

W O R D S O F H E L P
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The First Month of the Year.

“THIS month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exod. xii. 2); so spoke Jehovah to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, just before the solemn night of the passover. And just as Israel’s history as a nation began with redemption by blood, so our history as believers began on the day when we first received the Lord Jesus as a Saviour and were sheltered from judgment under His atoning blood.

Whatever our life’s history may have been before that, it does not count with God; the believer’s *real* history begins with redemption. An unblemished lamb was to be taken and its blood sprinkled outside, on the two side-posts and upper door-post of the houses: there it met the eye of a righteous and holy God and enabled Him to pass over the houses of the Israelites.

It is blessed to see that this was God’s own provision in His love to them; so that the requirement of His justice was met by the provision of His love. We find the same thing in John iii., the Son of man *must* be lifted up—Christ *must* die if sinners were to be saved; but the requirement of God’s justice was satisfied by the gift of His love; “God so loved the world that He gave,” etc.

We know well what the antitype of Exodus xii. refers to—“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. v. 7); and His precious blood, applied by faith, screens us from the judgment of God, which otherwise must have fallen upon us.

We cannot be too clear about this fundamental fact which the gospel declares, that it is only in virtue of the blood of God’s Lamb that His salvation is ours. But, in addition to this, God had to teach His people another lesson; they needed not only deliverance from the *guilt* of sin, but from the *power* of sin. This deliverance

they had when they crossed the Red Sea and could see all their enemies dead on the sea shore.

It was altogether God's work ; they had but to stand still and see the *salvation of Jehovah*. It was "that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians." And so they could sing, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously" and celebrate the praises of Him to whom they owed it all.

This was to be deeply impressed upon Israel at the very start of their journey, and it was to mark their history from that day onward. Ever afterwards they were to remember that they were a redeemed people—redeemed by Jehovah. He said, "Remember this day . . . this day came ye out in the month Abib" (Exod. xiii. 1-4). In the book of Deuteronomy it is laid down as an ordinance, that they were to observe that month—the month of their deliverance—regularly every year, continually.

And may not we, who stand on resurrection ground in a risen Christ, take a lesson from all this, which is written for our instruction? Let us begin the year with Him who has won the victory for us ; in whose triumphs we triumph, and in whom we stand. And since we are risen with Christ, let us seek the things which are above, and set our mind on things above, not on things on the earth ; which, alas ! so often attract and weaken the testimony of the people of God.

But merely good resolutions will not suffice : it can only be done in communion with God and as kept by His word ; going on with the Spirit of God ungrieved within us, and with Christ as the living object to fill and satisfy the heart.

He that Winneth Souls is Wise.

Proverbs xi. 30

THE difficulty of getting people under the sound of the gospel message to-day is felt, more or less, by all servants of the Lord who are anxious for the true blessing of souls, and it is the same in almost all parts of the kingdom. Open-air preaching suffers from the same general indifference; few are the places where anything like a crowd is seen around a preacher, however earnest may be his address.

To those christian labourers, men and women, who are unwilling to resort to music, pictures, and other means that seem to deflect from true dependence upon God and His word, and who mourn over the lack of opportunities for service, we venture to point out that the Lord's command is to go to the people *where they are*.

The early part of Luke, chapter x., is to the point here. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come. Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."

The conditions laid down for these labourers are not applicable to us in detail, but to be appointed and sent by the Lord Himself, and to be dependent upon Him who sends us, is of the deepest importance. Nothing less will avail us in face of the indifference and discouragement that so frequently awaits the labourer; and it is important also to keep the end in view—namely, the glory of God in the salvation of souls: in the hope, too, that the word, "Well done, good and

faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," may possibly be ours, "in that day."

Our object in quoting this scripture in Luke, as to sending out to every city and place, is to show the importance of reaching the people in their homes. Happy indeed if two brothers or two sisters can go together; likeminded in their zeal for souls; but this ideal is rarely attainable in these days.

And yet how are we to reach the people, if they will not, or do not, come to us, except by visiting them in their homes, and by personal intercourse seeking to gain their ear for the word of God? It is a kind of labour that calls for faith, courage and patience; while no training or natural gift can compensate for the lack of assurance of being sent by the Lord. We need to hear Him saying to us, "To whom now I send thee," in order that we may be able to speak to others; but having been sent by the Master, what need is there that He will not supply?

Speaking from experience, we would say to those who desire to take up this village work, Be prepared for rebuffs; arm yourself with a parcel of good gospel tracts which will serve as an introduction, and do not be surprised or damped by coldness and even contempt.

You will find that the agents of the enemy of souls have been busy in all directions, and in the most unexpected localities, disseminating the literature of Russellism, Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventism and other soul-destroying doctrines. These agents leave few parts unreached, and as a rule are capable and earnest in disseminating their doctrines.

But the One whom we serve is He to whom all power in heaven and on earth is given; and His word by the apostle Peter supplies us with much needed help here, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to (or have in) your faith courage, and to courage knowledge (or tact)" (2 Peter i. 5-8). These are needed elements

in this individual work; and the other graces in this scripture are sure to be needed as we go on. Let us also remember His word, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age."

In these outlying districts that for the moment we are contemplating, there will be found many old folks, past work, left in charge of the cottage homes, who are the only occupiers. Mothers also, busy with their family cares, who seldom get to church, chapel, or suchlike places. These are often glad of a visit or a cheery word, and listen, it may be while at work, to a simple message of grace. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

We remember being much struck on several occasions, when journeying in the Lord's service by an early Sunday morning train, to a town on the river Thames, to find that the majority of the passengers were fishermen, going to favourite resorts on the river for a day's sport.

With what interest these men discussed the state of the river, the weather, the fly or bait most likely to catch fish, and so on. They were fishers intent on their work: and what a lesson to one who would fain be a fisher of men was to be learnt from their devotedness! How it brought to mind the many earnest exhortations of the apostle Paul to his beloved Timothy: Watch, endure, work, prove, and "give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all."

Many a young man who has set out in gospel work with earnest desire for the blessing of souls has been spoiled by the training supposed to be necessary for a preacher; but if the Lord gives the gift of an evangelist, every need for the work is to be found in the Holy Spirit's power and the word of God.

There is an old story of a reed-lute which, in its original rude, crude, native simplicity, gave forth notes of unusual sweetness. Someone, thinking to improve

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it, varnished and gilded it. It henceforth lost its peculiar power. It shone with the glitter of gold, but it no longer breathed the sweet purity of melody as before. Comment is needless!

Doubtless the great difficulty in the present day is to awaken conscience. A well-known preacher says on this point, "I fear the work of definite soul awakening is far less frequently witnessed now than, say, thirty years ago." And another servant of God left behind him the trenchant words, "Learn to grapple with souls. Aim at the conscience. Exalt Christ." To this we might add, Be earnest in prayer.

T. R.

"It is The Lord!"

(John xxi.)

THE thick darkness that had gathered over all the land, and had rested like a "night of deepest woe" on Golgotha's cross, had passed away; and the calm, sweet "peace" of the resurrection morning had arrived; for the One who had "offered Himself without spot to God," and "had tasted death for everything," had risen triumphantly from among the dead. And, "when the morning was now come," we read, "Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew that it was Jesus."

They had seen the empty grave; they had seen and heard Him, when, shut in "for fear of the Jews," He spake "peace" unto them; they had again seen and heard Him "eight days after," under touching circumstances (1 John i. 1); yet now He was unrecognised—unknown!

"We change—He changes not"; and how often it happens when the view of Him becomes dim, the tendency of the heart is to return to things left long ago for His sake; like the children of Israel, who, in

their hearts, turned back to Egypt. It is not that we are unsaved; but Jesus risen has not been truly apprehended and proved by us.

