in binding or loosing is Matt. xviii. 18, a word addressed to the whole company of disciples, and not to a local Assembly. "Whatsoever *ye* shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Why the Assembly is capable thus to act, verse 20 tells us. But it is the Assembly as a whole, which is there viewed I take it, as thus acting, as it is the disciples as a whole which are viewed as receiving (John xx.), though the local Assembly in each case is that which initiates the action:—

NOTES.

Heb. ix. 26. Sin in this Scripture is in us, and also weighs on the world. Rom. viii. 20-22.—If we speak of '*us*,' we may call it nature—otherwise a principle in default of a better word. Indeed a nature is a principle, being the cause from which things

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

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proceed. So sin is the cause of evil acts, and of creation groaning.

In Rom. v. 12 we learn that itself, that hateful thing, entered the world by one man, and not merely the evil nature in Adam, but sin itself, the sin of the world, as much as sin in the flesh.

As to the term *old man*. "The form in which the nature expresses itself through the person" may, very likely, be the reason for the expression. One says, "That is just so and so—just like him." Any one, or thing, crucified would be thereby judicially dealt with. Through the Lord's cross, atonement was wrought but atonement and crucifixion are different things.

I believe Mr D—— was right in saying that the experience described in Rom. vii. 7-24 is that of one not sealed—therefore in the flesh. When we *were* in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law (verses 8, 9) did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death (verse 10). But the Roman saints were in the Spirit, because indwelt by the Holy Ghost (viii. 9), so they were no longer in the flesh. The effect of being in the flesh chap. vii. 7-24 graphically describes and 8-10 explicitly states.

I think the *old man* must be the old nature, for it is what belongs to us, yet can be viewed apart from us. "Our old man is crucified . . . that we should not henceforth serve sin." It is contrasted with the *new man*—and speaking of it in a practical sense can be put off and the new man put on (Col. iii. 9, 10) and this is characteristic of the Christian state (Eph. iv. 20, 24).

It is not, it is clear, just my former self; for if I speak of *former self*, I speak of that which is past, and in the present has no existence, whereas an old man is crucified with Christ for a present result. There would be no need to have crucified one's *former self*. Putting then the term the *old man* in the crucible of enquiry to discover what it is, what remains? It is not just one's former self, because its deeds if unwatchful, may be manifested still in any one of us. It is what is part of me as a person, and yet can be viewed as something distinct from me.

THE SCRIPTURAL DIVISIONS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

1 Cor. x. 32.

THE JEW.	THE GENTILE.	THE CHURCH.
Rom. ix. 4, 5	Eph. ii. 11, 12	Eph. i. 22, 23
John iv. 22	Eph. iv. 17, 18	Eph. v. 29-33
Rom. iii. 1, 2	Mark vii. 27, 28	1 Peter ii. 9

ISAIAH LXII.

IN the full blaze of the Eternal Throne,
 Breast-plated, glorious, stands our great High Priest ;
 His jewels shine ; He thinks upon His own
 Where'er they be : but still He loveth best
 To raise the all-prevailing cry,
 The plea that rings perpetually—
 Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
 Jehovah, help Jerusalem !

And far below Him, where the shadows fall
 On Zion's stones, and Judah's princeless line,
 A group is gathered on the crumbling wall
 To catch the echoes of the voice Divine ;
 From these lips, too, goes up the prayer,
 Incessant through the troubled air—
 Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
 Pity, O Lord, Jerusalem !

And we, we watch the angel's armour gleam
 Down Edom's purple chasms, and we see
 That when His foot has dipped in Jordan's stream
 Soon victory will be ours, and Israel free ;
 "Mighty to save"—we hear Him cry,
 "Mighty to save"—we make reply—
 Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
 Oh, God, preserve Jerusalem !

For, crushed and hopeless as the city lies
 Beneath the Gentile's proud remorseless tread,
 There comes a time when she will yet arise
 Amongst the nations with a crowned head ;
 Then shall our song triumphant be,
 Sung loud, sung everlastingly—
 Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
 Our God has saved Jerusalem !

GORDON CALTHROP.

Jewish Missionary Intelligence.

LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA.

Box 830 LOS ANGELOS CAL.,

Feby. 21st 1894.

BELOVED BROTHER,—I have been slow in responding to your letter, but having so many calls upon my time and much feeble health, it has been difficult for me to keep up with writing.

I scarcely know what will suit your purpose but may simply state that the need of something more being done to bring before the Mexican population of California the Gospel, I began to study at odd times the Spanish language and finally commenced to print with a small hand lever press and a little type some tracts and a small sheet in Spanish. My first attempt was made in Los Angeles, and an old butcher's shop or stall was my printing office, where with much labour, having to learn everything, I began my work. Some tracts sent me by a dear brother in England, and one or two translations made for me here by a professor of Spanish, for which I paid by doing some printing, gave me a start, and a few thousand of the first series of the "Las Buenas Nuevas" were issued monthly. With many interruptions and changes, as well as encouragements and difficulties the work went on growing slowly for several years, until I came here about two and a half years ago with the purpose, the Lord willing, of giving myself more especially to the Spanish work. In this the Lord has given much to cheer, with the loving aid of some of His people in America the work has prospered and grown until it has assumed considerable dimensions, and about all Spanish speaking countries are reached as well as Brazil, which is of course Portugese, and for which we print as the opportunity occurs in that language. Whilst Spanish America, from the Southern States to the Argentine and Chile, is the principle field we work, yet a good deal of what we print is sent to Spain and the West Indies.

We have nearly 300 names of persons on our list, most of them distributors of the Gospel and other papers, and who

receive from 1000, the highest, to about 5 copies monthly. They are sent to workers of all sorts, unless known to be heterodox, or for some other reason withheld, but otherwise without regard to denominational distinctions, the object being to help on as far as permitted to do so the spread of the gospel in lands where Rome has so long held sway over conscience and souls and bodies of men. The open door and opportunity for this being now such as it has never been before. That the Lord has a purpose in giving this access to lands so long closed to the light of His word, no one can doubt, and may well be one of the signs of the close of the dispensation and the coming of the Lord.

We print now 30,000 monthly of the little Gospel sheet "Las Buenas Nuevas." This is kept free from controversy and lately has contained in parts the whole of Luke, and we are following with John, whilst Galatians, 1 Peter, the 3 Epistle of John, as well as many other portions of the Word have all had quite an extended circulation in this way, and we printed also in booklet form for better preservation by those who want them entire. The importance of getting the Scriptures before them where multitudes have never seen a Bible or Testament has been much pressed on me of late, it is the true antidote to every error, whether popish or otherwise, whilst at best a tract gives but a very limited portion of the precious word at one time, and we can surely trust the Holy Spirit to use to the enlightenment and salvation of perishing souls that word which is "given by inspiration of God." In saying this I do not undervalue the preaching of that word, either by the voice of the Evangelist, or by means of gospel tracts. But in all these fields there are very few to work, in comparison to the great and crying need everywhere such as we can little understand in so-called Protestant lands. Besides a quantity of tracts of different kinds we issue a series on the controversial side called "Hojas Polemicas," this is occasional as there is opportunity for it. Another 16 page pamphlet "Auxilios para los Peregrinos," is designed to help believers in the study of the word. This has of late not

been kept up as I could wish, but I trust to do more at it this year, as it is an important part of the work.

This year we have issued 22,000 wall calendars, 10,000 Spanish, 6000 Portugese, and 6000 Italian, as many will receive these who would not take a tract, a little taste in the getting up of them making them attractive; whilst they contain a goodly portion of selected Scriptures designed for those who know nothing of the Bible.

All this through the loving fellowship of some of the saints is sent out freely to those who need them, and whilst we do not often get details of work, there is abundant testimony to the use the Lord is making of them, in opening doors of access in new fields, as well as carrying the message of salvation to those who never heard it, and for whom Christ died.

For Brazil we do some special work in Portugese and are just finishing 15,000 of the Gospel of John mostly for those parts.

The lack of labourers for those fields is very great, whilst there are some very earnest and devoted workers. But the enemy is busy enough sowing error on every hand and doing the work of destruction.

Besides the local work here, I hope soon to get again to Lower California, at least as far as Eusenado as I know of no one who has the Gospel in the whole peninsula or territory.

Thank you for the little publications sent which I should be glad to see from time to time. I am sorry not to have met you in America, but I realize that the distance to California is considerable especially when time is limited.

And now with much love, I remain, dear brother,

Affectionately in Christ,

ROBT. T. GRANT.

[We have the utmost confidence in commending the important work of our brother to the prayers, sympathy, and financial support of our Christian friends. Many have informed us that they would like to help in mission work by contributing, but they can give so little and they don't know *how* to forward that little. We will gladly do it for them, and will feel honoured to be used as a channel between our readers and servants of God at home and abroad. All sums will be remitted in full free of charge. But why not write direct and enclose your unite in a post office order if at all possible. The end is near. May God abundantly bless the labours of His beloved servant in California.]--ED.

I reject many things which I do not account sinful in the abstract. I look to influence and consequences. A thing may be lawful, and yet not be expedient.

“If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” The world should see what master we serve. They are consistent in their cause and course: Christians ought to be so in theirs.

If I am a Christian, I am a witness for Christ. I am in the world; but I am not of the world. I must not distress or perplex the good; I must not encourage or confirm the careless in their follies.

If Christians join in what are called worldly amusements, I ask nothing about their creed. They show their *taste*; that is enough. A mere creed, however correct, will save no man. The influence of the creed is the essential matter.

He who cultivates a sound spiritual taste cannot relish frivolity. Most of what is said about amusements is said to no purpose. Taste, not logic, rules the world. A new nature—a fine taste—a relish for, a delight in, the sublime and holy, the infinite and eternal;—plant this in the soul of man, and he looks upon the world’s amusements as mere cobwebs.

Is this amusement sinful in itself?—Perhaps it is not: but many things may be morally wrong in practice which are not morally evil in their nature. But reasoning on the point is needless. You account yourself a true Christian: be true, as such, to the taste which Christianity produces, and not a word need be spoken in the way of argument about the trifles and vanities of the world.

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXII.—(*Continued from page 39*).

THE previous chapter was, it will be readily admitted, a most remarkable one, opening as it did with a marvellous panorama of God's ways with man, commencing with the appearance of Christ the Promised Seed; continuing with His rejection by Israel, who are thereupon rejected and made outcasts from the Land, while we are brought into nighness, and joy, and liberty as sons; and ending with a millennial scene in which Israel, restored to the Land, are sought after by Gentile kings. That at the head of our present chapter we should read the words, "After these things," will not therefore surprise us, for the typical unfolding and ending of God's ways with man may have prepared us for a new departure in Abraham's history. Accordingly we read that "after these things" God did tempt Abraham. Now there are two kinds of temptation mentioned in the Word of God, and examples of them both appear in the first chapter of James' Epistle. Thus in the second verse we read, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that *the trial of your faith* worketh patience;" such evidently was the character of the temptation to which Abraham was now subjected—the trial of his faith; while as regards the other kind of temptation, we read of it in verse thirteen, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." With the latter kind of temptation, as we have seen, Abraham both in Egypt and at Gerar had to do, for the temptation sprang *from his own heart*; but the character of temptation which at present occupies us was a trial of his faith which sprang *from the heart of God*, who would fain

test His servant to see whether in Abraham's affections He or Isaac held the first place.

And notice how rigorous was the test, and how searching the language which proposed it. "Take now," says God, "Thy son—thine only son—Isaac—whom thou lovest." How, as the words left the lips of God, must they, with ever increasing poignancy, have cut the patriarch's heart, until they culminated in a reminder of the way in which his heart's affections twined round Isaac. "My son, Lord? Thou didst expel Ishmael, and now I have but one son." "Then take that only son." "Shall I take Isaac, Lord, in whom Thou saidst, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.'" "Yes, take Isaac." "But, Lord, he is my darling son." "Then take thy darling son, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

But if the trial was keen, the triumph was glorious. For Abraham rose early and clave the wood for the burnt-offering. There was none of the fussiness of undue haste, nor of the dilatoriness of one who would fain delay; he rises at once to do Jehovah's will, but he leaves no preparation for the journey unthought of. How many of us may on occasions, taken as it were by surprise, do noble deeds; on the spur of the moment a live bomb may be seized and cast out of the trench, or a leap overboard may be made into a shark-infested sea to save a comrade's life; but few of us would face these hazards if we had the time to look them fairly in the face. But not so with Abraham. Day after day as he journeys on, night after night as he lies awake in his tent, and listens to the light breathing of the lad, how his soul must have been racked as he thought that each hour as it rolled by brought him nearer to Moriah and its fatal heights.

JOHN FORT.

GOD'S WORK AND GOD'S WORD. 63

“When *I* see the blood, *I* will pass over you” (Exod. xii. 13). “Deliver him from going down to the pit; *I* have found a ransom” (Job. xxxiii. 24). “*God* commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 8). “The *Lord* hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. liii. 6). Herein is plainly stated God’s Work for sinners. What He has done in giving His Son to die and in raising Him up from the dead is the *alone* ground of safety. Now to mix this with feelings or experiences is to insult God. His work is perfect. “I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it that men should fear before Him” (Eccles. iii. 14). Not even the work of the Spirit *in you* can add to the value of God’s work *for you*. The sacrifice of God’s own providing is absolutely perfect. Now if even the holy work of the Spirit does not add one whit of value to the precious blood, think you the sinful and ever imperfect state and experiences of saint or sinner can add a feather’s weight to the value of the mighty sacrifice of Calvary? No. “By *one* offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. x. 14). What did that one offering consist of?—THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST (Heb. 10). Would you dare to add to *that* peerless sacrifice your sin-stained experiences, and fancies, and feelings? God forbid. Let it alone in its eternal and intrinsic value. Calvary shuts you out as a doer for salvation, for in the darkness and agony of that scene, God and

Christ settled the question of sin. The work is done. Its value is infinite. It stands out and alone, independent, yea, gloriously independent of aid from man or angel. It is God's work. "Nothing can be put to it." It is grandly and conspicuously *alone*, God's firm foundation for sinful and guilty creatures. Now if the ground of salvation is altogether independent of our state or feelings, where do these latter come in? Does a happy state prove that I am saved? Does the joy I had yesterday evidence a saved condition to-day. Let us see.

"He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 16). "Be it known unto you therefore, men, brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by Him all that believe *are justified from all things*" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). "By grace *are ye saved through faith*" (Eph. ii. 8). "Ye *are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified*" (1 Cor. vi. 11).

Now it is from the written Word that I learn I am saved having believed on Jesus. If God will not allow my feelings to mix with His *Work*, He as strongly rejects them to mix with His *Word*. His Work stands alone as *ground* for salvation. His Word equally remains alone as the *authority* for personal salvation and both the Work and the Word are independent of our ever changeable frames and feelings. It is God who says the believer is saved. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. xxviii. 26). Alas! How many fools there are. Now the Word is as firm

as the Work. The Work on which I rest is God's. The Word from which I gather assurance is God's. There are happy feelings, there is joy, but these *succeed* resting on the Work and believing the Word. It is the devil's deadly opiate to mix the human (sinful) with the Divine (holy). It is the devil's compound mixture which is destroying thousands. When I know I am saved from God's Word—alone from that Word—then happiness follows in its train. The knowledge of salvation is alone contained in God's book—the Bible. Feelings and experiences have their place, but they come third on our list. The *ground*—God's Work. The *authority*—God's Word. The *result*—happy feelings.

Solemnly, dear reader, do we warn you against Satan's mixtures and confusions. Keep these three things distinct. Keep each in its own place. How certain! How absolutely simple are the words of God: "He that believeth on the Son HATH EVER-LASTING LIFE." Now if I simply believe these words they will produce feelings of the most happy kind. But, if on the contrary, I cavil, look into my heart to find *there* evidence that I am saved, then all certainty is gone. It is the reception of the bare Word of God which makes me certain and sure. Do I trust God's Word and cling to it, believing it simply because therein God is the speaker, then I can never, no, never be a doubter.

66 WORSHIPPING TOWARD THE EAST.

WE were lately visiting certain cathedral cities in England, and in one of those grand old cathedrals we remained during the service. We were impressed with the quiet behaviour, the outward decorum of the worshippers. We greatly enjoyed, too, the devout reading of the Word of God in our mother tongue. The ritual and in fact the surroundings, and accessories could not but impress one with feelings of awe and reverence. We love the Church of England for the beauty and simplicity of its worship, for the respect accorded to civil and ecclesiastical authority, and the reverence paid to Holy Scripture, yet we need scarcely say that Ritualism, from its lowest to its highest forms, is as contrary to the spiritual worship of the New Testament, as light is from darkness. This was made painfully evident to us as the worshippers *en masse* (save ourselves) turned towards the east. It reminded us of the Parsees or "fire worshippers" who, when they pray do so toward the east. O dark England, thou art rapidly drifting into the arms of the mother of harlots. Israel's sun sunk in darkness when the greatest of abominations was reached: "Turn thee yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and behold at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar were about five and twenty men with *their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east*" (Ezek. viii. 15-16).

We do not pretend to be a prophet of woe, nor have we the slightest desire to wear the prophetic mantle. But we read our Bible and implicitly believe its statements. We are old-fashioned enough to pin our faith to the priceless volume of inspiration. Certain are we that the star of England is about to sink for ever, as Empires and Kingdoms

before her have done, unless God in mercy stir up His people to hurl back the forces of popery. England however seems apathetic. She sleeps, and the wily foe stealthily and rapidly advances. Popery is always weak in argument, but strong in quiet aggressive work and service. The Cathedrals of England will yet we fear become centres of Roman Catholicism—the most corrupt system on the face of God's earth.

Ritualism, whether in the Church of England or Rome, turns the back toward God like the idolatrous priests in the temple of Jehovah.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS.

1. Make it a *special* point (if possible) always to be in the place of meeting in due time. Better to be a few minutes before the time, and to spend them in secret prayer, praise, or meditation; as coming in late tends to distract the minds of those gathered. (Luke xxii. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 40).

2. Be occupied with "Jesus only," as He who died and rose from the dead, who ascended, and who is coming again. Do not speak to each other except it is really needful; do not turn over the leaves of your Bible or Hymn-Book except when necessary. (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

3. Remember that *each* one gathered at the table either helps or hinders in blessing; therefore the need that *each* saint be there in realized fellowship with God. (1 Cor. x. 17; xi. 28.)

4. Remember that the Holy Spirit is present to guide in worship and ministry. Let the brethren see, when leading in worship and ministry, that they are in the Spirit; for only as worship and ministry are in the Spirit can they be pleasing to God, and profitable to those gathered. (John iv. 23, 24; 1 Cor. xii. 1-13; xiv. 15; Rom viii. 8.)

5. Remember that all gathered together are in the same position as worshippers, blood-bought sinners saved by the sovereign grace of God (Eph. ii. 4, 5): but not so with regard to ministry. Some are special gifts given by Christ, the living head, for the edifying of the body; but there is also a general ministry in which all members of the body have their place. (Eph. iv. 11-16).

6. Any brother leading in worship or ministry should read and speak so loudly and distinctly that all present can hear well, and give due time to those gathered to find the hymn, or portion to be read, before beginning. (1 Cor. xiv. 9-12). "Let all things be done unto edifying." (1 Cor. xiv. 26).

7. When you miss any from the meeting, visit them if you can and learn the reason; if in trouble, help them if possible. (1 Cor. xii. 26; Gal. vi. 1-3).

8. Take heed not to condemn or hinder a weak or young brother in the exercise of his gift, however small. Try rather to encourage and help him; but do not show love at the expense of truth; both are to be exercised together; and each member in the body has its own special place. (Rom. xiv. 10-19).

9. When gathered around the Lord's table, remember that the special object in gathering thus is to remember Him and show forth the Lord's death till He come. Just in proportion as this is kept in mind will the praise, teaching, or exhortation be profitable; therefore the breaking of the bread ought not to be kept in the background. Though there is no special time appointed for the dividing of the bread and wine, yet we have the example of the Lord Himself; for He gave it a prominent place, as the special teaching in John (chapters xiii., xiv., xv., and xvi.) appears to be after the breaking of bread. (Acts ii. 42; xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 23-31).

10. Be kind and courteous to strangers who come amongst you. Bear and forbear one with another. Love each saint for Jesus' sake. If the flesh be manifested in any one, pray for that one, speak lovingly to that one, and remember that the flesh is also in you. (Heb. xiii. 1-3 ; Rom. xii. 9, 10).

11. Do not be angry if others do not show love to you ; let this rather lead you to show love to them. Manifesting thus the mind of Jesus, you will enjoy His love, and draw out their love. (Rom. xii. 21 ; Eph. iv. 20-32).

12. If any one offend you, be sure to take the scriptural way of dealing with that one ; speak to that one personally first ; go in the spirit of prayer and forgiveness ; pray together over the point first, if possible. (Matt. xviii. 15-35).

13. If you find your interest in Gospel work abating be sure that something is wrong ; go to God at once about it in prayer and supplication. (1 Tim. vi. 10, 11 ; 2 Tim. iv. 10 ; Phil. iv. 7).

14. Remember that each saint has an individual responsibility to God, and that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. (Rom. xiv. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 10).

15. Keep the coming of the Lord Jesus continually upon your hearts. (1 Thess. iv. 14-18 ; Tit. ii. 13, 14 ; Rev. xxii. 20).

16. Let none be brought into fellowship except with the full approval of all gathered ; and, if any has not full confidence in the one proposed, mention it at the time, or to those who have the rule, and who watch for souls. (Acts ix. 26 ; Heb. xiii. 17). W. G. S.

FAULTY REMARKS AND EXPRESSIONS.

WE died *in* Him is not correct. "Dead *with* Christ" (Rom. v. 1-8) is the Scriptural form of sound words.

In a risen Christ is not correct. "Risen *with* Christ"

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(Col. iii. 1), and in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6), is Divine thought and language.

"Dead in the death of Christ" and all expressions which refer to believers as being in Christ previous to His ascension are unscriptural and should be avoided. We are dead *with* Christ, raised *with* Christ, and seated *in* Him in the heavenlies.

"Justification in a risen Christ" is wrong. A person in Christ does not need to be justified.

"The *imputed* righteousness of *Christ*" is an exceedingly faulty statement. Righteousness imputed (Rom. iv.) is not quite the same as "imputed righteousness," this latter gives a character to righteousness *i.e.*, imputation which it does not bear ; but righteousness simply is imputed. "The righteousness of *God*" is the scriptural formula (Rom. i. and iii.); but not the righteousness of *Christ*. This latter is a theological statement, and is faulty, both verbally and doctrinally.

"Gathered to *Christ*" (Matt. xviii. 20) is clearly incorrect. We are gathered to His name. The gathering to His person is yet future (1 Thess. iv. 17). The gathering to His name is a present thing (Matt. xviii. 20). The name supposes the absence of the person.

INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ARE the speeches of Satan, the sayings of bad men, and the sermons and parables of our Lord, *all* equally inspired? Undoubtedly. Inspiration applies to what is *written*, not to what was said or done. Bad men were not inspired by God to say bad things, but the written record of them is inspired. Then is it inspiration of thought or word that we have in the Scriptures? It is verbal or word inspiration that we insist upon. What says David, "The *words* of the Lord were in my tongue;" "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Now Scripture, or writing, is

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composed of letters and words, and it is the *writing* which is inspired, or God-breathed. Again, "which things we speak," in chosen language of our own? Nay, but "in *words* . . . which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Were it inspiration of thought, leaving it to the writer to employ his own language, then what certainty would we have that we possessed the very truth in its absolute exactness as given by God? It *must* have been verbal inspiration with the Old Testament prophets, for they wrote—as moved by the Spirit of God—things what they did not themselves understand, hence they had afterwards to search their own writings to find out the meaning of what they had committed to parchment or paper (1 Peter i. 10-12). Inspiration gives us the certainty of what was revealed. We would not, ourselves, speak as some do of "the infallible Word;" infallibility, strictly speaking, applies to God alone; inspiration to the Bible. The highest spiritual understanding of an apostle, even, is distinguished from what was revealed by the Lord (1 Cor. vii.); this distinction we learn by inspiration.

There are persons going about whose pretensions and vagaries catch the unwary. A hyper-spiritual state is assumed, and their dictum is accepted. "To the law and to the testimony." Try the spirits and judge all things, not by creeds which are lifeless and consequently powerless, but by the inspired Word of God.

Some have difficulty in reconciling the human element with inspiration, and thus raise difficulties as to "the style of the Holy Ghost." We see not the slightest difficulty here. The Spirit of God is Sovereign in His choice of instruments. He has no style. He has caused the powerful *mind* of Paul to be reflected in his writings, as also the warm *heart* of John in his. The Spirit uses the human vessel, holds it, controls it, shapes it, guards it in the certain

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communication of truth, yet not so as to shut out the individuality and character of the person.

But enough, we are as certain that we have the Word of God in our English Bible as that the sun shines in the heavens. What other book but the Bible can explain the riddle of the moral confusion which everywhere exists? What other book has changed thousands of drunkards, wife-beaters, blasphemers, thieves, and the scum of society into God-fearing men and women, turning their once wretched homes into a paradise? Could Shakespeare do this? Could Tom Paine's "Age of Reason" accomplish these things? No, no. We will grasp our Bibles more firmly than ever, and refuse—absolutely refuse to part with them at the bidding of men, however learned they profess to be. The logic of facts is against them. It is the only book which is a revelation of God and *from* God. It is the only book which meets the longings of my nature, which satisfies and rests my conscience. I know *that* is a knife for it cuts; also, I know the Bible is the Word of God, for it pierces (Heb. iv. 12). We are willing to give up our Bibles when they are prepared to give us a book *as good*, for better they cannot. The struggle is an earnest one. The conflict thickens. The attacks of the enemy are numerous and diversified, but the point aimed at is the existence of the Bible itself. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Get sceptics to read the Bible, *it* will fight its own battle with the conscience.

God will guard His own book: let us see to its wider circulation. Urge people to read it. Read and study it more ourselves. It is life's chart through our tangled pathway; it leads us on and on, up to the pearly gates, yea, inside the jasper walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will go out no more for ever. What a book is the Bible! And what a holy and undying mission is committed to it!

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. xxii.—(*Continued from page 62*).

BUT if Abraham's heart-strings quiver, his faith does not flinch, and, on the third day, lifting up his eyes and seeing the place of sacrifice afar off, he bids his young men tarry while "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Come again to you? Was this a blank untruth, a lie behind which the Patriarch would for the moment hide the fact that Isaac would return to them no more? Not so: his mind no doubt slipped back to the time when, previous to the lad's birth, he had learnt that God was the God of resurrection, who raised up from his dead body this very son Isaac; and if He then brought life out of death, why should He not do it now? Did not the words "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" keep running through his mind, and would God lie? True, since the world was, none had ever recrossed that bourne from which no traveller returns: but faith looks to God, and does not search for precedents; and so, as Paul tells us, Abraham "accounted that God was able to raise Isaac up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 19). Laying therefore the wood upon his son, and taking the knife in his hand he breasts the hill. "And they went both of them together."

But if the Patriarch's eye of faith can pierce beyond the grave, he none the less is reminded by the fire and knife that resurrection must be entered into through

death—a death, too, dealt out by a father's hand. And now, as if to lay a further strain upon nerves already stretched to their highest point of tension, the silence is broken by the son. Father, he says, you carry the fire, I the wood, but nowhere do I see the lamb. And, may we not think it, choking down a sob the Patriarch replies, 'My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb.' So they went both of them together.

And how these touching words recall another scene: a scene on which the heavens open, in order that we may gaze in and hear, since what is there uttered so nearly concerns ourselves. It is the true Isaac who speaks; "Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offering and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein. Then said I, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God'" (Heb. x. 8). Blessed agreement! Blessed submission to His Father's will! In order to the redemption of our lost, ruined souls, 'They went both of them together.'

And now they reach the spot, as fair a one as mortal eye could rest upon, and one which shall yet be the joy of the whole earth. But Abraham has no eye for the scene; a horror of great darkness has settled upon his soul; truly he is in the furnace now; nevertheless a gleam from the lamp shoots athwart the encircling gloom; he has reached the place and however terrible it may seem to him, it is at least the place which God had told him of; and satisfied with that, and content to trust when he could not trace, he builds his altar, lays the wood in order, and then, binding Isaac his son, laid him on the wood. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son."

JOHN FORT.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES. AN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY.

(Continued from page 51.)

THE RETURN FROM BABYLON.

THE decree of the king had gone forth, and had been promulgated by proclamation throughout his dominions.

Who will respond to it? None were compelled. The decree was simply permissive. Those who loved their own ease! Those who were satisfied with the things that Babylon could give; and had no yearning of heart after the land of their fathers; no earnest longing for the altar and worship of Jehovah, were free to remain where they were. And so it was that only those "whose spirit God raised up," who responded to the decree. In Ezra i. 5, we read "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites, with all those whose spirit God had raised up to go up to build the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem." It was no easy thing they had undertaken. The sacred historian is silent as to any incidents of the journey but it was a long and wearisome one, from the banks of the Euphrates to the Holy Land. A similar journey by Ezra and his company related in chaps. vii. and viii. occupied four months; and we learn there that it was not unattended by difficulty and even danger.

Then how changed were the circumstances under which their journey was undertaken compared with the deliverance of their fathers from Egypt. Here there was no interposition of Divine power on their behalf. No pillar of cloud by day, or pillar of fire by night. They had no more in that way than we have to-day. But if there were no acts of power on their behalf, the watchful care of God over them, as mani-

fested by His providential dealings, was the more conspicuous. And this absence of miracle, and the same providential care, characterized the whole period over which the inspired history after their return extends. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah cover a period of some eighty years and not one instance of miraculous interposition is recorded.

Then if we look at the number of those who returned, how small a part of the nation it was. "The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore beside their servants and their maids of whom there were seven thousand, three hundred and thirty-seven" (Ezra ii. 64, 65). What a mere handful as compared with the population in the reign of David, when we are told that the men of Judah were 500,000 (2 Sam. xxiv. 9). They were a feeble few, and they were so regarded by their enemies. But they were on that very account suitable objects for the gracious care of their God which they did not fail to experience. They had "God and His Word," and it was all that they had. The great value of that word to them and how its sufficiency to meet every difficulty was proved by their history we may see hereafter. And do we not prove the same thing to day? It is surely a time of weakness, and not of the manifestation of power. But our resource is in "God and the word of His grace," the sufficiency of which we prove more and more, as we are more simply cast upon them.

This return of the captives has a peculiar interest for us in the present day, when such a decided movement is going on of the Jews towards the land. The return within the last few years has exceeded anything in the past. It is said that there are now about 43,000 Jews in Jerusalem alone, against some 10,000 or 12,000 ten or twelve years ago, and that there are now

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more than 100,000 in Palestine. It is also stated that some thousands of acres of land are being brought under cultivation; and that the land is giving a rich return. To the student of prophecy this return of the Jews to their land is very significant. We may at any time learn that "Palestine for the Jews," is becoming a popular cry.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY A SERVANT OF CHRIST.

LEV. x. 16. As to the sin-offering, the judgment must have been borne ere Aaron could eat of it, therefore the burning outside the camp could not symbolise it.

Eternal life, and life in the Son for saints, are true really for all time, but dispensationally you could not affirm them of saints before the cross.

Luke viii. 17 ; xii. 2, 3. These Scriptures have a different application. "Take heed how ye *hear*," in the former, and "what ye shall *say*," in the latter. In the former, I take it, they were warned that light should be displayed for the use of others, hence they must not hear like the *three* first classes of the parables just propounded, but must be careful to hear to profit so that the light could shine. If they failed to display the light, another day would bring out what their responsibility had been.

On the other hand, in the latter Scripture, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees was touched on. Disciples must be true in their ways, for what they might *say* in the darkness would be heard in the light—what is covered up will be uncovered.

Lev. i. 6. *He* shall flay—cut in pieces—wash in water. All refer to the offerer. For a bullock more than one person was needed to deal with the animal—so “*he*” plainly indicates the offerer, and the mention of the priest burning the parts on the altar in v. 9 shows that the previous “*he*” in that verse is the offerer. How this beautifully keeps up the typical teaching—*He* offered Himself.

As to the hour in John vii. 30, it is of course His death that is referred to. The hour for that. In xiii. 1—it is the hour for His departure out of the world to the Father, and the hour for Him to be glorified. In xvii. 1 of course the death was needful for all this, but the death is not the special thought presented as it is in vii. 30. The context in each place explains what is referred to and the hour for what. In xvii.—His death seems really passed over, though one knows it was through it he had to pass ere He could be glorified. In xiii. *to depart out of the world to His Father* seems all one thought. V. 4 is His life-work, I believe—and v. 1-5 treat of His own position in relation to His Father to which He was returning, though now as man as well as Son of God.

I had viewed Acts ii. 33—the Lord receiving the Spirit from the Father to shed it forth as the baptism of the Holy Ghost,—Matt. iii. tells us of the Spirit coming on Him in token of His Father’s delight in Him and witness of His perfect holiness—sealing Him—John vi. 27.

Acts ii. would clearly not be receiving it in witness of His personal perfection. His resurrection attested that and God’s acceptance of His sacrifice as well. Aaron receiving the oil before sacrifice of course typifies the Lord, on whom the Spirit came in life. Aaron sprinkled along with his sons with the blood and the oil showed that he as a man was no better than them. Into this last of course we could not bring the Lord.

SOME NOTES FROM THE BIBLE OF A DECEASED SERVANT OF CHRIST.

CONSCIENCE.—A *crochety* conscience is governed by its own notions; a *legal* one by its own fears; a *tender* one by the Word of God.

The remedy for a legal conscience is *grace*.

The remedy for a morbid conscience is *truth*.

The remedy for a self-occupied heart is *Christ*.

A *good* conscience, 1 Tim. i. 5, 19; 1 Pet. iii. 16.

A *pure* conscience, - 1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3.

A conscience *void of offence*, - Acts xxiv. 16.

A *weak* conscience, - 1 Cor. viii. 12.

A *defiled* conscience, - Titus i. 15.

A *seared* conscience, - 1 Tim. iv. 2.

A *purged* conscience, - Heb. ix. 14.

An *evil* conscience, - Heb. x. 22.

A broad path is not a broad heart, but a broad conscience.

Righteousness is described by Paul. Life by John.

WATCHFULNESS without prayer is presumption. Prayer without watchfulness is mockery. In the first, man invades God's part in the great work; in the latter, he neglects his own.

Prayer without practice is laziness; contradicted by practice, hypocrisy.

I see a man at God's right hand,
Upon the throne of God;
And in the sevenfold light I see,
The sevenfold sprinkled blood.

I gaze upon that glorious Man,
On that blood sprinkled throne;
I know that He sits there for me;
That glory is my own.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.—1 Cor. i. 9.

NAMES AND TITLES.

IF each reader of these lines has confessed Jesus Christ as Lord (Rom. x. 9., R.V.), to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 11), then the Name and fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord ought to be sweet.

Jesus. This name occurs well nigh 700 times in the New Testament and never once appears with an adjective. It needs none. It stands alone. The Angel announced to Joseph: "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus—Jehovah the Saviour for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). It needs no human touch to add to its value. We never read in Scripture of such expressions as "dear" "precious" "sweet Jesus". The name itself implies all of these. It is like the box Mary poured upon His person.

Jehovah brings out His greatness; Saviour His love and compassion. This enables faith, wherever found, to say "Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee" (Song i. 3).

Christ. This is His official name. "God has made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and *Christ*" (Acts ii. 36). The word means "anointed." When He ascended to the throne, He received this title. Man would not have Him, Israel refused Him as Messiah (anointed), but God has glorified Him at His right hand, hence if Jesus is His *personal* name, Christ is His *official* one. He has been anointed on high with the Holy Spirit; this He shares with His people (1 John ii. 27; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22).

The same Spirit He received at the right hand of God has been sent down from heaven, hence he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17);.

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forms part of the church which is His body, also termed "*the Christ*" (1 Cor. xii. 12, R.V.)

Adam and Eve were one, joined together. God called "*their name Adam*;" so Christ and His bride are one, joined together and are called "*the Christ*."

Such is the blessed place of relationship between Christ and His people of this dispensation. Grace, free grace, is the source of it all. A. E. BOOTH.

(*To be Continued, D.V.*)

CHRISTOS VOSKRESS.

THE most solemn and magnificent ceremony of Russian church life and the most salient and illustrious event in each Russian's life is the Easter night. In that night the whole of the immense Russia is ablaze. An hour before midnight millions in town and country stir with burning candles and torches to the hundreds of thousands of their respective churches. With the twelfth chime of the hour-piece the whole church is as if by magic, set ablaze. Hundreds of thousands of bells peal from the Danube to the Torneo in Finland, and to Sitka in the now American Alaska; "*Christos voskress!*"—that is, "Christ is risen." The highest ecclesiastical dignitary shouts to the whole assembly, "*Christos voskress*" (Christ is risen)! The choir responds, "He is risen indeed!" Then every one echoes the great joy of this night, "Christ is risen!" Then for hours the Easter hymn is sung.

"Christ is risen!

Christ has crushed death!

Christ has brought life to light!"

The clericals embrace and kiss each other three times, shouting the same news. The kissing becomes

universal in the church and out of the church. During the whole Easter week it takes the place of every other form of salutation. This annual joy has been repeated in the city of Kiev for nearly a thousand years. Alas! that so few experimentally realized in their hearts this most wonderful truth expressed by their mouths! But how can the "Light of Life" live in a soul dark in sin? How can the "Lord of Glory" be risen in a soul dead in trespasses? But when the risen Redeemer breathes on a soul and fills it with the pentecostal fire of His Spirit, then it experiences in its inmost essence the exchange of death for life; then it sees, in noon-day light, that the blood of the cross makes the most sinful whiter than snow. Such a blessed, regenerated soul is in thrilling sympathy with the kisses of children in Christ; in thrilling sympathy with the joy of a Stundist shouting his centennial and millennial paschal psalm, "*Christos voskress!*" Christ is risen!—*Selected.*

HIS OWN BLOOD.

THE blood of the Cross has made peace for thee (Col. i. 20).

The blood of the Lamb is God's token of safety to thee (Ex. xii. 13).

The blood has brought thee nigh to God (Eph. ii. 13), if a believer.

The blood has justified thee from every charge of sin and guilt (Rom. v. 9), if a believer.

The blood of God's Son hath cleansed thee from all sin (1 John i. 7), if a believer.

The blood has permanently and eternally purged thy conscience (Heb. x. 2), if a believer.

The blood is thy title and confidence to enter into the holiest (Heb. x. 19), if a believer.

The blood has secured eternal remission of sins for thee (Matt. xxvi. 28), if a believer.

The blood shed before God has atoned for thy soul (Lev. xvii. 11), if a believer.

The blood of Christ has purchased the Church of God of which you form part (Acts xx. 28), if a believer.

The blood of priceless value has washed you from your sins (Rev. i. 5), if a believer.

The blood has washed your robe and made it white (Rev. vii. 14), if a believer.

The blood gives you title to the final victory over Satan (Rev. xii. 11), if a believer.

The blood is the ground of your sanctification both progressive and absolute (Heb. xiii. 12), if a believer.

The blood has secured redemption and forgiveness for thee (Col. i. 14), if a believer.

Four times has the Spirit of God been pleased to write thus of Christ:—"His *own* blood"—connecting this beautiful and touching expression with our redemption (Heb. ix. 12); with our sanctification (Heb. xiii. 12); with our washing (Rev. i. 5); and with our purchase (Acts xx. 28), if believers.

"His *own* blood!"—thus every grain of creature worth is excluded from our blessed standing in grace. "His *own* blood!" measures the insufficiency and weakness of Judaism. "His *own* blood!" forms the ground of that perfect cleansing which is the blessed portion of the weakest saint in the presence of God. Then "clean every whit" becomes the word of sweetest assurance to every child of God.

THE CONTRAST.

The Unbeliever's Portion.	The Believer's Portion.
Sin, Rom. v. 12.	Forgiveness, Eph. i. 7.
Death, Heb. ix. 27.	Life, John v. 24.
Judgment, Rev. xx. 11.	Reward, 2 Cor. v. 10.
Eternal Woe, Mar. ix. 43.	Eternal Bliss, 1 Thes. iv. 13-18.

SUPPER of salvation, Luke xiv. Supper of communion, 1 Cor. xi. Supper of joy, Rev. xix. Supper of judgment, Rev. xix. 17.

WORSHIP is being nothing, and having God's thoughts about Jesus rolling through my soul. Worship is being *lost in wonder* at what we find in God and Christ.

BIBLE FORGET-ME-NOTS.

FORGET-ME-NOTS have five leaves.

1. Forget not to honour your parents, Eph. vi. 2.
God notes it and promises blessing.
Dr A. Clark and the ravens, Prov. xxx. 17.
Your parents' presence, a blue forget-me-not.
2. Forget not the Sabbath day, Ex. xx. 8.
1. It is God's rest day. Don't disturb it.
2. It is His present to you, Ex. xxxi. 13.
Legend—Man in the moon. See Num. xv. 32.
To us it is the Lord's day.
3. Forget not thy Creator, Eccles. xii. 1.
Evil is coming, pleasures are going.
Men who died, promises were once theirs.
4. Forget not the words of Jesus, Matt. vi. 33.
Seek—Ye—First.
5. Remember Lot's wife, Luke xvii. 32.
Left—Looked back—Lost. THOMAS NEIL.

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE LORD'S COMING.

No. 1.

EVERY true Christian believes in his heart that the Lord is coming. The truth may not be intelligently held, but there it is deep down in the soul. It is very simple, you love the Saviour and, of course, you want to see Him. Then the subject is largely treated of in the Scriptures: in fact there are more texts and passages about the second advent than about any other truth in the Bible, save that of His first coming. We want our readers to become scripturally intelligent on this great theme—one of such commanding interest that the country is getting roused up and people are asking “what is it all about?”

Now we propose to answer three questions in this brief paper.

1. WHO COMES? 2. WHERE TO? 3. WHAT FOR?

1. The Lord Jesus Christ *personally* comes from heaven. In John xiv. 1-3, Jesus says to His sorrowing disciples “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. 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. And if I go to prepare a place for you I come again (omit “will”) and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.” Now Jesus was on the earth when He spake these words. He told them of His *going*, and the purpose, to prepare a place for them. But His *return* is as clearly intimated, and the purpose, to receive us to Himself. He went away personally; He will come personally. It was Jesus and none other who went away; it will be Jesus and

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none other who will come. Some have confounded the "I come again" of verse 3, with the "I will come to you" of verse 18. But these comings are quite distinct. The former refers to the personal return of the Lord; whereas the latter refers to the spiritual presence of the Lord now enjoyed. The former verse is a coming *for* us; the latter is a coming *to* us.

Now turn to Acts i. 11. Two angels testified to the Lord's Resurrection (Luke xxiv. 4-7), here two angels affirm the truth of the Lord's return. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus* which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Jesus did not go away before the gaze of His disciples in a spiritual form. He ascended before them. It was no phantom. They actually saw Him who had been with them for years, who had been crucified, who had been raised. *This same Jesus* shall come in Spirit? nay, but in *like manner* as ye have seen Him go away into heaven.

One other passage in proof of the personal return of the Lord. In first Thessalonians chap. iv., we read "The *Lord Himself* shall descend from heaven" (v. 16). You cannot make the passage otherwise than that the Lord, the very Lord Himself is meant. No twist, no perversion of the text, can make it speak otherwise. It does not say "the Lord by His Spirit;" or "the Lord by His angel" shall descend from heaven, but "*the Lord Himself,*" is Himself and none other.

2. *Where to?* Now the Hebrew Prophet, Zech. chap. xiv. 1-5, says "the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee" and further informs us where to: "*His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives,*" not ours but His. Then in first Thessalonians, chap. iv. 15-17, the Gentile apostle

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says of the raised dead and changed living of believers only they "shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord *in the air*." The Lord comes to the *air* before He sets foot on *Olivet* and the proof is ready to hand. When He comes to Jerusalem and stands on Olivet He is accompanied by *all* His heavenly saints. Whereas the Thessalonian scripture shews that He comes for His saints. He necessarily comes to fetch them *to* heaven, before He comes *from* heaven with them. He comes, therefore, in the first instance to the air—the trysting-place between Christ and His beloved. The meeting spot is only named once.

3. *What for?* To receive *us* to Himself (John xiv. 3). In His love He longs for our presence and eternal companionship. This is termed the "blessed Hope." He comes as the "Morning Star" to reward the early watchers. He comes as the "Bridegroom" to receive His bride. He comes as the "Saviour" to change our bodies and give them a fashion like His own. He comes as "The Resurrection" to raise the precious dust of His own. He comes as "The Life" to change the living saints on earth. He comes to claim His people—both dead and living (1 Thess. iv. 16-17.) This is an event outside the prophetic future. It is the *first* step in that magnificent scene which the page of prophecy unfolds. The Lord's coming to Olivet with His saints and connected events are the subjects of prophecy. But the Lord's coming to the air for His Saints is a matter, not of prophecy, but of distinct revelation by Paul, such is the meaning of the words "This we say unto you *by the Word of the Lord*," and again "Behold I shew you a *mystery*." Distinguish therefore these two distinct aspects of the *One* coming, to different places, at different times and for different purposes.

(*To be Continued, D.V.*)

SIX SHORT RULES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

1. Never neglect Daily Private Prayer. And when you pray, remember that God is present, and that He hears your prayers (Heb. xi. 6). Never ask God for anything you do not want. Tell Him the truth about yourself, however bad it makes you; and then ask Him, for Christ's sake, to forgive you what you are, and to make you what you ought to be (John iv. 24).

2. Never neglect Daily Private Bible Reading. And when you read, remember that God is speaking to you, and that you are to believe and act upon what He says. I believe all backsliding begins with the neglect of these two rules (John v. 39.)

3. Never let a Day pass without trying to do something for Jesus. Every night reflect on what Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself, "What am I doing for Him?" (Matt. v. 13-16.)

4. If ever you are in Doubt as to a thing being Right or Wrong, Go to your room, and kneel down and ask God's blessing upon it (Col. iii. 17). If you cannot do this, it is wrong (Rom. xiv. 23).

5. Never take your Christianity from Christians, or argue that because such and such people do so and so, therefore you may (1 Cor. x. 12). You are to ask yourself, "How would Christ act in my place?" and strive to follow Him (John x. 27).

6. Never Believe what you Feel, if it contradicts God's Word. Ask yourself, "Can what I feel be true, if God's Word is true?" and if both cannot be true, believe God, and make your own heart the liar (Rom. iii. 4; 1 John v. 10-11).

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

AN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY.

(Continued from page 77.)

THE RESTORATION OF WORSHIP.

THE people had separated to their several cities : but the primary purpose of their return, the rebuilding of the Temple, had yet to be commenced. They could not wait for that before they restored the worship of Jehovah. It might be asked, "How could that worship be restored without the Temple?" In all its completeness, indeed, it could not ; but in all its essentials it could. Without the altar there could be no worship. They could have no altar in Babylon any more than their fathers could have had an altar in Egypt. Their first act when they gathered together was to restore the altar. "The people gathered themselves as one man to Jerusalem. Then stood up Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God." In this they showed clearly that they understood the mind of God. They felt their need of His protection. A feeble few, surrounded by enemies, "fear was upon them because of the people of those countries." Their resource was in God alone. The altar was the way of approach to Him, and assured to them His gracious protection. "They offered burnt-

offerings thereon to the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening."

This surely was a sweet savour to God, for it spoke to Him, little as they could have understood it, of the precious sacrifice of His own Son. Nor was this all; the altar being re-established, they could celebrate their deliverance by that, which, while it reminded them of the deliverance of their fathers from Egypt (Lev. xxiii. 41-43) and their sojourn in the wilderness, pointed to a more glorious period yet to come. They kept the feast of Tabernacles. It was a feast that spoke to them of joy, joy that shall yet be fully realized, when the people shall be fully blessed in their land.

There are one or two things connected with this portion of the history that we may profitably note for our own instruction. There seems to have been complete oneness of purpose, they "*gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.*" Need we urge the importance of this oneness of purpose in connection with worship.

We may here well quote the prayer of the Apostle for the Roman saints, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with *one mind and one mouth* glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xv. 5, 6).

Then, too, their worship was regulated by the Word of God, "As it is written in the law of Moses." As when the Tabernacle was set up in the wilderness,

everything was arranged "as the Lord commanded Moses" (Exod. xl.), so the returned captives found sufficient direction for their worship in the Word of God. They had Divine guidance for everything, and surely Christian worship can admit of no lower standard.

Connected with this history we have two men who are distinctly typical men—Zerubbabel, the Prince, and Joshua, the High Priest. Zerubbabel was a prince of the royal seed of David and in the direct line of descent through which our blessed Lord came, so we find his name in the genealogy both in Matthew and Luke, while the references to him in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah present him to us in a distinctly typical character. Joshua the high priest, too, is both a typical and representative character. It was by no accident that he bears the same name as the great captain who led the people into the promised land. Both alike point to Him who in grace stooped to bear the Name of Jesus, and Joshua the high priest before the angel of the Lord in Zechariah iii. stands as the representative of Jerusalem and at the same time furnishes one of the most beautiful illustrations in the Old Testament of the converted sinner justified in the presence of God, and the accuser rebuked.

We find the two offices of king and priest brought together in the most beautiful manner in Zech. vi. 12, 13 in His person who "shall sit and rule upon His throne and shall be a priest upon His throne."

C. B.

(To be continued D.V.).

BIBLE WORDS EXPLAINED.

Faith as a verb should be distinguished from its substantive, *the faith*. The former is a subjective act and signifies the hearty reception of God's testimony in the Scriptures (John iii. 33); the latter is an objective thing referring in general to the whole system of Christian truth, *i.e.*, Christianity (Jude 3; Eph. iv. 5).

Fallow-ground, (Jer. iv. 3), uncultivated ground.

Fasting from food and from other of nature's indulgences was frequently practised under Judaism, both nationally, (Jud. xx. 26) and individually (2 Sam. xii. 16). It is also practised under Christianity and has the direct sanction of the Lord Himself (Matt. iv. 2; vi. 16-18; Acts xiii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 5). In the New Testament prayer and fasting are associated. Fasting is humbling the body and bringing it for the time being into moral correspondence with the afflicted state of the soul.

Fat and blood were forbidden as articles of food to the Jews (Lev. iii. 16, 17). God claimed both. The excellency of the sacrificial victim was exhibited in the fat and that was necessarily God's portion. The word is also metaphorically used in a bad sense (Isa. vi. 10) and in a good sense (Luke xv. 23). "Fats," Joel ii. 24, should be "vats," the lower part of the winepress.

Feasts of Jehovah (Lev. xxiii. 2). The feasts or "holy convocations" (v. 2, 27) here enumerated cover the whole history of Israel as a nation and are seven in number. First, the Sabbath, *rest*; second, the passover, *shelter*; third, unleavened bread, *holiness*; fourth, weeks, *pentecost* (Acts ii.); fifth, trumpets, *Israel called and gathered*; sixth, atonement, *Israel saved*; seventh, tabernacles, *Israel's glory*. Three of those feasts were compulsory on all the males of Israel (Deut. xvi. 16); namely, passover, weeks, and tabernacles. There were other feasts instituted under special circumstances and of a commemorative character as the feast of *Purim*, (Esther ix. 21, 26-28). Then we have "the feast of the dedication" (John x. 22), referring to the dedication of the sanctuary after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes of infamous memory, 164 B.C.

Felloes, the spokes of a wheel (1 Kings vii. 33).

Fellow, associate or companion. It is used in a contemptuous sense in Gen. xix. 9; Matt. xxvi. 61; Acts xxiv. 5, but should be deleted as the word is italicised, not occurring in the original in these passages. Jesus on the cross is declared to be the "fellow" or companion of the Lord of Hosts (Zech. xiii. 7). Believers on the other hand are the companions of the Lord on high (Heb. i. 9).

Fill your hands is given in the margin of Exod. xxxii. 29 as the meaning of "consecrate yourselves" to God for judgment; or for service in the sanctu-

ary, Exod. xxix. 9, margin, *fill the hand*. The popular idea of consecration is not the full and blessed scriptural thought which is to *fill the hands with all that tells of Christ*.

Fig-tree, Israel as a nation (Luke xxi. 29). The vine denotes *fruitfulness* (John xv. 1-5). The olive signifies *testimony* (Rom. xi. 17-24). The fig tree is *profession* (Matt. xxi. 19).

Fire, emblem of the Divine Majesty (Exod. xix. 18); of the Spirit's energy in testimony (Acts ii. 31); of never consuming judgment upon the lost (Mark ix. 49); of consuming judgment upon the worthless service of the believer (1 Cor. iii. 13-15); of agony in the separate state or Hades on the wicked (Luke xvi. 24); and the expression of eternal punishment generally (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xiv. 10; xxi. 8).

Firmament, the expanse or sky-covering over the earth (Gen. i. 14). "Spreadth," Isa. xl. 19; "covering" Num. xvi. 38, 39 are the same as expanse or "firmament."

First-born, a title of dignity, not necessarily denoting birth (Rom. viii. 29; Ps. lxxxix. 27).

Flesh, used in a doctrinal sense as opposed to the Spirit (Gal. v. 17). The *badness* of human nature, *strength* for evil, and *impossibility* of pleasing God or being subject to His authority are moral characteristics of the flesh or corrupt nature of man (Rom. vii. and viii. and Gal. v.)

Fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4) refers to the incarnation of the Lord. "Fulness of times" (Eph. i. 10) points on to the millennium. "Fulness" or completeness of the God-Head centred in Christ as man (Col. ii. 9).

FROM OUR NOTE-BOOK.

“WITHOUT *the way*, there is no going ; without *the truth*, there is no knowing ; without *the life*, there is no living. Christ is *the Way* which thou oughtest to follow, *the Truth* which thou oughtest to trust, *the Life* which thou oughtest to live.”

Every 15 minutes a 1,000 souls pass into eternity. Every day a 100,000 souls pass out of time into—Where? Every year a population as large as Great Britain are blotted out from the earth. What am I doing to save these perishing millions?

The populations of Great Britain are rapidly drifting away from Christianity. The people are getting out of touch with the Church and no wonder when *money* and not souls seems the great and absorbing passion of the professing Church.

John and Peter started on a race to the sepulchre (John xx. 4). Love first reached the winning-post. John (*love*) outran Peter (*energy*). A heart for Christ is infinitely beyond intelligence or energy either, but when both are combined with a passionate longing after *Him*, you have a full grown Christian in deed and in truth.

The Gospel of *God*, for He is its SOURCE. The Gospel of *Christ*, for He is its OBJECT.

TRUE CONSECRATION.

UPON the fly-leaf of a Bible was written the following:—“Lay any burden upon me, only sustain me ; send me anywhere, only go with me ; sever any tie but that one which binds me to Thy service and to Thy heart.”

A TRINITY OF GOOD :—The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

A TRINITY OF EVIL :—The world, the flesh, and the Devil.

I plainly see that there are three,
Great powers against poor me :
And all these three, *always* agree
To worry, vex, and hinder me.

Yet other three I gladly see,
United are to succour me ;
To bless and cheer,
Thro' paths so drear,
And always near :
I will not fear.

In myself is nought but failure :
In myself dwells no good thing ;
Gladly then I turn to Jesus,
All perfection dwells in Him.

C. G. CHANDLER.

B I B L E G A T E S.

THE illustration was forcible and plain, ancient cities having gates in the walls. Eden had one gate, (Gen. iii. 24), Holy City, twelve (Rev. xxi.)

1. THE NARROW GATE, (Matt. vii. 13, R.V.) It admits no human merit, (Rom. iii. 20.) No time to lose in entering it, (Lu. xiii. 14.) It is for individuals, not crowds. It leadeth to life, Eternal life (Jn. xiv. 6).

2. THE WIDE GATE. All kinds of sinners with many sins. Way, *broad*, less heed to the Spirit, greater love and ease in sinning. End, *destruction*, begins with neglect. Then disregard of holy things. Then hatred of God, etc. *The Company*, those who hate good. Choose the narrow gate and way now.

THOMAS NEIL.

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXII.—(*Continued from page 74.*)

AND now the final act is reached; the Patriarch stretches forth his hand to take the knife which he, while binding Isaac, had for the moment laid aside, and raises his hand to strike; but, ere the blow falls, a voice arrests it in mid-air! And from the angel's hurried cry, "Abraham, Abraham," we learn how nearly he had struck the blow.

And never surely did a more welcome message fall on human ears than that which followed. "Lay not thy hand upon the lad," the angel says, "Neither do thou anything to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Again are the words "thy son, thine only son" repeated; but how vast the difference in their import now; *once* it was God demanding Isaac's life; *now* it was God dwelling with delight upon the fact that Abraham had been willing to give him up to death.

And now Abraham is to learn that all the time, though he had no eyes to see it, God has had his own sacrifice in reserve, for raising his eyes he beholds *behind* him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, and Abraham took the ram and offered him instead of his son. And how often since that day have believers in every age made proof of God's reserves. God has made some great demand upon our faith; for long, perhaps, we have sought to evade it; but the moment that we bowed our wills and adopted His, we found that God had already ordered for us a pathway through our difficulties. God's own pathway lies through great waters, and we can no more trace that pathway in advance than we could discern, when standing on the deck of some great ocean steamer, the track which the vessel will take.

And yet there was one reserve of God that the pro-

phetic eye of the patriarch did rest upon; for looking on by faith, as it would appear, to that transcendent scene, which should be enacted at that very spot where God who spared Abraham's son, would not spare His own, Abraham names the place, Jehovah-Jireh, "The Lord *will* provide," for, "in the mount of the Lord it *shall* be seen." God had already provided a ram in Isaac's stead, but this clearly was not the fulfilment of Abraham's prophecy; "God *will* provide Himself a *Lamb*," he says, and for the fulfilment of that the world must wait 1949 years, until in that same mount we see God's Lamb offered, not as Abraham's ram, for one individual, but as the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world.

But if Abraham's trial had been great, his blessing shall be commensurate with it. Thus, for the first time, Christ, the promised Seed, is definitely named, "Thy seed," he says, "shall possess the gate of *His* enemies, and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Thus, commenting on this passage, Paul says, "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16). And so with the highest revelation of blessing ever vouchsafed to man, the scene closes; and Abraham, having worshipped, returns to his young men with Isaac even as he had said.

And now, as it were, a little piece of family news is brought to Abraham. Some might think it superfluous and wonder why it was introduced here; there was nevertheless a divine purpose in it as we shall see. Isaac had now attained the not immature age of thirty-five, and, no doubt, the question had often presented itself to Abraham's mind, as to where he should find a wife for his son, but to that question he had hitherto been unable to find any satisfactory reply. Very opportune therefore in its arrival was this piece of news that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, had

borne him eight sons, and that to one of these sons, Bethuel, a daughter Rebekah had been born.

It is not unlikely that the Hittite princes by whom Abraham was surrounded had approached him with a view to effecting a marriage with Isaac and one of their daughters, for according to their own admission he was a mighty prince among them; but, however externally advantageous to both parties such a match might appear to be, he will brook of no such alliance for his son. His own experience of that alliance which he had entered into with the Egyptian Hagar, and the sorrow which it entailed, was indelibly impressed on his mind. The principle which 1940 years afterwards was to be impressed on Christians, that believers were not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, met with unqualified assent from Abraham, however much it may be disregarded by those who, in this nineteenth century, boast of having infinitely more light than the grand old sheik. And now had come, as come it always will to him who waits God's time, the solution to what appeared an insurmountable difficulty. Bethuel had begotten Rebekah; he would summon his servant Eliezer, and send him with proposals of marriage to his brother's house.

Chap. xxiii. And now in pursuance of a divine purpose, as we shall have occasion shortly to show, Sarah passes away at the age of one hundred and twenty seven years, remarkable in this that she is the only woman whose age is given us in the Bible. And Abraham, possessor though he be by divine title of the whole land, has been given not so much as to put his foot upon, and, if he will bury his dead, he must purchase the tomb from the present occupiers of the soil. And now is enacted before our eyes a scene which is repeated at every change of property, however small, in the East. The vendor with a great show of liberality professes to be desirous of giving his pro-

100 SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE LORD'S COMING.

perty away, and the purchaser meanwhile is perfectly aware that the vendor will drive as hard a bargain with him as circumstances will admit. But Abraham is in no frame of mind to enter into the customary haggle; and Ephron having, no doubt, asked an exorbitant price in four hundred shekels for the field, which was a rocky one at best, is overjoyed at Abraham's ready acceptance of his terms, and the conveyance is duly executed, and Abraham buries his dead out of sight. The account of this scene provokes a smile in one who has travelled in the East and seen it acted to the letter scores of times.—JOHN FORT.

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE LORD'S COMING.

No. 2. (*Continued from page 87*).

IN our previous paper we sought to distinguish between two distinct aspects of the *one* coming, *i.e.*, His presence in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17) and our going to meet Him there; and subsequently His descent to Mount Olivet (Zech. xiv. 4) for the deliverance of Judah. Now in order to clear the ground of possible difficulty and objection, as to these and other aspects of the Lord's return, we will briefly examine the great Prophetic Discourse preached by the coming One Himself, related in the Gospel of Matthew chapters xxiv-xxv.

This sermon was delivered on the Mount of Olives—the *last* spot on earth touched by the Saviour's feet, and the *first* on which He shall stand. It naturally divides itself into three main parts, each of which might be examined separately. We would earnestly press a careful study of this deeply interesting prophetic portion, and can personally assure the reader that more real help will thus be afforded than can possibly be gleaned from books and tracts specially devoted to the subject of the Lord's second advent.

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1. The coming of the Son of Man to Palestine, chapter xxiv. 1-44.

2. The coming of the Lord to the Professing Church, chap. xxiv. 45—xxv. 30.

3. The coming of the Son of Man to the Gentiles or nations, chap. xxv. 31-46.

Thus the Jews, then Christendom, and lastly the Gentiles are severally witnessed in relation to that great coming event on which all blessing for Israel, the Church, and the world depends. The preacher was Christ; the subject His second advent; the congregation the disciples; and the pulpit the sacred mount. It was an open air sermon spoken by the King in distinct reference to His coming again.

A considerable share of evangelistic work is carried on by what is deemed by many an irregular ministry at street corners. Our hearts rejoice in open air gospel preaching by all and sundry if divinely qualified for the work, but when it is remembered that most of the Lord's teaching was under cover of the canopy of heaven—at the way side, on the sea shore, on the mountain—we are surprised that Christian teaching is almost wholly confined to the academy, the church, and the chapel. The most dignified prelate would not lose, but immensely gain by following in the steps of his master. Go out to the people. If the mass of the populations are drifting away from the christianity of the church and chapel we are not a bit surprised. A great mistake has been made in the nature and genius of Christianity. It is not a conservative system like Judaism, but is essentially aggressive. Both evangelist and teacher should *go* to the people; the former to the unsaved, the latter to the saved. We would like to see the teacher taking his stand at a street corner or other convenient public place as well as the evangelist.

(To be Continued D.V.)

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 91).

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

THE worship had been restored; and the altar assured the approach of the people to God. But that alone could not satisfy either the purpose of God for His people, or their desires for His glory. Indeed the existence of the altar would serve as a constant reminder that the great work for which they had been brought back to their land was yet to be done; and they at once took the necessary steps to procure materials for the work.

Verse 7 of Ezra iii. tells us this. Lebanon was again laid under contribution to furnish cedars; and the inhabitants of Tyre and Zidon received payment in kind ("meat and drink and oil") to bring them by sea to Joppa, as when Solomon's Temple was built:— And in the second year of the return of the captives they commenced the work. The description given us of this in Ezra iii. is in very few words, but how expressive they are. The Levites were specially appointed to this service. It was in accordance with their vocation; and surely an honourable service it was.

It is worthy of notice that the work began with a service of praise. "And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David, king of Israel. And they sang together by course, in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever towards Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised

the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." Mark the ground of praise, for it is unchangeable, "Because He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever towards Israel." And so they could afford to look away from the circumstances and rejoice in that goodness. The circumstances were felt indeed; it could not be otherwise. All around them was ruin. The broken walls; the desolate houses; heaps of rubbish, charred remnants of former greatness, surrounded them on every hand. It was an affecting scene, for while they rejoiced in the goodness of God to them, many were weeping at the contrast between the present condition and the temple of Solomon, as it had stood in its glory, before the captivity. "But many of the priests and levites and chiefs of the fathers who were ancient men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

This was a happy beginning of the work. But they were not allowed to go on with it long without difficulties. Whenever did any good work go on without opposition.

Satan has two methods for hindering the work of God. First, by his wiles; if he can succeed by these, the work is ruined. If these do not succeed, he tries open opposition. He will employ all the power of the world against the work; and there he has great resources at his command.

In the present case the first method failed. "The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin came to Zerrubabel and to the chief of the fathers of Israel and said unto them 'Let us build with you; for we seek your God as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto Him since the

days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur, which brought us hither.'” The character of their service of God we may learn from 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33. “They feared the Lord” (a fear wrought by His judgments) “and served their own gods.” Could such have part in building the temple of the Lord? Surely not. And they were answered with great wisdom (Ezra iv. 25). “But Zerrubbabel and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel said unto them, ‘Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God.’”

May we not to-day learn a lesson from these godly Israelites? Do we not on every hand see the world invited and encouraged to have part in professedly Christian objects? But how can such help in the work of God? Do we not need to be reminded of the question of the Apostle to the Corinthians, “What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”

The wiles of the adversaries being thus foiled, they resort to open opposition. “Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius, king of Persia.”

These hindrances seem at first to have been but partial until the reign of Artaxerxes, said to have been a usurper, who reigned by personating a son of Cyrus.

The letters to Artaxerxes from the adversaries of the Jews and the king's reply are given in detail in Ezra iv. and in receipt of the reply “Rehum and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power,” and the sacred historian adds, “Then ceased the work of the house of God at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia.”

C. B.

(To be continued, D.V.).

NINEVEH AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

THE recent removal from our midst of Sir A. H. Layard may recall what was, from a Biblical standpoint, perhaps the most interesting of his many discoveries. In December, 1849, he unearthed at the Kouyunjik Palace at Nineveh, built by Sennacherib, ten colossal human-headed bulls. The two bulls which formed the central entrance to the Palace had an inscription on them in the cuneiform character of one hundred and fifty two lines; four of the other bulls had two inscriptions, one inscription being carried over each pair of bulls, and these inscriptions give us the annals for six years of Sennacherib's reign. We are first told of his conquest of Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon; next of his expedition against certain mountain tribes; then of his conquest of the Hittites of Phoenicia, and of his restoration to his throne of Padiza, king of Eteron, and a tributary of Assyria, who had been deposed by his subjects, and given over to Hezekiah, who had imprisoned him, and against whom Sennacherib marched, probably to punish Hezekiah for having dared to imprison his vassal. This last inscription is thus translated by Sir H. Rawlinson:—

“Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him and by force of arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty-six of his fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured

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and carried off as a spoil, 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to keep him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape. Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and elders of Jerusalem with 30 talents of gold, and 800 talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty. All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of his submission to my power" (Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' Vol. ii. p. 435).

And now let us turn to the second narration of these events, which we shall find in the eighteenth chapter of the Second Book of Kings, which runs thus :—"Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, did Sennacherib, king of Assyria, come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria, to Lachish, saying I have offended ; return from me ; and that which thou puttest on me I will bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the house of the Lord, and from the pillars which

Hezekiah, king of Judah, had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria." It will be noticed that, while the Biblical account of the amount of gold agrees with that on the sculptures, Sennacherib claims to have received considerably more silver than the amount levied; nor is the Biblical account inconsistent with this, for Hezekiah would appear to have emptied both the coffers in the temple and those in his own palace, and to have handed over the whole, regardless of the fact that it exceeded Sennacherib's demands, to that king.

Now we are not called upon to defend the Word of God: God does not require our puny aid, and He who has defended His own word since Moses' time, will defend it to the end. Like Himself it is living and eternal, "it liveth and abideth for ever." It is not judged by man, but it judges man; "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." But while, on the one hand, we regard the attacks made upon God's Word by the so-called "higher critics" with mingled feelings of scorn and contempt, yet, on the other hand, we cannot help rejoicing as we note the hand of our Father allowing these stones which have been sunk deep beneath the dust of ages, to be uncovered in our day, as if to give the lie direct to those who presume to sit in judgment on God's Word. We need not for ourselves these extraneous confirmations of its truths, for we have proved it true in our own souls, and are prepared to risk (we use the word for lack of a better one) our soul's salvation on it; but we are thankful for them, if only for the fact that they confound the critics, and may tend to establish unstable souls.

JOHN FORT.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. 1 COR. i. 9.

(Continued from page 81.)

NAMES AND TITLES.

LORD. Now we proceed a step further and learn from the same verse (Acts ii. 36), that He is not only made CHRIST, but LORD and Christ.

We may know Him as Jesus (Saviour) and our position as linked with Him "the Christ" which is a blessed and precious truth, but "Lord" implies even more. It gives Him His full place of authority over us and puts each believer in the place of subjection and complete surrender of the will to His. Jesus in the days of His humiliation was perfect in dependence and perfect in obedience. He could always say, "not my will, but Thine be done."

Our place of subjection is expressed in the words of Acts ix. 6, "Lord what wilt thou have me to *do*?" To answer to this in any measure and to follow in His blessed footsteps, we need the constant enjoyment of the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us now look at a few of the privileges, blessings, and joys which are linked with such a fellowship as Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. The *Lord's* Day, Rev. i. 16.
2. The *Lord's* Table, 1 Cor. x. 21.
3. The *Lord's* Supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20.
4. The *Lord's* Death, 1 Cor. xi. 26.
5. The *Lord's* Resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 20.
6. The *Lord's* Presence, Matt. xviii. 20.
7. The *Lord's* Coming, John xiv. 3.

A. E. BOOTH.

(To be Continued D.V.)

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXIV.—(*Continued from page 100*).

BUT first, since the Patriarch's age is advanced, and the journey a long one, and its result uncertain, he will make his servant swear that, whatever be the result of the negotiations he had in view, he would not in any event, take a wife for Isaac from among the daughters of the Canaanites. But here a difficulty presents itself to the servant's mind; the parents of the maid may prove agreeable to the match, but what if the maid herself refuse to accompany an unknown stranger into an unknown land; was he in such circumstances to take Isaac there? To this proposition Abraham gives an unqualified negative; God would, as he believed, direct the matter—"He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence," but, in any event, "Bring not my son thither again."

And it is very blessed to see how here, at the end of his career, the words of his call, "Come out from thy kindred," are as fresh in his memory as when they had sounded in his ears many years ago. And how many Christian parents might learn a lesson from his faith! It may be that they have come out from the world themselves, but, out of a false and mistaken kindness, they allow their children to remain in it. "We cannot expect old heads on young shoulders," they say, "and, besides, they are but children, you know, and we must not expect too much from them;" and so the thin edge of the wedge is introduced, and finally, they even, perhaps, assist at promoting worldly marriages for them. So did not Abraham: Beware that thou bring not my son thither again, contains a note of warning and a precept that we, who are Christian parents, may well lay to heart.

And now with clear and definite instructions the servant starts upon his journey ; and so well-timed is his arrival that he reaches the well outside Nahor's city walls at eventide, just when the maidens of the city would come forth to draw water. But how shall he ascertain which of them was to be his master's son's bride? He will leave the arbitrament of the matter in higher hands than his ; so he prays for a blessing on his movements and asks as a sign that the damsel from whom he shall ask for a drink of water for himself, may go beyond his request, and give his camels to drink also. Nor is God slow of hearing, for ere the words have left his lips, Rebekah, a damsel very fair to look upon, came forth and filled her pitcher at the well. And the servant makes his request, and Rebekah instantly grants it, and, even as he had prayed, went beyond it in adding, "I will draw water for thy camels also until they have done drinking." Thus the servant's quest is over, and he accordingly brings forth a golden earring, and golden bracelets, but ere he clasps them on her arms and ear, as if to make doubly sure, he asks her whose daughter she is, and meets with the expected, but nevertheless welcome, reply that she is Nahor's child : and gratefully he bows his head and worships the God who had in so signal a way prospered his mission.

And now the news spreads ; with speed Rebekah runs into the house, and her brother Laban runs forth to the well, and in a few moments the servant is recounting all the way the Lord has led him, and Laban and Bethuel have heard his tale, and pronounce the matter to be of the Lord, and say, "Behold Rebekah is before thee, take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken ;"—and again the servant bowed his head and worshipped.

JOHN FORT.

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE LORD'S COMING.

No. 3.

IN the Lord's great prophetic discourse referred to in our last paper, the first part from Matt. xxiv. 1-44 has the Jews and Jerusalem as the immediate subject.

The first 15 verses give the general history of things down to the middle of the 70th week of Daniel, yet future. Then follows the account of things in Judea during the great tribulation which will extend throughout the area of Christendom, while its strength and anguish shall be focussed in the land, especially in Jerusalem; for the former see Rev. xiv. 19, 20; for the latter see Rev. xi. 2-8 with Psalm lxxix. 1-3. The tribulation from which the Church is exempted (Rev. iii. 10) shall continue three and a half years or 42 months, or 1260 days, or time (one year), times (two years), and a half time (six months). There is no history in Scripture of the *first* half of Daniel's future week of seven years, but there is of the *last* half. The moment when the tribulation shall burst forth is indicated in verse 15. An attempt is made to force idolatry on the nation which the godly remnant of Judah resist—many even unto death. These tribulation-martyrs from amongst the Jews are the company of "harpers harping with their harps," in *heaven* of course (Rev. xiv. 2, 3); while the preserved company of Judah form the 144,000 on Mount Zion on *earth* (Rev. xiv. 1). The close and intimate connection between the two parts of Judah—those killed and those saved—is touchingly alluded to in verse 3.

Now returning to our chapter, Matt. xxiv., we have first, the general state of things down to the middle of the great prophetic week, verses 1-15; then, the suddenness, character, and severity of the tribulation in Judea, verses 16-26; but the tribulation will close even more suddenly than it burst forth, by the coming of the Son of Man (verse 27). The carcase is the

people as a whole—dead and loathsome, fit subject for the judgment of God (verse 28). The utter collapse of all civil and ecclesiastical authority on earth followed by the coming of the Son of Man and the dire effect on the tribes of earth are solemn events close at hand and surely announced (verses 30, 31). He comes to Christians as Lord and Saviour; to Israel and the earth as King and Son of Man. All this is practically applied to the disciples *then* as to us *now*. in verses 32-44. O to be faithful! O to be watching! Our Lord is *at hand*.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

AN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY.

(Continued from page 104).

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.—*Continued*.

WE have much light thrown on this part of the history of the returned captives in the prophecy of Haggai. In Ezra we have but the outward circumstances that led to the suspension of the work. In the book of Haggai we get the moral and spiritual condition of the people themselves. They had begun well; but they had been easily discouraged: and they made the opposition of the enemy an excuse for neglecting the work of the Lord for their own interests. If they could not go on with the building of the temple, why should they not look to their own houses. Surely it was needful that these should be rebuilt. But it is clear from the prophecy that their hearts were in the one and not in the other. "This people say, 'The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built'" (Hag. i. 2).