Of the seven disciples referred to in verse 2 of our chapter, three of whom had been great confessors (John i. 49; vi. 68, 69; xx. 28), Simon Peter is the first named. He once had said, "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee!" (Mark x. 28). It was a sorrowful path they were then treading, "in the way going up to Jerusalem." "Jesus went before them"; "as they followed they were afraid," for He was going to endure shame and spitting (x. 34); going alone into the waters of death, "to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45). To Peter, on another occasion, He had said as to this, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me *now*" (John xiii. 36).

It is in Luke v. 11, we find it recorded of Peter and the sons of Zebedee that they "brought their ships to land, forsook all, *and followed* Jesus." During the whole of the previous night they had toiled in vain; but, at the Lord's word, they let down their *net* (though He had said, "*nets*"), and it brake, for the "great multitude of fishes" enclosed; and the ships were "filled," and "began to sink."

Another has remarked concerning this incident, "The veil had dropped off from the face of the Nazarene, and the glory of God shone out. Who, but God, could have commanded the wealth of the lake into Peter's net? So Peter's conscience, coming in contact with the glory, found out that he was a sinner."

Now, in John xx., the Lord appeared to His disciples as the risen Head of the new creation—

"Conqueror both of death and hell."

Old things had passed away; and all things had become new. The clouds of ignorance (verse 9), of sorrow (verse 15), of fear (verse 19), of doubt (verse 25), were, one by one, dispersed by the sunshine of His presence;

yet for all this these disciples acted as if He had left them shepherdless; and the one who had boasted the loudest of leaving all to follow Him, "even unto death," was the first to intimate his intention of going back to that condition of things in which the Lord had first met him; and his, "I go a-fishing," was responded to by, "We also go with thee."

How graciously the Lord is seen to act towards them in John xxi. !

The lesson of Luke v. had, in its way, to be learnt all over again; though resulting in increased responsibility; therefore, here, as then, He presents Himself as the One suited to their need. For this purpose He came down to their level (verse 6) and said, "Cast the *net*" (not "*nets*" this time); and "Simon Peter . . . drew the net to land full . . . yet was not the net broken."

Again, "The veil dropped off from the face of the Nazarene." The Lord thus showed His toiling disciples that He had part with them in their work, though it was afterwards apparent they were having part in His work: for He had been before them in it (verses 8, 9, 10).

And now came out the recognition of affection; and the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (and who knew it) was the one who, with quickened eye, discerned his Master; and, may we say, with enraptured heart, exclaimed, "It is the Lord!"

Space compels us to pass over His gracious dealings with Peter on this occasion; but we would notice that there is a sweet prayer in the Song of Solomon (chapter i. 4) that says, "Draw *me*; *we* will run after thee." Peter's "I go a-fishing" may lead his colleagues one way; but John's "It is the Lord!" like the Baptist's meditative utterance, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John i. 35-39), will lead to the Son of God, not merely in order to "Come and see" where He dwells (John i. 39), but to "Come and dine" (John xxi. 12); and to do

His bidding, "Follow Me," "Follow thou Me,"—to the Father's House (John xiv. 2).

Surely, in the presence of such grace, we dare not, cannot talk of our love to Him; but may we be ever so conscious of His love to us (Rev. i. 5), that, in all circumstances, whether of joy or sorrow, we may know how, and when, to say—

"IT IS THE LORD!"

N. L. N.

"Things which must shortly come to pass."

THE opening chapter of the Revelation is truly in keeping with the whole character of that remarkable book. It is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave unto Him.*" He is spoken of distinctly *as man*, in the place of dependence and obedience; a truth which we find so often in the gospel of John.

How striking it is, in a gospel like that of John, which opens with such an unfolding of the glory of the Person of Him who was the eternal Word, the Son, God and with God, to find that He ever takes and always keeps, the humble place of obedience to the Father's will. His words and His works were those which the Father had *given* Him to speak and to do. This was His place here.

We might also venture to suggest that the same thing is seen in the way the Lord is spoken of in Acts ii. 33, where it is said, "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Though exalted on high, He is still viewed as man, having received the Holy Ghost in order to shed Him forth.

Considering this truth from our own point of view, how precious it is to remember that Christ is still a man, and that having once taken up human nature, He will retain that nature for ever. We may well say, "Why, O Lord, hast Thou shown such infinite grace towards such unworthy creatures? Why hast Thou found Thy delights with the sons of men?"

This book of Revelation is a book of judgment all through. Judgment, though God's "strange work," is a thing which *must* be, because when God gives any privilege, we are responsible for its use; also His glory must be maintained intact. We have in chapters ii. and iii. judgment on the professing church; and from chapter iv. onward judgment on the world, in order that the scene may be cleared of evil and opposition, preparatory to the establishment of the glorious kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As we contemplate such a fact as this we cannot help feeling what a solemn thing it is to see this very Christendom in which we live going rapidly on to its final doom. Indeed, the shadows of the apostasy are falling round us more and more manifestly every day. God would have His servants instructed beforehand; He would take us to the mountain top of His own thoughts, as He did Abraham of old, that there, in communion with Him, we might see everything in the clear light of His presence and understand what the world is and what is its end.

John "testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, all things that he saw" (new translation). It is true that the "word of God" here contemplates, more especially, the book of Revelation, yet in view of the vast importance of it in the present crisis, we may well say a little on the subject generally.

The word of God is God's revelation of and from Himself, perfectly adapted to man, meeting every need of his soul, bringing to him light and truth which he

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never could have known without it. Both life and light are in it, we are "born again" by it, and the practical daily cleansing which the believer needs is through "the washing of water by the word."

Besides this, it is that on which we are wholly dependent in this evil day. And by it the man of God is fully equipped for every good work. The word of God, learnt in communion with God, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, is sufficient for all times no matter how difficult they may be.

"All things that he saw"—those pictures given us from chapter iv. onward, all passed before John in Patmos as successive parts of a panorama, and he was inspired to write them for the benefit of the church of God, as well as for those witnesses who shall follow us after the close of the church's history, that is, after the end of the history given in chapter iii.

A special blessing is pronounced on the one who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy—perhaps the reason it is said on the "hearers" is because in those days they had not printed Bibles as we have, and were dependent on what they heard read in the assembly. And it is not only those who read and hear but those who *keep* the things written therein.

Oh, how important is that word "keep"! The exhortation to keep something supposes the danger of that thing being taken away or neutralised by something else. In chapter iii. the Lord commends the church at Philadelphia for keeping His word, also the word of His patience.

Again, chapter xxii. 7, exhorts us to *keep* the words of the prophecy of this book, in view of the near coming of the Lord. So also in the gospel of John He speaks much of keeping His commandments and keeping His word; this surely is our privilege as well as our responsibility during the time of His absence. And we may well remind ourselves of how Paul exhorts Timothy to

keep, by the Holy Ghost, the good deposit of the truth entrusted to him (2 Tim. i. 14).

"The time is at hand" (verse 3); with this we may connect what is said in verse 1, "things which must shortly come to pass." If we take the dates in our Bibles, it is now about 1,832 years since these things were written, but God does not account of time as we do; with Him one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

But how much nearer it is now than it was then! The history of the seven churches, chapters ii., iii., has well-nigh run its course, and the close of the dispensation seems to be coming rapidly on. What a joy this is for the true believer, what a solemn and awful time for the world, especially for the professedly christian world, which has brought upon itself a guilt even worse than that of Chorazin and Bethsaida of old.

Those cities rejected Christ when He was here—Christendom has also refused the testimony of the Holy Ghost and despised the grace which, at the cost of all the sufferings of the cross, has offered a wealth of blessing to all who, with the heart, believe the gospel which God sends out so freely to-day. May we who know His grace respond to it better from our heart and soul!