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

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From the prophecy we learn too, what the result of this was in the providential dealings of God towards His people. Returned to their land; their worship restored in accordance with the Word of God, might they not now look for the blessing of Jehovah? If they failed to enjoy it the fault was surely with themselves; and how entirely they did come short of the blessing we learn from the prophecy. Instead of the blessing in the city and in the field, in the fruit of the ground, in their basket and their store promised in Deut. xxviii., as the result of obedience, we read "Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes," (Hag. i. 6) and again, "ye looked for much and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it." Then came the solemn challenge of the prophet, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways." The heavens over them had "been stayed from dew," and the "earth was stayed from its fruit," and the land had suffered severely from drought. "Why, saith the Lord of Hosts Because of My house which is waste, and ye run every man to his own house."

Must we not here pause to ask if we have seen nothing like this in our own day—making of course due allowance for the difference in the dispensation in which we are? Alas! who can claim exemption from the necessity of the word of warning, "Consider your ways."

Why have we so often to complain of leanness, why so little apparent blessing? Is it not too often that we are too much taken up with our own things? The Apostle had to complain to the Philippians that "all men seek their own not the things of Jesus Christ." Then how easy it is to find an excuse; how small a difficulty in such a state appears insurmountable. How often do we hear complaints of the small attendance at the meetings! how often of lack of interest in the gospel. Bodily weakness, family duties, and other unavoidable hindrances there are; but how often the fault lies in ourselves. Have we not all need of the word of warning, "Consider your ways."

The remedy is not far to seek; we need not go beyond the same chapter (Hag. i.) for an illustration of it. "The people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him; and the people did fear before the Lord." Surely it is this that we all need; to have our ear more open to the Word of God; and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The hearts of the people were moved by the prophet's message. But let us notice that before they had put their hands to the work they received a gracious message, "I am with you, saith the Lord." Then the hearts of the people and of the rulers were stirred, "and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of Hosts their God, in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king."

Faith in God had now given place to fear of their enemies. The enemies were there, as we shall see but they had lost their power.

C. B.

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD.—1 Cor. i. 9.

(Continued from page 108).

1. THE LORD'S DAY. REV. i. 16. John the beloved disciple who lay on Jesus' bosom, was in the Spirit on that day—the day our Lord rose from the dead. A clear proof that God accepted the work of Calvary on our behalf.

The first day of the week was a perfect contrast to Israel's day. They kept the seventh, the *last* day of the week. But when our Lord rose, it was the beginning of a *new* week. So that we commence the week in Christianity by observing what God has been pleased to call "The Lord's Day." The Jews observed their Sabbath. The heathen a day for worshipping the sun (Sunday). But we as a privilege, who are the Lord's—the Lord's Day, not because of any merit in the day, but as lifting up our standard before all nations and shew them whose authority we own—Jesus Christ our Lord.

True we are not under law, but grace. But grace does not lower the standard of walk and morals, but lifts it even higher (see Matt. chap. v) and hence more is expected from those taught by grace, than from those under law. Let us see well to our ways, that we do not bring dishonour or reproach on the Lord's work, by laxity or indifference as to His claims upon us, but seek like the Apostle to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, John xx. 1-19, 26; Acts ii., xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi.

A. E. BOOTH.

(To be continued, D.V.)

WHAT a volume of misery is comprehended in that one little word *sin* ! It had its birth in heaven in the bosom of the most exalted of the angelic hosts (Ezek. xxviii, 15-17), while the first subject of it on earth was the fairest of God's creatures (Gen. iii. 7). Sin is in us, on us, around us, above us, beneath us. It has wrapped itself round the roots and fibres of our moral being and stamps its character on the most trivial detail of life. Sin only explains the agony of the universe. It has bred corruption and withered and blasted wherever it has permeated. Sin has "built the great state prison of hell, kindled its first fires, and awakened groans that never end." After the millennial reign of 1000 years God shall gather from all parts of the universe the subjects of sin and banish them, along with its moral and physical effects, to that vast, gloomy, and eternal prison, "the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15 ; xxi. 8), not primarily prepared for men, (Matt. xxv. 41), but for angelic sinners.

The scriptural definition of sin is *lawlessness* (1 Jn. iii. 4, R.V.) There is but one sovereign, dominant will in the wide universe—the will of the Creator, sin therefore is simply doing your *own* will and not God's.

DEFINITIONS.

SIN, *missing the mark*, which is God's glory (Rom. iii. 23). DARKNESS, *fundamental and final ignorance of God* who is light (John i. 5 ; 1 John i. 5). TRANSGRESSION, *breaking a known command ; passing over a boundary* (Rom. v. 14). INIQUITY, *morally distorted or perverted—contrary to equity* (Ps. xxxii. 5). DEFILEMENT, *moral or ceremonial uncleanness*. UNRIGHTEOUSNESS,

state of, or inconsistency with one's relationship to God or man. GUILT, (judicial), amenable to punishment. GUILE, fraud, deceit.

What a waste of time and talent in discussing the question of "the philosophy of moral evil." Sin is a fact, while its consequences reach up to God's throne and down to the depths of hell. Sin is like a huge upas tree—rotten from root to topmost bough. The removal of the tree has been *the* question of questions for 6000 years. Men in all ages and in all countries have been and are working at the branches, pruning, purging, cutting and improving, but yet the tree stands. God has applied the mighty axe of judgment to the *root* of the tree "in the place called Calvary." The sin-question is eternally settled for each and all who believe. Sin (the root) has been condemned, while sins (the branches) have been forgiven.

—*First brief article of BELIEVERS' ALMANAC for 1895.*

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THEIR ENGLISH FORM.—The volume usually termed The Holy Bible is more largely and widely circulated than any other book in existence. It has got a foothold throughout the whole earth, being translated into almost every known spoken language. The Bible needs neither introduction nor apology. It has taken its place amongst men and will hold it, and make way for itself. All this and more is sufficiently accounted for as we consider the character, subjects and authorship of the Bible.

The Holy Scriptures in their complete form as embodied in our English Bible, consist of 66 separate books—commenced by Moses 1450 B.C., and completed by John 96 A.D. The Bible is divided into two parts of unequal length spoken of as the Old and New Testaments. The former consists of 39 books, the latter of 27. The Testaments are separated by a period of about 400 years. But we claim for both Testaments the same Divine authority, both being equally inspired. Some of the books of the Bible are anonymous and others have been subjected to needless discussion as if it were a question of prime importance *who* the penmen were employed by the Holy Ghost to write the sacred books. Inspiration is applied to *what* was written, not to *who* wrote (2 Tim. iii. 16 ; 1 Peter i. 10, 12). There is no question as to the authorship of most of the books, but even were we unable to determine who the writers were in all cases, that would in no wise affect their title to be received as part and parcel of the Word of God. Each of the 66 books of Holy Scripture, irrespective of the name of the writer, carries its own Divine authority with it. The loss of one book thro' inability to pronounce definitely as to its authorship, or from any other cause, would be irreparable, create a huge blank in the system of Divine Revelation, and effectually mar the beautiful and perfect symmetry of the Bible as a whole. The Bible exhibits a Divine unity—internal and vital—and be it carefully noted, that each one of the 66 books is absolutely essential to the formation and continued existence of that unity. The whole fabric of Divine revelation must stand, or fall to-

gether—this latter, of course, being impossible. The veriest fragment, the minutest particle of inspired Scripture is more unchangeable than even heaven and earth. A “jot” is the least letter, and a “tittle” the smallest stroke of a letter and yet if God-breathed they are impressed with the stamp of immortality (Matt. v. 18).

THE TITLES OF THE BIBLE.—“The Scripture” (John x. 35); “The Scriptures” (2 Peter iii. 16); “The *Holy* Scriptures”—only once used (2 Tim. iii. 16); “The Word of God” (Heb. iv. 12); and “The Oracles of God” (Rom. iii. 21) spoken of by Stephen the martyr, as “*Living* Oracles” (Acts vii. 38), are titles employed to designate the written Word.

From the publication of the books of the New Testament till the fourth century, the fathers and Christians of these times not only regarded the inspired writings as the all comprehensive sum of God’s revelation to man, but spoke of them in terms of the highest veneration. They frequently referred to the New Testament as “the Gospel,” “the Apostles,” “the Scriptures of the Lord,” “Holy Scriptures,” “Oracles of the Lord,” “Fountains of the Divine Fulness,” and other distinguishing titles.

St. Jerome, probably the most distinguished and learned father of the Latin Church, and who flourished during the latter half of the fourth century, beautifully styled the whole collection of the 66 sacred books “THE DIVINE LIBRARY.” John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople—the eloquent preacher and faithful witness for God—was for long a contemporary with Jerome, and was wont to refer to the Bible as “THE DIVINE BOOKS.”

From the fifth century the chosen title of the Sacred Scriptures throughout the known world has been “The Holy Bible”—a title in general use in England for 600 years. It was under the Pontificate of the

military and licentious head of the Romish Church—Julius II.—that the title “The Holy Bible” first received papal sanction.

It is an interesting circumstance that Philo the learned Alexandrian Jew and philosopher, and Josephus, the scholarly Palestinean Jew and historian—both contemporaries in the latter half of the first century—regarded the Old Testament as a Divine revelation. Their testimony in speaking of the former Oracles of God as “The Sacred Scriptures” is all the more valuable from the fact that neither were Christians even in name. Surely these men knew their own writings—the Jewish Scriptures of 39 books—more intimately and from whence they derived their authority than modern English critics and German rationalists. Does it not savour of unpardonable presumption in a few moderns to sit in judgment on the Old Testament and coolly say to the whole of the Hebrew nation: “Your Bible is full of mistakes; your jealous custody of a body of writings which you regard as the sum of a Divine revelation is so much lost labour. Paul was all wrong when he wrote of the special advantage of the Jew as consisting in the Oracles of God being committed to them (Rom. iii. 1, 2). ‘Moses in whom ye trust’ cannot be relied on in the domains of science, history, and theology. Modern research and discovery have satisfied us that the Bible is wrong and Moses is wrong and we are right. Why the Assyrian inscriptions in the royal library of Nineveh, which are now adorning our British Museum, contradict Daniel on various points, therefore the Assyrian records are right and the Hebrew prophet who lived in these stirring scenes is wrong.” We do not hesitate to say that these advanced (?) critics throw logic and common sense to the winds when faced with the question of the Divine authority of the Sacred Scriptures.

(To be continued D.V.)

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXIV.—(*Continued from page 110*).

AND now the servant brings forth for Rebekah, gold and silver jewels, pledges, as it were, of the wealth of the heir whose bride she was about to be, to whom his father had given all he had ; and having silenced the objections of her relatives who would fain have prolonged her stay, by leaving the decision of the matter to Rebekah herself who declares that she will go at once, within twenty-four hours of the time when he first sighted Nahor's home, he is again upon his camels returning joyfully to Beersheba with the object of his mission and her maids. How simple is the pathway when we bring God into it at each successive step !

And all is expectation in Isaac's heart, as, leaving his home at Lahai-roi, he wends his way to Beersheba, where his father dwelt ; and, as would appear to be his custom, goes forth to meditate at eventide, and sees the caravan approach, and Rebecca, with all her natural impulsiveness, alights to meet Isaac, who leads her as his wife to Sarah's tent ; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

CHAP. XXV.

Our present chapter opens with the narrative of two distinct events, viz., the subsequent marriage of Abraham to Keturah, and his numerous offspring by her, and his death and burial at Machpelah, where it is pleasant to see that the persecution of him that was

after the flesh of him that was after the spirit ceased ; for we read that Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham.

Now these two events following closely as they do, on the call of the Bride, and her espousal to Isaac, are extremely significant in their typical import as we shall propose to shew. On several occasions in studying the characters which have come before us, while seeking to point out the moral teaching which pervades their histories, we have at the same time called our readers' attention to the fact that a distinct line of typical teaching of a most valuable nature when read in the light of subsequent history and prophecy, underlies the whole. But these notices of the types have necessarily been somewhat fragmentary in character ; we now purpose shewing that Abraham's life-history unfolds to us one great and consecutive type, which, commencing with the history of the earthly people Israel, goes on to foreshadow for us the present action of the Holy Ghost in calling out from the world a Bride for the risen Christ, and ends with a glimpse of the greatness of Abraham's posterity in the coming day.

JOHN FORT.

ETERNITY.

Days come and go in joy or woe ;
 Days go and come in endless sun.
 Only the eternal day shall come, but never go ;
 Only the eternal tide shall never ebb, but flow.
 O long eternity, my soul goes forth to thee !

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

AN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY.

*(Continued from page 114).*THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.—*Continued.*

THE hearts of the people were now in the work, and fresh encouragement comes to them from the lips of the prophet. In chapter ii. of the prophet Haggai we have three distinct messages to the people.

First, in the 21st day of the 7th month of the 2nd year of Darius, those who had seen the house in its first glory are reminded of the contrast with its present condition; and they are encouraged to be strong and work, and are reminded of the Divine promise to the people in their deliverance from Egypt, "according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not" (v. 5). And they are assured of a time coming when all things shall be shaken; a time still to come, a time when the house should be filled with glory, a glory greater far than the house built by Solomon ever saw. But that latter glory calls for a separate notice.

The second prophecy is dated the 24th day of the 9th month of the same year. By it the people are reminded of their condition as a people. That as to them, and to the work of their hands all was unclean (v. 10-14). How then was blessing to come to them? In no other way than that it was the purpose of Jehovah to bless them, and this they are called to consider. Thrice in this chapter is this word used.

In v. 15, "consider this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord," consider their poverty, how they had lacked the blessing. "Yet ye have not turned to me," saith the Lord. In v. 18 again, "Consider from this

day and upward, from the 24th day of the 9th month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's house was laid, consider is the seed yet in the barn," etc. (v. 19). Was there anything yet to see? Nothing. "From this day will I bless you." Thus they were assured on the word of Jehovah of certain blessing.

Thirdly, in the same date we have the final message of the prophet. Another prophetic shaking of the heavens and the earth ending in the judgment of the nations. And in connection with this the typical position of Zerubbabel seems clear from the terms of the promise "In that day"—the day of the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and the overthrow of the throne of kingdoms and the destruction of the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen—"I will take thee and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts."

With such encouragement the people went to work; and they had no sooner put their hands to it than their enemies are on the scene. Tatnai the governor on that side of the river, (apparently the representative of the kings of Persia in all the country between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean), Shetharboznai, and their companions. They had all the power of the world at their back. What resource could the feeble Jews have against such power? Their resource was in God alone. Indeed they seemed to have had no answer to the challenge of their enemies. "But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews that they" (their enemies) "could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius."

It is interesting to follow the history of the appeal to the Persian monarch, not by the Jews, but by their enemies, and the result as detailed in chapters v. and vi. of the book of Ezra to which the reader should refer. From it we see how the answer to the letter

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

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of the adversaries had been provided for in the providence of God by the enrolment of the decree of Cyrus amongst the archives of the kingdom of Persia. To that decree reference was made by the decree of Darius, to the utter confusion of the adversaries of the Jews, who found that they had completely outwitted themselves. Moreover, by a new decree of Darius, they were commanded not only to refrain from hindering the work, but to help it on, by providing out of the tribute levied of the country beyond the Euphrates, money and materials to assist the Jews in their work "that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons." And this they were commanded to do under the threat, according to the despotic custom of an Eastern potentate, to any who should presume to alter the king's word that timber should be pulled down from his house and he should be hanged thereon. Indeed there was no resisting the king's will. But how crestfallen must have been Tatnai the governor, Shetharboznai, and their companions, when they were thus forced to contribute to the work they had taken so much trouble to hinder. Their feelings could not have differed very much from the feelings of Haman the Agagite, when he was commanded to lead through the city of Shushan, Mordecai, the Jew, clad in all the apparel of royalty.

But God was now for the people, who could be against them? Verily He makes the wrath of man to praise Him. And now the work of building went on rapidly, until in the third day of the month Adar (corresponding to our March) in the sixth year of the reign of Darius, it was finished, having been about four years in building.

Its completion was celebrated in a manner suited to the occasion. "And the children of Israel, the

priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity kept the dedication of the house of God with joy," and they kept the feast of the passover in its due season, and "the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel" (Ezra vi. 22).

Thus as they were reminded of the redemption of their fathers from Egyptian bondage, they experienced the truth of the announcement to them of the prophet Haggai; "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you." Thus in a time of weakness they proved the faithfulness of God and that truly. "Blessed are all they that trust in Him."

C. B.

(To be Continued, D.V.)

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

(Continued from page 120).

WILL our readers pardon a further digression. In the latest attack upon the word of God, the battle has been transferred to the land of Mesopotamia, that "graveyard of empires and nations." The inscriptions and Daniel are opposed, *therefore* the latter must be wrong and the heathen monarchs in recording their own virtues and victories must be right. The testimony of an idolater outweighs that of a true worshipper of Jehovah! And this is considered wisdom. In our judgment it manifests the grossest folly, if not a state of moral darkness incomprehensible were it not that the much maligned book reveals the infamy of the human heart. Are not the critics too premature in

entering on the Assyrian campaign? Scholars are not yet agreed on the reading of these cuneiform inscriptions, the process of decipherment is not yet complete. Would it not be more wise to wait therefore till it can be demonstrated to a certainty that you have read aright these arrow-headed characters, and even then should it be satisfactorily established that in some instances they contradict the Jewish historian, why should the veracity of a heathen be preferred to that of a believer? But should it ultimately be proved that *some* of the tablets contradict in a few instances verbal statements in the book of Daniel, what of the striking and remarkable agreement in numerous cases? Must we remind the critics what they seem determined to forget, that the Assyrian library—of stone, of course, and consisting of 30,000 tablets on which are inscribed as much, if not more, than the entire contents of the whole of the Old Testament—contains Sennacherib's own boastful account of his Judean campaign and of the siege of Lachish, both being recorded in 2 Kings xviii. The Assyrian monarch in recording his victories tells us that he had taken 46 cities and shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." He omits all mention, however, of his terrible discomfiture when in one night 185 thousand of his warriors were slain by the angel of the Lord (2 Kings xix). Again, there has all along been a seeming contradiction between the invasion of Judah as recorded in Isa. x., from that written in chaps. xxxvi. and xxxvii. of the same prophet. Now the tablets clear up the difficulty and shew that Sargon the father conducted the campaign described in the earlier chapter, while Sennacherib the son led in the invasion recorded in the latter chapters. There were ten years between these two invasions of Judea. Then various kings of Israel and Judah are named in these cuneiform tablets as Ahab, Omri, Jehu, Menahan, Pekoh, Hoshea, Azariah, Ahaz,

and Manasseh. Nebuchednezzar too, besides other monarchs of these times have recorded their warlike doings and victories over the people of Jehovah's choice. But enough, Assyria and Babylonia after a long sleep of two millenniums and a half have woke up and have amply verified the truth of holy writ. We will now return to our subject.

The terms Old and New Testament, or covenant, were originally applied to the relationships in which Jews and Christians stood towards God. The former under law, the latter under grace. Then by an easy transition the terms came to be applied to the respective portions of the Bible in which these relationships were developed and expressed. For "the *Old Testament*," see 2 Cor. iii. 14; for "the *New Testament*," see Matt. xxvi. 28. If the word "covenant" is substituted for that of "testament," then the ambiguity in the terms Old and New Testament is removed.

THE WRITERS OF THE SACRED BOOKS.—These were sovereignly drawn from all classes of society—from the crowned head to the toiling peasant—and embracing in its range every variety of character and intellectual and moral endowment. In this respect the Bible is unequalled and must bear the palm of numbering amongst its penmen the rarest combination of sanctified heart and mind. While the original Scriptures are verbally inspired even down to the minutest stroke of a letter, yet the character of the human vessel is distinctly reflected in the divine writings. The *mind* of the scholarly Paul and the *heart* of the beloved John are indelibly impressed on their respective books.

From the "learned" Moses (Acts vii. 22) who opened the Bible with "Genesis," till the "unlearned" John (Acts iv. 13) who closed it with "The Reve-

lation," there are nearly 50 writers in the production of the Scriptures. Amongst them may be mentioned the illustrious monarchs of Israel—David and Solomon; the Prophet and Judge—Samuel; the distinguished Scribe—Ezra; the Prime Minister—Daniel; the Cup-bearer at the Persian Court—Nehemiah; the distinguished Captain—Joshua; the Farm Servant—Amos; of Prophets we have Isaiah—the grand, Jeremiah—the touching, Ezekiel—the fiery, Joel—the powerfully descriptive, and Habakkuk—the sublime. The New Testament is the production of eight writers of whom may be mentioned Matthew the despised tax collector; Peter and John, "ignorant and unlearned;" John Mark the graphic delineator of the Lord's life in the second and shortest of the Gospels: Luke, the scholarly Gentile Physician; and the tent maker of mighty intellect—Paul.

THE PLACES WHERE THE VARIOUS BOOKS OF THE BIBLE WERE WRITTEN.—The whole of the Bible was penned in the continents of Asia and Europe—the most of it in the older continent. Portions of it were written in deserts, dungeons, palaces, tents, and towns and cities. Some of the sacred books were produced in Babylon, the capital of the Chaldean monarchy; in Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Israel; in Rome, the capital of the fourth universal empire; and in Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor. If you take Jerusalem as a centre—regarded by the ancients as occupying the central situation in the then known world; see also Ezek. v. 5—you have Daniel the historian and Peter the apostle writing in Babylon 560 miles distant, and Paul penning his prison epistles in the imperial city of Rome, 1450 miles off. The greater number of the sacred books were written in Palestine.

(To be Continued, D.V.)

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE LORD'S COMING.

No. 4.

WE have already noted that the Lord's Prophetic Discourse recorded in Matthew, chaps. xxiv. and xxv., is divided into three main parts. We have glanced at the first, we now proceed to consider the second which treats of the Christian profession in relation to that grand truth and subject: the Lord's Return from Heaven.

How does the Coming of the Lord bear upon Christendom? This is shewn in three parables. First, the true and false servants in the house are shewn each in their real character (xxiv. 45-51). The "faithful and wise servant" feeds the household of faith with meat in due season. Milk which is for babes was given to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 1-2) and to the Hebrews (Heb. v. 12-14); the former were turning from Christ to philosophy; the latter from Christ to Judaism. On the other hand, the Ephesians and Colossians had solid food given them, being of "full age" *i.e.*, of matured Christian growth. The right kind of food, and at the right time, are essential to the progress of the sheep and lambs. But, besides feeding with convenient food the true servant is on the alert. One hand on the table, the other on the handle of the door. Serve on beloved servant of Christ. Press on and forward in your Master's work. Weary not. Tighten up the reins. The encouragement is enough, (ver. 46) and the reward is sure (v. 47).

The evil servant's conduct and ways in ecclesiastical oppression and worldliness (verse 49) is traced to the state of heart, it was *there*, he said, "My Lord DELAYETH His coming." The heart failed to respond to the truth, "I come QUICKLY." It was not the adoption of erroneous opinions. No, all wrong thought and deed is traced to one source—the heart. The state of the affections to Christ, morally lower or exalt, as the case may be, the whole life. To the

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evil servant the Lord suddenly appears and eternal ruin is the result of professed service in the Church where there is neither life nor love for Christ (v. 50-51).

In the parable of the virgins (chap. xxv. 1-13) the general condition of Christendom—of the professing church, is depicted. This is not a Jewish picture. At the coming of the Lord to Judea, at the close of the tribulation, the Jews will not be asleep. The circumstances then will be of too stirring and too serious a character for sleep by any in the land of Palestine. But here it is the Christian profession viewed from the Lord's departure till His return. The oil is the Spirit. Those who had not oil were not christians; that is, were not children of God at all. At midnight *all* were awakened for *all* had slept—both wise and foolish. Consequent on the midnight awakening, trimming lamps and going out as at the first to meet the bridegroom, seems the work of the wise virgins. The foolish, alas! find out at the same time their want of oil—they have no life, no Holy Spirit. While they go to buy the bridegroom comes, and the "door is shut."

The third parable is that of the talents (verses 14-30). In the parable of the servant in the house, the servant is termed "faithful and wise" (ch. xxiv. 45), but in that of the talents it is "good and faithful" (ch. xxv. 21). In the former it is service in the *church*; in the latter it is service in the *world*. Hence for both, faithfulness is required, but in the church wisdom is needed in meeting the varied needs of Christ's beloved people, while, in the world, a good character is indispensable. This parable brings before us the grace of God active in calling out a people ere Christ returns. The rewards are distributed at the coming of Christ, but they are sovereignly bestowed as the gifts were sovereignly given. The servants, too, serve just in proportion as they know their master's will. It is ever so.

THE SEVEN BIBLES OF THE WORLD.

THE SEVEN BIBLES OF THE WORLD are the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Tri Pitikes of the Buddhists, the Five Kings of the Chinese, the Three Vegas of the Hindus, the Zendavesta of the Persians, the Eddas of the Scandinavians, and the Scriptures of the Christians.

The Koran is the most recent of all, dating from about the seventh century after Christ. It is a compound of quotations from both the Old and New Testaments, and from the Talmud

The Tri Pitikes contain sublime morals and pure aspirations. Their author lived and died in the sixth century before Christ.

The sacred writings of the Chinese are called the Five Kings, the word "kings" meaning web of cloth. From this it is presumed they were originally written on five rolls of cloth. They contain wise sayings from the sages on the duties of life, but they cannot be traced further back than the eleventh century before our era.

The Vedas are the most ancient books in the language of the Hindus, but they do not, according to late commentators, antedate the twelfth century before the Christian era.

The Zendavesta of the Persians, next to our Bible, is reckoned among scholars as being the greatest and most learned of the sacred writings. Zoroaster, whose sayings it contained, lived and worked in the twelfth century before Christ.

Moses lived and wrote the Pentateuch fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ; therefore that portion of our Bible is at least three hundred years older than the most ancient of other sacred writings.

The Eddas, a semi-sacred work of the Scandinavians, was given to the world in the fourteenth century.

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXV.—(*Continued from page 122*).

IN order to present the typical teaching of the previous chapters as a consecutive whole, we will, as briefly as may be, recapitulate the salient points in Abraham's history. Abraham, called out by God from the surrounding nations, was made the depositary of the promise of a son; but, through impatience and unbelief, he sought to obtain the promise through the bondmaid Hagar, whereby he introduced the seeds of discord into his home. When, however, God's appointed time had come, Isaac, the promised son and heir was born, and this results in the expulsion of the bondmaid and her son, who, outside the Land was sustained in the wilderness by God, and eventually became a great nation, while Isaac, the son, occupied Abraham's home and filled it with joy. Next, Abraham, at God's command, offered up Isaac, and received him back from the dead in a figure, whereupon Sarah died, and Abraham sought from among his kinsfolk in Mesopotamia a bride for his son, and sent his servant to fetch her thence across the wilderness to Isaac, whom she meets at eventide; and entering into Sarah's tent, she becomes his wife. Finally, Abraham takes another wife, begets a numerous family and dies. Such, in brief, was the actual history of Abraham's life. It will now be our province to unfold the type which this history contains.

God, in the case of Israel, called out from the world at large, a people to Himself. He gave them promises and dealt at first with them upon the ground of grace alone, until, upon His proposing to give them His law and to deal with them upon the ground of responsibility, they, in an evil moment of self-confidence, elected to be dealt with on that ground and undertook to do all that Jehovah would say unto them.

They, as Abraham had allied himself with Hagar, allied themselves with Mount Sinai, and sought to get the blessing by their own works (which could, in reality only bring them under the curse) and end at last in becoming the murderers of God's Son. "This is the heir," say they, "come, let us kill him." But Christ, the Son and Heir, having gone down into death, is received again from the dead by God, not in figure, as in Isaac's case, but in fact, and Israel, who had born the Messiah, (like Sarah whose death is here introduced into the history), passed for the present off the scene. Next God sends forth the Holy Ghost (the true Eliezer) to call out from the world, irrespective of nationality, *i.e.*, from Jew and Gentile alike, a Bride for His risen Son. Isaac is not to be allowed to go into the world for her, but the Church, though she has never seen her intended Bridegroom, ("whom, not having seen, we love") believes the servant's report (for Christ said that the Holy Ghost "shall take of Mine and show it unto you") and receives the earnest of her inheritance as His bride (He "gave gifts to men"), and under His escort crosses the wilderness and at eventide sees her heavenly Bridegroom coming forth to meet her ("I will come again and receive you unto Myself,") and she occupies the place (Sarah's tent) hitherto held by Israel. With the nuptials of the risen Bridegroom and His Bride, and the history of Abraham's seed by another marriage, representing Israel called into blessing in a later day, the type ends.

We may note, in conclusion, that throughout this interesting history the servant's name is never given us—though doubtless he was the Eliezer of Damascus mentioned by Abraham in chap. xv. 2; and this is very significant. The Holy Ghost's office is to exalt Christ, "He shall testify of Me," "He shall not speak of Himself" (John xv. 26; xvi. 13); hence, no doubt

the intentional silence as to the servant's person. And herein lies the test of all teaching and preaching; if its tendency throughout is to conceal the servant, and magnify the Master, it is teaching or preaching by the Holy Ghost; if it exalt the servant, it is merely human and worse than useless. Moses was told to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole; it was a sight of the serpent and not the pole that saved. Alas, how many instead of exalting the serpent, are occupied in polishing the pole! JOHN FORT.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 126).

THE "LATTER GLORY" OF THE HOUSE.

WE have said that this calls for a separate notice.

There was a glory connected with Solomon's temple. As a building it must have been very beautiful; but it was not in that that its true glory consisted. Let the reader turn to 2 Chron. vi., and read Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and mark the Divine acknowledgement of it in the opening verses of chap. vii. "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and *the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.*" We wonder not that those who were witnesses of such a scene bowed in worship. "The children of Israel bowed themselves upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, for He is good for His mercy endureth for ever."

In the same connection too we may read Isaiah's wonderful vision recorded in chapter vi. of that prophet, as occurring in the year that King Uzziah died. The prophet there saw the glory filling the house. Surely deep reverence becomes us as we read the Divine record of that wondrous vision; also deep

thankfulness that we now know that the glory which must have consumed us as sinners, now shines to us "in the face of Jesus Christ;" for we learn from John xii. 5-41, that it was *His* glory that filled the temple. "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him."

We have seen from Ezra ii. that when the foundation of the house was laid, some of the ancient men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice. The spirit of God took account of this, and in the prophecy of Haggai, chap. ii., encourages them by directing their thoughts onwards to the future glory. "The latter glory of this house, (for so we should read it with the revised version), shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

But this promise is connected with the shaking of the nations. "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory."

The common thought has been that this prophecy had its fulfillment by the presence in the house of our Lord when on earth. But there was then no shaking of "all nations;" neither was the house filled with His glory. No, the fulfillment is still future. That the Lord will come to His temple we are assured by Malachi, but it will not then be as the meek and lowly one. It will be in power. It will be suddenly. "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." But His coming will test everything. "But who may abide the day of His coming?" Mala. iii. 1-3).

How then are we to understand the phrase "This house"? We must regard the temple at Jerusalem as one, whether built by Solomon in its original beauty; or the more humble construction of Zerubbabel, or the

splendid building of Herod the Great, (the outer courts of which alone, were trodden by our Blessed Lord when He exercised His authority as Son by driving out those who defiled them), or the future temple in which "that wicked one will sit as God setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. ii. 4, R.V.) or the finally restored house of Ezekiel; in the mind of the Spirit of prophecy, each is alike the "Temple of God;" the only building on earth ever owned by Him as His house. The application to any other building of the term "the House of God," is wholly unwarranted by scripture, and contrary to the dispensation, as announced by our blessed Lord at the well of Sychar.

Of what grace does His announcement there speak to us. The Father is seeking worshippers, seeking them too, from such as that poor Samaritan woman. Giving such to discover in Him, and in His precious work, that which alike meets the need of the conscience and satisfies the heart; and to learn that the true place of worship is where the High priest is, and that "No temple made with hands His place of service is;" but that it is now our privilege to "enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19).

The glory which Ezekiel in prophetic vision saw leaving the house and the city in chapters x. and xi. is seen returning in chap. xliii., and the prophet sees the earth shining in the glory; indicating a display of the glory beyond that which characterized Solomon's Temple. Such a display will be suited to the altered circumstances of the Holy City, when Isa. lx. 1, shall be made good "Arise, shine for thy light is come, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "And the name of the city from that day shall be 'The Lord is there' Jehovah Shammah" (Ezek. xlviii. 35).

To this glorious period the thoughts of the returned captives were directed by the prophet Zechariah, chap.

ii. 10-12. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion ; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord of hosts. And the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." Then will be fully known the meaning of that word by the prophet Haggai. "In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

To return to the present: though the Jews are rapidly returning to their land, they have no temple. The site of the Holy place is at present defiled by the worship of the false prophet, and occupied by the mosque of Omar, the most sacred place of the Mohammedans with one exception—the false prophet's tomb at Mecca. But events move rapidly in these days ; and a very few years may see all this changed, and the Jews rebuilding the temple. But whether the time be long or short, the word will certainly be fulfilled, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

C. B.

(To be Continued, D.V.)

CHRISTIANS ONE HAS MET.

I WANT to discourse about two classes of Christians I have met—classes as far removed from each other as the poles, and yet who, did they but know it, might be greatly helpful to each other. It is seldom, alas, that extremes meet, but when they do they are apt to amalgamate, and there results from the two an "aurea mediocritas"—a golden mean. Would that those two classes of Christians I am about to describe might find such a fusion, for it would be for the lasting benefit of both and the advantage of the world at large !

But to the consideration of our two classes. First, there is the one who is always talking about "Ephesian truth." "Ours," they will tell you, with an air of conscious superiority, "is an objective line of things," and if you listen to their worship—and this is, to my mind, the greatest test of what a man is—you will find that it certainly *is* objective, and that the object is themselves for it consists in an endless repetition of what they are before God, and if a poor brother who has spent his week in the coal pit, or in the foundry, or in the fo'castle of a coaster, gets up and from a full heart pours out to the Father what Christ is to him *down here*, there are few Amens to his giving of thanks; it is a low level of worship, say these closet theologians "Why, he never took us into the heavenlies at all." But the poor brother doesn't only want a Christ in the heavenlies; when he gets home tired and hungry after a hard day's work, and opens the door, and the wet clothes hanging on the line in the steamy kitchen flaps him in the face, and his poor, pale-faced wife, who has stood all day over her wash-tub says, "Bill, I'm that spent with the washing, lad, that I haven't been able to get thee's supper; thee must get it thee-self, lad;" or when, tired out, he goes at last to bed, and has to get up and walk for half the night with little Elsie who is teething, and who cries for "Dadda" all the time, he, poor fellow, wants a Christ on earth, and such an one, thank God, he has.

But perhaps, we could bear better with our friends and their endless talk about their *position* up there, if we knew less about their *condition* down here. "We are sitting," say they, "in heavenly places." Possibly: but sometimes we happen to know that they are lying on earth. And this brings us to the consideration of their pet phrase, "Ephesian truth," and you perhaps ask, "Is there no such thing as Ephesian truth?" Most certainly there is, and you will find it described

in Eph. iv. 15 and 25; 'but speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ . . . Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.'

But now let us turn to the second class. These latter are characterized by the former as 'seventh of Roman Christians'—that is, if they are not unchristianized altogether. Who of us has not heard it said of some fellow-believer, 'Oh yes, he's in the seventh of Romans,' in tones that would suggest that he had committed a felony at the very least—which, by the by, would be the last thing the poor fellow would be likely to do. Shakespeare tells us that he who steals one's purse steals trash, but he who robs one of one's good name—and how many Christians have not our Ephesian friends robbed of their good names, or blackened their characters by suggesting that they hold doctrines which they know their souls abhor? What stone, too, has been left unturned in the effort to cast out as vile those who unfortunately differed from themselves, until the strange spectacle was presented of those who claimed to be 'heavenly men,' abandoning everything for the sake of digging for 'roots' on earth. Poor legal soul, my purse and my character are alike safe with you; you may know nothing of 'Ephesian truth,' but you would scorn to rob me of my character in order to enable yourself to score an apparent ecclesiastical advantage over me! Oh, that our Ephesian friends with their vaunted 'high truth' were equally high-minded with you!

Nevertheless you want a lift, and it is with the desire to give you one that I pen these lines. You long to serve, and yet much of your service is vain, because you are not at liberty in your souls; you long to walk for God, but, Lazarus-like, the cere-clothes are yet about your limbs. I would seek to loose you and to let

you go ; and as you have often been puzzled by the seventh chapter of Romans, which so exactly describes your state, I have tried to explain it by a fancied visit to a certain Mrs Law, in whose conversation you will doubtless find a reflex of much that has passed through your own mind, while the numerals after her different statements shew that her utterances are, after all, the utterances in simple form of Paul.

"Good afternoon, Mrs Law, and how is it with you to-day ? You seem somewhat depressed."

"I *am* glad you have called, yes, I am more than depressed ; I am wretched " (verse 24).

"Wretched ? How strange ! Why, I should have thought you have everything to make you happy. Your fortune is, I understand, made, and your past, your present, and your future, are alike provided for. What more *can* you want ?" (verse 12).

"Well, I hardly like to mention the matter, even to a friend like you, yet I am sure you will sympathise with me when I tell you that it is my home life that makes me so wretched."

"You surprise me : why I always looked upon Mr Law as the most rigidly upright man I ever met."

"Oh, pray don't misunderstand me, I haven't a word to say against my husband ; in fact I most readily echo your sentiments concerning him, and most readily consent unto Mr Law that he is good" (vii. 16).