F. G. B.

"My Sheep."

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

HOW blessed to follow the Good Shepherd! No harm can befall the sheep when under *His eye* and *care*. How tenderly the Shepherd *leads*! And the sheep, which gently follow in His footsteps, are *safe* and *secure*. What a Shepherd; what a Saviour!

A short time since I was musing on that portion, "Christ is made unto us, Wisdom, and Righteousness,

and Sanctification, and Redemption." What does the believer lack? Nothing! Christ is everything, *in time*, and for *eternity*. How poor we feel at times, and yet, at that moment, how rich we are! Oh! that we may draw on our resources at all times, not only when we feel in want, but when we do not.

Christendom is tottering and going on to judgment; Religion is losing its *hold* on the hearts of men; but *Christianity* is Christ, and must endure. Amidst the *wreck* of *Christendom*, ones and twos are found here or there, testifying to the truth of *Christianity*.

We ought to be wise; but often we are not. Well, He is Wisdom! *Christendom* is seeking human righteousness on the principle of law; but Christ is our righteousness. It is true we come short as to separation (of heart) from the world and its things, but Christ is the measure and the model of our sanctification (John xvii. 17, 19).

Do we not come short in the constant enjoyment of *Him* who is our sanctification? Oh, for a closer walk with *Him* and a *practical* knowledge of this sanctification!

We talk of *Redemption*; but do we understand its deep meaning? He is our *Redemption*. Not only has He redeemed our souls, but He *is* our redemption. God will remove every trace of weakness and accomplish *full* deliverance by His power in Christ, for the body as well as the soul.

Well might the apostle say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We are the possessors of all things in Christ.

H.M.H. (*St. Vincent*).

Divine Life and Its Effects—I.

(An Address by W. Trotter, of York, given November, 1850.)

CHAPTER read, *Romans xii.* There is nothing that so essentially distinguishes the christian from all other men as this, that he possesses a life of which all others are destitute; "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And this life, which those who have the Son possess, is, in its objects, its tendencies and its spirit, just what it was manifested to be in the Son Himself when He was down here upon earth.

It is in Christ, and by living union with Him we have life. This life is in us derivatively, and it will surely manifest itself in the same way in which it did in Him who possessed it essentially and underived—the same way as it did when He tabernacled here in flesh—in Him of whom it was said, "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."

Now of this life which thus manifests itself in actual practical likeness to Jesus, conformity to Him, all who, through grace believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are partakers. But it is not enough, beloved friends, to possess this life. All are safe who possess it; but, for the *manifestation* of it here below, the possession of it is not sufficient.

There are many who possess the life, in whom it is very imperfectly shown forth; and indeed in all it is imperfectly manifested. But there are those who possess it in whom it is seen but little; and necessarily so because of various circumstances, which have to be considered.

Life must be at liberty in order that there should be any suitable manifestation of it. If you were to take a new-born infant and wrap it round with bandages, so

as to restrain the life within from manifesting itself, as it surely would if unrestrained, we know what the result would be. The child might live, it might even continue to live, but it would be a stunted life—a life very imperfect—the manifestation of it would necessarily be very limited.

Now there are multitudes of christians who have life, but through not knowing the liberty of the gospel—liberty which the grace of God reveals in the gospel—the life in them is stunted most fearfully. I may be a partaker of this life, and through not knowing that full and perfect work which Christ has accomplished for me on the cross, and that place of perfect acceptance in which it has set me before God and the Father, I may be, even though a partaker of the life (the very possession of which proclaims that I am forgiven and accepted), seeking this forgiveness and acceptance as though I possessed them not.

If that be my state, though there be the life, as we see in many christians, there is no *assurance* of forgiveness, no perfect knowledge of that acceptance which we have in Christ. And consequently the very service of God, which the life—the new life within—leads to : that very service, is directed to an end which has been accomplished for believers in the work of Christ upon the cross. You will sometimes find christians serving Christ *in order to make sure* of their acceptance, instead of serving without terms, in the sense of the full and perfect acceptance which God's grace has already bestowed.

The fact is, beloved friends, that unless we know the liberty of the gospel, we may be partakers of this life, and so be safe ; but to a very great extent self will be the centre round which our thoughts revolve. Self will be the object to which our efforts are directed, and thus it will hinder the manifestation of the divine life. For just in proportion as self is our centre and

object; instead of manifesting the divine life which we have in Christ, we are preventing and hindering that manifestation.

Christ is the centre, the glory of God the object of this new, this divine life, of which through grace, we have been made partakers. Until the conscience is set at rest entirely, by the knowledge, by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, of what the grace of God has accomplished for us, in the perfectly accepted sacrifice of Christ; we are not at liberty to revolve around this new and blessed centre—Jesus.

From Him it is our life flows, but we are not free to pursue this one object with undivided heart and aim, to the glory of Him who has saved us by His grace and called us with such a calling as is revealed to us in Christ, until we are set at rest by the knowledge of what God has accomplished for us through Him.

Now in the previous part of this inspired epistle to the Romans, the heart has been set at rest entirely on this question. The eighth chapter sums up the whole of that which precedes it. It begins with "No condemnation" and it ends with "No separation." Well, beloved, the soul is planted there, in the assured certainty of God's love, and of its never being separated from it; before the exhortations are addressed to us.

Of course, none can receive these exhortations but those who both possess the life and know the love of God as manifested in this portion which we have been looking at. None can feel the force of the exhortation, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," but such ones. And so we read, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

"Holy, acceptable," and is it not our reasonable service? What! has God in His grace, forgiven all through the accomplished redemption that is in Christ,

His perfectly accepted sacrifice? What! has He perfectly justified us, and set us in the consciousness of His unchanging and inalienable love, partaker of the very life of Christ Himself? Surely He has.

Oh! is it not then our "reasonable service" that we should have no thought, or aim, or end but the glory of Him who has thus saved us by His grace—that we should "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service."

"A sacrifice," and so all title or proprietorship over ourselves has been renounced. And it is a "living sacrifice" because it is not a sacrifice by which sin has to be put away. It would have been a *slain* sacrifice if that were the case.

There was but One fitted to be that *slain* sacrifice, even that holy Lamb of God who has been slain for us; our "Passover" slain for us. Oh! then, beloved, is it not our reasonable service to present our bodies a thank-offering; a continual, daily, hourly, thank-offering for the grace which has provided and accepted that perfect, blessed, slain sacrifice, through which our sins have been put away and every question settled that could disturb our hearts as to our relationship with God? Well, it is the heart thus set at rest that is exhorted, "I beseech you therefore, to present your bodies," etc.

There is one other point to which I would refer. Not only must I be a partaker of the life—for without that I am "dead in trespasses and sins" and hastening down to perdition—not only must I know the perfect acceptance in Christ of those who are partakers of this life, and so be free from the trammels that would otherwise restrain and hinder its expression, but the life must have both exercise and food.

Accordingly, in the first epistle of Peter, 2nd chapter, the exhortation is, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk

of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The life within must be nourished—nourished by suited food; and that food, as we know, is the whole word of God.

That word is ministered to us by the Holy Ghost, and so suited portions of it must be brought to bear upon our consciences and hearts in a way suitable to our actual growth in this new and divine life. There must be the actual sustenance of the life by suited food, or it becomes weak and sickly, and, as it were, ready to die.

(To be continued.)

The Sailor's Loyalty.

MISS AGNES WESTON, so well called "The Sailors' Friend," used to tell a pretty little anecdote in connection with an interview she had with Queen Victoria.

It appears that one of our Jack Tars, arriving at Devonport, found his way to the Sailors' Rest there. When he was shown the cabin that had just been presented to the Rest by Her Majesty, he asked whether it was really provided at the Queen's own cost and given out of her private purse. On being told that it was so, the sailor was much moved. He dashed away a tear, saying, "I never would have believed it unless I saw it. She has always been my Queen, now she is my friend!"