"I am very glad, Mrs Law, that we are thoroughly agreed as to that ; but I must own that I am now further than ever from understanding the reason of your wretchedness."

"Well, to tell you the truth, my wretchedness arises just from that very fact. You see my husband is, excuse the expression, so *awfully* good. Why, you should just hear him talk—and you know what a man to talk he is ; his ideas are most lofty, and his sentiment sublime. But there—I suppose that there must

be a good deal of the old Adam left in me, for I must own that I find his ideals and his sentiments altogether beyond me, yea, a very weariness to the flesh (14). It is trying, I think you will admit, for a poor creature like me to be tied up for life to such a man of perfection as Mr Law; and as if that wasn't trying enough, whenever I make a slip, and somehow or other I am always making them, he has a horribly aggravating way of coldly remarking, "There, I told you so, you've done for yourself now!" (10-11).

"Well, I had no idea when I called that I should have been made a confidante in so delicate a matter, and I can assure you that I should be only too glad to be of any assistance to you if I could; but, after all, what can any assistance that I could give you be compared to what Mr Law, as your husband, must be ready to afford?"

"Oh, therein lies my greatest trial. I don't wish to speak disrespectfully of my husband in anyway, but what makes me so utterly wretched is, that my husband with all his exalted notions, and almost extravagant claims, never puts forth as much as his little finger to help me. If he were not so aggravatingly immaculate himself, and if he could only unbend a little, I think we might get on very well together; for I want to do what is right (15-16), but I am always failing, and really that eternal "I told you so, you've done for yourself now," is more than a poor body like myself can put up with. And yet with it all I declare to you that I do honestly try to obey him and carry out his wishes, but find myself absolutely unable to do so. Oh, wretched woman that I am, who shall deliver me from this horrible strait!" (24).

I can't go on with my simile for, were I do so, I should have to murder Mr Law in order to set Mrs Law free, and that I could not possibly do, even if I wanted to, which I don't, for, strangely enough he is

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invulnerable (Matt. v. 18); but if my simile break down here, I am not out of conceit with it on that account, for so did Paul's, as we shall see when we turn to it; for Paul shews that the law has dominion over a man so long as he liveth (vii. 1); but the Christian, being in Christ, has died with Christ to the law: it is not the law that dies, but the man, or, in my simile, the woman who has died to it, and hence has deliverance from it; wherefore my brethren, ye are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God (4). Here then is deliverance; I was wedded to the law as a man in the flesh, and could not meet its claims; as a man in the spirit I have become dead to the law by identification with Christ in death, and am united now to Him risen, and in the power of that union can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me. The law made its demands upon me but gave me no power to fulfil them. United to Christ I draw from Him the needed power, and bring forth fruit to God.

How needed are both sides of truth, and how dangerous to unduly press either! It ends in license on one hand, or legalism on the other. The Lord keep us from both, and may He use this simple allegory to set free any who, groaning under bondage to the law may read these lines! C.

 NAMES OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.

Sunday, from the Sun.

Monday, from the Moon.

Tuesday, from the idol Tuesco, or Mars.

Wednesday, from Wodin, the Saxon god of war.

Thursday, from Thor, the god of Thunder.

Friday, from the goddess, Friga.

Saturday, from Saturn, the Celtic deity, appropriated by the pagans of Greece and Rome.

EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN TERMS EMPLOYED IN PSALM CXIX.

YOU ask what is the distinctive meaning of the words *commandments, judgments, statutes, testimonies, precepts, law* in Ps. cxix.

Commandments—*Mitzvoth*, have of course for their subjects things which are enjoined on men, and so is often a word of general import. Abraham kept God's commands (Gen. xxvi. 5).

Judgments—*Mishpatim*, are judicial decisions, and where God is concerned, His revealed decisions in matters for men, but not in this Psalm in His acts of judgment. So we read of Solomon's judgment respecting the two children. David asks for God's judgment to be given to his son (Ps. lxxii. 1). We read of the breastplate of judgment (Exod. xxviii. 15), and the judgment of Urim and Thummin (Num. xxvii. 21).

Statutes—*Chukkim*, are decrees. In Ps. ii. 7-9 we have a decree about the Lord and in Lev. vi. 18 a statute regarding Aaron and his sons.

Testimonies — *Edoth*, are God's attestations of Himself and of His will in the word of revelation. So *Delitzsch*.

Precepts—*P'Koodim*, are orders for men's conduct for the most part. The word occurs only in the Psalms and chiefly in the cxix. Elsewhere in xix. 8; ciii. 18; cxi. 7.

Law—*Torah*, is divine teaching.

In Ps. xix. 7-9 we have the *law*, the *testimony*, *precepts* rather than *statutes, commandment*, and *judgments* all brought in.

C. E. S.

A TOUR IN BIBLE LANDS.

IF the traveller in Palestine can spare the time, he should most certainly visit Hebron. He will be certain to go southwards as far as Bethlehem, and an extension of his journey thence of two and a half hours will bring him to Hebron, which is situated on the southern road some twenty miles from Jerusalem. Not that the route thither presents any special features of interest; on the contrary, after the pools of Solomon are passed, the road becomes wearisome and monotonous, but the town itself is one of surpassing interest, seeing that it was here that God on different occasions held familiar converse with Abraham, and the latter received the promise.

Emerging from the Jaffa Gate, or, Bab-el-Khulil, (Gate of the Friend, *i.e.*, Abraham), as it is locally called, at six o'clock in the morning of March 28th, we sought our carriages, no wheeled vehicles being allowed inside the gates of Jerusalem. This, by the way, is rather an unnecessary regulation, as if they were allowed inside, it would be quite impossible owing to the narrowness of the streets, to proceed. Of course the drivers had undertaken by the beard of the prophet to have the carriages ready; and equally of course, they were not forthcoming. However in about half-an-hour they arrived upon the scene, and a sorry sight they presented when they did so. The harness and the carriages themselves seemed to be chiefly held together with string, and we had not proceeded far before one carriage after another broke down. The men however were quite used to this, and tied

the carriages up with different portions of the harness until ere long there was nothing but the traces left. Those same carriages were advertised as "French landaus;" but as we were travelling in a land of tradition, we could scarcely be surprised that the conveyances had assimilated themselves to the land.

Crossing the valley of Himon by the top of the lower pool of Gihon, we ere long passed the solitary tree which is pointed out as that on which Judas hanged himself, and at the top of a ridge were shewn the "well of the Maji;" close by is the convent of Elijah. Descending the ridge, with Bethlehem in view, we came in about a mile and a half to the tomb of Rachel, which is covered with a dome-shaped building of no great antiquity; there can be little question however that it occupies the site where took place that event which cast a gloom over the whole of Jacob's life, and occupied his thoughts just previous to his death. How touchingly he speaks to Joseph; life with all its possibilities lay before the latter, but the old man's hopes lay buried in Rachel's grave. "As for me," he says, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath, and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem" (Gen. xlviii. 7). Entering the tomb we found it contained a cenotaph, round which were several women praying and weeping. Not far from Rachel's tomb the road divides, the left hand portion bringing one in a mile to Bethlehem, and the right, along which we shall proceed, taking us in little over an hour to Solomon's Pools. These latter are constructed of marble, and Dr Robinson gives their dimensions as follows;—the upper pool is 380 feet by 236 feet broad; the middle pool 423 feet by 250 feet broad: and the lower pool 582 by 207 feet broad; their depths vary from 25 in the

upper pool to 50 feet in the lower. There seems no reason to doubt the tradition which assigns them to Solomon. "I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees," says Solomon in Eccles. ii. 6; and Josephus tells us that he constructed a paved road to his gardens there, and each morning, clad in white, used to visit them in his chariot to enjoy "the pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes with all the chief spices; a fountain of gardens" (Song of Sol. iv. 13-15). The spices have disappeared, but, thanks to the efforts of the Jews' Society, a number of Christian Jews have been located there, and produce grapes and peaches and apricots and tomatoes and vegetables for the markets at Jerusalem.

From the lowest of these pools runs the aqueduct which supplied the Temple at Jerusalem with water, but, like everything else, it has been allowed by the Turkish Government to fall into disrepair. Our dragoman told us that an English lady had offered to re-open it to Jerusalem at a cost of £20,000, but the Turkish Government replied that, if she would hand over the money, they would superintend the outlay. No doubt they would have done so, but the snare was in vain set in the sight of the bird.

The water which supplies the pools comes from a spring, which is covered in, and known as the "Sealed Springs;" it is from this that Solomon is thought to have drawn his simile, when he sang, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (Song iv. 12).

From this spot the road, until you near Hebron, is uninteresting. We pass Beit Sur, identified with Beth Zur (2 Chron. xi. 7), and ere long reach Ramet-el-Khulil, identified by many with the place where Abraham pitched his tent under the oak of Mamre.

To the left is a hill which commands a view of the Jordan valley, or rather of the depression in which it lies, and hence it was, as is now generally thought, that Abraham saw the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah rising up like the smoke of a furnace.

A drive of two more miles brings us to Hebron or El Khulil, as it is called. The road runs down a valley known as the valley of Eschol, and vineyards abound on every hand; for though the Moslems abstain strictly from wine themselves—at any rate, the poorer of them—they have no objection to supplying the Christians with the means of making it. The town is pleasantly situated on the side of a hill, and impresses one favourably as one gazes up at it from the valley below. We halt beside a pool of not very tempting water, but seemingly that from which the Hebronites obtain their supply. Here was enacted the scene we read of in 2 Sam. iv. 9-12, when David punished Rechab and Baanah for the murder of Ishbosheth: “And David commanded his young men, and they slew them and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up *over the pool in Hebron.*”

Hebron is a town of many names, at various epochs it has been known as Kirjath-Arba, Mamre, Hebron, and El Khulil; it is one of the most ancient cities of the world, having been founded “seven years before To-am,” classically known as Tanis in Egypt (Num. xiii. 22), and it is striking that its last name, The Friend, should serve to perpetuate the friendship between God and Abraham. As another has remarked, “This is the only spot on earth which attracts to it all who possess the one creed, ‘I believe in God.’ The Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem separates Moslem, Jew, and Christian; here they assemble together. The Moslem guards this place as dear and holy. The Jew from every land draws near to it with reverence and love, and his kisses have left an impress on its stones.

Christians of every kindred, and tongue, and creed, visit the spot with a reverence equally affectionate. And who lies here? A great king or conqueror? A man famous for his genius or learning? No, but an old shepherd, who pitched his tent 4000 years ago, among these hills, a stranger and a pilgrim in the land who was known only as El Khulil—"the Friend." By that blessed name Abraham was known while he lived; by that name he is remembered where he lies buried; and by that name the city is called after him."

Let us visit his place of burial—at least so much of it as the Moslem permits us to do. We ascend from the town pool through the usual maze of tortuous, evil-smelling streets, and reach a rectangular building with high walls, constructed with immense stones. Some stone stairs lead up to the entrance into the Mosque, but up these we are not allowed to ascend, and a Moslem makes a surly remark to our Dragoman, which he interprets to us that we are to be very careful not to pass beyond 'the hole.' This hole allows the pilgrim to thrust his umbrella or walking-stick through the wall and prod a hard substance, which may, or may not be the cave of Machpelah; and I must own that most of our party prodded it lustily. The only favoured individuals who have, so far, been permitted to enter the Mosque are the Prince of Wales, the Marquis of Bute, the Crown Prince of Russia, the United States Minister at Constantinople, and Princes Albert Victor and George of Wales, and members of their respective suites. Dean Stanley, who accompanied the Prince of Wales, gives us a description of the interior of the Mosque: it was once a Byzantium church, and contains the cenotaphs of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebekah, of Jacob and Leah, and of Joseph, who, the Mohammedans declare, was brought hither from Shechem. No one has ever ob-

tained access to the cave itself. As Jacob was embalmed, his mummy is doubtless there, and at the dismemberment of Turkey will probably be disentombed.

There are no Christian inhabitants in Hebron, and the Moslems are strangely fanatical; we were spat upon from roofs as we passed, and one man scowled and uttered something in Arabic, which was translated as "cursed be your father, and your religion."

The only industry of Hebron appears to be glass-making. We visited the factory, and saw them making the variegated glass armlets, so many of which are purchased by pilgrims to Jerusalem at Easter. Considering their crude appliances, the workmen displayed considerable skill in blending the different colours of the fused material.

Leaving the town, which some of us pronounced to be the most filthy we had yet visited—for Moslemism and apathy, and decay, and filth, go together—we started to walk to the so-called 'Abraham's oak.' It is a magnificent ilex, measuring 32 feet at a height of six feet from the ground. It is known to have been a very old tree 300 years ago, and is now fast decaying. Arab boys were there selling acorns from it, a few of which most pilgrims like to carry away.

Getting back to our carriages, we started on our homeward journey, but had only proceeded a few yards, when a shout from the driver of the carriage in the rear announced another break-down. The driver of the first carriage—presumably the last possessor of a piece of string—jumped down from his box and rushed back, leaving the carriage with ladies in it in the centre of the road: the horses turned to follow the driver, the wheels of the 'French landau' locked, and, for a moment, the carriage balanced itself with two wheels in the air! Fortunately, the horses seemed to have satisfied their curiosity as to what was happening behind, for they moved no further, and the carriage

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settled down upon its wheels again. Meanwhile, two Moslems had been apathetically looking on, and, even when the carriage with its terrified occupants was almost overturned, did not put forth a finger to prevent an upset. No doubt they were only too sorry that the hated Nozrani (Nazarenes) had escaped a fall.

With occasional break-downs, we finally reached Jerusalem at half past six, after a tiring, but on the whole, interesting day. J. F.

 THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 138).

THE HIDDEN HAND.

THE Temple was finished on the third day of the month Adar in the sixth year of Darius, or the month of March, B.C. 514.

From that year until the seventh year of Artaxerxes, B.C. 458, upwards of half-a-century, the Divine record is silent about the Returned Captives. Events were taking place elsewhere that had an important bearing upon their subsequent history. Before we follow that history we may review shortly the acting of God in His providence on behalf of His people still scattered amongst the heathen; and these were by much the larger part of the nation.

Darius Hystaspes was succeeded, B.C. 485, by his son—Ahasuerus, known to history as Xerxes, and for the enormous army he led into Europe, and his entire discomfiture by the Greeks. But for us the chief interest attaching to him is opened out by the book of Esther. It can hardly be needful to remind our readers that the Divine Name does not occur in that book; nor is there in it any reference to God at all.

No doubt that is somewhat startling at first sight in an inspired book; but careful consideration of the circumstances in which the Jews were placed amongst the heathen; and above all of the truth that their God was dealing with them now not by miraculous interposition as He had interposed for their fathers, of old, but by the ordinary working of His providence will lead the thoughtful reader to admire the wisdom of the omission.

As an example of the providential care of God for His people, while He Himself was hidden, it may be questioned whether a parallel to the book of Esther can be mentioned.

Let us look for a moment at the marvellous chain of circumstances by which the object of the enemy was frustrated, for there was an enemy more powerful and more subtle than "that wicked Haman," who was indeed but the blind tool of the great enemy behind the scenes.

The object was the utter destruction of the people of God. In one day, could he but have carried out his plan, every Israelite throughout the Persian Empire, which we must remember then included the Holy Land, would have been massacred, with a result that we need not here stop to point out. That it could not succeed was certain; for no power of the enemy can frustrate the purposes of God for His people. But let us look at the several links in the chain of circumstances by which this deep and diabolical design was frustrated. The very natural refusal of Queen Vashti to obey a command of the king, which to the mind of an Eastern lady was contrary to her sense of decency; the choice of Esther to take the place of the deposed Queen; and Esther's relationship to Mordecai, a faithful Jew; the refusal of Mordecai to humble himself before the haughty gentile, Haman, the king's vizier, or chief minister; the

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conspiracy of the two eunuchs against the life of the king, and the discovery of the conspiracy by Mordecai; the record of that discovery in the chronicles of the kingdom; the determination of Esther to approach the king contrary to the law of the Persian court with the resolution that found an expression in the words, "If I perish, I perish;" the favorable reception of Esther by the king: the sleeplessness of the king on that very night when the gallows had been erected by Haman for Mordecai, and the reading to the king of the Chronicles; the execution of the wicked Haman, and the exaltation of Mordecai in his place: and, lastly, the letters issued under the seal of the king's signet ring, authorising the Jews to defend themselves, resulting in their complete triumph, and the discomfiture of their enemies. In all these links in a wonderful chain of circumstances, who can fail to trace the Divine hand?

We are reminded of a very expressive sentence in the prophecy of Isaiah, connected with the deliverance by Cyrus, "Verily, thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour" (Isa. xlv. 15). The Jews continue to observe the feast of Purim in remembrance of their deliverance, a strong proof, if proof were needed, of the truth of this wonderful history.

It is our blessing to know the same God, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in Him, but He is not less the God of providence. Is it not so, that His watchful care is exercised over His people; making their very mistakes the means of blessing and carrying out His gracious purposes for them so that "All things work together for good to those who love God."

How wonderfully is this illustrated in the history of the great apostle of the Gentiles. He longed to see the saints at Rome, and to impart to them some spiritual gift (Rom. i. 11), but what a chain of circumstances

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has to be linked together to bring him there in God's way ; making even the apostle's mistakes subservient to the end in view. It would be going outside our history to trace out the several links in that chain, our readers may do that for themselves through the last eight chapters of the Acts of the Apostle.

The confidence and superiority to circumstances which faith in the care of God for His people imparts, we may see well illustrated in that part of the history of the Returned Captives, which has yet to come under our notice.

C. B.

(To be Continued, D.V.)

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No. 5.

THE third division of the Lord's Prophetic Sermon preached on the same mount to which He shall descend (Zech. xiv. 4) at His coming in power, is related in chap. xxv. 31-46 of St. Matthew. The Jewish aspect of His return occupies the first forty-four verses of chap. xxiv ; then Christendom's relation to that great event is the subject of verse 45 till verse 30 of the next chapter ; followed by the Lord's return to the Gentiles or nations occupying the last 16 verses of the chapter.

A white *horse* is the chosen symbol to express the actual coming of the Lord to earth in victorious power (Rev. xix. 11) ; a *throne* as fitly represents His governmental authority (Matt. xxv. 31). First, conflict ; then the Kingdom established.

The nations are gathered before Him, on earth and at the introduction of the millennial kingdom. This judgment must not be confounded with that of the dead recorded in Rev. xx. 11-15. The former is of the *living* ; the latter of the *dead*. The former is in *time* ;

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the latter is in *eternity*. A comparison of the two scriptures will reveal numerous points of contrast, not similiarity. The ground of judgment is the reception or rejection of a class distinct from either the sheep or goats, spoken of by the King as "these my brethren" (v. 40).

On the Lord's return to earth He will resume Jewish relationship which had been broken off on the eve of the kingdom in mystery being announced to be established amongst the Gentiles (Matt. xii. 46-50). These Jewish brethren of the Lord shall, after the translation of all saints to heaven, be raised up to go amongst the nations and preach the gospel of the kingdom. Hence punishment and blessing—eternal in both cases—is made to hinge on the rejection or acceptance of the gospel of the kingdom as witnessed in the treatment of the heralds of the King. The separation of the sheep from the goats (verses 32-33); the "come" addressed to the righteous (verse 34), and the "depart" to the wicked seem to admit of no delay. The judgment is immediately executed; the blessing is immediately entered upon. We have no reason whatever to believe that the wicked here shall die and then come up for eternal judgment in that of the dead (Rev. xx). The seer of Patmos does not say "I saw *all* the dead," but simply "I saw the dead." The sentence, it seems to us, is at once followed by its execution. The fires of hell were not prepared for man, but for the great leader of angelic rebellion and his angels; but alas if the authority of God is contemned and the claims of Christ contemptuously rejected, and Satan's rule accepted instead, what remains but to share his eternal doom (verse 41).

This solemn assize is held on earth, and is introductory to the kingdom reign of our blessed Lord for 1000 years in the scene where, as the Nazarene, He lived, and where, as the Lamb He died.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.—1 Cor. i. 9.

(Continued from page 115).

2. The Lord's Table, 1 Cor. x. 21. This expression is found but once in the New Testament.

The heathen had their tables called tables of devils (demons). The Jews had theirs also spread by Jehovah. Now, since Jew and Gentile join hands and crucify the Lord, He in grace spreads a *new* table called "The Lord's Table." This is for all who are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord and hence is given to the Church as a blessed expression of communion in contrast to Judaism and heathenism.

The early Christians gathered around this table on the first day of the week (Lord's Day), to break bread, to remember their absent Lord. So ought the Lord's people now. The church has failed, yet the *order* and *example* of the early church remains the same. Let us then who are His see well to our ways, that we walk before God in the spirit of self-judgment, so that when that day arrives to remember our Lord in the breaking of bread, that there be no laxity in remaining away, which is one mark of the apostacy of the last days (Heb. x. 25) and falling into the same spirit of Israel who said in their day, the table of the Lord is contemptible (Mal. i. 7-12).

This is a royal feast spread by the Lord Himself while the guests are redeemed—kings and priests to God. No place on earth can be compared to such. We need to cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord and walk upright to rightly enjoy such a sacred place.

A. E. BOOTH.

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXV.—(*Continued from page 135*).

BUT to continue our history. Isaac, true to his retiring disposition, dwells by the well Lahai-roi at the southernmost limit of the Land; and here is impressed upon him a lesson which Abraham and Jacob, in common with ourselves have to learn, namely, that the flesh is powerless to obtain the promises, and that it is only when this is fully recognised that God can come in to bless. Thus for twenty years of his married life, Isaac waits for the offspring upon which he had set his heart, and realising at last that his wife is barren, he is cast upon the Lord. He and his wife are powerless in the presence of this fact; if children are to be born to them it must be by direct intervention of that God of resurrection who can bring life out of death. So Isaac entreated the Lord and was heard, and Rebekah conceived. And now Rebekah has to learn another lesson. In answer to prayer she has conceived, and she feels within her the witness that God has brought life out of death; but it is not only life that she is made conscious of, but conflict also. Life she had indeed longed for, but she had little thought that its acquisition would bring conflict in its train; and so, in her surprise and distress she cries, "If it be so, if the Lord has indeed, as I know He has, heard my cries and given me life, why do I suffer this

conflict within?" She is passing, in figure, through that experience through which we all, sooner or later, have to pass, namely, that if God has given us life and a new nature, He has not destroyed the old. And very vividly is this experience set forth in the seventh chapter of Romans, where Paul places himself for the benefit and encouragement of those who should have to pass through them in similar circumstances. The conflict between the old evil nature, as typified by Esau, and the new, as typified by Jacob, is thus described. "I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, 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." And long in his own strength has he struggled against sin—this law, or evil principle at work within him—as the use of the words 'I' and 'me,' some forty times repeated, shew, until, realising at last his utter impotence against it—the powerlessness of 'I' and 'me'—in the bitterness of his soul he cries out in effect, "O wretched man that I am, however much I would, I cannot deliver myself, *who shall deliver me?*" and that very moment his chains drop off, and he is free, and thanks God for it. Deliverance, he has learnt, lies not in himself, but in Jesus Christ our Lord!

Thus we see that the seventh chapter of Romans does not give us the proper and normal experience of a Christian, but it gives us a picture of the experience through which, we suppose, most Christians have

sooner or later to pass, in order that they may enter on the overcoming life of chapter viii., which is attained, not by entering into conflict with sin, for that only ends in the painful acknowledgment that "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not, for the good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do ;" but by realising the fact that I have died with Christ to sin, and have, hence, nought to do with that to which I have died ; but that the law—the continuous action hence termed law—of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free* from the law of sin and death. Yes, thank God, let us repeat it again, "The elder *shall* serve the younger," for "sin shall *not* have dominion over *us*, for we are not under the law, but under grace."

"But," says some one, "Must I not struggle against sin ?" Scripture plainly answers "No," for if you do, you will only find yourself in the painful experience of chapter vii. ; the gracious liberty of chapter viii. is attained not by struggling against it, but by counting myself dead to it. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And God hears Rebekah's cry, and gives the explanation of her sufferings ; the conflict with her prefigured the conflict between the two nations, the fleshly and the spiritual, which should be born of her—a conflict which, however, should result in the elder serving the younger.

JOHN FORT.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 154).

EZRA AND HIS WORK.

FROM our short notice of the providential care of God over His people scattered amongst the heathen, we turn again to the Holy Land. We last saw the people rejoicing over the completion of the temple. Between that period and the date of the events recorded in Ezra vii. there is a gap in the history of over half a century, at which we shall not be surprised if we remember the purpose for which the history of Israel is given to us. This we may gather from two New Testament Scriptures, Romans xv. 4, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," and 2 Cor. x. 11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Therefore so much only of the history of the people is given us, as will serve the end pointed out by these New Testament Scriptures.

It is clear from the first and second chapters of Nehemiah that there had been but little progress even of a material character for the walls and gates of Jerusalem were still in ruins, and also in chap. vii., verse 4 of the same book we read, "Now the city was large and great; but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded." Tributary to the Persians the Jews were subject to the extortions of the tax-gatherer, to satisfy whom they had to mortgage their

lands and vineyards, as we learn from Neh. v. 4. Surrounded too by a mixed people, Arabians and Samaritans, and a remnant of the Canaanitish nations, ever ready to take advantage of their weakness, there is no room for wonder that the condition of the people was anything but prosperous.

But if their state materially was low, their spiritual condition seems to have been even worse. The effect of the revival by means of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah probably passed away with those servants of God; and the people in general seem to have sunk into a condition of utter worldliness. They had not indeed fallen into idolatry but they had broken down the barriers which separated them from the heathen around by mixed marriages. They had taken for wives daughters of "The Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Egyptians and the Amorites: so that the holy seed mingled themselves with the people of those lands," and the princes, and the rulers, who should have set an example to the people had been "chief in this trespass" (Ezra ix. 1, 2).

It was practically denying their place of separation as the people of Jehovah. This doubtless, more than anything else contributed to their degradation. It is very probable that by this means they purchased some measure of freedom from the hostility of the people around. Conformity to the world in our own day has the like result; but at what a price is such a peace purchased. No less than the forfeiture of the peculiar place of privilege of the children of God. The *relationship* indeed can never be broken; but it may be practically denied and therefore the promise to those who hear the warning, "Come out from them and be ye separate," is "I will receive you, and be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18).

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

(Continued from page 129).

TIMES WHEN THE SACRED BOOKS WERE WRITTEN—
 The composition of the Bible at intermittent periods was carried on thro' the slow progress of 15 centuries and a half. The earliest portion is the Pentateuch, or first five books, written by Moses at various times, but completed in 1451 B.C. Some claim for the book of Job an earlier date by 40 years, but it is not a matter of importance and cannot be pronounced upon with certainty.

The completed Pentateuch was put by the Levites in the most sacred place on earth "in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God" (Deut. xxxi. 25, 26). There it rested for nearly 800 years. After the days of Joshua, it seems to have been neglected and forgotten till the early part of the reign of the godly Josiah, when, owing to certain repairs in the temple it was accidentally discovered by Hilkiah the high priest (2 Chron. xxxiv.), and was the means under the good hand of God in turning the heart of backsliding Judah to Jehovah. The tables of stone written on by the LORD were put "*into* the ark" (Exod. xl. 20; 1 Kings viii. 9). The Pentateuch written by Moses was put "*in the side* of the ark" (Deut. xxxi. 26).

Herodotus has been termed "the father of history," but that designation only and properly applies to Moses, who, in the book of Genesis wrote the world's history from its birth—a history of 2,300 years. Equally distinguished in legislation, he not only records the initial stages of Israel's wonderful history of 40 years, but in a body of laws—characterised by depth of wisdom and in a system of separating ordinances, which, when read intelligently, opens a grand future—yet to be written—of the Hebrew na-

tion leaves the Pentateuch a marvel in conception, and in its unity of books and subjects and design stamped—if ever book or work was—with the seal of the Living God. The high antiquity of the Pentateuch is unquestionable—preceding Herodotus by a thousand years, and Homer and Hesiod, yet more ancient, by six or seven centuries.

The second inspired writer—Joshua, the renowned captain of the military power of Israel—25 years after Moses, records the conquest of Canaan and its occupation by the tribes. On the eve of his death the aged warrior added a quarter of a century of interesting history “in the book of the law of God” (Jos. xxiv. 26).

Then followed a long interval of about 360 years—from the close of the administration of Joshua to the close of the government of Israel by Samuel. It was probably but a few years previous to the death of Saul and the accession of David to the throne, that Samuel the third writer of the Holy books penned the books of Judges and Ruth and the first 24 chaps. of the first book which bears his name. The after history of David was continued by the prophet Nathan, and by Gad the seer (compare 1 Sam. xxv. 1 with 1 Chron. xxix. 29). The period from Joshua to Samuel has been justly termed “the dark ages” of Israel’s history. The Judges affords a dismal picture of that period.

Another and yet more lengthy period of nearly 500 years, when Israel’s sky was overcast by the deepening shadow of coming doom by the sword of the Chaldean relieved now and again by gleams of light which are seen to flit across the darkening horizon, and we are brought to the close of the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah—587 B.C. The monarchial history of Israel recorded in the books of Kings for about 430 years was probably penned by the “weeping prophet” as Jeremiah has been termed; for this compare 2 Kings xxv. 22-26 with Jer. xl. 5-16 and chap.

xli. ; also the last four verses of the Kings with the last four verses of the prophet.

The books of Chronicles, or kingdom history of Judah especially, were evidently compiled some years after the books of Kings and during the captivity in Babylon. The authorship is generally attributed to Ezra, "a ready scribe in the law of Moses," and the ecclesiastical historian of the restored Jewish commonwealth. The genealogical lists contained in the first nine chapters enabled the returned remnants—people, priests, and levites—to verify their respective rights and position in the restored commonwealth. This consideration along with a careful examination of the genealogical records (chap. vi. 15) would shew that the books must have been written during the captivity and of course before the restoration.

From the grand and glowing strains of Isaiah—the prince of Hebrew prophets—till Malachi—"the seal of the prophets"—we have a period of fully 360 years; in fact, several of the minor prophets precede Isaiah, which of course would greatly lengthen the period of written prophetic ministry.

Then a long and dreary interval of 400 years "between the Testaments," unwritten by the pen of inspiration brings us to the prophetic ministry of John Baptist. Malachi, John, Elijah, and Christ are strangely mixed up. The broken threads of history are picked up, yea, even to the coming of the Lord in judgment: connect Malachi, chap. iii. with the Lord's coming in grace which is past—preceded by John Baptist; and chap. iv. with the Lord's coming in judgment yet future—preceded by the coming of Elijah.

'Ere the first century closed the whole of the New Testament was completed. John the beloved apostle was allowed to linger for a few years, ere he died, over the Sacred Volume—one grand, blessed book and one worthy of God to give to man.

HOW ONE ENTERS THE KINGDOM.

DOES one enter the Kingdom by baptism, or the new birth, or how? We are not aware of a single passage which teaches that the door "into" the kingdom is by baptism; but we adduce several conclusively proving, in our judgment, that the new birth is the only door of admission into the kingdom and its privileges whether for Jews or Gentiles.

In John iii. 3-5 the Lord says, "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* the kingdom of God;" again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." But it may be objected that this *sine qua non* applies only to the kingdom of God, and not to the kingdom of heaven. The expressions however are substantially identical, both applying to one and the same kingdom. The former expression—a characteristic one of Luke's gospel—intimates that the kingdom belongs to God, whereas, the latter term—found only in the first Gospel—signifies that heaven's authority or rule is to be acknowledged on earth. Observe also that the Lord intimates that the kingdom here spoken of is on earth (verse 12). Nicodemus, "the teacher of Israel" (R.V., verse 10), should have known from the testimony of the prophets that the new birth was the alone door into the kingdom. Hence both the kingdom and that which admits into it were amongst the earthly things spoken of by our Lord. We may add that the new birth is an absolute necessity in every age and dispensation for the enjoyment of eternal life and blessing (John i. 12-13; James i. 18.)

But that the kingdom *of heaven*, and the kingdom *of God* are substantially the same, are, in fact, interchangeable terms, the reader has only to compare the following passages : Matt. v. 3 with Luke vi. 20 ; Matt. xi. 11 with Luke vii. 28 ; Matt. x. 7 with Luke ix. 2 ; Matt. xiii. 11 with Luke viii. 10 ; Matt. viii. 11 with Luke xiii. 29. Both evangelists refer to the *same* conversation or event, Matthew using the term "the kingdom of heaven," while Luke employs the expression "the kingdom of God." Now let us cull several passages from the Gospel of Matthew and see what is there regarded as essential to "enter" the kingdom. "I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees ye shall in no case *enter* into the kingdom of heaven" (v. 20). Again, "not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall *enter* into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (vii. 21). Again, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not *enter* into the kingdom of heaven" (xviii. 3). Does it not seem conclusive, therefore, that a Divine work wrought in the soul is essential to *enter* the kingdom. Neither profession simply as such (Matt. vii. 21), nor baptism entitles one to enter it. Others, than true believers, may be brought within its sphere of influence (Matt. xiii.), but to *enter* it the new birth is an absolute necessity. The keys of the kingdom entrusted to Peter refer to the administrative authority conferred upon the Jewish apostle and which he exercised in the admission of Jews (Acts ii.) and Gentiles (Acts x.)—saved persons who had received the seed or word of the kingdom ; compare Matt. xiii. 19 with verse 38. As this subject is presently occupying the thoughts of many Christians we shall be glad to be favoured with brief statements of honest difficulty or objection.

THE TWO NATURES. 167

THE believer has *in* him the old, the God-condemned nature, and which he can only get 'rid of by death, or at the coming of the Lord. But he has also *in* him a new nature, given when born of God. Now these two are fundamentally opposed. They co-exist in the Christian, but are antagonistic to each other. The gulf between them is wide and impassable. The two natures can no more assimilate or agree than can light and darkness, good and evil. In source, principle, tendencies, characteristics, they are essentially opposed. God is against the one, *i.e.*, the old man, and for the other, *i.e.*, the new man. The devil is for the one, *i.e.*, the *old* man, and against the other, *i.e.*, the new man.

But the presence of the old nature in the believer does not hinder communion with God. We are not responsible for its existence, but we are for its activities. In proportion as we allow it to act or display itself in any form whatever, spirituality is checked, and we cease to live in fellowship with the Father and with the Son. To neither is responsibility attached, *that* applies directly to the person. Hence we are responsible for the actions of either nature. Nor is the nature said to be born of God, that is said of the *person*—the responsible *I*.

The chief characteristics of the old nature are delight in evil and insubjection to God. The main features of the new nature are delight in holiness, obedience, and dependence on God. The food of the old nature is the world, morally characterised as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John ii. 16)—an immense variety to suit all tastes. The food of the new nature is Christ, the Word, and the whole system of heavenly things—rich and wholesome food. The power behind the old nature is Satan. The power of the new nature is the Holy Ghost. The tendency of the old is towards death. The tendency of the new is towards life. The issues of the new na-

ture are all that is morally excellent—all that God can accept. The issues of the old nature are only evil—all that God abhors.

Let it be a prime lesson at the start of our Christian course to distinguish the natures. Remember that God is the source, the Holy Ghost the power, Christ the object and devoted example, and the Word the chart and guide of the eternal life possessed by every believer. As you strengthen the desires of the new man you weaken the old. As you heartily accept death with Christ, you of course necessarily learn that in God's sight (and let it be to the practical reckoning of faith) you are dead to all that Christ is dead to—to sin (Rom. vi. 10), to the law (Rom. vii. 4), to the world (Gal. i. 4), and to sins (1 Peter ii. 24). You cannot free yourself from the bondage of sin or from the law. You may struggle, weep, and pray, but deliverance comes in another way and from another quarter than self. When you have measured your strength and found it to be absolute weakness; when all is given up in despair and you turn *alone* to God with the bursting cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24), then comes rolling over the emancipated soul the shout of victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 25), followed by the calm, doctrinal, yet personal declaration, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (v. 25). The opposition of the natures (Rom. vii.); the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh (Gal. v.); and the conflict of the believer with wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. vi.), are frequently confounded and mixed up in the experience of believers and that to their serious loss. The first issues in deliverance. The second in the victory of the Spirit. The third—which only is Christian conflict—is to maintain practically our place and blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

PLAN AND ORDER OF THE AGES.

THE dispensational dealings of God in the past and those yet future, are an important department of biblical study.

There is an order and exactness in the sequence of events and in their groupings under distinct and divinely revealed principles by which God directly or indirectly governs the race, which invests the history of the "ages" with intense interest.

In the Divine, therefore imperishable records of Inspiration, the great chart of time is unrolled. Here facts are duly chronicled. Here the ways, actions, words, and thoughts of men are faithfully recorded; or, in other words, the history of the race is given us according to God. What a history! The impress of eternity is upon it!

Now in this Divine account of man we have laid bare what no human pen could trace, the *inner* history—the principles and motives which govern men. The successive, varied, and probationary trials to which the creature:—individually, nationally, universally is subjected, led to a growing development of his *moral* history which culminated in man openly declaring himself as the determined enemy of God in the rejection and murder of Christ. "But now once in the end of the ages (*i.e.*, their '*consummation*') hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26, *revised version*).

The past ages have completed their course and now yield their rich and varied stores of instruction to us "upon whom the ends of the ages are come,"—(1 Cor. x. 11, *revised version*). From *innocence* to *enmity*; or from the garden of *life* (Gen. ii. 7-8) to the garden of *death* (John xix. 41) the finish or consummation of the ages centre in the cross of Christ, for to it they all tended. What a wondrous meeting-place! *There*,

where the complete and utter ruin of man is openly declared, the boundless grace of God is as publicly manifested. *There*, the depravity and guilt of man is thoroughly exposed, *there*, too, the greatness and grandeur of God's salvation for all is witnessed.