Is it not so with our souls? We have been glad to escape the wrath of God, and to have our doom in hell-fire averted. Indeed, some measure of gratitude may have arisen to the One who so kindly undertook our cause. But it is only as we discover at what a cost to Himself He wrought our salvation, that the affections of our heart are drawn out to Him. For we "were not

redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Ours is a "blood-sealed friendship." "The cost—His precious blood."

It is as we realise that Christ *suffered* for sins to bring us to God, that our love ascends to Him in worship. The more we know of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes *became poor*, that we through HIS POVERTY might be rich," we exclaim, like the sailor, "He has always been my Saviour, now He is my Friend."

Miss Weston added that on relating this incident to the Queen, the aged and beloved monarch was so affected that she wept.

And God has His share in our joy, and the Lord Jesus has His part too, as grace gives to us all thoughts in common about that precious blood, so that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i.).

E.R.M.

Gleanings.

SELF-JUDGMENT. The normal state of a Christian is, to walk in communion with God, according to the power of that which has been revealed. Is there failure in this?—if so communion is lost, and with it the power to glorify God—a power found nowhere else. But if one judges oneself, there is restoration: the heart being cleansed from the evil by judging it, communion is restored. If one does not judge oneself, God must interpose and correct and cleanse us by discipline, which discipline may even be unto death (see Job xxxiii; xxxvi; 1 John v. 16; James v. 14, 15)

What we have to do is not only to judge an evil committed, it is to discern one's condition, as it is

manifested in the light—even as God Himself is in light—by walking in it. This prevents our falling evil either in act or thought.

But if we have fallen, it is not enough to judge action; it is ourselves we must judge, and the of heart, the tendency, the neglect, which occasion our falling into the evil—in a word, that which is communion with God, or that which hinders it. It was thus that the Lord dealt with Peter. He did not reproach him for his fault, He judged its root.

J.N.D.

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If we have learnt to know love, we have learnt to know Jesus, such as He is for us; and He is what we need for us.

* * *

The Lord give us to know while passing through this world what a Christ we have, taking our hearts clear out of the defiling circumstances around, so that whether we get a taste of the glory, or are passing through the crowd of this world, He may be everything to us, as He is everything for us.—J.N.D.

A Golden Chain.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. iv. 6).

“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, I will guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine” (John xv 13, 15).

Completeness of the Bible.

WE find in the Bible, when read prayerfully, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, a complete guide for our path through this world. Being a revelation of and from God, it differs most markedly from every other book. All others grow old and we weary of them; this one has a perennial freshness, a vitality, which marks it as divine.

Leading prelates of to-day tell us that the old order of things was very good for men of past ages—times of comparative ignorance—but that now the advance of science and knowledge has changed everything, and we must adapt our worship, our prayers, our thoughts, to present conditions.

Is God, then, to bow to human wisdom and to the varying ideas of the men of this age? Is He who created this vast universe, of which we know, comparatively, so little, obliged to adapt Himself to the new discoveries of the day? Is He who "*upholds* all things by the word of His power" to learn from man, the creature whom He has created? Vain delusion it is to think so!

As the Lord said to Job long ago, "Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty? He that argueth with God, let him answer it" (Job xl. 2, R.V.). Science is very good in its place, but God's word alone can teach us of Him and instruct us as to what is suitable to Him.

But to the simple and humble christian God has given in the Bible that to which he can turn in every time of perplexity and difficulty—a sure guide amidst the varying circumstances of daily life. To the servant of God—be he an evangelist thirsting for souls—it furnishes a gospel which can reach down to the vilest sinner and

bring a complete remission of sins through the precious blood of Christ.

To the teacher in the church of God it gives a wealth of spiritual food fitted for every time and class. To the pastor it gives suited help and wisdom for his work. To the weary, way-worn saint it gives the most precious cheer and encouragement, and it holds out before him the joyous hope of the rising of the bright and morning star, Jesus Himself, for whom he waits. To the man of God it gives all that is necessary to equip him for his work.

Oh, to feed upon the word of God, to meditate upon it, to find Christ in its pages—in types and shadows in the Old Testament, in actuality in the New! Not merely to read a chapter and lay down the book, but to prove it to be the joy and rejoicing of the soul, the food and sustenance of the new life within, our peace amidst the storms of this world. O God, our gracious Father, may this be our portion for the coming year; in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen!

Little Things.

LITTLE things! How apt we are to despise them or to be discontented with them. We are inclined to resent the multiplicity of apparently unrelated trivialities which every-day life presents to us. Like Naaman, we look for something spectacular, or, at least, an experience that will rise above the level of ordinary humdrum existence. Occasionally, some wise man has seen the mistake of the general appraisal of things commonly deemed insignificant. One such has suggested that the most insignificant thing becomes full of interest if studied deeply enough. Another has said,

“He who is a christian in little things is not a little christian.”

For instruction as to their value we must turn to the Word of God. That Word is a lamp to the feet as well as a light to the path. It is as the sun, which, though it illumine the whole world, will send a ray through the lowly cottage window to reveal and lustre the homely objects of its humble rooms. In many a biblical biography the divine interest in, and use of, little things is made manifest, as the pure light of the Word of Truth reveals how they are inter-related and linked up with God's purposes.

Of this, the histories of Joseph and Moses afford eminent examples. But far surpassing even these in interest are the little things connected with the advent and mission of the Saviour which were used in the effectuation of the divine counsels concerning Him. For example, the bringing of the Virgin Mary to Bethlehem by a census decree, so that His birth there fulfilled a prophecy given to Micah more than seven hundred years previously. Of what deep, abiding, sacred interest, too, is the direction that the spices which formed the sweet incense burnt upon the golden altar should be beaten “very small” (Exod. xxx. 36) on account of the preciousness of their typical significance of the moral graces and perfections of Christ, that in every minute circumstance and every activity of His life afforded ineffable delight to God the Father.

For the christian God's word offers exceeding great encouragement as to the little things in his daily life. And this in two ways. It reveals that he is under a close but loving surveillance that is making all things work together for his good (1 Peter iii. 12; Romans viii. 28). And it shows how, even in commonplace matters, he may render acceptable service to the Lord. Again, the Lord may link the little things of human life into a golden chain or He may use them separately

for His own gracious and glorious purposes. The five barley loaves and two small fishes that Andrew brought to His notice He uses in feeding the five thousand He had been teaching in His compassion for them, until the evening had set in; thereby fulfilling another prophecy.

Even stones (words) of offence cast at Him, He turns into sparkling gems of wisdom and grace (Luke v. 30-32 and xv.). He observes the widow's mites cast into the Treasury and the repentant outcast's tears that fell upon His feet in the Pharisee's house; and sets a rare value upon both. He tells us that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, but also that the cup of cold water given to a little one in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose its reward. He is ever ready to impress a divine value on the humblest service rendered to Him or the feeblest response to His word and grace. Mal. iii. 16, 17; Matt. xviii. 20; Luke xii. 35-38; xxii. 28; Rev. iii. 8-10). This is beautifully developed in Colossians iii. 17 to end.

What a dignity this confers upon a christian. It places within the reach of all classes and conditions of "His own"—wives, children, servants and their correlatives—the priceless privilege of pleasing our well-beloved Lord and of glorifying God. And it presses into that privileged service the common, menial or routine duties of everyday life, even as 1 Cor. x. 31, tells us, eating and drinking. Unspeakably tender is the grace that brings the comprehensive words "whatsoever ye do" to all in Col. iii. 17, and again specially gives them to servants in ver. 23. May we then, while the stream of life is slipping by, dip up the golden opportunities it every moment presents to us, rather than waste time in regrets at the lack of sphere or circumstance for the accomplishment of some *great* thing.

A. J. H.

Divine Life and Its Effects.—2.

(An Address by W. Trotter, of York, given November, 1850.)

THE life we possess must be sustained by suited food or it becomes weak and sickly and ready to die; but besides food, beloved, there must be exercise. That was the thought especially on my heart in reading this chapter (Rom. xii.). As I have said, there must not only be life, and the life unrestrained by the trammels that effectually hinder its manifestation, until we know the liberty with which Christ has made us free. So there must not only be the food suited for the nourishment of that life, but the life must have *exercise*.

Recurring again to natural things—an infant might have no restraints to the development of its life such as those of which I was speaking a little while ago. It might have life, and the life might have liberty unrestrainedly to manifest itself: the infant also might have food, and abundance of it too; but as it grows up it must have exercise, or if it has not, you know the consequence.

So the divine life within us must have exercise also. Now the value of these chapters is, that they afford exercise to the life which we have as one with a glorified Christ. And that life must have exercise in accordance with the nature and objects of the life itself. All these exhortations are in order that we may walk “as Christ also walked.” “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked.” “I have given you an example,” He said, “That ye should do as I have done to you.” And so it is, as we find all the way through.

Now let us look briefly at our chapter, glancing at the several principles as we come to them. In the first place there is the unreserved surrender of all to God, that is in the first verse. In considering the importance

of that let us ask, What do we see in Jesus Himself? The unreserved dedication of Himself to God.

So we read, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God." And, in that case, what is specially referred to as the doing of God's will is, the laying down of His life, that we might be "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Well, beloved, our consecration of ourselves to God cannot stop short of giving up our life, if that be requisite, for the divine glory. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." And surely the grace that saved us and led Him to lay down His life for us, has a claim upon our hearts even to the giving up of our lives for Him.

So we find it was with the apostles; "they loved not their lives unto the death," as we know was the case with some—Paul said, "I count not my life dear unto myself." We should thus consecrate and give up ourselves to God even as the apostles did.

Well, the 2nd verse says, "Be not conformed to this world." So that if I am living like the world around me, I am not living like a christian; because the life within, which we have in union with Christ, is essentially distinct from, and contrasted with, the whole course of the world around. It has nothing in common with it; it is from heaven, and tends to heaven; whilst those that are around are occupied with some object beneath the sun.

"Be not conformed to this world." The word here rendered "world" is literally "age," as all who are acquainted with the subject know. And it is very solemn in that point of view, "Be not conformed to

this age.” If there be one thing more serious than another in the course of professing christians at large, it is the way in which the spirit of the age is drunk into by them.

It is, indeed, lauded and commended, without the least apparent sense of what is involved in it; even asserting that it is the place and duty of the christian to take part in promoting those things which come from the spirit of the age—they are carried away by it.

Well, this is the exhortation, “Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” You were carried away by the spirit of the age before you were partakers of this new life—before you were partakers of the grace of God in the gospel—but be no longer “conformed” thereto: rather “Be ye transformed” to the very opposite. I do not dwell farther on this now but pass on.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me”—Oh! what a contrast there is, beloved, to what the spirit of the world, the spirit of this age, is! The latter is the spirit of boasting—vain man boasting of what his power has accomplished, of what he has achieved and of what he will achieve. The apostle says, “For I say, *through the grace given unto me.*” etc.

Even in addressing an exhortation like this to his brethren, he acknowledges that it is through the grace given unto him. It is not through any wisdom of his own, or because it is fit or suitable, that he exhorts them. It is “through the grace given unto him” that he says it. “I say . . . to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think,” etc.

Oh! that this indeed were attended to by us. Should we have such thoughts of ourselves as, alas! we are

prone to have if this were the measure by which we judged ourselves, "the measure of faith"? The fact is, that whatever in us—in our conduct or in our course—that springs not from faith, is just so much sin, is just so much shame and humiliation before God.

Whether it be in our ordinary course, or in any special actings for God amongst one another, or in any ostensible service to God in the world; there is nothing of the least value in God's sight but what springs from faith. What does not spring from faith, and is not characterised by faith, is not of the least service or pleasure to God.

Thus we read, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him;" this is how the apostle speaks of it. The measure in which we please God, is just the measure in which our actions are conformed and moulded and regulated by faith. Oh! dear friends, if we did thus judge ourselves; if we did nothing but what, before we did it, we were sure before God that we did it in faith, how many things that we feel ourselves competent for, should we shrink from!

And now the apostle goes on to speak—and this is the introduction to it—of the membership of the one body of Christ, and of our being "members one of another"; also of the "members not having the same office." Thus he gives principles for our guidance in the Lord's service, as "having presented our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service."

These principles for our guidance are given to us as those who have consecrated ourselves thus to God, in the service that we have to render to one another; in fact, in God's assembly, the church.

Now, beloved, what is to keep the several members of the one body each in his proper place, not assuming

the place which has been assigned to another, nor despising the place which has been assigned to himself; but each in his own place, fulfilling his own service to God? What is to keep us in this blessed harmony, serving the Lord and one another, each in the place assigned to him in the body?

Oh! here is the direction; "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." What we can do in faith toward God, with the certain consciousness, in communion with Him, of its being His mind for us to do, *just so much* we do without getting out of our place, and without encroaching on the place of another.

(To be continued.)

A Letter on Prayer Meetings.

I DO not desire to set before you a meditation, but simply some thoughts on the subject of our prayer meetings. My object is to exhort the brethren to prayer, and I take my own part in this exhortation for I feel my weakness on this subject and I pray God to bless what is said to myself and to all of us.

The truth is that we do not sufficiently realize the liberty which God has given to us when we come together for prayer. I understand that some brothers only, and nearly always the same ones, take part in prayer audibly. It appears that other brothers do not join in it except by their Amen. Surely this should not be thus. Why all these closed mouths? Is it timidity which is the cause of it? Or is it that they mistakenly leave all to those brothers who are more

prominent by reason of their activity in the assembly?

Does this silence arise from a fear of being criticized by our brethren? A sad reason truly! Such a motive is not at all valid. I may be told that *all* the brothers could not take part in prayer because the meeting would be prolonged indefinitely. Would it then be so very regrettable if for once or twice the prayers should be so numerous that the hour of the meeting was exceeded?

On the other hand, alas, it too often happens that the lack of communion of a brother causes him to engage in what I might call rather a discourse than a prayer; and in that case we have to ask ourselves if the brother in question has any idea of what prayer is.

Let us, then, avoid these long prayers which have more to do with the flesh than with the Spirit. Such a state of things will never result in encouraging the young brothers among us to prayer in the assembly. Instead of imitating the brother who has prayed before them, these young brothers remain silent. But if, on the contrary, the meeting were, on account of numerous brothers, prolonged by even half-an-hour, there would result from it much blessing to the assembly and to all those who take part in it.

The conclusion which I would draw from these reflections is, that not only every brother present amongst those who are on their knees in prayer should not rise without having taken part, but also that such should not be held back by fleshly and blameworthy reasons, as, for example, not knowing how to express oneself.

Is it so that the Holy Spirit does not know how to express Himself? Again, I would ask these brothers if they do not know how to express themselves when they pray in the family circle? Let us, then, be forgetful of self when we are on our knees before our God

and Father, and let us be assured that we can and ought to open our mouths in all liberty before Him.

Let us return to what we said at the beginning of this letter. We believe that we may affirm that it is timidity which most frequently keeps our mouths closed. The end of the meeting, when we are retiring from it, proves this. We are not happy, some need has come before our heart and spirit and we have kept silent instead of spreading it out before the Lord.