The ages to come will have a history as sorrowful and humbling as those of the past. As the previous ones finished their course in the rejection of Christ in *grace*, so those yet future will close their story by the rejection of Christ in *glory* (Rev. xx. 7-15). The *cross* (Heb. ix. 26) and *the lake of fire* (Rev. xx. 15) respectively close the past and future ages. How fruitful in lessons to us!

*Character-
istic Name.*

ADAM.—I. INNOCENCE.—The period of innocence was a brief one; its salient features are described within the compass of eighteen verses (Gen. ii. 8-25). In a sinless state and in a specially prepared garden, Adam and Eve stood alone (Gen. ii. 8.) The state and place being forfeited by sin there can be no return to either (Gen. iii. 24). Outside the garden and in sin the race commenced its sorrowful history (Gen. iv. 1; Psalm li. 5). *Scripture reference* Gen. ii.

CAIN.—II. CONSCIENCE.—From the fall to the flood—a dreary period of 1656 years of lawlessness and sin prevailed. Unbridled self-will was rampant, and the moral corruption universal. God left the race without promise to cheer or law to restrain. Man, however, had been supplied with conscience—God's inward, warning monitor. During the last 120 years of this dark and darkening period God interposed with a combined testimony, through Noah, of Salvation and Judgment, (Gen. vi., vii.; Heb. xi. 7; 1 Peter iii. 20).—Gen. iii.-vii.

NOAH.—III. GOVERNMENT.—Magisterial authority and the first and fundamental principles of civil government for man as such, were revealed to Noah after the flood ; these principles ever remain in all their force. All governments and powers are responsible to God for the due maintenance of law and authority in their respective spheres. God in governmental dealing with man at large in judgment and in blessing is the great characteristic of this period. This fresh beginning was founded on sacrifice, (Gen. viii. 20-21).—Gen. ix.

ABRAM.—IV. PROMISE.—Owing to the universality of idolatry (Jos. xxiv. 2), Abram, himself an idolator, was called “out” (Gen. xii. 1) to head a new race (Rom. iv.) ; to commence anew, public testimony for God (Rom. xi.), and to become the source and channel of blessing to the world (Gen. xii. 2-3), God thus morally judging the wicked scene. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made” (Gal. iii. 16) ; to the former in Gen. xii., to the latter in Gen. xxii. Believers in all ages become “Abraham’s seed” (Gal. iii. 29), and can claim him as their father (Rom. iv. 11).—Gen. xii. ; xxii.

MOSES.—V. LAW.—The law was given by Moses as a test and trial of mankind ; and its history and effects as exhibited in Israel have been faithfully chronicled for instruction in all ages. It proved a ministry of death and condemnation to Israel (2 Cor. iii.) as it also does to every individual soul quickened, but yet undelivered, (Rom. vii.) not knowing that as Christians we are dead to *it* (verse 4). The law as a covenant existed from Moses to Christ (Gal. iii. 24)—an interesting period of about fifteen centuries ; under it the Jews became transgressors (Rom. iv., v).—Exod. xix.

JOSHUA.—VI. THEOCRACY.—During the period of the Judges—about 450 years—(Acts xiii. 20) Israel was governed by Jehovah, but instrumentally by successive Judges—16 in all—raised up in various parts of the country. This dark period in Israel's history brings into relief some fine instances of individual faith in God and traits of noble character; the sovereign grace of God to His failed and ever-failing people is also conspicuously displayed on the dark back-ground of Israel's unbelief. Pre-eminently the "dark ages" of Israelitish history.—The Book of Judges.

DAVID.—VII. MONARCHY.—A new and important era in Israel's history dates from her rejection of the theocracy, *i.e.*, of Jehovah as king and law giver, and of her publicly expressed determination to have a king like the nations (1 Sam. viii). The monarchy—from Saul till Zedekiah, first and last kings—existed for about 500 years. Not Saul, however, the people's choice, but David was Jehovah's chosen king (Psalm lxxxix.)—The Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

DANIEL.—VIII. CAPTIVITY.—Ephraim or the ten tribes after existing as a separate kingdom for about 260 years under 19 kings, was destroyed by Assyria (2 Kings xvii.) Judah as a distinct monarchy existed for about 390 years under the sway of 20 sovereigns, and was destroyed by the Chaldeans in the year 588 B.C., (2 Kings xxv). The captivity of Judah lasted 70 years (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). Babylon, not Jerusalem; the Gentile, not the Jew, then became the centre of the world's government (Dan. ii. ; Luke xxi. 24).—The Books of Kings and Daniel.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—IX. GRACE.—Israel is the main subject of prophecy and of government. The Church is the subject of New Testament Revelation and of grace. From the judicial rejection of Israel (Acts xxviii. 25-27) and Roman destruction of Jerusalem several years later (70 A.D.) till she once again occupies *the* place in history, the interesting interval between, of about 1900 years, has as its grand characteristic, the Revelation of God in grace to sinners and the unique place and destiny of the Church as the body and bride of Christ (John iii. ; Eph. iii.)—The Acts and the Epistles.

SATAN.—X. JUDGMENT.—*After* the translation of Old and New Testament saints to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), which will close up this parenthetical period of grace, *then* the 70th week or seven literal years of Daniel's celebrated prophecy (Dan. ix. 27) will run its course, during which—the latter half especially—Satan will ply his terrible role. The characteristic feature will be the infliction of successive judgments upon apostate Judah and apostate Christendom, mainly noted in the prophetic part of the Revelation (chaps. vi.-xix)—Rev. vi.-xix.

CHRIST GLORIFIED. — XI. GLORY. — The personal reign of Christ for 1000 years (Rev. xx. 1-6) will be a magnificent time in the history of the world. It will be a reign of righteousness. The Lord will throw the skirts of His glory over the scene of agony—the universal groan will be hushed, the general wail of misery cease, while one loud, long, universal anthem will be sung by Redeemed Creation *of Him* and *to Him* (Rev. v. ; Psalm cxlvi.-cl.)—Rev. xx., xxi. 9-xxii. 5 ; and the Prophets.

Who alone is worthy.

GOD.—XII. REST.—We have at last reached perfection. These eternal ages are not the fruit of past eternal counsel as the millennium is, but the result rather of what God is as *light* (1 John i. 5) and as *love* (1 John iv. 16). O! the deep and unfathomable blessedness of entering into God's rest (Heb. iv.) when perfection will be stamped on every creature and on every thing—the lake of fire and its eternal inhabitants alone excepted (Rev. xxi. 8). The description of the eternal state is stated in negative terms only. What will it be to be *there*? Rev. xxi. 1-5; 1 Cor. xv. 28.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him, and to Him are all things to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”—Rom. xi. 33-36.

NOTE ON THE GEOLOGICAL AGES.

IN the foregoing plan we have necessarily omitted the utterly unknown ages previous to the commencement of human history.

The periods demanded for geological formation—in many instances the outcome of wild and reckless conjecture—must yet be very great. The most sober geologists require periods of far greater length than those assigned in Scripture, when man became God's tenant on the earth, 6,000 years ago. Now science does not make facts; its province is to disclose them. Science discovers what *is*. Hence as a Christian, and as a firm believer in the verbal inspiration of the Word of God, we welcome, gladly welcome, the disclosure of facts in every department of the realm of nature, but conjecture and supposition we utterly repudiate. We would again repeat, that science reveals what *is*, not what *may* be, or *might* have been.

Now, while frankly accepting facts from whatever

quarter—christian or infidel—we unhesitatingly challenge the production of *one* which contradicts any statement of holy writ. The periods in Scripture refer to man's history, and not at all to the age or antiquity of the globe. That useful chapter—Gen. v.—or family register of the race from Adam to Noah—1656 years—the basis of human chronology—is an important factor in a question of this kind. All the periods therein enumerated, and they are the first on record, refer to the age of persons.

Not one inspired statement informs us *when* "God created the heavens and the earth;" nor how long the ruined earth lay desolate (verse 2 Gen. i.) nor by what means its ruin was effected; it was will-less in the matter (Rom. viii. 20). Neither does the word of God define the time, from the brooding of the Spirit of God upon the waters which were wrapped round the chaotic earth as a huge winding-sheet, till God prepared it in six *literal* days as man's home till he enter one of the eternal abodes—Heaven or the Lake of Fire. Hence the periods required for the formation of the various geological strata can easily be granted, and are, in fact, fully provided for in the first 39 words of the Bible. How perfect is the Word of God!

ON EQUALITY WITH CHRIST.

THERE is a tendency and teaching abroad, which, on the face of it, looks most plausible, and seems at first sight to magnify the grace of God. It is said, we are equal to Christ; that we have His very place and position before God and the Father. Now, we emphatically assert that neither the Church, nor the individual believer is on a par with Christ, and we utterly reject all such teachings.

Christ is "The Son of God" and "Son of the Father." We are Sons and Children, but the former

titles are applied exclusively to Christ. He is seated at God's right hand—the highest point in the universe (Eph. i. 20; Heb. i. 3). Are Christians or the Church said to be there? *Never*, and never to eternity shall we sit on yonder seat of glory and power. It is the highest place, and a special and reserved one for *Him* alone. It is our joy to see Him there. The devil sought God's place (Ezek. xxviii. with 1 Tim. iii. 6) and some Christians seek Christ's place; let such guard against spiritual pride and ambition which had their birth in the heart of the devil. Christ sits with the Father in His, the Father's throne (Rev. iii. 21). Are we ever said to sit there? *Never*. We are in Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. i. 3), not at God's right hand. Seated, too, we shall be with Christ in His throne—not the throne of the Father (Rev. iii. 21). We recoil with holy indignation from all such teaching as would exalt a creature—be it angel or man—to an equality with Christ. We worship and adore as we read John i. 14, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the *only* begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Again, "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father" (v. 18). Are we said to share with "the only begotten Son" this wondrous place of deepest love and intimacy—this Divine relationship? *Never*, nor could it be; yet a believer like John (chap. xiii. 23 R.V.) might have a place in the bosom of the Son. *He* in the bosom of the Father; *we* in the bosom of the Son.

But is it not said, "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17)? Undoubtedly, but the context shews that the subject is that of absolute immunity from Judgment; in this we are as He is. That we in grace share with Christ much that He possesses is blessedly true. We have with Him the same Father (John xx. 17); the same life (1 John ii. 8);

the same throne (Rev. iii. 21); the same peace (John xiv. 27); the same nature (2 Peter i. 4); the same love (John xvii. 27); and the same glory (John xvii. 22). But Christ as Man and Son has dignities and glories and relationships peculiar to Himself. Even as to the Church He is *Head*.

THE BIBLE IN THE CHINESE COURT.

AN esteemed friend has sent us the following interesting account—a cutting from one of the London daily papers.

A CORRESPONDENT at Peking writes: The Testament for the Empress Dowager was sent to the Palace at Peking on Nov. 12. This “Jesus Religion Book” was received and immediately sent in to her Majesty, who lost no time in examining its contents. The Emperor, too, when he heard of the arrival, was anxious to see the book, but on finding that her majesty was too busy looking over it, he got impatient, and immediately ordered the head eunuch to go out and purchase a copy, and to lose no time about it. Shortly after the presentation was made, one of the eunuchs, named Li, dressed in his official robes, made his appearance at the American Book Store and Bible Dépôt. He carried with him a slip of paper, on which was written, in Chinese characters, “One Old Testament, one New Testament.” The Chinese assistant at the store, who is very highly educated, was struck with the uncommon look of the characters, and out of curiosity asked who had written them. The eunuch replied, “The Emperor.” “Oh, indeed,” said the assistant, “to-day the women of the Christian religion presented a beautiful copy of the New Testament to the Empress Dowager.” “Yes,” replied the eunuch, “the Emperor has already seen it, and now wishes to obtain copies of the books of the Jesus religion.” The books were got ready, taken possession of, and paid for. The slip of paper was left behind. The assistant was very

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pleased to get this, so he placed it on one of the shelves. A short time after the eunuch returned, very much excited, saying he had left the slip of paper behind. It was reluctantly returned to him when the eunuch said, "It will never do for me to lose the Emperor's writing." The assistant then made the eunuch a present of a Catechism and a copy of the Proverbs for his own use, which pleased the eunuch very much, and he promised to let all the other eunuchs in the Palace read them. Just after noon on the same day the eunuch returned to the dépôt with the New Testament, many of the leaves of which were turned up. He said his Majesty the Emperor had looked through it, and that he had observed a number of errors in the printing. The assistant at once changed it, giving the eunuch a more correct copy. While this eunuch was talking about the book, another eunuch hurried into the store and cried out, "Get one with large characters ;" but, as there were not whole copies of the New Testament in large characters, he took the copy that had been selected. It has been ascertained that the eunuch had come directly from the Emperor, and it is now known that he found out the names of the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament" from the introductory letter accompanying the Imperial present. Since then the Emperor, Empress Dowager, and other Royal personages have been busy reading the Holy Scriptures.

 THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

1 COR. i. 9. (*Continued from page 156*).

3. The Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20, another term used, yet inseparable from chap. x., the *Lord's table*. Yet here we get more the emblems we partake of as *a remembrance*, more than a communion, and instead of the title "Christ," as in chap x., the personal name "Jesus" is introduced, verse 23—hence all the more

connected with the past. The bread (symbol of His body given for us). The wine (His blood shed for us); what a supper! No common *meal*, no common *table*, no common day: but the Lord's supper; a ROYAL *feast*. Who would miss such a feast? Who would be absent? None surely but those unredeemed by the precious Blood and unregenerated by the Holy Spirit; they have no place there. But each saved person; each believer, has right and title (if *walk* and *doctrines* are right), to be there. The Blood of Christ, which puts sins away and opens heaven, the holiest of all for God's people, opens out also to God's people this sweet privilege of sitting at such a feast and so remember the Lord until He comes again. Yet each needs, before coming to such a *royal* feast, to examine ourselves and if in anything we are wrong in our lives, judge it, and then with a *glad heart* and *good conscience*, *communion*, uninterrupted, an inner feast will be enjoyed as we partake of the bread and wine which will strengthen and cheer the inner man. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved" (Song v. 1).

C O N S E C R A T I O N .

"AND he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet" (Lev. viii. 24). "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

The Ear for God.—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." May our answer be, "Speak, for thy servant heareth." God speaks to us in His Word, may we *diligently* and *daily* study it, and our ears be more ready to listen to what He has to say to us in it. It has been remarked by a servant of Christ, that God has given us two ears and but one mouth, showing us that we should be swift to hear and slow to speak. How apt, alas! we are to hear with one and let it out through the other, like a sieve. May we know prac-

tically what it is to have the ear set apart to God by the Blood of Christ that His Words may sink down into our hearts.

The Hands for God.—The Saviour's hands were nailed to that Cross for us. He had to say, "They pierced my hands and my feet." He now claims the right hand of every young Christian. Shall we withhold what is His by right? Let us see to it that the precious Blood is on the thumb of the right hand, if it be so, we shall be careful what we do with it. It is Thine, Lord! let my hands henceforth be employed in Thy service, set apart for Thee.

The Feet for God.—There is a race to be run (Heb. xii. 1), and a prize to be won (Phil. iii. 14). "So run that ye may obtain." Are you ready? Is the Blood on the big toe? Now then, right foot foremost and away to win souls for Christ. "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. xii. 1, 2). His blessed feet have trod this sin-stained world. He bore for us the cruellest sufferings; if He still walked this earth His life was such that the multitude would call Him a fanatic. His spotless life was wholly set apart unto God so that He could say, "I do always those things that please the Father." It is a small thing He asks us to do, just to live for Him, who, in such wondrous grace, died for us. "He has left us an example that we should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). A brief moment of time, and the privilege of living for Him will for ever have passed away. May He give us then in the interval that remains to have eternity so before us that we may be wholly set apart unto Him, "Vessels unto honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use." H. L.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

EZRA AND HIS WORK.—*Continued.*

(Continued from page 161).

SURELY the failure of the Returned Captives speaks a word of warning to us in this day, when the barriers between the Church and the world have been so broken down, and when even those who have, in name at least, taken a place of separation too often fail to maintain it practically. Have we not all, and young Christians especially, need to be on our guard against forming worldly associations.

To return to Israel; the condition of the people was indeed pitiable. Yet there was a godly remnant, "those that trembled at the words of the God of Israel" (Ezra ix. 4). Such were ever under the eye of God, for has He not said, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word" (Isa. lxvi. 2). To revive such and to recall the people generally to obedience, and that a faithful remnant should be preserved, such as are represented in the Gospels by the aged Simeon, and Anna, and Nathaniel of Cana of Galilee, to wait for their Messiah, their God ~~was~~ preparing His own instruments.

This introduces us to two most interesting characters, Ezra and Nehemiah. Jeshua and Zerubbabel were interesting by their official position and the part they took in connection with the actual return of the people from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the tem-

ple. Haggai and Zechariah arrest our attention by the importance of the prophetic message they were called to deliver. But of them personally we learn but little. With Ezra and Nehemiah it is otherwise, both had indeed an important official position, both were called of God to a great work, but what arrests our attention in their case is the sterling character of these two devoted servants of God. It is not that the object of the inspired record is to set the men before us ; but so graphic is the narrative that introduces them and their work, that they seem to live before us in the page of inspiration.

Ezra is introduced to us in chap. vii. of the book that bears his name as "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given."

Here is a man learned in the law of God ; but he needs more than that to fit him to be the instructor of others ; and especially to be the instrument in the hands of God for the revival of His people, and so we read in verse 7, "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it."

How much instruction is there in these few words. Ezra had begun where everyone must begin who would help others, with his own heart. The Spirit of God tells us the result in but few words, but in them is wrapped up the secret of the training of this honoured servant of God for his great work. Personal faith in God ; subjection of himself to His word. What difficulties he had met with in his path hitherto, we know not. A fight he must have had, we know. But he stands before us in these few words as one

THE BEAUTY OF THY LOVE.

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who has overcome, and so one whom God can use "to teach Israel statutes and judgments." We may learn a little more of his character as we follow him in his work.

C. B.

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE BEAUTY OF THY LOVE!

Oh Lord, the beauty of Thy love,
Our souls would deeply trace,
And soar to where Thou art, above—
Thy rightful place.

E'en now we gather round Thy feet,
And gaze into Thy face ;
The memories of Thyself so sweet,
Once more we taste.

* * * * *

Thy saints shall gather round Thee soon
In glory, wondrous fair ;
Lord—how blest a moment will that be,
Thy voice to hear !

Most blessed One—it is enough,
The cup of joy runs o'er ;
We worship and we praise Thy Name
For evermore. J. E. B.—D.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.—1 COR. i. 9.

(Continued from page 179).

4. The Lord's Death. When those redeemed gather around His Table and eat of His Supper, it solemnizes the heart and is a most blessed place. "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew (announce) the Lord's death till He come." Who can sit at such a place, at such a season, and contemplate the deep, deep sufferings of the Lord and not have the heart moved at such a sight? This would be used by the Holy Spirit, not only to fill the soul with wonder, love, and praise, but also mould all our thoughts about the One we remember and about the world and sin which necessitated Him to take such a place. Here is a place angels cannot approach and partake with us at such a Supper. It is for redeemed ones only, and here, before our God, before the world, and the angels as spectators, ought we not to take the shoes from off our feet when we approach such a place.

This place we take, this Table we sit around on the first day of the week as the early Christians did. Some of us may not have gift, and perhaps not have utterance, yet all have this privilege to gather to His Table and in this blessed way *announce* His death until He comes. May such a sacred feast strengthen His people the seven days which follow till another eighth is reached, the first day of another week.

A. E. BOOTH.

(To be continued, D.V.)

ON SECTARIANISM.

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MR WARD, fellow-labourer with Carey and Marshman in India, wrote thus:—"as for sects a breath may make them, as a breath has made. There is much trash cleaving to us all; but when I see Him, whose right it is to reign, and whose dominion is over all, going forth conquering and to conquer, I must and will rejoice. I am more than ever anxious to know no man as an Independent, an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Methodist, or a Baptist. . . . What a sad thing that while our Lord Jesus Christ loves His people because they bear His image, the cause of our attachment should be that they belong to us! . . . Let us conscientiously profess our opinions, but let us love the man of our sect but little who possesses but little of the image of Christ, while we love him in whom we see much of Christ, though some of his opinions are the very opposite of our own. . . . If I am enabled thus to love all the family 'whose names are written in heaven,' I have property in all; I have fellowship with all; the gifts of all are mine; the spirituality of all is mine; the success of all at home and abroad is mine."

May we each breathe this noble spirit!

S H E O L.

THIS word occurs sixty-five times in the original Hebrew of the Bible, and is rendered, in the common English translation, thirty-one times "hell," thirty times "the grave," three times "the pit," and once "grave."

THE FINISHED WORK.

GOD'S mighty work for the salvation of sinners is done. The work is absolutely and eternally finished. Nothing can be added to it, for its value ever abides before God. The Resurrection did not add one whit to the value of the Cross, but the Resurrection declared its worth. Now this Divine work is the soul's resting place. It is God's rock for my soul. He has cleft the rock. He has smitten it, and into it I flee, and on it I rest. All other ground is shifting sand. But how do I know I am saved, exactly in the same way that you know you are lost. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." How simple the question and how easily answered. Do you believe on the Son? Can you truly answer "Yes;" then on the authority of Christ you *are* saved, "HATH everlasting life." If you believe not the Son, you are unsaved, and "the wrath of God abideth on you" (John iii. 36). God's work saves. God's Word makes me sure of it. Now these two verities:—God's *work* to save me, and God's *word* to assure me are enough, are they not? The WORK clears the conscience, while the WORD establishes the heart. "When I (Jehovah) see the blood (the work) I will pass over you" (the Word) (Exod. xii. 13).

Unbelievers complain of the mysteries of Revelation; but we have the best authority for saying, that, in general, the only mystery which prevents them from receiving it is, "The mystery of iniquity."

ON THE OFFERINGS.

THE BURNT OFFERING.—Lev. i.

Signification.

Jesus in death presenting Himself to accomplish the will and glory of God. It is the God-ward aspect of the cross of Christ (Heb. ix. 14).

Notes.

The offering could be of the herd, flock, or birds. Thus the animals specified are bullocks, goats, sheep, rams, lambs, turtle doves, young pigeons.

Here the offerer is prominent ; *he* offers the animal, lays his hand upon its head, kills it, flays it, cuts it into pieces, and washes the inwards and legs in water.

When it was an offering of birds the priest killed it ; but that was an exception, not being directly priestly work.

The priests sprinkled the blood and arranged the various parts on the altar.

The trumpets were to be blown over these offerings on special occasions, as a memorial before God (Num. x. 10).

This was the highest in character and the first in order of these sacrifices.

On the entrance of Israel into the land, no *burnt* offering was complete without an accompanying *meat* or *flour* offering ; God would have the death and life of His Son thus prefigured before Him.

References.

Lev. i. ; vi. 9-13. Num. xv. 3-12. 2 Chron. vii. 1-7.

THE MEAT OFFERING — Lev. ii.

Signification.

Jesus as man presenting to God an unblemished life, with all its grace and moral perfectness; of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

Notes.

The offering consisted of "fine flour" dry or cooked, or "green ears of corn." Its adjuncts were frankincense, oil, salt.

The oil "*mingled*" with the flour sets forth the truth of the Divine conception of the human nature of our Lord (Matt. i. 20); while the flour wafers "*anointed*" with the oil would as fittingly signify the weighty truth expressed in Acts x. 38.

God's part was a handful of the flour and of the oil, and "*all* the frankincense," as a memorial of the cakes, etc.

This offering, as setting forth the holy humanity of our Lord, is not only a sweet savour offering, but is termed "*most holy*."

Salt was not to be omitted.

Honey was not to form an ingredient.

This offering was based upon and its value declared by that which God found in the burnt offering.

The meat offering for a priest was wholly consumed, none of it being eaten.

References.

Lev. ii. ; vi. 14-23. Num. xv. 4-9. Exod. xxix. 40-42.

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THE PEACE OFFERING.—Lev. iii.

Signification.

Christ slain, the ground of *communion*, whether for God, the Church, or any individual of God's people.

Notes.

This offering could be of the herd (male or female), of the flock (male or female). Bullocks, lambs, and goats are specified animals.

The fat and inwards burnt on the altar as a sweet savour.

The breast (*love*) and other parts eaten by the priestly family.

The shoulder (*strength*) heaved before the Lord, and eaten by the officiating priest.

The carcase, the remainder of the animal (if any) was burnt on the third day, as communion with God could only be maintained in connection with the sacrifice.

The trumpets were to be blown over these sacrifices on all solemn occasions and seasons of gladness (Num. x. 10).

The inwards, etc., laid on the altar of burnt-offering, as also the meat offering, were consumed on the burnt-offering.

References.

Lev. iii. ; vii.-11-21 ; xxviii. 24.

THE SIN OFFERING.—Lev. iv.

Signification.

Jesus on the Cross made sin for us. The judgment of God borne in the holy sacrifice of Christ.

Notes.

This offering could be of the herd (male or female), of the flock (male or female), of birds, and in one case, a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour.

The goat was pre-eminently the sin-offering.

The sin, trespass, and meat offerings were termed "most holy."

Here the offerings varied according to the position of the offender ; sin being measured by the responsibility of the person in the position he was Divinely set. Thus the *value* of the animal and the *application* of its blood are important points in these sin-offerings.

Sins of ignorance were not passed over, but could only be met by sacrifice. For presumptuous sins none could be brought. (Num. xv. 30).

The very poorest were thought of by God ; *they* could bring a pair of birds, or even the tenth part of an ephah of flour.

The fat (*excellency*) of this offering and the inwards could be burned on the altar and go up to God as a sweet savour.

References.

Lev. iv. ; v. 1-13 ; vi. 24-30 ; x. 16-20.

THE TRESPASS OFFERING.—Lev. v.

Signification.

Sins and transgressions against God or man depriving them of what was theirs, divinely met by Christ's sacrifice, and restitution insisted upon.

Notes.

This offering was of rams.

In these offerings the main thought is not what *I am*, but what *I have done* ; so of the sin-offering.

Having injured another, it can only be met by sacrifice, and the injury repaired by full and righteous restitution.

Most of the particulars bearing upon the sin offering equally apply to these sacrifices. The blood not dealt with in the sanctuary.

There was no laying on of hands on the victim's head (*identification*), as in the case of the sin offerings.

Sacrifice, restitution, with an additional part added as compensation, accompanied with confession, are characteristics of these offerings.

The *guilt* of the person is more in view in the sin-offering ; here it is the *injury* done whether to God or man.

References.

Lev. v. 14-19 ; vi. 1-7 ; vii. 1-7. Num. xviii. 9-10.

THE DRINK OFFERING.—Num. xv.

Signification.

The *joy* of God and man in the voluntary death-and-life-obedience of Jesus.

Notes.

This offering consisted of “strong wine” poured unto the Lord in the Holy Place (Num. xxviii. 7).

A drink offering was to accompany the daily morning and evening burnt sacrifice.

This offering could only be offered in connection with that which set forth the death and life of Jesus, namely, the *burnt* and *meat* offerings.

The *fourth* part of WINE and the *fourth* part of OIL teach that our joy (wine) is proportionate to the power of the Holy Ghost (oil).

The wine and the oil always correspond in quantity.

Drink offerings will yet again be poured out before the Lord in expression of millennial gladness.

The touching expression of Paul in Phil. ii. 17 refers to this blessed character of offering: “Yea, and if I be *poured out* as a libation on the sacrifice and *ministration of your faith*.”

References.

Exod. xxix. 40-42. Num. xv. 1-13; xxviii. 7.

THE COMING MEETING.

(1 Thes. iv. 13-18.)

THERE will be a wonderful meeting by and bye. None shall be late, none absent. Saints have waited, and longed, and watched, and prayed for that meeting for 1900 years ; but it shall come, and it is nearer to-day than it was yesterday, for "*now* is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Are you, beloved Christian reader, ready for the meeting? Let us refresh our hearts by a brief meditation over those intensely interesting verses—

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven."

Here the heart is at once arrested. Himself shall come ; no archangel or angel accompanying the Lord in His descent from heaven. The morning has come for which He endured the cross, and passed through those profound depths in which there was no standing. The joy set before Him has fully come ; the hour for which He suffered and bled and died has arrived, and He comes to possess Himself of the "one pearl of great price" and of exceeding beauty. He loved the assembly, and gave Himself for it. He followed His guilty bride into her shame and misery. He found her, cast out and polluted in her blood, and ere He could say "LIVE," He went to the cross, and there expiated her guilt by His agony and blood. Her sin and guilt could only be measured by the cross of the Blessed One. Now, having ascended to the right hand of God—angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to Him—He ever lives for the nourishing and cherishing of His Church ; and when her wilderness journey is o'er, and His present ministry of grace on high ceases, He will come and present her to Himself—the Church in glory, without fault, or spot, or wrinkle, *i.e.*, no trace of care or old age. He wants her for Himself, so He will come Himself.

O, what a rush of holy and blessed recollection at

the mention of the Lord *Himself*! Yes, He Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with archangel's voice, and trump of God. His shout will alone be heard by the righteous. It will be an awakening and gathering shout, falling alike on the ears of the dead as on the living. "God is gone *up* with a shout, the Lord with a sound of a trumpet." Yes, Lord, Thou didst spoil principalities and powers—triumphing over them in Thy wondrous cross, and Thou hast gone up to Thy home in holy triumph; the glory of God now shines in Thy face, Thou Blessed One; but Thou wilt come, and with an assembling shout gather to Thyself the fruit of Thy love and death! He shall speak with archangel-voice. There is but one archangel named in Scripture. The voice is individual, the shout is general. We heard His voice out of the darkness. O! 'twas the most desolate cry God and man e'er listened to—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Risen from the dead, He met us in our unbelief and fear, and His voice fell upon our ears and souls—"Peace be unto you." He enters the circles of mourning and announces Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. He counts upon our knowing Him and recognising His voice. "He calleth His own sheep by *name*—they *know* his voice." Ah! it won't be long ere He will speak to us each one—"Come up *hither*." Then the trump of God shall sound—called in another place "the *last* trump"—and thus close in detail the blessed action of the coming Christ. All will be done in the "twinkling of an eye," and all done in subjection to God.

WHO WILL MEET THE LORD?

Every saint, from Adam until the descent from heaven, shall meet the Lord in the air. Not one will come short of the blessed meeting and of the subsequent scenes of glory. The "dead *in* Christ"—sweet

thought! lose nothing by absence from the body—rise first—that is, before the living are changed. Priority is thus accorded to the sleepers. The Lord, as the Resurrection, will sweep the tombs, the earth, and sea of every particle of the precious dust of His sleeping saints, for “precious to the Lord is the death of His saints.” The voice of Christ, as of old, shall sound amongst the tenants of the tomb, and at His word, “Come forth,” every slumbering saint will rise unto the resurrection of life. Then the living shall be changed; to them Christ will appear as the life, and our bodies of humiliation shall be changed and fashioned like unto His body of glory. Then every trace of mortality as to our bodies will be swallowed up of life; “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“Caught up *together*,” the raised dead and changed living—“together.” O precious word! This will be the second great Church gathering. The Lord Himself was the centre in Acts ii.; the Lord Himself will be the centre of 1 Thess. iv. The first general gathering of the Church was at Pentecost; but, alas! Satan soon succeeded in spoiling the lovely work of God. Like another garden of the Lord—a second Eden of delight—the Church continued to bloom for a brief hour; but the flower has faded, the fruit has withered, and the spouse of the Lord has offered herself to many lovers. But now the meeting takes place in the air, where the serpent’s hiss, the tempter’s seductions, and the weakness of nature can have no place. They leave the world blighted by the curse; they weep no more, they sin no more. The “air” is the meeting place. It is not heaven, for *it* will be entered by the Lamb and His fair company; nor is it earth, the scene of our sin and sorrow.

The meeting! Who can describe, what pen portray the blessedness of that grand gathering together of

Christ and His saints, away from the poisonous breath and humid atmosphere of a ruined world ! The moment has fully come ; the desert crossed, and we see Him as He is. Changed into His image, to which we were predestinated, we shall bear His likeness, morally and physically. Lord Jesus, speed on the moment ! When will the meeting take place ? We cannot say. It may be, beloved reader, before the closing lines of this address are read. There is no intervening event spoken of in Scripture before the meeting of 1 Thess. iv. One brief sentence sums up the blessedness of the gathering together—

“For ever with the Lord.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KINGDOM.

OUR brief article on “How one enters the Kingdom” in February No. has created an interest in this important subject for which we are right thankful. We may frankly state that the main view therein taught, namely, that the new birth is God’s door of entrance *into* the kingdom—now and hereafter—was the result after much thought and prayer, of a conversation with an honoured servant of Christ. We hope our readers will carefully read his “Notes on the Kingdom,” which we reproduce in this and succeeding numbers of our little monthly.

The following passages conclusively prove the special point sought to be established: Matt. v. 20 ; vii. 21 ; xviii. 3 ; xix. 23, 24 ; xxi. 31 ; Mark ix. 47 ; x. 23, 24, 25 ; Luke xviii. 24, 25 ; John iii. 5 ; Acts xiv. 22. Now in each one of these fourteen texts the word *into* occurs, and, what we would especially note, is the fact that every text referred to, supposes the new birth on the part of all who enter “into” the kingdom ; it is positively so stated in John iii. 5. There are, besides, many other passages as Luke xviii.

17; Matt. v. 10, etc., which confirm the general statement, namely, that the new birth is essential to enter "into" the kingdom. It is a real thing then to enter "into" the kingdom, whether spoken of as the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven; for the former see the texts in Mark and Luke; for proof of the latter consult the passages in Matthew.

But still a question may be raised as to the kingdom now and in the future. Does not profession *now*, as in baptism admit one *into* the kingdom? Two passages will, we consider, dispose of this objection: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter *into* the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Thus profession merely is expressly excluded, while *reality* is insisted on as necessary to *enter* the kingdom. Again, the solemn declaration of the Lord to Nicodemus is equally conclusive "Verily, verily I say unto thee, *except a man be born of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot *enter into* the kingdom of God," (John iii. 5). Whether the kingdom be viewed, therefore, as a *present* thing as in John iii. 5, or *future* as in Acts xiv. 22, a vital change is intimated on the part of all who *enter* into it.

What then about the kingdom-parables of Matt. xiii. which intimate in some of them, a mixed state both of persons and things—good and evil, light and darkness; see verses 24-30; 47-50. It is not said, however, that the "tares" or "fish" entered *into* the kingdom. This word "into" is exclusively used of what is real. Others than true believers have been brought within the influence of the kingdom; they are *in*, but not *into*. Hence all who do not enter *into* the kingdom by being born of God, but may be found within its borders—having surreptitiously gained an entrance, and professedly placed themselves under the authority of Christ as Lord—shall be cleared

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out by judgment (verses 30-49) when the kingdom is about to be set up in power. But these people are never spoken of as having entered *into* the kingdom.

The kingdom comprehends in its range both heaven and earth. The kingdom of heaven signifies that the seat of rule is in the heavens. The kingdom of God intimates that the kingdom belongs to Him—all power is of God (Rom. xiii. 1). The kingdom of the Son is earth. The kingdom of the Father the heavens; the saved on earth are contemplated in the former; the saved in heaven are embraced in the latter.

The baptism of the Spirit creates the One Body. The new birth is God's door into the kingdom. Baptism by water admits into an outward sphere of blessing on the earth—the House of God.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR
LORD.—1 COR. i. 9.

(Continued from page 184.)

5. The Lord's Resurrection. Christians when thus gathered as members of *one body*, are gathered on *resurrection-ground*. The first day of the week observe, is a *celebration of His resurrection*. He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, hence we are associated with Him on *resurrection-ground*, we have passed from death unto life.

It was on this day the disciples heard such a message, He is not here, *He is risen*; risen indeed, the enemy defeated, and that for ever. Blessed victory! The world now under judgment, its price also paid, and to faith the world is but an empty tomb, and we on *resurrection-ground* gather around One we love—One who has delivered us by His death and resurrection, hence, seeing we occupy such a place, God puts an *object* before our hearts—The Lord Jesus Himself, and we are by the Spirit enjoined if ye be risen with Christ set your minds (Col. iii. 1-2, R.V.)

on things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Then as the mind is set on Him, the heart will be taken up with such an object, and affections entwined around Him, we will be enabled rightly to value our *place* and *portion*. What a place! on *resurrection-ground*. What a portion! God's *Beloved Son*. One *place* and *portion* now in time and through all *eternity*. *God's Beloved Son*.

6. **The Lord's Presence** comes next. He knew how much we would need such a *table*, such a *feast*, and in our weakness would need Himself, hence His promise, when two or three *are gathered* unto My name, there am I in the midst of them. For prayer or praise, and at *His table*, He *presides*, He *sits*, His presence makes it a *green spot*, a perfect heaven upon earth, the key note in going to such a place ought to be, *Sir, we would see Jesus*, and when we arrive at the place and the hour has come (ought one to be absent?) we take up the language of Heb. ii., "*We see Jesus*." This is when faith, guided by the Holy Spirit would guide and lead each one, and if this is not realized a blessing *is lost*, here the soul is free to be gazing on the *unveiled face* of *Jesus*, enjoy a fresh manifestation of His own presence, and hence human things fade away for the time being, and like the disciples on the mount we "see none but *Jesus only*." *Blessed* place, *blessed* company, *blessed* people, may reader and writer enjoy it *more and more*.

7. **The Lord's Coming**. It is here, as we have said, there is no place on earth to be compared to where *His presence* is. When His people are rightly gathered and His presence is *recognised* and *enjoyed*. Only *one* place is *better*, *sweeter*, and *higher*, with Himself in *the glory*, for this we wait His coming. Then we will no longer need to observe the *Lord's day*, to gather around the *Lord's table*, to partake of the *Lord's Supper*, to announce the *Lord's Death*, to cele-

brate the *Lord's Resurrection*, nor yet need the *Lord's presence* in a world of sin, for then we will know the *power* and reality of the *Lord's coming*. That for which the early Christians *looked, longed, and waited*—to hear *His voice*, and see *His face*, to have the privilege of falling at His feet and pouring out in His ears the praise and worship which is due to Himself. *May this hope, "His coming" to receive us, draw reader and writer nearer Him now, that we in heart may answer and respond to those blessings which are ours, whom God has been pleased to call into the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord.* A. E. B.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

WE beg to call the attention of our readers to the books advertised on the second page of cover. We are not personally acquainted with the second and third books in the list, but have been informed that they have proved helpful and useful to many. The others we do know and can with the utmost confidence accord them a hearty commendation.

We wish every young Christian would procure Mr Kelly's book "*In the Beginning*." It is without doubt one of the most masterly works on the subject of creation yet published. This volume would furnish our readers with an exposition of Genesis chaps. one and two which is simply invaluable. We heartily commend the book. The three last named are evangelistic in character. Evangelists and others in their preaching and dealing with souls have repeatedly told us of much real help derived from reading these books. Some time ago we were written to by a friend in the South of England, who greatly cheered us by the happy tidings that numerous conversions had taken place through "*Streams of Grace*" which was written and compiled by us years ago. To God alone be praise and glory!

NOTES ON THE KINGDOM. 201

"It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," was God's announcement to the serpent in the hour of its apparent triumph; for He would not leave the enemy in undisturbed possession of power over man and the earth. From the time, however, of man's acceptance of Satan's guidance, violence, self-will, and oppression began to be manifested in the world; but God's purpose must be fulfilled. So from time to time, during the forty centuries which rolled by between the prophetic announcement and the appearance of the One predicted, God disclosed something of the future concerning the kingdom to be established in power and permanence, where His authority has been disowned and His rights denied.

To Abraham it was promised, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and to Isaac and to Jacob after him was this promise confirmed (Gen. xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14). In the hope of the kingdom saints died. Jacob, before gathering up his feet into the bed, predicted the gathering [or better, obedience] of the nations to Shiloh, who was to come (Gen. xlix. 10); Moses closed his blessing of the tribes with the prospect of the people's welfare when the Lord should be reigning in person over the earth (Deut. xxxiii. 29); and David's last words are descriptive of the One who is yet to put down all that opposes itself to God (2 Sam. xxiii). In the days of Israel's triumphs the hope of the kingdom was remembered, for they sang of it at the Red Sea, and looked on to it as the ark entered Jerusalem under David (Exod. xv.; 1 Chron. xvi. 23-33). Individuals cherished the prospect of it in their hearts. Witness Hannah, who, pouring forth the joyful utterance of a grateful heart, cannot close her thanksgiving for special favours without making mention of the King, the Lord's Anointed. And David, as he wan-

dered over the land he was one day to govern, and as he sat on his throne in the city of Zion, looked onward to that which we too expect (Psalms xviii.; lxiii.); whilst of the personal majesty of the King he sang in Psalm xlv., and the beneficent character of His reign he celebrated in Psalm lxxii. After him the prophets took up the strain, Isaiah, Micah, and others predicted the blessings that will be enjoyed under His rule, and Daniel fixed the date of His first coming to earth; whilst to Nebuchadnezzar God revealed in dreams the crushing power of the stone cut out without hands, and the setting up by the God of heaven of a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, having taught him likewise that the heavens do rule (Dan. iv. 26).

To Jewish ears then it was no strange sound which John the Baptist gave forth as he proclaimed, "The kingdom of heaven [or, the heavens] is at hand." After him the Lord Jesus uttered the same words, when He began His ministry in Galilee; but both prefixed to their announcements the imperative call to repentance (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17). For the children of Israel being sons of the kingdom (Matt. viii. 12), its establishment in power is connected with that nation's blessing, and their future glory depends on it, as Daniel had predicted: "The kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 27). To them, then, whilst announcing the near approach of the kingdom, it was needful to declare the terms upon which they could enter it, and what God looked for from those who should receive it. In Galilee, therefore, the Lord preached repentance; on Nicodemus He impressed the necessity of the new birth (John iii. 3-5); to His disciples He made known the childlike spirit requisite for those who shall enter it (Matt. xviii. 3), and warned all against mere profession

without practice, which would for ever shut out souls from that which Israel has been taught to expect (Matt. v. 20 ; Luke xiii. 25-29). To John the kingdom was future, for dispensationally whilst on earth he was outside it (Matt. xi. 11); but the Lord could speak of it as existing on earth, manifested by the power over Satan which He Himself exercised (Matt. xii. 28).

John spoke of the prospect ; the Lord preached the kingdom of God, and commissioned the twelve and the seventy disciples to proclaim it likewise (Luke iv. 43 ; ix. 2-60 ; x. 9). The devils discerned the great change which had taken place consequent on His presence in the midst of Israel, for they felt His power, confessed His authority, and owned what alone they expected from His hands (Mark i. 24 ; Matt. viii. 28-31). He had come who was to destroy the works of the devil. The people who heard Him, and witnessed His works, should have discerned the great change and have rejoiced ; for if He preached to them, as Matthew and Luke express it, "the gospel" or "glad tidings of the kingdom" or, as Mark perhaps really wrote, "the gospel of God" (Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35 ; Luke viii. 1 ; Mark i. 14), the kingdom was in existence, for the king was present. A power, which could deliver man from that one into whose hands he had put himself, was manifested in Him who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. The people saw it and marvelled ; the rulers confessed the works, and cavilled, and blasphemed (Mark i. 27 ; iii. 22-30). Men released from the tyranny of demoniacal possession were witnesses none could gainsay. The King was really on earth, and gathering souls around Himself by the word of the kingdom, the seed spread abroad by the sower ; all who heard and received His word became really what Israel was only nationally, true children [or rather,

sons] of the kingdom (Matt. xiii. 19-38), wheat, or good seed sown in the field.

Turning back to Dan. vii. 18-27, we find mention made of two classes: "the saints of the Most High," who "take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever"; and "the *people* of the saints of the Most High," to whom the kingdom *under* the whole heaven shall be given. The former are the heavenly saints who shall reign on high over the earth, the latter are the people of Israel on earth during the millennium; for the kingdom, as prophesied in the Old Testament, and often when spoken of in the New Testament, has reference to a rule to be exercised over the earth. To Jews, therefore, though the term "kingdom of heaven" is not found in the Old Testament, the thought it conveyed was not a new one, and when John preached, "The kingdom of heaven [or, the heavens] is at hand" (and he did not, that we read of, use any other formula), whilst His message must have gladdened the hearts of the faithful, he would have stumbled by his language none who were acquainted with Israel's hopes, or had studied the Old Testament Scriptures. And, often as we meet with the term "kingdom of heaven" in St. Matthew's gospel, where alone it is found, we never read of any one asking either John or the Lord what he meant by it, or what it was intended to express. The term might be new, but the thought it expressed had cheered the heart of many a saint in previous ages, as the language of the priest Zacharias, when his mouth was opened, shows us how the godly, before the Lord's first advent, looked onward to the fulfilment of God's word (Luke i. 71-79).

[We have taken the liberty of extracting this article *verbatim* from that excellent work which we heartily commend: "*From Advent to Advent: or, The Outline of the Gospel according to St. Luke*," by C. E. S.—the article to be continued, D.V., in successive Nos. till finished.—ED.]

NOTES ON THE KINGDOM.

(Continued from page 204).

JOHN THE BAPTIST spoke of the kingdom of heaven ; the Lord spoke besides of the kingdom of God. Are there then two kingdoms or one ? One only. It is the kingdom of God, because it belongs to Him ; it can be called the kingdom of the heavens, because in the heavenlies is, and will be, the seat of royal authority and power. If we take in the full range of the kingdom, it comprehends both heaven and earth. So we read of the righteous shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (that is, the heavenly part of it), and of the kingdom of the Son of man (that is, the earthly part of it), which has earth for its sphere, though the seat of power will always be in the heavenlies (Matt. xiii. 41, 43). Again, addressing those who form part of the heavenly saints, the Lord said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29); whereas in the address He will at a future day make to the sheep, those among the Gentiles who shall have a portion on earth when He reigns, we read "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34).

In general, however, in the gospels where the kingdom is spoken of, what was to be on earth, not in heaven, forms the subject of the teaching. And often we find the terms kingdom "of God" and "of heaven" used interchangeably. Thus the Lord could announce that both were at hand (Matt. iv. 17 ; Mark i. 15). He could speak, too, of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, as in Matt. xiii. 11, and of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, as in Mark iv. 11 and Luke

viii. 10; for He was teaching the things concerning the kingdom in existence, but not in display, as it would be known to the faithful whilst alive upon earth, and before it would be manifested to the world. So the parables of the leaven and of the mustard tree are similitudes of the kingdom of heaven as well as of the kingdom of God (Matt. xiii; Mark iv.; Luke xiii.); for they describe the outward appearance and character of the kingdom on earth, after that the King should have entered into heaven. And looking on to the day when the kingdom shall be seen in power, and the heavenly saints shall have entered into their inheritance, the Lord could speak of souls sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. viii. 11), as well as in the kingdom of God (Luke xiii. 28). Both terms could thus be used, because the epoch contemplated was that subsequent to His ascension to the heavenlies. For ever since the day that the clouds received Him out of the sight of His disciples, who stood gazing up to heaven, the kingdom as it exists on earth might be rightly called the kingdom of heaven as well as the kingdom of God.

But such was not always the case. When the Lord was on earth the kingdom of God was on earth, because He, the King, was here; but it could not be called the kingdom of heaven till He had taken His place in the heavenlies. So in certain places in the gospel, where Matthew adduces something characteristic of the whole of the present epoch, he uses the term the "kingdom of heaven"; whereas in the parallel places in Luke, where something is introduced characteristic of the time when the Lord was on earth, the term employed, and the only one which could be is "the kingdom of God." Compare Matt. xi. 12-13 with Luke xvi. 16. In the former, the Lord points out the new feature manifested in connec-

tion with the kingdom, which would be characteristic of the whole time till He returns in power. The Jew looked on the kingdom as his by right; his title to it he considered was bound up with his genealogy. As a son of Abraham he was a son of the kingdom; his birth according to the flesh settled the whole matter. But this was a grievous mistake, as the aspect of things around would point out. The Spirit of God was at work on souls, and the kingdom, whilst connected with birth, was connected with the new birth, and not with descent with Abraham according to the flesh. Men were finding that out, and as acted on by the Spirit, were taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, being in earnest about it. God's Spirit had then begun to work on souls who could not rest till they entered it. Such was, such is, the character of things as regards the kingdom. But in Luke the Lord speaks of what actually was done in His day: "The kingdom of God is preached," hence the change in the language, for we never read of the kingdom of heaven being preached. He preached — proclaimed — the kingdom of God, and taught about the kingdom of heaven.

Again, comparing Matt. v. 3 with Luke vi. 20, we may note the difference, and understand the reason of it. Describing the character of those to whom the kingdom belongs, the Lord speaks of it as the kingdom of heaven, but, telling those before Him of the blessings already theirs, He calls it the kingdom of God, for that was the character of it then existing.

Very guarded then is the language of Scripture, and it is well to observe it. This Matthew illustrates. For whilst he so often wrote the words "the kingdom of heaven," he teaches us that there were occasions when the Lord Jesus Christ could not use them. Disciples were to seek first the kingdom of God (chap. vi. 33), which had come unto Israel (chap. xii. 28), in-

to which publicans and harlots were entering before the chief priests and elders, and from whom, because they rejected Christ, it should be taken and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (chap. xxi. 31-43). These four passages are the only ones in which Matthew has used the term "the kingdom of God," except in chap. xix. 24. In the preceding verse to this last reference, we have the more usual term of the evangelist, "kingdom of heaven." And whilst the common text, with the majority of MSS., in ver. 24 reads "kingdom of God," Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Alford, following Z and many of the fathers, read here also "the kingdom of the heavens." Whichever reading be preferred on textual ground, there is nothing to forbid, looking at the passage exegetically, the reading of the Dublin rescript from being the faithful preserver of the original form of expression.

The hope of Israel was the kingdom in power when Messiah should reign. The angel in his message to the Virgin Mary took cognisance of it (Luke i. 32). The wise men from the east expected it (Matt. ii. 2). The aged Simeon died in the hope of it (Luke ii. 32). John the Baptist's question by his disciples when in prison proves it (Matt. xi. 3). All classes were familiar with it. The chief priests and scribes could turn up the Scriptures which spoke of it. Andrew, a humble fisherman, and the woman of Samaria, and the penitent thief, by their language confirm it. So, with Messiah at last really on earth, the appearance of God's kingdom was looked for as close at hand. To correct this mistake, the Lord spake the parable of the "pounds" (Luke xix. 11). Yet how deeply engraven this thought was on the hearts of the Jews is evidenced by the question addressed to Him by the disciples in their last moments with him on earth (Acts i. 6-9). Joseph of Arimathea, who buried the

Lord, waited, we learn, for the kingdom of God ; and the two disciples on their journey to Emmaus confided to the stranger, as they thought, the once cherished hopes of their heart, now dashed to the ground by His death (Luke xxiii. 51 ; xxiv. 21). His answer confirmed the correctness of their hopes, and revived the anticipations of the nation's future blessing : "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" His death then, however startling and stumbling to His disciples, is no bar to the accomplishment of the prophecies recorded in the Scriptures ; for, as Paul taught the assembled multitude in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, the mercies of David would be made sure through the King reigning in resurrection (Acts xiii. 34).

All this, however, is yet future, though the kingdom exists on earth. What then would characterise the epoch whilst this anomalous condition of matters should last, the kingdom in existence without the King's power being everywhere really owned? The prophets can tell us nothing about it, so the Lord gave those parables, which are called similitudes of the kingdom, to explain it, and they supply the link in the chain which we should in vain search for elsewhere. Found in Matt. xiii., xviii., xx., xxii., xxv., Mark iv., Luke xiii., they come in each gospel, it should be remarked, only after His rejection by the nation has been unequivocally declared. See Matt. xii.; Mark iii. 22-30.; Luke xi., xiii. "Therefore," said the Lord, "every scribe which is instructed unto [or, hath been made a disciple to] the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old": "old things" because he can speak of what the prophets predicted ; "new" because he can teach what the Lord revealed.

Of the parables in the gospels all are not similitudes

of the kingdom. Those only are similitudes which have special reference to the characteristic features of the epoch between the Lord's ascension and return in power. Thus the parable of the sower is not a similitude of the kingdom, because it deals with the Lord's work, as the Sower of the seed, whilst He was on earth; but the parable of the tares is a parable of the kingdom, because it describes the evils that would be disseminated in the field by the enemy while men slept. So that parable peculiar to Mark, of the seed cast into the ground, is a similitude of the kingdom, because it tells of the crop growing during the absence of Him who sowed the seed. Again, the parable of the husbandmen (Matt. xxi.) is not a similitude of the kingdom, because it only carries us down to the Lord's death, the heir killed, and the announcement of the judgment to be executed on the unfaithful husbandmen; but the parable of the marriage supper, which immediately follows, is a similitude of the kingdom, as it treats of events on earth in the kingdom after the Lord's ascension. And these two, placed so close together, and dealing with acknowledged facts in history, the death of the Lord and the death of His servants afterwards, help a careful student of the Word to discern when what is called the kingdom of heaven really did begin. Other parables there are, such as "the talents" and "the pounds," which treat of God's general dealings with men, but are neither of them similitudes of the kingdom (notwithstanding the unfortunate interpolation of the A.V. in Matt. xxv. 14); for though they apply to all who shall be in the kingdom, they do not confine themselves to what is characteristic only of the time during the Lord's absence from the earth.

That He will return to the earth, having received the kingdom, many of these parables intimate, as they speak of judgments to be executed and rewards to be bestowed. But this event, the ushering in of the

kingdom in power, is rather outside their scope, and is treated of fully elsewhere in the book. They suppose it, for responsibility as servants does not cease till the Lord takes the kingdom; but they do not describe His advent, which will not take place till the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come (Matt. xxiv. 14). This last-mentioned phrase, the "gospel of the kingdom," very clear yet much misunderstood, marks at once the difference there must be between the character of the testimony that has been going forth since the Lord's ascension and that which was when He was on earth, and will again be ere He returns to reign.

These glad tidings He first announced, and these glad tidings will again be heard. He preached them in the land of Israel; they shall be preached throughout the whole world among all nations. How this is to be effected we learn in Rev. xiv. 6, and what the terms of the message are we there read. It is the everlasting gospel or good news, as it speaks of God's kingdom to be at last established in power on earth, to which, too, all are exhorted to submit, though it differs widely from the gospel or good news of God's grace. The former will be good news, because it will proclaim the end of the reign of wickedness and of Satan's meddling with the affairs of earth, and that the reins of power are henceforth to be in the hands of the Man competent to retain them. The latter is good news, as it tells us of God's plan of salvation for all the lost who believe on His Son, Jesus Christ.

Since the time when the Lord and His disciples preached the gospel of the kingdom before His crucifixion, that joyful sound has not been heard. When next it breaks forth, as a message from God to a groaning creation and a downtrodden people, from heaven will the tidings fall on the ears of all who will

give heed to them. How those in heaven will regard the approach of the epoch when the Lord shall appear to the world and reign openly, Rev. xi. 15-17 discloses. Without one dissentient voice it will be hailed with joy. How creation and God's people on earth will view it, Psalms xcv.-c. bring out. "Zion heard and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of Thy judgments, O Lord," is the simple statement of the Psalmist (xcvii. 8). And the Spirit, speaking by Isaiah, exclaims, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth" (lii. 7)! Till these days approach, though the gospel of the kingdom will not be proclaimed, the kingdom should have its due place in the teaching and preaching of God's servants. It had a place, as we will show, in the instruction which the first teachers of Christianity gave to their disciples; it should always have a place still.

During the forty days which elapsed between the Lord's resurrection and ascension, the kingdom of God had a prominent place in His teaching (Acts i. 3). Philip went down to Samaria and spoke about it (viii. 12). Paul at Ephesus, at Rome, and elsewhere preached it, and taught the things concerning it (xiv. 22; xix. 8; xx. 25; xxviii. 23-31), but as the kingdom of God, and at times also of Christ, terms which must bring before the heart the thought of responsibility. It is God's kingdom; therefore to His will souls should conform, and His mind they should seek to discern. Were there contentions and strife about days and meats among the converts at Rome, the Apostle would remind them that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (xiv. 17.) Were the Corinthians taken up with gifts and the eloquence

of their teachers, the Apostle would have them remember that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. iv. 20). And when he has to expose unrighteousness in various forms, he warns them that the unrighteous shall not inherit it (vi. 9-10); and whereas some were seeking to persuade them that there was no resurrection of the dead, he would have them know that all the godly must be changed, "for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (xv. 50). To the Galatians, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians, he has to speak of the same subject; for, whether he has to write and reprove those who were slipping away from foundation truth, or is able to unfold the true place of a believer in Christ, the truth concerning the kingdom having to do with the believer's walk on earth finds its proper place in both these letters (Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5). The saints at Colosse are reminded of the grace which had delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of his love (i. 13), though its display in power was, and is yet, future. The saints at Thessalonica had heard of it, and when in trouble were comforted by the prospect of it (1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. i. 5). Timothy was reminded of it, and the Hebrews received exhortations founded on the hope of it (2 Tim. iv. 1, 18; Heb. xii. 28). James speaks of it (ii. 5); Peter would stir up those to whom he wrote, that they might have an entrance into it ministered unto them abundantly (2 Peter i. 11); and John declares that he and the saints in his day had part in it (Rev. i. 9), as all the saints have still. At times, then, they taught about it as in existence; at times they spoke of its manifestation in power, which is future. As servants and instructed scribes they knew how to speak of it, and what to teach about it.

To *enter* the kingdom, however, and to *be found in*

it when the Lord returns, are very different things. None can enter it now without being born of water and of the Spirit, nor even see it without being born again, and all who are so born during the time of Christ's absence become inheritors of it. It is the inheritance of God's Son, and God's children will inherit it with Him—"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." But within its range, as it now exists, all manner of evil is found, which at his coming will be gathered out of it (Matt. xiii. 41); and ever after nothing actively evil will be allowed in it unjudged (Psalm ci.), though the unconverted will enjoy earthly blessings under His reign, if outwardly obedient to His sway (Psalm xviii. 44, margin).

Are the kingdom and the Church then the same, it may be asked? By no means. All who are of the Church inherit the kingdom, but all the heavenly saints will share in it likewise (Rev. xx. 6). Connected with each there is a hope. The hope of the Church is Christ's descent into the air; the hope connected with the kingdom is the Lord's manifestation in power. In the kingdom there are ranks; in the Church there are gifts. The rank and reward of each one in the kingdom will be determined by his service, as the catalogue of David's worthies shadows out, and the parable of the pounds clearly intimates; the gifts are bestowed on the Church in accordance with God's sovereign will, and responsibility flows from the possession of them. The place in the kingdom will be determined by the right use of the opportunities afforded and responsibilities discharged. From the kingdom all evil will be put out when the Lord returns; from the Church evil should, in subjection to the Word, be put out by His servants on earth whilst He is absent on high. The kingdom awaits an absent Lord; the Church is joined to a Head in heaven.

A few words in conclusion. Varied are the terms used in Scripture when speaking of the kingdom. It is God's kingdom, as we have seen, and the kingdom of heaven likewise. It is also the kingdom of God's dear Son, because to Him the rule in it has been committed. It is the everlasting kingdom, because it never will end. The Father's kingdom, and heavenly kingdom speak of the heavenly part of it; the kingdom of the Son of man is the earthly portion of it. We learn from the Word the commencement of the existence of the kingdom on earth. We learn, too, when the present form of it will cease. We read in the prophetic portions of the book how it will be displayed in power; and we read too, that a time will come when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; but the kingdom will never end. He delivers it up, but it does not terminate. Daniel declares it shall last "for ever, even for ever and ever," and John in the last chapter of the Bible reaffirms it, as he writes, "They shall reign for ever and ever."

WHEN AND WHAT TO READ.

If you have a sordid feeling read the eighth chapter of Romans.

If your faith is weak read the last two chaps. of John.

If you are tired of the world read the last two chapters of Revelation.

If you don't know how to make both ends meet read the seventeenth chapter of first Kings.

If there is sorrow in your home read the eleventh chapter of John.

If there is joy in your heart read over the later Psalms.

If you feel lonely read the twenty-third Psalm.

If you are burdened by a sense of sin read on your knees the fifty-first Psalm.—*Selected.*

216 BENARES AND PATNA—INDIA.

BENARES, the sacred city of India, has been the scene of street and Bazaar preaching for many years. Thousands of people come from all parts to the great Hindu feasts to bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges. Many a soul has been converted in the Bazaars of Benares.

Mr Leupoldt laboured here for forty years. Once, accompanied by several companions, he went to a great festival at Patna, lower down the Ganges. They went about preaching and tract-distributing all night, and resumed their itinerating at six next morning. About seven they had exhausted their stock of tracts, and were returning for more when the idea of speaking from the boat occurred to them. So till mid-day Mr Leupoldt and two others read and preached by turns to a crowd of about 3000 people on the shore. Then the weary missionaries declared that they could not speak to them any more at present. "If you are tired, go lie down and rest," was the reply; "we will sit down on the shore and rest also." The missionaries had been sleeping about half-an-hour when a deputation came and roused them up, and said, "The people think you have now slept long enough and that you might now come out again and tell them something more of what God has done for them." It was impossible to refuse the invitation, so the missionaries got up and went on preaching and reading till four o'clock. Next day this curious boat service was resumed from half-past six till four—the eager congregation pressing forward till many of them were up to their waists in the water.

As one result of the work of these two days, Mr Leupoldt could not speak, so as to be heard, for a fortnight.

Mr L. was also largely used in establishing schools and orphanages.

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXV.—JACOB.

DISCIPLINE.—“What son is he whom his father chasteneth not?”

WE have now reached in our history the birth of the patriarch Jacob—a truly remarkable and interesting personality, and one who exemplifies in a striking way the discipline through which God has (for their ultimate blessing) to pass His children who act in the flesh; and, hence, the life-history of the Supplanter can scarcely fail to teach us some important lessons.

Now, at his very birth, a testimony was given to the prophecy which had gone before upon him; for Jacob, as if jealous of his brother's birth-right laid hold upon Esau's heel, a fact which Esau was destined to recall with bitterness in after years. And from their boyhood the difference between their natures, and the diversity of their proclivities, was plainly marked. It has often been noticed by scientists that the characteristics of parents are reproduced and intensified in their offspring; and this was certainly exemplified in Esau and Jacob's case. Thus the bustling and generous activity of Rebekah, which we saw evidenced at the well, are reproduced in Esau, the cunning hunter and man of the field; while Isaac's quiet, self-contained, and stay-at-home nature characterises Jacob, the plain man, and dweller in tents. Nor, as regards their respective affections for their sons, was that natural affinity for characteristics the converse of our own, which we most of us evidence, lacking in Isaac and Rebekah; for the wholesome, outdoor energy of Esau commended itself to Isaac, who, at above eighty years of age, would seem to have developed into a somewhat sensual recluse: while Rebekah's heart went out towards her silent, secretive, scheming, home-staying son. To Rebekah's credit, however, it should be noted that,

whatever else she might be, she was peculiarly open-hearted, and loved Jacob for himself ; while Isaac, on the contrary, in the spirit of a voluptuary, loved Esau for his venison.

Such, then, were the leading characteristics of these two men ; and, as might be imagined, it was not long before the possession of them brought their owners into collision ; for Esau, arriving from the chase, faint and exhausted, finds that his brother had just prepared a meal, and of this the famished hunter would fain partake.

Now here was just such an opportunity as Jacob, it may be, had long sought ; he notes with satisfaction his brother's evident prostration ; he knows by experience his careless off-hand way ; he will propose that Esau shall sell his birth-right for the pottage. And poor Esau readily falls into the trap ; he profanely answers, in effect, that he was at death's door from hunger, and that the birth-right would not save him from starvation—"this birthright," he contemptuously says, what profit could it be to him ? And so the bargain is struck, the lentils eaten, and Esau goes his way refreshed, but his birthright has been despised.

The incident is a painful one whichever way we look at it. On the one hand, we have in Jacob's case a man of dogged determination and relentless will, who is bent on obtaining the birthright and the blessing. If he can obtain it by fair means, so much the better ; but if not, the blessing he means to get, and the blessing he will have, no matter how low he may have to stoop to get it. Hence no doubt it is that Scripture calls him "*Thou worm Jacob*" (Is. xli. 14). Grovelling, and tortuous, and worm-like, were indeed his ways ; and we can only view with disgust the means he adopted for obtaining the object upon which he had set his heart ; but, back of it all, there was a true appreciation of the value of the blessing which under-

lay his every act, and which culminated in his cry to the mysterious Wrestler, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." It was his value of the blessing which met with Divine approval, and made him Prince with God; while it was the wretched expedients to which he resorted in order to obtain it which brought upon him years of chastening at God's hand, and forced from his lips towards the end of his career the declaration that few and evil had been the days of the years of his life. But the Word of God which speaks of Jacob as a worm speaks of Esau as a fornicator and profane person; he was a fornicator, for, utterly regardless of Jehovah's mind in the matter, and of the history of his parent's marriage, which he must have often heard related, and of their sorrow at his course, he recklessly effects an alliance with Judith and Bashemath, Hittite brides; he is profane, for, living only for the present and in the present, he despised and rejected his birthright, only to find subsequently that he is himself rejected, when he would have inherited the blessing, yea, when he sought it earnestly with tears, and that because, though desirous of the blessing, he found no place for repentance. No doubt he truly sorrowed; but it was sorrow for his *loss* and not sorrow for his *sin*, and, hence, the sorrow was not of the godly sort that leadeth to repentance, and, though sorrowing, he remained profane. Frank, open-hearted, and generous, and infinitely preferable to Jacob as a natural man, he no doubt was; but he was just that, a natural man, and no more. Jacob, on the other hand, though he so frequently allowed that which was merely natural in him to act, and sought by merely natural means to appropriate the blessings he so greatly coveted, lived for the future, and, at bottom, had real spiritual apprehension, and real faith in God, and real appreciation of His promises.

JOHN FORT.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

*(Continued from page 183).*EZRA AND HIS WORK.—*Continued.*

“THE king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water ; He turneth it whithersoever He will” (Prov. xxi. 1). This very expressive proverb receives a beautiful illustration from this portion of our history.

If the God of Israel had prepared the heart of His servant for the work, He also had prepared the heart of the king to give the needed authority, and material help.

Artaxerxes, known to history as Artaxerxes Longimanus, (the longhanded), the son of Xerxes, could not have been ignorant of the remarkable events recorded in the book of Esther ; and it is not unlikely that these events may have influenced him in favour of the Jews ; for, during the greater part of his long reign of 40 years, he acted as their friend and protector.

The decree of Artaxerxes included in Ezra, chap. vii. 11-26, is of great interest. With the exception of the decree of Cyrus, it is the most important document on record in relation to the returned captives : and is very much more extensive in its bearing than the decree of Cyrus. It may be divided into four parts.

1. An authority from the king and his councillors, making Ezra and such of the people of Israel and of the priests and Levites in the realm of the king, as were minded of their own free will, to go to Jerusalem and to make the freewill offerings of the people of

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money and vessels for the service of the house of God.

2. A requisition to the Treasurers beyond the river (the Euphrates), to supply whatsoever Ezra should require of silver, wheat, wine and oil to the amounts mentioned, and salt without limit. And this was to be done speedily, and for the house of the God of heaven; and that there might be no wrath against the realm of the king and his sons.

3. An exemption from toll, tribute, and custom in favour of all connected with the ministry of the house of God.

4. A commission to Ezra, personally, to appoint magistrates and judges for the region beyond the Euphrates; and it is provided that those appointed were to be such as knew the laws of God; or, if they knew them not, that they should be taught.

It also gave to Ezra the power to punish with death or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment those who were disobedient.

These were great powers indeed to be put into the hands of one man. How will he use them? Man loves authority, and, armed with such authority as this, how great most men would seem in their own eyes. But we look in vain for any sign of self-exaltation in the conduct of this servant of God.

For Ezra, God was first; then His house; then His people.

So the first thing Ezra did when the king had issued his decree was to turn in worship to God—"Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem." And

he adds, "I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord God was upon me, and I gathered out of Israel chief men to go up with me."

Ezra then prepared for the journey by assembling his company "at the river that runneth to Ahava." The exact locality seems now difficult of identification; but the river was probably the Euphrates.

The first 14 verses of chap. viii. give us the names of the "chief of the fathers," heads of families, and the numbers of their dependents, a very large company. The males alone, leaving the chiefs out of the reckoning, were 1496.

Ezra reviews this large company and finds that the Levites were absent. What kept them back we are not told; it would seem that they should have been the first to come forward to offer their services for such a work. To attend on the service of the house of God was their special vocation. Did they love their own ease, or fear the toil and danger of such a journey? Whatever may have been their excuse, it was not consistent with Ezra's plan that they should remain behind, and he found means to bring them together. For this purpose he selects his messengers, "men of understanding," who were despatched on this special mission—"To bring unto us ministers for the house of our God." Their mission was successful, and he says, "By the good hand of our God upon us" (for Ezra ever owns that), "they brought us a man of understanding of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, and his sons and his brethren, 18." Another company of 20 Levites, and 220 Nethinims raised the number of males to little short of 1800. If we add to these the women and children and servants, there must have been at the lowest estimate, 3,000 to 4,000 souls. To be responsible for the safety of such a company was no light matter, and Ezra felt it. Going on such a journey, armed with such authority

as he had, Ezra might well have asked for a strong military guard. He understood well the dangers to be expected from enemies and "such as lay in wait by the way." The country then, as now, was infested by bands of Bedouin; sons of Ishmael, whose hand is against every man, as every man's hand is against them, and who could not but be attracted by such an unarmed multitude, carrying such valuables with them. Travellers to-day are not safe without a Turkish military escort. What will Ezra do? He had borne testimony before the king to the power and goodness of the God of Israel, on behalf of His people. Could he now nullify that testimony by asking the king for a military escort. He could not. "I was ashamed," he said, "to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken to the king saying, the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him."

Ezra's resource was in God. His testimony to the king was no idle boast. It was the firm conviction of the man of faith; and he could act upon it. But the protection that he and his company needed was to be sought, and so he "proclaimed a fast there by the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God to seek of Him a right way for us and for our little ones and for all our substance."

There was one other thing to do, which neither a conscientious man, nor a good man of business, (which Ezra most certainly was), would neglect, namely, to provide for the safety of the great treasure of which he had the care; and that he, and those who had the charge of it, should be free from all suspicion. For the servant of God must ever be above suspicion in relation to the goods of this world. How much reproach has been brought upon the name of Christ from forgetfulness of this. Ezra had all carefully weighed in the

presence of twenty-two chosen men. The silver and the gold, with twenty basins of gold, and two vessels of fine copper," (or more probably bronze), "precious as gold." For all this treasure was consecrated to the service of God, and it, and those who had the charge of it, were to be regarded as holy, set apart for the service of God; and they were solemnly charged to keep it until it should be again weighed before the priests and Levites and the chief of the fathers of Israel in the chambers of the house of the Lord.

Then they started on their long journey, which occupied them four months from the first day of the first month to the first day of the fifth month (chap. vii. 9). No incidents of the journey are given; but they proved the faithfulness of their God, for "He delivered" them "from the hands of the enemy, and of them that lay in wait on the way." And so they learned how real a thing it is, and how safe, to trust in God alone.

After three days rest the treasure was again duly weighed in the house of God, according to the direction of Ezra, to those who had the custody of it. Then Ezra and his company joined in a solemn act of worship. They "offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel: 12 bullocks for all Israel" (thus recognising the oneness of the nation, scattered though they were,) "sixty-nine rams, seventy-seven lambs, twelve he-goats, for a sin offering." All this, as it spoke of the need of man, as a sinner, pointed to that sacrifice which alone could meet the claims of a Holy God, and in it surely the heart of this true servant of God found rest.

There remained one thing. To deliver his commission into the hands of those who were in authority under the king of Persia, who gave effect to it (chap. viii. v. 36.)

C. B.

(To be Continued, D.V.)

THE PRAYER MEETING.

I was awfully tired and worried,
 The week had been full o' care ;
 So over my work I hurried,
 And went to the house of prayer.

My poor husband's health was failin' ;
 It was little that he could earn ;
 An' young Jackie, in climin' a palin',
 Had given his ankle a turn.

The weather was hot and broilin' ;
 It was washin' week with me, too ;
 An' I guess my temper was failin',
 For it rose as seldom it do.

I'd spoke sharp to my daughter Mary,
 Who'd tried all my labours to share ;
 So, although I was tired an' weary,
 I crept to the house o' prayer.

'Twas the regular week-end meetin',
 An' auld Deacon Weston led.
 (He mostly did the leadin',
 An' was looked up to as the head).

He read a long Psalm of rejoicin'
 By David o'er vanquished foes,
 But that I felt I'd no voice in,
 Though 'twas all very good, I suppose.

An' then the good deacon, he led us
 In prayer in his usual way—
 Thankin' God that His wisdom had made us,
 An' guided us up to that day.

He thanked Him for "peace like a river,"
 For grace given by which we'd "been kept,"
 An' I sighed as I thought, with a quiver,
 How my anger o'er reason had leapt.

He praised Him for store above measure,
For bounties that strew'd all the way.
(The deacon, they say, at his pleasure,
Could buy half the town any day).

He prayed a long spell for the pastor,
For "souls as his hire an' seal,"
And that he in the steps o' His Master
Might press on with courage and zeal.

He prayed that the church and its members
May be knit like the heart o' one man ;
That their love might leap up from dull embers
Like a fire under breath from a fan.

He prayed that the Sunday School also
Might "Marys and Timothys" train.
But, ashamed as I felt that it was so,
I thought only of Jackie's bad sprain.

He prayed for the world altogether,
In the arms o' the wicked one Cain.
(And I found myself wondering whether
God couldn't the evil restrain).

He prayed for the Queen an' the missions,
For all sorts and conditions of men ;
An' endin' his numerous petitions,
Finished off with a double "Amen !"

We'd more singin' and then Deacon Warren
And several more brethren prayed,
(But the words so familiar seemed barren,
I was quite out o' tune, I'm afraid).

We'd to draw from the wells of salvation,
The Scriptures search line upon line,
An' overcome strong bulls o' Bashan,
Like giants refreshed with new wine.

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We'd to mount up on wings like the eagle,
 And never grow weary or faint ;
 Our high calling was priestly an' regal,
 Nought less was becomin' a saint.

An' now the last singin' was finished,
 And shortly the meeting must close,
 An' my troubles an' care undiminished,
 Forbade hopes of peaceful repose.

I had eagerly watched for some token
 But nought seemed just suited to me,
 An' I felt sad and almost heartbroken,
 And as wretched as wretched could be.

I felt I'd been hard on dear Mary,
 An' yet somehow—I couldn't say why,
 It was things goin' cross an' contrary,
 Seemed more deserve blamin' than I.

The good deacon stood up for the blessin',
 An' I sadly half rose from my knees,
 When a voice (it was old Widow Lessing's),
 Broke the silence with passionate pleas.