I would appeal to those to whom such a case has frequently happened. We must, then, overcome this timidity; and has not the Lord given us the means and the motive for doing so? "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God" (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

Let us also quote Heb. iv. 14-16, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart." With such passages, should we not be filled with confidence and all fear be banished from our hearts?

All the evils from which assemblies suffer, such, for example, as party spirit (which, by its fruits, causes us to mourn and to experience feelings of shame) would be very quickly dispelled and the gathering of the faithful would realize, as at the beginning of the Acts, the joy, the peace and the freshness of the assembly, if we had a truer estimate of the value of prayer meetings and if our hearts were continually more in exercise when we come together.

In a prayer meeting, even if some exhortations are in place, a *meditation* is never suitable. It is a meeting *for prayer*. Let us therefore remain on our knees, even

if we must go through long times of silence.* These latter will be profitable, for the Lord can do His work in silence. Let us not, then, fail to remain on our knees in prayer. *There* is our strength, our safeguard; and there will flow from it joy and peace for each one in particular, and for the assembly also.

It is said in the Acts, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts i. 14). Is not this a scene of much beauty characterising a prayer meeting? And how this word "persevering with one accord" addresses itself to our hearts!

May we, then, have our prayer meetings much at heart and not fail to be there. May we also be of the same mind as those who persevered with one accord in prayer, and so much the more because the coming of the Lord is very near. A.B.

* Long silences in prayer meetings may proceed from a dead state, from formality and a want of heart for Christ. In that case they are to be deplored. If it be a question of real waiting upon God, the case of course is different. Simplicity and earnestness in prayer; realising that we are speaking to God, not merely to one another—*this* is the great thing. (ED.)

"Your Mortal Bodies."

HE was such a fine aristocratic-looking old gentleman, with all the dignified military bearing of an officer of the time of Queen Victoria. In spite of his four-score years and more, he had spoken at some length, and with great power, on the various offices of the Holy Ghost.

He had just reached his last point, in Rom. viii. 11, as to what the Holy Ghost is yet going to do for us in the future. This was his illustration :— Every year I go to the Isle of Wight. I make a point of going each summer to look at a little house near Ryde. I am not sure that it more than a cottage. Most probably if you saw it, you would call it a cottage. But I love it. Every brick of it is dear to me, and each year I take the steamer and cross the water so that I may have another look at it. Unfortunately now, the place is occupied by strangers, so that I cannot wander at will all over the inside of it, but I have a good look at the old cottage from the outside. First, I look at the front, then I walk round and look at both sides of it, and at as much of the back as is visible. You see I love the place and that is why I take all this trouble. Shall I tell you why I love it? Well, the reason is that I was born there, and in that little house I spent the first eight years of my life. Oh, the happy days of childhood that it recalls ! What delightful memories of early days it brings back to my mind ! I love the place, and if I had my way it should never be pulled down.

Now that is exactly what the Holy Ghost says as He looks at your poor body. Maybe it is not a very fine one, and likely enough, nearly worn out, but the Holy Ghost says, "I love it, that has been My home. I have lived in it 10-20-30 years, and it shall never be destroyed. Even should it fall asleep, I shall one day quicken that mortal body, and raise it in glory" (1 Cor. vi. 14).

What a cheer for the sick ! In 1st Corinthians each member of the Trinity is mentioned in connection with our body. It is called "*The temple of God*," iii. 16, members of *Christ*, vi. 15, and a "*Temple of the Holy Ghost*," vi. 19. When the time comes for us to "fall

asleep," it is the special work of the Holy Ghost to call us home: for "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). *Notes of an address.*

The Sufficiency of Christ.

"**I**N Him (Christ) dwells all the completeness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in Him" (Col. ii. 9, 10). Referring to this passage it has been said that "The fulness or completeness of the Godhead is in Christ, as towards us; and we, as towards God, are complete in Him." How blessed and precious for the soul!

Christ! what a fulness that word has for us! In Col. i. 16, He is said to be the Creator of all, the One *in* and *by* and *for* whom all things were created. He was no inferior person, no emanation from the Godhead as the Gnostics taught of old, but GOD in the most absolute sense of that word.

"The Word was God," "The Word became flesh" (John i. 1, 14); both these truths are brought together in Col. ii. 9, 10. And how much is involved in the word "bodily"! How mysterious and inscrutable is the union of the divine and human natures in the Person of our Lord! He is truly God and Man in one Person.

God in His infinite Being is the One before whom the seraphims cover their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah vi.), and "These things said Esaias, when he saw *His* (Jesus') glory, and spake of Him" (John xii. 41).

And if on the one hand His Being is infinite, on the other how close He comes to us in His position as man in this world ! The little village of Bethlehem was the place where was to be born Him "who is to be Ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2). No lordly palaces were opened to Him, no great ones of the earth received Him ; His first resting-place was in the manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn.

We find Him growing up in the privacy of His early life at Nazareth, subject to His parents, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." As one has said, "His being the Son of God secured His perfection as a man and a child on earth He was all that a child ought to be ; but it was the Son of God who was so ; in the development of His humanity is manifested the Son or God on earth."

We see in the life of the Saviour this wonderful combination of divine power and glory ; of omnipotence, omniscience and other divine attributes, together with all that belongs to the lowly and subject place which He had taken in this world. He did not come in the brilliancy of outward or *displayed* glory ; had He done so we could not have witnessed it, any more than the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration ; He veiled His glory here, but there was always about Him a *moral glory*, to be discerned by faith, and which could not be hid.

Jesus knew all men, He did not need that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man (John ii. 25). He knew their thoughts, even when those thoughts were still unexpressed, He read the heart through and through ; He could command the fishes in the lake to go into Peter's net, He could cause the fish to yield up the piece of silver needed for the temple tax and tell Peter to go and take it.

He could feed the hungry multitude of five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes, leaving twelve baskets over—a most marvellous miracle truly, and, perhaps the only miracle narrated in all four gospels. He could walk on the stormy sea, and then cause the ship to be at the land *immediately* (John vi.).

So in Mark vi. we see the Lord feeding the vast multitude, then going unto the mountain to pray, then walking on the tempestuous sea to join His disciples in the ship. Here is prayer and dependence coming in between two remarkable miracles.

On another occasion He is asleep on a pillow in the ship, now covered with waves. In reply to the appeal of the disciples He arose, rebuked the wind and the sea, and changed what had been a “great tempest” into a “great calm” (Matt. viii.). What an evidence of perfect humanity and omnipotent Deity! In John xi. He could raise Lazarus from the dead; and afterwards pass on to die Himself—laying down His life as One who had authority to lay it down and to take it again.

Christian reader! this is *your* Saviour, *your* Christ. And He is now the risen and glorified Christ, all power in heaven and earth being committed to Him. His priestly service, His constant intercession, His gracious advocacy with the Father, are all ours. He has tasted what this world is (Himself apart from sin) and He can sympathise with His people.

Are you tried in home circumstances, in your business, in your bodily health? Then remember, Jesus knows it all and He loves you infinitely—and love always does the best for its object, whatever appearances may say to the contrary.

Or are you tried about things in the assembly of God, where you meet your fellow-christians? Well then, how comforting to turn to Him who is Head of His body the church, and who can meet every difficulty through

which His people are called to pass. Perhaps He allows the trial to show you your own weakness and lead you to find all your resources in Him.

How different God's ways sometimes are to ours! and yet they are always right. We heard lately of one who, when at the Lord's table, joined in the singing of the first line of the hymn, "Gazing on the Lord in glory," then was seized with a spasm and passed away. How sad for those who were left, but how blessed to be with the One whose praises he had just sung!

God leaves us in this world so that we may learn in His school and prove, practically, as well as doctrinally, that Christ is sufficient. As we have seen, All the completeness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Him; and ye are complete in Him. Christ is everything, and in all.

F.G.B.

Jesus in Company with His Disciples.

A Word for the Present Crisis.

WE are aware by how many different ways our fellow-disciples try us, and grieve us; and no doubt we do them. We see, or fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it, or to go on in further company with them. It has occurred to me that we may observe, that just in those same ways, the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh, and yet He went on with them, as we know—as I need not add "*not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good*,"—the evil that was in *them*, with the good that was in *Himself*.

I would mention some of these wrong things in them, that must have grieved Him, and the influence of which upon our own thoughts and feelings towards others we well understand and continually experience.

Vanity in another, tries us—an air of self-satisfaction, or the esteeming of ourselves, and the putting of ourselves forth to admiration. The Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. Peter was thus self-confident, when he said, though all should be offended, yet he would not. And all of them were guilty of this, when they contended who should be the greatest; and also when they *forbade* those who followed not with themselves.

Ill-temper is a very fretful thing; it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it, when she complained to Him of her sister; and so did the Apostles when they urged him to send away the multitude, just because their own privacy and repast had been intruded upon. (Mark vi.) Any show of a *covetous* grudging spirit is very hateful to us. Jesus must have discerned this (and therefore have had to bear with it) on such occasions as Matt. xiv. 17; xv. 33.

Unkindness—whether towards ourselves or to others—is very irritating. Peter's enquiry in Matt. xviii. 21, covered, I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper, as also we see it in Matt. xv. 23.

Indifference to others, and carefulness about oneself, is very vexing to us also, it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried by enough of it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping. He spoke of His death, but they were thinking of their place and honours in the kingdom. He spoke of leaving them, but none of them asked "whither goest Thou?" and in the ship it was of their *own* safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

Ignorance is apt to try us, and make us impatient. Who ever found more of it in those He was continually

teaching than the Lord? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned; and when He spoke *spiritually* or *mystically* to them, they listened to Him as *in the letter*—they were asking explanations of the simplest parables.

Unspirituality of mind in fellow-disciples is a trial to us. How much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering, and He was always light in discovering it. We, often, through vanity or self-esteem, mistake mere nonconformity with ourselves for it.

These are among the ways in which the disciples must have tried the mind of their divine Master; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren. It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect the mind of Jesus is, and then we shall know that though the instance was faint, and the occasion a small one, yet *his finer sensibility gave it more than the importance of the greatest occasion*

The pride, the indifference, the ill-tempers, and the low unspiritual mind, which the disciples were continually betraying, did not tempt Him to take a place of distance from them.

For at the END of their walk together He is *nearer to them than ever*. (John xiv., xvi.) He did not *part company* with them because they gave Him much exercise of heart, and were continually drawing upon Him, He warned and instructed them, He rebuked and condemned them, but **NEVER GAVE THEM UP**. Blessed, perfect Master!—lover of our souls at all cost!

J.G.B.

Gleanings.

Prayer in communion with God. Apart from being in communion with God in the power of the Spirit, our worship falls back into the flesh; our prayers (or praying well) form what is sometimes called a gift of prayer, than which nothing often is more sorrowful (a fluent rehearsal of known truths and principles, instead of communion, and the expression of praise and thanksgiving in the joy of communion, and even of our wants and desires in the unction of the Spirit) all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil

J.N.D.

* * *

"If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." (John xiv. 28). He gives us to be interested in His own glory, in His happiness, and, in it, to find our own.

Good and precious Saviour, we do indeed rejoice that Thou, who hast suffered so much for us, hast now fulfilled all things, and art at rest with Thy Father, whatever may be Thine active love for us. Oh, that we knew and loved Thee better! But still we can say in fullness of heart, Come quickly, Lord! Leave once more the throne of Thy rest and of Thy personal glory, to come and take us to Thyself, that all may be fulfilled for us also, and that we may be with Thee and in the light of Thy Father's countenance and in His house. Thy grace is infinite, but Thy presence and the joy of the Father shall be the rest of our hearts, and our eternal joy.

* * *

The more intimately we know scripture, the more simple and distinct is the truth that, though Son of man, Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

J.N.D.

The Cross and the Evening Oblation.

OUTSIDE the city walls He died, the Man of Calvary, having met "sin in all its terror there, God's wrath, and Satan's power."

Outside the city walls, upon the cross, He, the only sinless, righteous One that ever trod this earth, uttered a cry, in which was raised a question that must have startled the universe, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46).

Outside the city walls, "outside the gate," the divine Sin and Trespass Offering, suffered, bled, and died !

* * *

But, what was happening within the city walls? What was taking place "within the gate"?

* * *

It was "*the ninth hour*," when that forsaken cry was uttered; "the hour of prayer" (Acts iii. 1; x. 30). It was "the time of the evening oblation" (Dan. ix. 21); of the offering of the evening lamb belonging to the "continual burnt offering," as directed in Exodus xxix. 41; and observed by the remnant returned from Babylon, as recorded in Ezra iii. 3.

How truly blind had this favoured people become (John ix. 40; xii. 40) ! Little did they think that while He, their "despised and rejected" Messiah, was suffering, under the eye of God, as the mighty sin and trespass offering, "*outside the gate*," they, *within the city walls*, were celebrating, an offering, which, typically, was the expression of the perfect devotedness of Jesus, "the Lamb of God"; and who, *at that very moment*, was proving His devotedness by His "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross" !

* * *

"One lamb in the morning, and the other in the evening," for "a continual burnt offering," typified Christ in His acceptability, as ever before God.

But, when this nation of Israel shall be restored to their land in a future day, *we read no more of an "evening oblation"*; and, only of "*the lamb in the morning*" (Ezek. xlvi. 13-15). Why is this?

It has been happily suggested that one reason seems to be that, "it will be a day when the sun of Israel will no more go down (and therefore has no evening); for the long night during which they had slept in forgetfulness of Him, who had died for them, will have passed away. In the millennial day, when they are in the light of *His* day, the evening lamb disappears, while every morning it abides as a continual burnt offering."

And, further, it would appear, also, to signify that the remembrance of the awful sin, which found its culmination in "*the ninth hour*" at the cross, will be for ever obliterated (Luke xxiii. 34, and Heb. x. 17); thus affording another glorious instance of the truth, that, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20).

Then shall be sung that thanksgiving song, Psalm cvii., with its

"O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good;
For His mercy endureth for ever"!

And we, believers, in this day of grace, can add, with joy,

"Thousand, thousand thanks, to Thee,
Jesus, Lord, for ever be"!

N.L.N.

The Atonement-Money.

Exodus xxx. 11-16:

THE simpler our apprehension of "atonement," or "reconciliation," (the same thing) the happier. It implies a change of condition towards God. Instead of being at a distance from Him, we are brought nigh—instead of being in a state of enmity, we are at peace with Him. Such is our *condition*. Whatever *experience* we may have of it, our condition is that of peace with God, when we have received the reconciliation which has been accomplished by the blood of the cross.

But this reconciliation, this condition of peace with God, rests on the fact that God finds His satisfaction in what Christ has done on the cross for us. My peace with God depends on His satisfaction in Christ. If God did not rest in Him and His work for me, I could not rest in God.

If God's demand, in righteousness, against me had not been answered, I could have had no warrant for talking of reconciliation, or taking my place in peace before God.

I was God's debtor—debtor to die under the penalty He had righteously put upon sin. Christ acted as my Surety with Him, He undertook my cause as a sinner. If God had not been satisfied as to my responsibilities to Him, I should still be at a distance from Him; He would still have a question with me, a demand upon me and against me.