(She'd a son in the 'sylum at Ryall,
 Another bedridden at home,
 An' a daughter—her bitterest trial—
 Gay, dressy, and given to roam).

"Oh, Lord—our Great Father,"—she started,
 Then she paused, as if trouble pressed sore,
 "Thou knowest"—the words through me darted,
 An' I scarcely heard anything more.

Yes, there was the message I'd waited,
 "Thou knowest," that's all we can say
 At times when with cares overweighted,
 We neither can worship nor pray.

Thou knowest—my cares then I'll bear them ;
 My strength—then right onward I'll press ;
 My few joys—then, if need be, I'll spare them ;
 My failings I'll freely confess.

Yes, my blessing had come, though it tarried,
 I'd surely not waited in vain.
 Small now seemed the burden I carried,
 An' light my affliction and pain.

A warm kiss made it up with dear Mary,
 And I soothed little Jack for the night ;
 E'en my husband grew hopeful and cheery,
 Seein' me look so happy an' bright.

B I B L E N O T E S.

THE whole man:—Spirit, soul, body, 1 Thess. v. 23.

Spirit and *body* distinguished, Eccles. xii. 7.

Soul and *spirit* distinguished, Heb. iv. 12.

ELECTION.

Adam's third son—Seth.

Noah's second son—Shem.

Shem's third son—Arphaxad.

Sarai instead of Hagar.

Isaac instead of Ishmael.

Jacob instead of Esau.

Joseph instead of Reuben.

Ephraim instead of Manasseh.

A REMARKABLE CHAPTER.

Genesis, chapter four, is a remarkable chapter. We have polygamy in v. 19 ; agricultural life in v. 20 ; music—sacred and secular—in v. 21 ; engineering in all its numerous branches in v. 22 ; feminine grace and sweetness in v. 22. It reveals a high state of civilisation. It had its religion too—the way of Cain (Jude 11). But it is a world and a state of things *without God*.

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXVI.—(*Continued from page 219*).

THE chapter before us gives us the experience of Isaac as heir of the Land ; indeed it practically gives us, so far as his pilgrim character is concerned, the experience of his life, which, in comparison with that of Abraham, was uneventful. At the same time, this chief experience of Isaac's life found its counterpart in a remarkable manner, in the experience of his father's. Both alike were the victims of a famine ; both went to dwell at Gerar ; both denied their wives ; and with both finally Abimelech entered into covenant.

And there is in this, as it seems to us, a practical lesson for ourselves—more especially if we be the children of godly parents—viz., that the triumphs or failures of others, instructive as they may be to us whether in the way of encouragement or warning, cannot be regarded as lessons which we have ourselves practically learnt ; and hence, though Isaac may have often heard Abraham recount the history of his failure and his success, and perhaps just because he had heard them so often recounted, he is tried in almost exactly similar circumstances, and, despite the benefit of his father's precept and example, he evinces in those circumstances, as indeed his character might have led us to expect, even less firmness than his sire. And we must remember, in estimating Isaac's character, that in certain points, quite apart from mere nature, he

was at a disadvantage as compared with Abraham. For, firstly, he had been born and reared in the Land and had never known a testing call to come out from his father's house ; and, besides, as we have said, he was continually overshadowed by the towering personality of his father, so that things had come to him naturally and as of course ; and, as having never been personally called to the Land, and having never been personally given the blessing, he might be the more prone to leave it easily. This weakness God would apparently rectify by giving him what was equivalent to a personal call to dwell in the Land, and a personal blessing also ; and the instrument which God used towards this end was the famine with which our chapter commences.

There we read that, in consequence of the famine, Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, to Gerar. And notice, it is not said that Isaac "went down" unto Abimelech, for, so far, Isaac was perfectly right, since Philistia, as we have shewn, lay within the limits of the Land. But, since Philistia bordered upon Egypt, it was a place not without its peculiar temptations. And here, accordingly, the Lord, for the first time, as far as we are aware, in Isaac's personal history, appeared unto him and said, "Go not *down* into Egypt ; dwell in the Land which I shall tell thee of ; sojourn in *this* land, and I will be with thee and bless thee, for unto thee and to thy seed I will give *all these countries*." Plainly therefore (though in this we have to differ from other writers), Isaac in going into Philistia found himself in the right place ;

only since it was contiguous to Egypt, he had to be careful not to go down there. Meanwhile, his sojourn in Philistia thus affords an opportunity for God to give him what was Isaac's personal call and promise; "Dwell in the Land," was his personal call; "unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," was his personal promise.

But though Isaac's *position* in the Land was right, his *condition* of soul was wrong, and he, with the warning of his father (may we not say it?) before his eyes, yet fell into the same sin, and denied his wife, and brought upon himself the just reproof of Abimelech. But though God puts, for this blessing, his servant to shame, even at the hands of an uncircumcised Philistine, yet He gives him providential tokens that he was in his right place in the Land, and that he was the rightful heir of it; for we read that he sowed in that land, and received in the same year, an hundred-fold, and the Lord blessed him.

Now all this was not lost on the Philistines; as was but natural, they were stirred to envy by his pre-eminent success. But even these tokens of Jehovah's presence, added to his express command, "Sojourn in the Land," and to Abimelech's admission, "Thou art much mightier than we," are not sufficient to cause him to remain in face of Abimelech's request, "Go from us." Essentially a weak man, and one whose motto was "peace at any price," he disregards Jehovah's injunction and gives way. For Isaac Abimelech's

“Go,” has more cogency than Jehovah’s “Stay ;” so he moves his tent and pitches in the valley.

But it was not to be supposed that he would be left in peace there. Encouraged by so easy a victory, they follow in his steps, and, not content with closing wells that Abraham had dug of old, even go so far as to claim the water that Isaac had himself just found ; and repeat their aggressions till he has removed himself so far from them as to make it no longer worth their while to dog his steps, where he weakly calls the place “Rehoboth, for now the Lord hath made room for us !” while, as a matter of fact, Isaac had been making wells and making room for the Philistines ! How differently in similar circumstances had Abraham acted. Conscious of his rights, and, shall we say, of his superiority also, he reproved Abimelech for the well which his people had forcibly taken away, while Isaac weakly surrendered to them, and finally left Philistia for Beersheba.

But the Lord was very gracious to his timorous servant, appeared to him that same night. How pacifying to his fears must Jehovah’s words have been. “I am the God of Abraham, thy father,” he says, “*Fear not*, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham’s sake.” And there, at the very spot where Abraham had rebuked Abimelech, and by the well which Abraham had secured to himself, and the grove, by planting which, he had taken formal possession of the Land, Isaac built his altar, and pitched his tent.

JOHN FORT.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

*(Continued from page 224).*EZRA AND HIS WORK.—*Continued.*

IT seems clear from chap. viii. that the principal object of Ezra in undertaking his journey to Jerusalem with such a company and so much treasure was “to beautify the house of the Lord,” and to provide for the more efficient carrying on of the Temple service. He had not been many days in Jerusalem before he found he had other work before him.

We may gather from the beginning of chapter ix. that Ezra had come to Jerusalem entirely ignorant of the sad failure of the people. To this his attention was directed by some of the chiefs. His astonishment was very great. He says, “And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished” (ch. ix. 3). The company we have before referred to of “every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel” was with him; and such could have fellowship with the servant of God in the trying work before him.

Then we have a solemn scene. This great man—great even as men reckon greatness, if we look at the powers with which he was intrusted—is on his face in the presence of God; bowed down under a sense of the sin of his people. How he pours out his soul before God. How full is the confession. Like Daniel before him (Dan. ix.) and Nehemiah after (Neh. i.), he

takes up the sin of the people as involved in it. He says, "I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice, and at the evening sacrifice," (note the time, it was a solemn and typical hour), "I arose up from my heaviness and having rent my garment, and my mantle, I fell upon my knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said, O, my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens."

Then he acknowledges the sins that had brought the people into captivity; the goodness of God in allowing a remnant to return to the land, and in the mercy shewn to them through the king of Persia, to enable them to rebuild the temple. He acknowledges their disobedience to the express commands of God by Moses in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, by which marriages with the heathen were strictly forbidden. He owns the righteousness of God; and that the people could not stand before Him on account of this trespass.

The confession was full indeed. It was confession simply. No request is recorded. The man of faith brings all before the Lord and leaves it in His hands.

The next chapter brings before us a second company—How had they been brought together? We read of no means being used for the purpose. This is all the more remarkable because when a third company was assembled, we are informed of the means by which they were gathered. May we not conclude that the assembling of this second company was the

outcome of the confession of Ezra ? that while Ezra was confessing the sin of his people, God, by His Spirit, was graciously acting upon the hearts of many who were indeed involved in the sin : but now convinced and truly repentant, were ready to take the part of God against themselves, and thus they assembled together at Jerusalem. This view is borne out by the first verses of chap. x. reading it with the Revised Version. We read, "*Now while Ezra prayed, and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there was gathered unto him out of Israel, a very great congregation of men, and women, and children, for the people wept very sore.*"

Thus as in Daniel's case we have an illustration of the gracious promise, "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. lxv. 24).

Of the multitude thus assembled, Shechaniah, the son of Jehiel, was the spokesman ; and speaking on their behalf he confesses the trespass. But he was a man of faith and a man of action. His faith found expression in the hope that he saw arising out of the humbling of the people before God. "Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing," said he. But he knew too that if there was confession there must be the forsaking of the sin confessed, and so he proposed that the people should bind themselves by a covenant with their God to put away the heathen wives and the children born of them ; for this it seems had been urged by Ezra, "and those that trembled at

the commandment of their God ;" and this was to be done "according to law."

It was terrible work. Flesh and blood must have strongly resented it ; but by no other means could the people put themselves right before God, and Ezra took an oath of the people that it should be done. But how was this to be enforced ? By the exercise of the power entrusted to Ezra by the king of Persia. It is the first, and only time we see these powers exercised by Ezra. And mark the spirit of the man who is about to exercise such authority. The history tells us "he did eat no bread nor drink water, for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. Then proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem, that all should assemble at Jerusalem within three days, or incur the penalty of the confiscation of all their goods in default."

Thus we have gathered a third company. It was a sad assembly indeed and to add to their discomfort it was a time of much rain. They had no public building where such a large company could assemble, and such a gathering in the open air must, under such circumstances, have involved much misery. "It was the ninth month, the 20th day of the month, and all the people sat in the street of the house of God trembling because of the matter, and for the great rain."

Thus assembled, Ezra exhorted them to confession and separation. "Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do." It was no small matter, as they said, it was not "a work for one day or two." Much had to be

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done, which does not appear in the narrative. For instance, righteousness would demand that provision should be made for the divorced wives and their children, who were certainly more sinned against than sinning. A systematic inquiry was instituted, the names of those who were nominated for the purpose being given; and they were occupied in the work three months, "from the first day of the tenth month to the first day of the first month." Then follow the names of certain priests who were involved, "and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass" according to the ordinance of Lev. vi. 4-6.

The difference between the three companies in this chapter is worthy of notice.

In the first we have those who, walking in the fear of God, had been kept from the evil. These could help others when the occasion arose.

In the second we have those who, though they had grievously failed, appear to have been true-hearted. They furnish an instance of true revival and of that repentance that needs not to be repented of. The reader should compare the narrative of Ezra, chap. x. 1-5, with the effect of true repentance upon the Corinthians in 2 Cor. vi. 11 in the Revised Version:—"For behold this self-same thing, that ye were *made* sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what longing, yea, what zeal, yea, what avenging."

The third company, no doubt by far the greater number, were those who, for the most part, had not

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been exercised on account of their sin, but were constrained to assemble in obedience to the decree of Ezra, for fear of the consequences of disobedience. They furnish us with an illustration of outward reformation.

This sad history presents a striking contrast with the practice of Christianity in relation to mixed marriages as given to us in 1 Cor. vii. 10 to 16, where the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified by the believer; and the children, instead of being unclean, are holy. Still the principle is maintained, and the command, "only in the Lord," is imperatively binding upon every Christian who would marry.

Ezra having finished this work, we lose sight of him for 13 years. Whether he carried out his original purpose with regard to the temple, or for a time returned to Babylon, we have no certain knowledge. Thirteen years later, we meet with him again under more interesting circumstances, and in company with Nehemiah.

C. B.

(To be Continued D.V.)

NOTES ON FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS AND DOCTRINES.

THERE is increasing need for solid teaching and for a thorough grounding on the fundamental truths and doctrines of christianity. The following notes are intended as suggestive in this direction.

NEW BIRTH.—The capital seat of this doctrine is

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS AND DOCTRINES. 239

in John iii. God is its source (John i. 13). The Holy Ghost effects it (John iii. 6). The word of God is the seed (1 Peter i. 23). It is pre-eminently a Divine and Sovereign act (James i. 18); should not be divorced from faith on the part of the subject (John i. 12); is an absolute necessity for every one—Jew or Gentile—who would “see” or “enter into the Kingdom of God” (John iii. 5). Taught by the Lord in Jerusalem, and to Nicodemus—an upright and pious Jew—we learn that man in his best estate however cultured or religious, is in his nature a total ruin. There are two natures in every saved person: the old nature which is condemned, and a new one which is dependent and obedient.

REGENERATION is named but twice in the New Testament, viz. Matt. xix. 28, and Tit. iii. 5, and intimates a new state of things into which persons are brought. Regeneration is frequently confounded with the new birth. The former in Matt. xix. 28, refers to the millennium when all things shall be made new; while in Titus iii. 5, a present new condition or state of things which we might speak of as Christianity is in view. It is an *objective* state, while new birth is a *subjective* condition. “The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost” gives both sides of the truth. The former is *outward* and an integral part of christian profession; while the “renewing of the Holy Ghost” is *internal* and is of course vital and real. No doubt there is an evident allusion to Christian Baptism in the word “washing of regeneration”.

(To be Continued D.V.)

B E S T I L L.

It is hard to be still when all is turmoil and commotion around—when dangers thicken and troubles multiply on every hand. There is at least a moral heroism in battling single-handed with opposing hosts even if you fall in the struggle. Controversy has its uses as well as its dangers, and never let us forget that the Judah-remnants who returned to Jerusalem from their forced exile of 70 years were men who could wield the sword as well as handle the trowel. “For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded” (Neh. iv. 18). There are times and seasons when the advances of our wily foe on the citadel of our most holy faith must be resisted in spiritual energy—foot to foot, and inch by inch. The sword must not be sheathed, must ever be sharpened and burnished and ready for use. The armour is needed for conflict with Satan and wicked spirits (Eph. vi. 11-13).

There are, however, times when God *seems* to hide Himself, when our only safety is in doing nothing. The voice of our Saviour-God is heard beside many a Red Sea difficulty, “*Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.*” It is a hard lesson to “stand still” in the midst of opposing foes. Jehovah is the *Living* God. Cloud and storm are beneath His feet and His throne remains unmoved. Can’t you, won’t you let Him act for you? Be still and see the wonder-working arm of Jehovah clearing a path for your feet. Once more the seas divide and Jehovah has triumphed and now we sing.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 238).

NEHEMIAH THE TIRSHATHA.

OUR history now takes us to Shushan, or Susa, at the time of which we write the capital of Persia, and to the court of the Persian monarch.

It is an interesting circumstance that godly Jews should have occupied positions of trust first under the kings of Chaldea, and then under the kings of Persia, as Daniel and Mordecai, Ezra and Nehemiah did. It will be remembered that Nebuchadnezzar in the first instance carried captive the best of the people. Many of these and their descendants, born in captivity, were doubtless men of talent. Daniel was such a man, or he would not have held the position he did under both Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. Ezra and Nehemiah are shewn by the history to have been men of great administrative ability. Besides being men of faith, they were men of great natural talents. We call attention to this because we claim for Ezra and Nehemiah a very high place as witnesses for the genuineness and authenticity of the earliest historical books of the Old Testament.

Now where the evidence of a witness is of importance, we ask—Who is he? Can his evidence be relied on? The value of the evidence will depend very much upon the character of the witness.

It may perhaps be thought that in making so much of this point, we lose sight of the fact that we have here an inspired history. The inspiration of the Record is not here in question (on that we should insist in the fullest sense), but the character of the men whose words and works are recorded.

It is scarcely possible that our readers should not

now and again have their attention directed to what is somewhat euphemistically called "The higher criticism." We think that the adjective "lower" would often more correctly characterise it.

Now a favourite notion of some of these "higher" critics is, that the earlier books of the old testament are much more modern than they profess to be. Ezra and Nehemiah lived 2,400 years ago, and therefore so much nearer the date of the authorship of the Divine Oracles, therefore their evidence on this point, if they were men whose testimony may be relied on, must greatly outweigh that of any modern scholar, however learned. Their honesty cannot be impeached, and their standing, as men of ability, and talent, adds great weight to their evidence. The importance of their witness will appear in the sequel. Our present subject is the personal character of Nehemiah. We have seen the kind of man Ezra was; what sort of man was his contemporary and co-worker Nehemiah?

Whether we regard Nehemiah in his individual character as a man of God, or as a leader of his people, he appears before us very distinctly as a man of character and purpose. Moreover he was pre-eminently a man for the occasion; a man for the time. Like the children of Issachar he had "understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do."

Nehemiah held a high and honourable office in the court of the king of Persia. He was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus. The office was a responsible one. It was also an ancient one, for the chief butler of Pharaoh, introduced to us in connection with the history of Joseph, probably held the same office in the court of the Egyptian monarch.

This office with its honours and its privileges Nehemiah relinquished in order to give himself to the service of God and his brethren at Jerusalem.

(To be Continued, D.V.) C. B.

NOTES ON FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS AND DOCTRINES.

PURCHASE, REDEMPTION, AND RECONCILIATION ILLUSTRATED.

SUPPOSE a slave mart. The slaves are huddled together in their misery. The clanking of chains and the lash of the slave-holders' whip greet the purchaser as he enters the auction mart. Stepping up to a certain slave who has conceived an implacable hatred to the benevolent and kind-hearted gentleman, the purchaser lays his hand on the shoulder of the slave and his enemy, and, striking a bargain with the slave's master, say to the slave, "You are mine: I have legally bought you." That is PURCHASE. Every person and thing has been purchased by Christ; see Matt. xiii. 44, the field is the world, v. 38; Heb. ii. 9; Acts xx. 28; 2 Peter ii. 1, false teachers are bought.

PURCHASE therefore intimates a change of masters merely. You now belong to another. You are not your own property, but on this some weighty exhortations are founded (1 Cor. v. 19-20).

But the slaves' new master writes out papers duly attested, sealed, and in legal order, granting freedom to the slave. He is now a free man. The chains are removed and he is completely delivered from all fear of the lash. He is a free man. That is REDEMPTION. The outward state or condition is entirely changed. The change of masters illustrates PURCHASE. The change of condition illustrates REDEMPTION.

Israel's Redemption was not effected by the blood of the passover lamb, *that* screened them from Divine Judgment (Exod. xii. 13). But the Redemption of Israel was effected by the power of Jehovah in cleaving the Red Sea and conducting His people in triumph across the dry bed of the Sea; see Exod. vi. 6; Ps. cvi. 10, etc. Israel will yet be redeemed by blood, not typically, but in deed and in truth. Christians

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are now redeemed by blood (Eph. i. 7 ; 1 Peter i. 18-19) and await redemption by power, *i.e.*, the body raised and changed (Rom. viii. 23). Another important distinction is to be observed. Things and even wicked persons are purchased, but not redeemed. This latter applies to saved people only. Mankind is purchased but not redeemed and as such never will. Things are purchased and will by and bye share in redemption, hence "until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. i. 14). The inheritance *is* purchased but awaits redemption.

But the slave altho' purchased and redeemed is still the implacable enemy of his purchaser and redeemer, and this brings us to a third truth, *viz.*, RECONCILIATION. The enmity was and is all on the one side. God never was man's enemy. The Cross did not reconcile God to man. "He is not a *reconciled* God and Father," such a statement would imply a previous state of enmity in God's nature. It is not so. "God so *loved* the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Sinners need reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 18, 21) "*reconciled us* to Himself," not Himself *to* us. We are "*reconciled to God* by the death of His Son"—Rom. v. 10 ; see also Col. i. 20-22. The enmity is gone. We hated God, now we love Him. But at what a cost to Him ere the enmity of our hearts could be removed and love and confidence take its place. Things are to be reconciled—placed on a new footing in millennial times and share in the general blessing of these coming days. All mere human illustrations fail to shadow forth Divine truths, but now to return to our slave. He has been purchased, redeemed, and reconciled. By the first he changed masters, by the second he changed his outward condition, and by the third his mind underwent a complete change. Reconciliation intimates a change of mind. The heart is won by love.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

GENESIS contains in germ every truth and subject unfolded in the Word of God.

EXODUS illustrates in grand and impressive types the great truth of redemption and resulting consequences.

LEVITICUS from the Jewish ritual lodged in the tribe of *Levi*, treats of sacrifice and priesthood; the former the basis; the latter the means of drawing nigh to God.

NUMBERS records the trials, service, and wanderings of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years.

DEUTERONOMY reviews the wilderness, and affords ample instruction as to Canaan—ways and conduct.

JOSHUA treats of the wars of Canaan and conquest of and partition of the country amongst the tribes.

JUDGES notes the repeated failures of the people, also Jehovah's unchangeable faithfulness and grace.

RUTH unfolds in type Israel's future reception on the ground of sovereign grace alone. Root of Divine counsel respecting Israel—the typical history of the people.

1 SAMUEL treats of governmental power in the hands of Saul, *i.e.*, *demanding*.

2 SAMUEL gives the history of governmental power in the hands of David, *i.e.*, *beloved*.

1 KINGS is the divine account of governmental power in the hands of Solomon, *i.e.*, *peaceable*, and its subsequent decline.

2 KINGS traces the decline of royal power, especially in the Kingdom of *Israel*, *i.e.*, the ten-tribed kingdom.

- 1 CHRONICLES shews royal power and glory in David connected with the Throne and the Temple. Here the Kingdom of *Judah* is prominent.
- 2 CHRONICLES traces the decline of royal power, especially in the Kingdom of *Judah*.
- EZRA, *help*, unfolds the *ecclesiastical* condition of the returned Jews to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity of 70 years.
- NEHEMIAH unfolds the *civil* condition of the returned Jews to Jerusalem from their captivity.
- ESTHER reveals the providential care of Jehovah over the mass of the people *not* returned to Judea, but who elected to remain in the lands of their exile.
- JOB details the process by which the flesh and human righteousness are withered up—all being under the disciplinary hand of God.
- THE BOOK OF PSALMS records the experiences of Christ personally, and in connection with the future remnant of Israel: as also that of the pious, God-fearing Israelite. Christ with Judah in the land—*Jehovah* (relationship title) 270 times; *God* (creatorial name), 30 times, i.-xli.; Judah and Christ outside the land and rejected—*Jehovah*, 30 times, *God*, 200 times, xlii.-lxxii.; History of the nation as a whole—*Jehovah*, 50 times, *God*, 64 times, lxxiii.-lxxxix.; Christ coming—*Jehovah*, 100 times, *God*, 20 times, xc.-cvi.; Jehovah's character and doings—*Jehovah*, 230 times, *God*, 30 times, cvii.-cl.
- PROVERBS is a divine collection of wise sayings for a righteous walk in the world. Principles of God's moral government.
- ECCLESIASTES gives the search of the king (Solomon) for happiness and the result, "All is vanity."

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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THE SONG OF SOLOMON (compare chap. i. 1 with 1 Kings iv. 32), unfolds the changing feelings of the bride (Israel) and the unchanging affection of the bridegroom (Christ).

ISAIAH is the grandest and most comprehensive of all the prophetic writings.

JEREMIAH is both historical and moral in character, and deals with Israel, Judah, and nations of the past and future.

THE LAMENTATIONS depict the sorrows of a heart breaking itself over the miseries of God's people—Israel.

EZEKIEL unfolds the judgment of Israel by the Chaldeans, and reveals latter-day blessing connected with Israel, her land and temple.

DANIEL comprehensively sketches the times of the Gentiles and their latter-day connection with Judah.

HOSEA points out the sins of Israel and Judah; as also their future blessings.

JOEL speaks of the day of the Lord (*judgment*), afterward the Spirit poured out upon all flesh—Pentecost being a sample (Acts ii.)

AMOS declares the iniquities of Israel and the nations; at the close, however, glory and blessing break out for all Israel.

OBADIAH presents a brief and forcible record of Edom's way and doom. Shortest of the prophetic books. Judgment of Edom.

JONAH announces judgment upon Nineveh—capital of the Assyrian Kingdom—and its repentance.

MICAH predicts certain judgment upon Jerusalem and Samaria, but full blessing for both in the last days.

NAHUM is the announcement of final judgment upon haughty Nineveh, which had been preserved because of its repentance (see Jonah) for nearly 150 years. Doom and judgment of Nineveh. (*Interesting particulars of the siege*).

HABBAKUK abounds in moral reflections and exercises upon Israel's sorrowful condition and guilty ways.

ZEPHANIAH speaks of unsparing judgment upon Jerusalem and the nations—a remnant preserved and blest. Judah and the near and distant heathen judged; Israel's latter-day blessing.

HAGGAI is divine encouragement to the people to resume the building of the temple.

ZECHARIAH unfolds the scenes of the last days—Jerusalem being the centre of them all.

MALACHI gives a touching record of Jehovah's last pleadings with His guilty people of Israel.

HOW TO GET RID OF DOUBTS.

A FRIEND remarked to the writer, "I have never known a doubt from the moment of my conversion." Doubts as to God's love, or of one's personal salvation are a shame, and are utterly unknown in the pages of the New Testament. The parent of doubt is rank unbelief. What could you expect from such a source? How to get rid of doubts? Ah! that is it. "If only I could bid an eternal farewell to doubts and fears I would be so happy." We can put you in the way of the happiness so long and so eagerly desired.

Read Heb. xi. 6 "He that cometh to God must believe that *He is*, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "HE IS!" He is true. Absolute truth is alone found in what God says in His Holy Scriptures.

Now read carefully Heb. x. 14, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," that is those set apart by His grace. "Perfected for ever." God says that of *you* timid, shrinking believer. The one offering of Christ as a sacrifice to God for our sins was so complete and so perfectly acceptable to God that he puts the perfection of that one offering upon you. You are perfected for ever as to your conscience and standing before God. Do you believe it? *I do*, simply because Heb. x. 14 declares it. Then about your sins. He says in verse 17 "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," Doubts are amongst my gravest sins, but when I was forgiven and justified, all doubts were included in the black list of forgiven sins. The cure then for doubts is simply to believe Scripture exactly as it is written, as God wrote it. To doubt my personal Salvation is to disbelieve God and call Him a liar to His face. "O I would not do that" you say, but that is just what you are doing. Every doubt is giving the lie direct to the Living God. "God hath given to us eternal life," every doubt thrown on that statement, every unhallowed thought that perhaps after all I am not saved altho' I believe on Jesus, is a declaration to the effect that God is "a liar" (1 John v. 10-11).

You can't get rid of doubts by prayer, or good works; nor are they to be regarded as works of humility on your part. Every doubt is giving the lie direct to God. He says you *are saved*, you think and speak differently however. The case between you and God is in a nutshell. He says that believing on His name you *are saved*, but you doubt it, what is that but calling Him a liar? Cast your doubts overboard and lighten the ship. Never mind what your heart says in opposition to Acts xiii. 38, 39; John v. 24; 1 John v. 10, 12; Heb. x. 14, 17. One line of Scripture is worth more than a cart-load of human thoughts and

reasonings. Pitch them overboard, we say, and firmly cling to the true sayings of God. "I don't *feel* saved," you say. Neither do I, but I *know* I am saved. How? Because God says so. "By grace are ye saved." My heart is deceitful and Satan is a liar, and so I am cast upon God and His word which is a rock for weary feet.

"AS HE IS, SO ARE WE."

1 John iv. 17.

It does not mean that we, believers, have Christ's place in love, on the Father's throne, or in Glory (John i. 18; Rev. iii. 11; John xvii. 24), that would be to equalise ourselves with Christ, to His dishonour and our loss and shame. In all things and in all relationships He must have the pre-eminence. He is worthy! He alone!

But the passage refers to Judgment. As He (Christ) is beyond judgment, so are we in this world. We are as completely beyond eternal judgment and condemnation as Christ Himself. God's love *with* us (see margin or revised version) is thus perfected in giving us present boldness, because as "He is" so "are we." If judgment cannot reach Him, it can no more reach us. We are as the Judge, and *in this world*! The very one who bore our sins is the ordained Judge. He cannot in righteousness judge those whom He has saved, whose sins He has borne, else He would judge His own work, and deny Himself; two impossibilities!

There will be judgment on our works as *believers*, but none as to our sins as *sinners*. What a soul-emancipating truth!

CAN ETERNAL LIFE BE LOST? 251

"HATH everlasting life" is the Lord's own word to every believer—young and old (John v. 24). "The gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23). We have it. The weakest, the meanest, the feeblest child of God has eternal life *in him*. But if it was freely given by God, would it not be a mean action to recall the gift? Besides which we see it written down in Rom. xi. 29 "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." That is a gift once bestowed shall never be recalled, nor will God repent of having called us with His holy calling. But how can eternal life be lost? It is in every believer—true; the believer, however, is not the source of life, it is Christ. "In Him was life" (John i. 3). "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life." We believers have it. It is God's record that we have. We know it on His testimony, but can the life *in us* ever be severed from its source? No, for adds the inspired penman, "and this life is in His Son" (1 John v. 11). Eternal life therefore cannot be lost. It is absolutely secure. So long as Christ lives, so long does the life of the believer. The one is not more enduring than the other. Christ and our life are bound up together.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES.

THESE have their value. Here are a few interesting facts.

In the year 1200 A.D. while excavating for antiquities 53 miles north-east of Rome, a copper-plate tablet was found containing the death warrant of Christ and which read thus:—"In the year 17 of the empire Tiberius Cæsar and on 25 of March, I Pontius Pilate governor of the Prator condemn Jesus of Nazareth to die between two thieves, Quintus Cornelius to lead him forth to the place of execution." Signed by 4 persons.

Bashan lies east of the Jordan. 4000 years ago that part of Palestine was occupied by giant races—

men of enormous height and strength, of gigantic stature. In the time of David some specimens were alive, as Goliath who was probably about nine feet in height. Even in the land of Palestine to-day, there are graves of immense size. The supposed grave of Abel near Damascus is about 30 feet long. There are many others of a large size. Need we say that we have no thought of any of our own race attaining to such dimensions as 30 feet. Now these old giants built strong houses and numerous towns. Many of these towns are standing to this day, some of them containing hundreds of houses which are intact as in the days of Abraham. Travellers from Europe have traversed the streets of these towns, trod the halls of these houses, and slept in the rooms. The walls, doors, windows, and shutters, yet swinging on their hinges attest the reality and trust-worthy biblical record. The old Bible salutations are yet heard in that province, the same simple instruments of husbandry are used as in the days of Isaac and of Job. The walls of the houses are from 5 to 8 feet thick of large square blocks of basalt. Owing to the exodus of Jews from Russia and other lands of persecution, many thousands are flocking back to the land and are rapidly occupying these long deserted towns.

The fact is that the evidences as to the exact historical truth of the Scriptures are now so full and overwhelming, that many leading Infidels have returned to the faith of Christianity.

But no amount of intellectual conviction can reach the conscience. God's Holy Spirit must convince of sin and apply the truth of the Sacrifice of Christ to the guilty conscience. Each reader must have personal dealing with Christ, and that is not through stones or monuments, but by the action of the Living Word of God on the soul. Has God spoken to your heart dear reader?

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS.

GEN. XXVI.—(*Continued from page 232*).

GOD having, as we have seen, re-assured his timid servant with the words, "Fear not," now gave him a proof that his fears had been groundless, and his retreat before the advancing Philistines, uncalled for; for the King and his commander-in-chief themselves seek Isaac out, and desire a league of peace with him: for, say they, "We saw certainly that Jehovah was with thee." How strange that what had been patent to the uncircumcised Philistine, should have apparently escaped the knowledge of the child of God! Moreover, it is interesting to notice that, if there is decadence on the part of Isaac as compared with his father, there is advance in the knowledge of the true God on the part of Abimelech; to Abraham the latter had said, "*God* is with thee;" to Isaac, "*Jehovah*."

And has not all this history a lesson for ourselves? We start on some pathway, or embark on some project, as to which we have the distinct assurance that we have Jehovah's favour. "Sojourn in the Land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee," He has whispered in our ear. But presently difficulties crop up, and spiritual Abimelechs and Phicol's loom before our gaze. Alas! how large they bulk, the moment we get our eyes off the God of circumstances, and let them rest upon the circumstances themselves. And yet these foes are shadowy foes indeed; they would flee like startled fish in some clear stream, had we the courage to lift our hand. But if we are craven, God is gracious. He "knows our feeble frame," and revisits us with the assurance of His loving care, and gives us proofs of the groundlessness of our fears. The defence of an Almighty arm is ours, and the provision of an eternal love—an arm that will never grow weary, and a love that will never grow cold.

Hence while our spiritual foes *must* quail before us, our bread and our water are sure ; and on that very day when those, whom Isaac in his weakness and distrust feared, had sought and made a compact with him, his servants arrive with the welcome tidings that they had dug and found water ; and Isaac, accordingly, calls the name of the place Beersheba "the well of the oath."

And now we would pause to ask a question. Is it possible that Isaac, who had been born at this very spot, had been ignorant that his father had already so named it, and of the circumstances which led him to do so? One would think it impossible that even if he had left his birth-place before he was old enough to remember the circumstances, he had not at anyrate heard its name, and the circumstances under which that name had been acquired ; moreover it is more than probable that, in seeking the covenant with him, Abimelech would have strengthened his plea by reminding him of the league he had already made with his father at that spot. Besides, water was already there, for Abraham had dug the well and found it! Indeed it would appear that Isaac's servants had done no more than re-open the well that Abraham, in days gone by, had dug. We can hardly think that Isaac was ignorant of those facts ; rather he would appear to us to act as a weak but somewhat vain man, who would pose as being original, when he was, in fact, but giving a name to what was already named. Sometimes in these pages we may have seemed to have trodden in Isaac's steps ; others have dug the wells, and we have appropriated the waters, and perchance not acknowledged the diggers : we make no apology for having done so, if, in handing on the waters to others, they prove as refreshing to them, as they have done to ourselves.

JOHN FORT.

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 242).

NEHEMIAH THE TIRSHATHA.

THERE are three things prominent in the character of Nehemiah, as it is presented to us in the book that bears his name, which have much to do with making him the man of power that he was.

First, Nehemiah was a man of faith ; faith wrought in him as it did in Moses before him. It led him to give up present personal advantages in order to cast in his lot with his brethren. Of Moses we are told (Heb. xi.) that he counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, because he had respect to the recompense of the reward. The hope of the future reward was, we judge, before Nehemiah in his aspirations recorded in chapters vi. and xiii. "Think upon me, my God, for good," "Remember me, O my God, for good." Nehemiah does not find a place in the list of worthies in Heb. xi. ; but the history itself bears witness to his faith, and that, like Moses, "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Nehemiah's faith was also seen in the manner in which he identified Himself with the people in their failure and humiliation. Witness his confession in the first chapter. Like Daniel and Ezra before him, he took upon himself the shame that attached to Israel on account of their departure from God.

It was faith, too, that gave Nehemiah courage when the enemies of the Jews would have put him in fear. We have a fine instance of this in chap. vi. 10, where

Shemaiah said to him, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple ; for they will come to slay thee, yea, in the night, they will come to slay thee. And I said, Should such a man as I flee ? and who is there that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life ? I will not go in." It may be said of him, as it has been said of another, "He feared God and he feared nought else."

We also see in Nehemiah the man of faith in his maintenance of the authority of the Word of God. To this we may refer more at length hereafter.

Nehemiah's faith, too, was seen in this, that while he used all means put within his reach to accomplish the purpose he had in view, he did not rely upon the means but upon God. This we may see finely illustrated in chap. iv.

Secondly, Nehemiah was a man of prayer. We see this at the beginning of the narrative, when Hanani and others brought to him the news of the low condition of his brethren at Jerusalem. He says, "It came to pass when I heard these words that I sat down and wept and mourned certain days, and prayed before the God of heaven" (ch. i. 4). He took his burden to God, and pleaded the promise of restoration on repentance given in Deut. xix. ; and claimed for the people, as Moses did, that they were the people of God whom He had redeemed, and he then prayed for mercy in the sight of the king.

In chap. ii. we see Nehemiah in the king's presence.

The sadness of his heart betrayed itself in his countenance, and the king noticed it. "Then," he says, "I was very sore afraid." And well he might be afraid, for his sadness in the presence of the Eastern despot might have cost him his head. But mark how quickly he turns from the fear of man to his resource in God—"So I prayed to the God of heaven." It is a beautiful instance of ejaculatory prayer, the heart turning to God in the moment of its need. It needed not that Nehemiah should retire from the king's presence for that. His prayer in chap. i. had been, no doubt, in the retirement of his own closet, but here he is in the presence of the king and the queen, and his heart sends up its request to God. No voice was heard; that prayer found entrance to His ear for which alone it was intended. And so throughout the book we find him again and again turning to God in prayer.

And what a privilege is this! In the turmoil of our daily duties, when difficulty arises, we may, like Nehemiah, make known our desires to God with the fullest assurance that he hears us, and in a language that none can take knowledge of but He whose ear no groan escapes.

Thirdly, Nehemiah was also, and pre-eminently a man of action. His prayer received an immediate answer. God did, according to his desire, shew him mercy in the sight of the king, and he obtained leave from the monarch to go to Jerusalem. And he neglected no means to secure the success of his mission. He obtained letters to the governors of the

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country beyond the Euphrates, authorising them to facilitate his journey and a letter to the keeper of the king's forests to provide him with timber for building. The king provided him with a military escort, for it does not appear that Nehemiah had asked for it; but it was suited to his position as a great officer of state.

Other illustrations of this feature of Nehemiah's character will come before us as we follow the history.

C. B.

(To be continued, D.V.).

SOME PROOFS OF GOD'S DELIGHT
IN MEN.

It is a blessed and wonderful thought for us that God can have delight in men. And the way He has shewn it, should call forth adoration from our hearts.

In Eden He manifested His delight in His creature just created, an order of being perfectly new in the history of the universe. Never before had there been a head placed over the creation on earth endowed with powers of mind, a rational and intelligent, but withal a human creature, who could hold as permitted intelligent intercourse with its Creator. Placed in the garden to dress it, and to keep it, God brought the animals and the birds to Adam to see what he would call them. Adam named them, God as it were standing by. Then a helpmeet was provided him, and brought to him and at once he designated her—woman, because she was taken out of man.

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But the fall took place, and God who is holy had necessarily to take the place of judge with reference to His creatures. He passed sentence on the guilty pair (Gen. iii). He subsequently pronounced judgment on Cain (iv.), and later on announced the coming flood (vi. 17). Such was the character of His utterances after the fall.

The flood came and subsided, the waters receded from the earth, dry land was again seen, when Noah and his company, just eight souls preserved alive in the ark, came forth afresh to tread solid ground. The little remains on earth of the human family all gathered around an altar, which Noah had reared, and on which were offered burnt offerings to God, the Almighty again spoke. No prayer that we read of preceded the divine utterance, yet God spoke, and this time in blessing. Never since He had blessed the seventh day (Gen. ii. 3), had He spoken in such a strain. Never had any of that company in their personal experience, we may well believe, heard the Almighty bless any one. Was man so changed by witnessing the judgment of the flood that God could thus act? Was his nature improved by his long sojourn in the ark? We know it was not; for ere God opened His mouth in blessing, He had spoken to Himself of man's incorrigible evil nature (Gen. viii. 21)—yet He blessed Noah and his sons. Why was that? What enabled Him in righteousness to do it? The sweet savour of the sacrifice drew forth the blessing, and God delighting, may we not say it, to bless, waited not a day nor an hour to do it. Strange, yet joyful sounds the little company must have heard—God blessing His earthly creatures because of the burnt sacrifice.

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Further, His delight in them was manifested in another way: He gave them everything on earth of the vegetable and animal kingdom for their food. Nothing was withheld. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I given you all things" (ix. 3). In such terms, short, simple, and comprehensive was the grant conveyed. Men, as we have pointed out, did not deserve it, but God would not withhold it, and Noah and his sons could speak of a grant far exceeding in extent that which Adam before the fall enjoyed. Compare Gen. i. 29 with Gen. ix. 3, and contrast this last verse with Gen. iii. 18. By the fall Adam lost the fruit which he had enjoyed before it. By virtue of the burnt offering all that and much more was bestowed on the little company of eight, the sole representatives of the human race on earth. So great, so full was the blessing which, in virtue of the sacrifice, God could bestow.

Abel had learnt personal acceptance before God when he had offered by faith of his flock, with the fat thereof. Noah and his family could say that they knew God in, to them, a new character, since the sweet savour of the burnt sacrifice had ascended heavenward from their altar. They had known Him as acting in righteousness in most awful judgment by the flood. They had proved Him to be for them a Saviour God. Now they learnt that He could bless the undeserving, and that in the fullest earthly way that any of the human race had known.

What, indeed, is there which God withholds, when that, of which the burnt sacrifice was a type, is really before Him? We can say that He withholds nothing, in that He has now blessed us, who believe on His Son, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. i. 3). More wonderful blessings are

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ours through grace than Noah ever heard of, or even dreamt of; yet the ground upon which both rest is virtually the same—the sacrifice offered up to God. In Noah's case the offerings were numerous, being of every clean beast and of every clean fowl. We speak of but one victim, but one which far outweighs in value all that earth could supply, God's well-beloved Son offered up on the cross for sinners. Gratitude for preservation through the flood in the ark stirred Noah's heart, and moved him, we may surely say it, to rear up his altar, and to offer up the creatures thereon. Love, not ours to God, but His to us, and the love of Christ were the moving springs in the offering up voluntarily of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, that blessings might be ours, blessings which cannot be surpassed, nay, can never be equalled, blessings too which are enduring seeing they are never to end.

Years rolled by, centuries indeed elapsed, when God in a new way shewed His delight in man. He had shewn His delight in unfallen man. He had manifested His willingness and delight to bless in righteousness men who did not deserve it. Now in another way would He act, but this time only on behalf of a part of the human race—the nation of Israel. He had brought them out of Egypt, He had redeemed them with the arm of His power and brought them to Himself in the wilderness (Exod. xix. 4). Then it was that He announced His desire to dwell amongst them: "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them" (Exod. xxv. 8). The High and the Holy One would have now a dwelling place on earth, and that in the midst of Israel. And who were Israel? Were they better than other nations? Not at all as Ezekiel much later reminded them (Ezek. xx. 7-9). Why then could He, would He dwell among them? What had taken place to bring this about?

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God had redeemed them. Redemption accomplished and that by the arm of His power, He could dwell among them, and He would. What delight in them this manifested.

But what does all this say to us? It tells us on what ground blessing can be enjoyed by the undeserving—that of the accepted sacrifice. It tells us too on what ground God can dwell amongst a people—on the ground of redemption. That makes them His people, and when that He delights to dwell among them.

In the Old Testament these things were displayed in type. But that in which we share far surpasses what Noah and his sons could speak of, as well as what Israel could boast of. We have already noticed that as regards the fulness of the blessing. We have to note it now as regards the presence of God in the midst of His redeemed ones. Of old, in Israel, He dwelt in the tabernacle in their midst. Now His redeemed ones form His habitation by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). By and by the holy temple completed, forming *now* of living stones, God will dwell in it for ever.

Far surpassing then what Israel knew, believers enjoy, and shall enjoy for ever. Enduring and not to be surpassed are the blessings bestowed on the ground of the sacrifice of the Lord. A nearness to God such as none could have conceived, and that for ever we share in, since He dwells now in His redeemed ones on earth who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. And He will dwell for ever in that holy temple of His choice, growing now as the company of Christians increase by the preaching of the Gospel, on believing which they become living stones of that one holy, everlasting shrine. What delight God must have in His church to make it His dwelling-place without end.

C. E. S.

ON POLITICAL AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS.

IF truly born of God, your special attention is called to the following truths and considerations of commanding interest at all times, but especially so when a democratic spirit, principles and ways, are spreading rapidly: undermining divine and human authority; destroying the fabric of society, and setting class against class. Lawlessness is rife in the church and in the world.

Scripture distinctly recognises the rich and the poor; the king and the subject; the master and the servant; the governing and the governed. It also unfolds the respective responsibilities of each and enforces their due fulfilment. There are natural and acquired rights and relationships which in the government of God are allowed by Him as conducive to the general well-being—rights and relationships which grace does not trench upon nor in the least degree weaken. Christianity never enfeebles any human obligation of whatever character. One's social position and relationship in life remain equally the same after as before conversion to God. Christianity did not form the social system. It did not create governmental institutions; it recognises what is, and in no wise destroys, but rather firmly maintains obedience to the powers that be as ordained of God.

It is commonly said that "Christ on the cross paid our debts." But forgiveness of sins, not payment of debt, is the scriptural thought; "And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave" (Luke vii. 42); not he "paid," but he "forgave." What we owe to God as His creatures is whole hearted obedience; that we owe equally after as before our conversion. Creature-relationship is eternal. Our new relationship to

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God as His children ; as members of Christ's body, etc., on the ground of redemption, involves other and weighty responsibilities flowing from a set of new relationships peculiar to christianity, but these in no wise enfeeble any creature-obligation to God and to man, and which exist on the simple ground that you are God's creature. The cross never destroys *creature-responsibility*, but maintains and upholds it, adding, as we have said, fresh relationships and supplying one with both motives and power of an enduring character, so as to enable one to walk with God in every position of life with a good conscience. Our creature-estate eternally remains, and all the consequent responsibility attaching thereto. Obedience, subjection is God's order throughout creation for men, angels, and all intelligent beings. This must be so if the relative position of Creator and creature is to exist. Insubjection to God, or lawlessness, is sin (1 John iii. 4 ; see revised version). Natural and other relationships which, of course, apply only to man's life on earth remain in all their force—from the cradle to the grave. So, too, social position is recognised, not in the church or synagogue, but in the world (James i. and ii.) Grace, of course, bows the rich and exalts the poor (James i. 9, 10) and leads *all* to cultivate lowliness of mind (Phil. ii.) But the rights and respective positions of each, whether in the church or in the world, are most carefully maintained and guarded. Grace flows freely, thank God ! but whether to saint or sinner, the river flows in the channel of righteousness. Christianity, too, is a bright thing ; as it in no wise lifts one out of any natural or governmental relationships, but further forms the tie and dignifies the relationship, so it never makes business a drag, or duty a drudgery. It fits one and all for the due and right discharge of the multitudinous details of life.

(To be continued D.V.)

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES.

(Continued from page 258).

THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

BEFORE we follow the history unfolded to us in the book of Nehemiah, we may look shortly at the history of the walls of the Holy City, the restoration of which forms so interesting an episode in that book. They have always held a prominent place in the history of the city itself; and, like it, had associations that were dear to every Israelite.

Like the city, too, the walls have a figurative as well as a historical interest, and carry our thoughts onwards to the millennial glory of the earthly Jerusalem and to the greater glory of the Jerusalem above.

We may therefore regard them first historically, then figuratively.

We find no direct reference to the walls until the times of the kings; but it is probable that the city itself had its beginning with the strong position of Zion, which was a stronghold of the Jebusites.

The hill fort was no doubt the most ancient form of defence in all hilly countries. There are many remains of such in the hills of this island. In some cases a town gradually grew up under the protection of the hill fort. Those who know Edinburgh may find an illustration of this in the precipitous Castle rock and the Old Town which grew up under its shadow. Such we believe was the history of the Jebusite city.

This appears to receive confirmation in the short notice we have of Jerusalem in the book of Judges. Thus in chap. i. verse 8 we read "Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire;" but in verse 21 we read "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem, but the Jebusites dwell

with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day."

Judah could take the lower city, but the stronghold of Zion proved impregnable to the children of Benjamin, and Israel continued apparently to hold the lower city; for we find that after the slaughter of Goliath of Gath, "David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem." But the Jebusites continued to inhabit the stronghold of Zion until the eighth year of the reign of David. The record given to us in 2 Sam. v. is exceedingly interesting, so confident were the Jebusites that their fortress was wholly impregnable that they scoffed at David's attempt to take it. The blind and lame might be sufficient to defend it: and it would seem that they set some such on the walls in derision, and challenged David to come and take them. Joab the son of Zeruiah (as we learn from 1 Chron. xi. 6) was the first to scale the walls and became commander in chief of David's army; and the stronghold of Zion became the residence of David who "dwelt in the castle, which therefore they called the city of David."

The first object of the king after he had secured the entire city for the capital of his kingdom was to strengthen it, for the historian adds, "and he built the city round about, even from Milo" (1 Chron. xi. 8). Milo seems to have been part of the fortifications, as we read of it afterwards in connection with the walls.

The first express mention of the walls is very short. It was in the reign of Solomon. We find it in 1 Kings ix. 15. "And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Milo, and the wall of Jerusalem." It might be thought from this passage that Solomon built a wall which had no previous existence. The Jewish historian Josephus throws light on this; he says, "Now when the king saw that the walls of

Jerusalem stood in need of being better secured, and made stronger, (for he thought that the walls that encompassed Jerusalem ought to correspond to the dignity of the city), he both repaired them and made them higher with great towers upon them." Jerusalem, in the reign of Solomon, was no doubt a strong city. The walls were for its defence; but they were a defence no longer than the people were true to their God, and so, in the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the walls did not keep out Shishak, king of Egypt, and the reason is clear: "He forsook the law of the Lord and all Israel with him" (2 Chron. xii. 1). Indeed it does not appear that the Egyptian monarch had even to besiege the city.

It is a lamentable fact that the first break of the walls was not made by a heathen enemy, but by the ten tribes, affording a sad illustration of the weakening effects of division amongst the people of God. Of this we read in 2 Chron. xxv. 23, when Amaziah, king of Judah, having concluded a successful war with the Edomites, bowed down to the gods of Edom. "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah," and He allowed him in his pride to challenge Joash, the king of Israel, with the result that Amaziah was taken captive by Joash, who brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits." And Josephus says Joash "drove his chariot through the breach into Jerusalem, and led Amaziah captive along with him."

In the next reign, that of Uzziah, the walls were again strengthened for we read in 2 Chron. xxvi. 9, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate and at the valley gate, and at the turning, and fortified them. It is said of him, "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." C. B.

(To be continued D.V.)

ON POLITICAL AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS.

(Continued from page 264).

THE sexes are not equal. God has not made them so. It is a question of God's order and of facts, as 1 Cor. xi. 3-16 clearly enough shew. "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (verse 3). The writer will yield to none in his appreciation of the other sex. The character and physical organization of the woman however, necessarily places her in a dependent place, and demands from every honourable mind of the other sex respectful sympathy and the strength of a sustaining arm. But she is intellectually and physically inferior to man and unfitted for public place and representation. There are exceptions of course. On the other hand, high toned moral feeling; a more delicate character of mind, what goes to make up a loved and loving character, are characteristic of the woman. She reigns as queen in the moral domain. The covered head is the sign of subjection to the man (verse 5). Angels, too, are interested in beholding creation's order observed amongst men and women (verse 10). The subordination of the woman to the man is also deduced from the prior creation of the man, from circumstances connected with the fall, and from the fact that the woman was created *for* the man (verse 9; 1 Tim. ii. 11-15), hence "silence" in the *assembly* (1 Cor. xiv. 34) and in *public* (1 Tim. ii. 12) is enjoined upon the woman. The man, not the woman, is God's representative in power on the earth—His image and glory (1 Cor. xi. 7). Now this creatorial distinction of the sexes is firmly maintained in the church (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35) and in the world, but not in Christ Jesus; in Him there is neither male nor female—no distinction of sex (Gal. iii. 28). Long and short hair have their

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own special significance in the mutual relation of the sexes (1 Cor. xi. 14, 15).

One great effort of Satan is to obliterate the distinction and relative position of the sexes, hence the *public* prominence given to women and which they are loudly asserting, which is really to their shame if they only knew it, and to the dishonour of the man—her natural head. All this is a covert attack upon God and His rights in creation! The public ministrations of women, where both sexes are represented, are exceedingly lowering to man's dignity, and in result tend to rob the woman of her true glory. She shines best and brightest in the domestic sphere; *that* undoubtedly is the normal and proper sphere of the woman. No woman need complain of her assigned place of subjection, nor suppose that thereby her usefulness and influence are circumscribed. Even Christ Himself, as man, has voluntarily taken a subject place to God; so also every man is in subjection to Christ. Praying and prophesying are not forbidden to women, but are regulated (1 Cor. xi). If not to be exercised in the church or publicly as Scripture prohibits, it remains for her to do so in private and to those of her own sex. There is ever true blessing in keeping in subjection to God and to one another; no one—man or woman—need fret and chafe under the application of the bit and bridle. Subjection is God's universal law.

Our christian relations to the governments of the day—to existing civil and political authorities—are of the simplest kind. Honour all men in every estate of life is ever a bounden duty, and an elementary principle of every day application which grace enforces (Rom. xiii. 7). Courtesy and respect to all is a christian duty. Again, "let every soul be subject to the higher powers" (verse 1). The political form of government and the personal character of its supreme head are questions with which we have nothing *di-*

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rectly to do. We may here remark that the monarchical system of government is that which undoubtedly has the direct sanction of the Word of God—an absolute monarchy, as witnessed in Nebuchednezzar (Dan. ii.) and yet to be exhibited in perfection in our Lord (Rev. xi. 15). The three empires which succeeded the Babylonian came into power providentially; whereas the first, or Chaldean, was the one to which God directly committed absolute authority.

We have already observed that we have nothing directly to do with the *character* of the government under which we live. Our sympathies are certainly on the side of a strong and powerful monarchy owning God and His authority. A state church from the standpoint of the one body of Christ—of real believers only—is, no doubt, unscriptural, but the principle underlying it is certainly of God. Yet in the government of God the national church in this land has proved an incalculable blessing and has wrought much real and lasting good. We insist on a state recognition of divine authority. There are three independent links with God. First, a personal one (Mark xvi. 16); second, a household one (Gen. vii. 1); third, a national one (Jonah iii. 5-10). But while our sympathies and tendencies are with an absolute and universal monarchy (Dan. ii. 37, 38), yet we deprecate any public expression of this in countries where a different order of government obtains, as tending to bring that government into disrepute. The direct intervention of christians in political matters is, we judge, directly opposed to the principles and teachings of the New Testament. Our country or commonwealth is in heaven (Phil. iii. 20). “My kingdom,” said Jesus, “is not of this world” (John xviii. 36). “Let the dead bury their dead.” The Lord will, by and by, secure good government for the world and for that we wait in patience.

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“The powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. xiii. 1). Our relation to them is simply and clearly defined. *First*, “Honour the King” (1 Pet. ii. 17). Both Paul and Peter wrote about the same time, A.D., 60, when Nero, one of the worst of mankind, occupied the throne of the Cæsars. Both Apostles insisted upon unqualified obedience (Rom. xiii. ; 1 Peter ii.) ; the one to Gentile christians, the other to Jewish believers. Exceptional circumstances are rare when disobedience is a bounden duty, but occasions may arise when submission would be positive sin (Acts v. 29), but neither apostle formulates these exceptional cases. Obedience is urged, and that moreover in the full knowledge of the iniquitous character of the supreme head. It is the office which demands reverence and not the character of the personal head of the state—“Honour the *King*.” It is interesting to observe the ground on which these commands are based. Paul urges submission to all higher powers, tracing the authority to its source—God Himself (Rom. xiii. 1 ; so also in John xix. 11) ; whereas Peter commands obedience on the ground of conscience and the practical consequences of disobedience (1 Pet. ii. 12, 15, 17). We are pleased to record our humble tribute of sincere admiration to the illustrious head of these realms. The Queen and Empress of India is a model sovereign. Christians should sternly reject democratic prints and other papers containing scurrilous attacks upon the rulers of the country. Whether King or President, the executive head of the government is entitled, because of his office, to be regarded with honour and treated with all consideration and respect.

Second. All subordinate authorities and human institutions are to be submitted to and cheerful obedience rendered. It is sometimes asked “should ecclesiastical titles be given?” Undoubtedly. The use of any title—ecclesiastical or civil—by which one’s

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place and position are defined, seems to us a simple matter. Any clerical title, from the Pope down to the lowest form of dissent, is a matter about which we do not concern ourselves, and our use of any ecclesiastical term or title does not at all involve our sanction of the term or title, as the case may be (1 Peter ii. 13; Titus iii. 1). Public street preaching, if forbidden by the Magistrates in any given place, should at once be discontinued. It is a greivous dishonour to the Lord when Christians, who ought to be the most obedient and law abiding of subjects, are found arrayed against the authorities. Police prohibition against public out-door assemblage on any subject should in all cases be submitted to.

Third. Not only is complete obedience to be rendered, but the temporal and spiritual blessing of all in authority are to be desired. "I exhort therefore," says the apostle, "that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. ii. 1-2). "Seek the peace of the city," was said to captive Judah, "whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. xxix. 7). Individual and congregational prayer for all, especially for those in authority, that they may be richly blessed in their persons, that they may be endowed with wisdom in framing wise and beneficent laws and be gifted with firmness in their execution, have been sadly neglected of late years. We would be glad to see a return to the primitive custom of the church when kings, emperors, and even cruel persecutors were made subjects of special prayer. In public prayer especially, all rulers, magistrates, legislators, from the Crown downward, should be remembered as a burden on the

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hearts of the saints. Under the providence of God we, in these lands owe much, far more than we are aware of, to those who guide the destinies of the country. A firm and wise administration of the laws conduce greatly to the general welfare, and we as christians gain immensely (1 Tim. ii. 2); besides, which, a true spiritual interest in our rulers is good and acceptable to our Saviour-God (verses 3, 4).

We would now direct attention to the more immediate and domestic relationships of life. The leading portions of the word which treat of these are Eph. v. 22—vi. 9; Col. iii. 18—iv. 1; and 1 Peter ii. 18—iii. 7. Two considerations of importance are worthy of notice. *First*, that those in the most dependent positions are first addressed in words of counsel, encouragement, and strength. Thus wives are addressed before husbands; children before parents; and servants before masters. *Second*, the respective duties and obligations of those occupying any given relationship, are not founded on the character or personal worth of the person or persons to whom they are responsible; but flow from the fact of the relationship—pure and simple—unless idiocy or physical inability prevents, which of course, would equally apply all round. Thus when wives are addressed in relation to their husbands, it is not assumed that the latter are in the Lord; nor when husbands are spoken to, that their wives are in the Lord. It is the relationship in itself simply which demands the fulfilment of obligation and duty. The same principle applies to all governing and governed throughout the whole social system.

1. WIVES.—Owe a twofold duty to their husbands—submission and reverence (Eph. v. 22-23; Col. iii. 18). A high-spirited intellectual woman may be wedded to a man altogether her inferior intellectually and morally, but the obedience of the wife is not to be

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regulated by the character, capacity, or mental endowment of the husband ; it flows solely from the relationship. What, then, is the wife's resource should the husband be unsaved, and perhaps unkind, tyrannical, and unwise in his commands and wishes? Why, yield heart submission to his authority. Seek, too, earnestly, patiently, and prayerfully his salvation. Do not, however, be ever preaching to your husband. God would have you win him "without the word" (1 Peter iii. 1), *i.e.*, without preaching to him, or much talk. Live Christ ; practice the precepts of the gospel, and that will preach a far more powerful, and convincing, and soul-saving sermon than all the talk of which husbands, and men in general, are not specially fond of. Christian wives, you can do all this ; only see the Lord behind your husbands : "Submit yourselves . . . as unto the Lord." Ah ! when we bring in the Lord, the "yoke is easy and the burden is light." The Lord accepts submission to your husband as obedience and service rendered directly to Him. Is yours, therefore, not a sacred duty—a holy privilege? We may observe that wives are not directly told in scripture to love their husbands ; that they seldom fail in. Titus ii. 3-4, is only a *seeming* exception.

2. HUSBANDS.—Are to love their wives with a love strong, enduring, and tender. If the subjection of the christian wife even to an unsaved husband is patterned by the subjection of the church to Christ (Eph. v. 24), so your love to your wife ought to be of this character, viz., Christ's love to His church (Eph. v. 25). There is great danger in a husband soon ceasing to love his wife and grow careless in that tender solicitude for her comfort which should be his daily pleasure. Christ loved the church, even unto death, yea, more, for He gave *Himself* for her. Himself ! the measure of His mighty love ! Then His

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present love is seen, in that He is sanctifying, cleansing, nourishing, and cherishing her, so that she may be His chosen and only companion through the glories and joys of eternity. Then His love will never know pause nor rest, interruption, chill, nor disappointment till He presents her to Himself—spotless and in glory (Eph. v. 27). His love in the past (verse 25), in the present (verse 25), and in the future are thus fully assured, and that, too, whatever her character and ways may be in meantime. Christian husbands, is *that* the manner of your love to your wives? Do not hesitate to express a tender regard in word and action, for in doing so you but copy Christ; and this constant love and care, with the absence of all bitterness (Col. iii. 19)—common enough, we regret to say, to most husbands—are to be in constant exercise even where the character of the wife might afford no claim upon it. The relationship, and not the character of those in it, we repeat, forms the ground of these admonitions (Eph. v.; Col. iii.).

(To be continued D.V.)

CORRESPONDENCE ON THE LORD'S TABLE.

VARIOUS communications have been sent us respecting "the Lord's Table." Specific questions have been asked. We trust the following remarks may meet difficulties suggested by some of our correspondents.

"The Lord's Table" occurs but once in the New Testament (1 Cor. x. 21). Its use in the old (Mal. i. 12 etc.) need not now detain us, only remarking that the employment of the term in both Testaments convey substantially the same general truth, *i.e.*, divine worship as opposed to paganism.

The apostle contrasts the respective systems of

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Christianity and paganism (1 Cor. x. 20, 21), each having its table and its cup of fellowship. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the *Lord*, and the cup of *demons*; ye cannot be partakers of the *Lord's* table and the table of *demons*." The systems signified by the different tables; the fellowship expressed by the respective cups; and christian and pagan worship which have God in the one and Satan in the other as supreme objects of worship, absolutely forbid fellowship in kind or degree.

The Lord's table, then, cannot in its nature be applied to anything less than the *profession of Christianity* in contrast to the system of idolatry set up by Satan. Such seems evidently the force of the expression. The Lord's Table, again, we repeat, is one in which God and Satan and the respective worship of each, is sharply contrasted with that of the table of demons. The force of both terms would be more readily perceived in heathen lands, in which the worship of God and that of demons are carried on almost side by side, yet as widely apart morally, as light is from darkness, and good from evil.

All professing Christians are partakers of the Lord's table, therefore from *it* no company of Christians can put away. If the expression is one which covers the whole area of Christendom, how can you put away from it? But never so speaks Scripture. "Put away from *among yourselves* that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 13). Every company of professing Christians are held responsible by God to clear themselves from evil, but are not directed to do the impossible—put away from the Lord's table—or, in other words, to exclude from Christendom. No body of Christians can claim exclusive possession of the Lord's Table. The claim is readier advanced than proved, and manifests gross ignorance of Scripture and arrogance of spirit. Many of our mistakes on this subject spring from neglect of adhering to the letter of Scripture.

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2. HUSBANDS—*continued*.—Were husband and wife thus walking together, it would be impossible to measure the blessedness of the married life; living in holiness and chaste conversation, together they could bow their knees in the presence of their God and Father, and spread their united and family interests before Him, their prayers unhindered by aught in ways or behaviour unworthy of Christ (1 Peter iii. 7). Trials there will be—in the family, in the church, in the world—but these very trials would the more knit their hearts in one and practically connect them with God and His grace. Blessed union! foreshadowing the marriage scene of Rev. xix. We shall be the Lamb's bride and wife throughout the millennial reign and the eternal ages; the former title telling of bridal love, and the latter of established relationship.

Husbands, even more than their wives, should have knowledge—Christian knowledge—of the duties and relationships of the married state. The wife, because weaker and more dependent is to be honoured, and *he* is to *dwell* with her and *walk* with her as heirs in common of the grace of life (1 Peter iii. 7). How needful these exhortations! How sadly neglected by husbands, to the sorrow and distress of many wives, who long for their husband's society and weep in secret o'er its loss. Husbands ought to remember that they are the *house-band* of the home and family circle.

3. CHILDREN.—The Lord lays upon you the command: "Obey your parents in *all* things; for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. iii. 20); "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Eph. vi. 2). Remember, your obedience and honour are to be rendered equally to father and mother. Some converted children known to us have insisted—against their parents' strongly-expressed wish—to go out at nights to distribute tracts and take part in Gospel preachings

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in halls and streets. Such ways and conduct are positively displeasing to the Lord, and their Gospel service under such circumstances He will *not* accept. Disobedience to parents is a deeply-sorrowful and growing evil, and is a marked sign of the apostacy of Christendom (2 Tim. iii. 2). Christian children, if you desire to please the Lord, let there be ready and full obedience to the slightest expressed wish of your parents. They may be unsaved and may command you to do many painful and even unreasonable things, but yield implicit and unquestioning obedience. The Blessed Lord who died for you, and whose life is your perfect example, was subject to His parents (Luke ii. 51). But perhaps you say, How long is this subjection to continue? So long as you are an inmate of the household. It is no question of age; you may be five, or twenty-five, but unless your parents have voluntarily allowed you to leave the house and live elsewhere, or another relationship as husband or wife be entered upon, the duty of obedience in all things (save in cases of sin) is enjoined by the Lord's authority. We love to repeat it, and long that every Christian child who reads these pages would lay it to heart, that a daily life of obedience to parents is WELL PLEASING UNTO THE LORD. Slang expressions used of parents are the sure indications of a low and vulgar mind, and besides, are hateful to the Lord. Treat your parents with respect and reverence; this is ever followed by governmental blessing, hence the quotation from the law in Eph. vi. 2, 3).

4. FATHERS.—Do not be austere, captious, and ever finding fault. You, specially, are addressed as responsible to train up the children, not for the world, but for heaven, for God, for a blessed eternity (Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21). How is this to be done? According to the character of the Lord's dealings and ways with yourself. It is to be the *Lord's* admonition and nurture, and not the exercise of mere parental authority

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and discipline. Interest yourself in the employments pleasures, games, books, and companions of your children. Many parents have their love, but neither their confidence nor respect. Win the heart's confidence and command the reverence of your household. Let there be cheerful, unrestrained intercourse with every member of the family. If you have a favourite child, do not manifest partiality unless you wish to embitter the lives of the others. Have a blind eye to many little faults of your children. There are many things which a little time, sense, and patience correct; and if you are too severe, and expect angelic conduct and ways from your children, you will only discourage them (Col. iii. 21). All we mean is, do not be continually checking the child. On the other hand do not permit your authority to be called in question, but insist upon prompt obedience in all cases. Use the rod if need's be, but do not be severe; *that* is your danger.

5. MOTHERS.—Do not be over-indulgent, gratifying every wish and whim of your child. You, above all others, can impart delicacy of feeling, purity of thought and deed, and do much in developing the moral character of the children. As a rule, the general state of morals and condition of society may be traced to the wives and mothers. Are they virtuous, modest, irreproachable in character, and godly? then they do more to form the rising generation than all the laws and precepts, however wise, publicly taught in schools, books, platform, and pulpit. Rule by love; yet be kind and firm. Noise is not power. Angry words, and harsh and scolding speeches, may terrify and force submission for the time; but you will never thereby secure the respect and hearty obedience of the members of the household.

6. CHRISTIAN PARENTS—Study to make your households attractive to your children, happy for your domestics, and bright for all who may visit you. Never neglect daily family reading of the scriptures

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and prayer. Should friends call at the hour appointed for "family worship," do not postpone the sacred duty. If they cannot or will not join in the household's remembrance of God, then leave them; for God claims *that* sacred hour or half-hour, or even quarter of an hour as the case may be. Much prayer, much reading of the scriptures, and much hymn-singing in our homes will exercise a more permanent influence upon the future of our children than any amount of public ministry. The happy home circle is the normal sphere for the blessing, growth, training, and cultivation of those high moral and christian qualities which go to make up true Christian men and women.

7. SERVANTS.—As we think of our precious and adorable Lord in His condescending love becoming the Servant of His Father's grace to needy sinners and saints—as we trace His blessed ministry through the sixteen chapters of Mark's Gospel and hear the happy commentary: "He hath done all things well"—our hearts go out in unfeigned love and sympathy to you. Your dependent position exposes you to the caprice, selfishness, and harsh treatment of master or mistress. You are often wronged, and even when no positive act of unkindness is meant, your work is sometimes greatly increased and your hours of labour lengthened by inconsiderate demands and conduct of your social superiors. We count as some of our dearest friends on this side of the glory, servants occupying a humble position socially, yet "*rich* in faith and heirs of the kingdom." On the other hand, we would not for a moment be a party in breaking down existing distinctions in society. We exceedingly fear the inroad of the democratic spirit abroad, which would reduce the political, social, and ecclesiastical states to one dead level. May God preserve writer and reader from the truly awful spirit of *communism* whether in things ecclesiastical or social. But servants, God knew your characteristic failures, and so He has faithfully warned

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you ; He also knew your numerous discouragements, and hence His word abounds with cheer and encouragement.

Christian slaves or servants, then, belong to Christ. He is their Master. Christianity has not abolished the relative position of master and servant, nor does it necessarily snap the fetters of the slave, nor break down the framework of society whether in a free or slave state. It is true that in Christ, as also around the Lord's Table, "there is no difference." What are we in God's sight but sinners redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and all standing on one common platform of grace ? The admonitions to Christian servants are full, precise, and abundant. In spirit they are taken out of the region of man's world. In the actual circumstances of life, they belong to Christ ; in their daily round of toil, they serve Christ ; in obeying even the imperious commands of their master, they are doing God's will. They are to serve with all fidelity, not answering again, even be it to unjust accusation or rough scolding. Are they wrongfully deprived of their wages or insufficiently paid ? They can afford to waive their claims in the meantime, for their wages will be amply paid by Him whose servants they are. Let your service and obedience be simple-hearted and cheerfully rendered to your master whether "good or froward," and your fidelity as to his goods and interests beyond the breath of suspicion. If wrongfully blamed, quietly explain if you can, but if not, keep silent ; and if thus you suffer it is "acceptable unto God," for "*even hereunto were ye called*" (1 Pet. ii. 18-21). Christian servants, whether bond or free, ponder over the exhortations and encouragements presented in the following Scriptures, which were specially written for your admonition and comfort, 1 Cor. vii. 21-23 ; Eph. vi. 5-8 ; Col. iii. 22-25 ; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2 ; Titus ii. 9-10 ; 1 Peter ii. 18-25.

8. MASTERS. — Remember that the act of the

oppressor is seen and the cry of the oppressed heard by One with whom there is no respect of persons, and in the coming day of recompense to many a poor wearied servant, it will be a day of retribution to many a cruel and inconsiderate master. Let there be equal justice and kindly consideration shown for the comfort of all your servants. Do not threaten punishment nor indulge in an imperious will and temper. Exercise your authority wisely, moderately, and considerately. Always bear yourself towards your domestics and work-people in such a manner as to command their loving respect. Habitually remember that you are a pardoned sinner; hence do not be too exacting, while withal firmly maintaining the relative position of master. The Lord of all—of master and servant—occupies the heavens. Solemn consideration for us each one! (Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1).

We would press upon our Christian readers the godly consideration of these matters, so vitally affecting practical christianity and so essential to our glorifying God in every-day life. Let it be ours to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in *all things*.

PRAISE TO SAINTS AND SERVANTS.

It is no light matter to bear the honoured titles, Servant of Christ, and Steward of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1). Hearty, loving, obedient service is due to Christ under the first title. Faithfulness in holding and teaching "the secret things" or mysteries (Deut. xxix. 29), *i.e.*, New Testament truths, is the main characteristic of a Steward of God. Christ has made you a minister of His—go and serve Him. God has committed to you His mysteries or truths—be faithful to the trust.

Now in chap. iii. the solemn responsibility of ministerial service and its issues in loss or reward is enforced and unfolded in terms of severe simplicity. Our sins were judged on the Cross. Our service is to be tested

and tried at the judgment seat. In our chapter we learn that the saints were subjecting Paul to an enquiry or examination as to his service—its character, motives, etc. This enquiry on their part Paul regards with an indifference bordering on contempt, not of them, but of their judgment (verse 3). He was not conscious of being or doing wrong in his service to Christ, or trust to God, not that a good conscience in these respects justified him, but he appeals to the Lord Himself (verse 4). Now, while at all times, brotherly admonition and counsel ought to be listened to from godly and competent persons, yet the principle must be firmly maintained that the servants of Christ are alone and directly responsible in their service to the Lord. "He that judgeth me is the Lord."

Besides, the saints were premature; why judge before the time? (verse 5). The world and angels too are in a coming day to be judged by God's saints (chap. vi. 2, 3). But it is the Lord's own and special prerogative to examine into the character and motives of service done to Him. He has not delegated that right to His church.

"Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God" (verse 5). The word whispered in secret; every petty intrigue meant to hurt a saint or ruin a servant—all morally unlike God and Christ whether committed by clergyman or layman, whether done in the Church or in the world, shall be dragged forth and exposed in its true character in the light of God. Every dark deed of evil in the inquisition and convent; every victim immured within yonder grim walls; the stifled cry of the Lord's prisoner on the rack and in dungeons; the smothered groan; deeds of satanic cruelty and wrong; tears, moans, and miseries unwitnessed and unheard save by the torturers

and the tortured, ALL shall yet give out their secrets in the light. It will be a day of awful exposure and of corresponding retribution.

But "the counsels of the hearts" shall also be revealed. Ah! the Lord knows that many a yearning desire after increased holiness, deeper devotedness, and intense love to Christ, have crossed these hearts of ours. Many a morning which has opened with high and holy purpose has resulted in an evening of broken vows and shame. God took account of the morning counsel formed in the heart, *we* have had to mourn over broken resolutions in our evening meditations.

The counsel in the heart of Peter was to share imprisonment and, if need be, die with his Lord, yet, alas! how quickly the scene changed. Oaths and reiterated denials of all knowledge of the beloved Master only showed out poor Peter and exposed his self-confidence. But the counsels of his heart were all right and godly, and Christ prized them—the love that would have gone to death was precious to the Lord. Our failed and ever-failing resolves to walk worthy of Him who has loved us with an eternal and unchanged affection may have left the counsels in the heart *only*. Now all these desires and breathings after Christ shall be made manifest when the Lord comes. We may have miserably failed in practical life and conduct, while the counsel of the heart was otherwise bent. The spirit gets crushed as we reflect on our moral unlikeness to Christ. But God never forgets that counsel in the heart to *be for* His beloved Son in this world, and the desire to see Him and be like Him. His eye rests in delight on these holy desires, even if not carried into effect as yet. This gives Him ground and opportunity to extract from the heart, if not from the life of *every believer*, something good which He shall speak of to their praise; "Then shall *every* man have praise of God."

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