Therefore I ask, Has God been satisfied with what Christ has done for me? I answer, He has, for He has let me know this by the most wondrous, glorious, magnificent testimonies that can be conceived. He has published His satisfaction in the Cross of Christ, in Christ the Purger of sins, by the mouth of the most unimpeachable witnesses that were ever heard in a Court where justice or righteousness presided to try

a matter. He tells me that *all* His demands against me as a sinner are fully, righteously, discharged.

The rent veil declares it. The empty sepulchre declares it. The ascension of Christ declares it. The presence of the Holy Ghost here (gift as He is, and fruit of the glorification of our Surety) declares it.

Were ever such august testimonies delivered on the debating of a cause? Were witnesses of higher dignity, or of such unchallengeable credit, ever brought forward to give up their depositions? Were depositions ever rendered in such convincing style?

The sequel is well weighed. Peace with God is our condition, a condition settled by God Himself. For we plead the cross of Christ as our title to peace, God Himself having declared that He and all His demands against us are satisfied in and by that cross. God rests in Christ, and so do we.

J.G.B.

A Gem from the Song of Songs.

Song of Solomon ii. 3, 4.

THESE verses form one of the gems in the Song of Songs—a gem which may be considered by itself. It is the expanding song of a heart that is opening out to the beauties and excellencies of the perfect lover of the soul of the bride as the flower opens to the beneficent rays of the sun. How blessedly it sets forth what our beloved Lord is to His own in this day—His shelter, His fruit, His love; and how beautifully it voices their appreciation of Him.

She is attracted, arrested, entranced by one who is so far superior to all others that she can only describe him by contrasts. In this, she follows his gracious words to her. These, indeed, have called forth her response. His “lily among thorns” she answers by

“as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.” His love begets hers and is forming its object. “We love Him because He first loved us.”

Learned men discuss whether it is not rather the citron, the apricot, or the orange that is referred to. The apple tree seems to answer best the requirements of this scripture as supplying beauty, fragrance, sweetness and shade. It would be difficult to mention a more beautiful tree than the apple tree in full blossom. To it the trees of the wood can only form a dark background to bring out its beauty. It is a fitting illustration of one having his eyes opened to behold the peerless beauty and attractiveness of the Saviour. The meek and gracious Saviour, putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, has no attractions for the world; but to God-given faith He is “the chiefest among ten thousand” and “altogether lovely.” To the man born blind, the woman in the city, the Samaritan leper, among others who were attracted to Him, what were the trees of the wood while they were at His feet, feasting upon His grace?

“I sat down under His shadow with great delight,” her next note of appreciation, also gives choice expression to the feelings of everyone drawn to the Saviour by the Father’s grace. Such a one will desire to tarry, yea, to abide in His presence. He will not depart from the covert of His wings for there he can rest in eternal security and changeless love. The disciples of John the Baptist who heard his rapturous exclamation, “Behold the Lamb of God!” and followed Jesus, abode with Him that day—a full day, a perfect period of time.

“And his fruit was sweet to my taste” follows her delight in the shelter of her beloved. In a higher degree is this true of “them that believe.” To them, their Saviour and Lord is precious. And the present sweetness is but a pledge of the full fruition yet to

come—the Tree of Life, the hidden manna, their living food for ever.

“He brought me to the banqueting house,” or house of wine, is her next tribute of grateful esteem for her beloved. Our Lord has told us of new wine—His own joy (Matt. ix. 17). In perfect grace He would share it with us. How far do we respond to this? He has procured it for us at an infinite cost through His own exceeding sorrow. It is His tender desire for us here and now; (John xv. 11; xvii, 13) but He is bringing us into the eternal joy of His own home in the Father’s house. The fact that *He* brought us will ever minister to our joy. That He sought us and He brought us will be our everlasting song.

As the lark soars upward, its song becomes more joyous. In “his banner over me—love,” she reaches her highest note. The word “banner” may bring conflict to mind. Our Well-beloved has been in a conflict to which even Armageddon is as nothing. How easily the words pass over our lips, “To vanquish for us every foe and break the strong man’s force”; and again, “our sins, God’s wrath and Satan’s power.” But they tell of immensities and depths that are utterly beyond us. We may only ponder them with awe and adoring wonder.

He who descended into the lowest depths has ascended to the highest heights, passing through the heavens. A mighty conqueror beyond compare, He has secured eternal peace for His own, and laid the basis for the reconciliation of all things which eventuates in the “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, He has planted the banner Love on the immovable base of divine righteousness. Under it, His own may repose in inalienable serenity.

There, reviewing the past and scanning the future,

with the eye of faith they may see every foe discomfited. There, more than conquerors through Him that loved them, they can issue the challenge to the universe, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? And, in the ensuing silence, answer it in the very words of inspiration to their own eternal satisfaction. Well may they begin the endless song, "Unto Him that loves us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

A. J. H.

Divine Life and its Effects.—3.

(An Address by W. Trotter, of York, given November, 1850.)

OUR chapter (Rom. xii.) then instructs us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith; thus we shall be kept, each in his own place, without encroaching on the work of another.

There is this guard which God in His mercy has provided; and you will observe how the fairest systems and arrangements which man has substituted for the body of Christ and membership of that body and of one another—you will observe, I say, how these hinder all this blessed discipline, all these blessed exercises towards God, as to what the place is that He has assigned to each of us.

It is easier, indeed, to the flesh, for one man, or for any number of men, to assign this place to that man and that place to the other. But there is no scope for the exercise of faith there; no discipline for the individual there. Where there is a place assigned by human authority, and the duties of the place are well understood and defined, where is the danger of getting out of it?

But, beloved, where it is a matter of individual intelligence and communion with God, "God having set the members in the body as it hath pleased Him"; there will be room for the members getting out of their place. And so we shall surely find it if the flesh works; also if there be not individual subjection to God and to one another.

And what, dear friends, is the true principle to go on? "I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Now take the instance of the assembly of the saints such as we have been speaking of for the last two or three Lord's day mornings; how very possible it is for one, because possessed of natural fluency of speech and competency to express his thoughts, to speak—without, perhaps, any consciousness of individual, personal, responsibility. How very possible it is to speak in order to fill up the time, or from the felt competency to occupy it!

But, dear friends, is that as the apostle tells us? Is that the Holy Ghost (as we saw last Sunday) working by the several gifts as it hath pleased Him? No! By the very constitution of the church of God, human will is excluded. By the very tenure of service that is stated here in this chapter, man's will is excluded altogether.

If I am a servant, it is God's will that is to be done, and not my own. As a servant I am put in the place of being disposed of as it pleases God. And we are all so set in the 3rd verse, "Through the grace given unto us." And, beloved, it needs grace—grace, however, that will never be denied if we are conscious of our own inability and are looking to God for help.

If we are thinking of ourselves as in nature, or with

respect to anything that we are in nature, what must be the result? All that we are in nature is what exposes us to eternal condemnation; it is unserviceable to God. Faith, and the power of the Holy Ghost who gives it and sustains it, may use these bodies which we have consecrated to God—and surely He does use them as the vehicles and vessels through which we serve one another also.

But God uses these bodies, in subjection to His will and in the renunciation of ourselves, only acting so far as we have faith for it. Nothing presses so much upon my soul as that—that if we did nothing but what we have faith for, and if we did unhesitatingly what God bids us do, we should be doing the right thing, at the right time and in the right place, and all would be blessed of God.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ; and every one members one of another.” Oh, let us think of that—members one of another! Each a member of Christ; all united members of Christ; but therefore members one of another too.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,” etc., so that if one attempts to take the place of another, he neglects to do what he has a gift for, and he attempts to do what he has no gift for. God has bestowed gifts for the places which He has assigned to each; and if I get out of the place assigned to me, and attempt to fill another, I am attempting to fill one for which I have no gift, and I am leaving my own place for which God has bestowed a gift—I am leaving it unfilled.

Consequently, we are individually cast upon God in self-renunciation and dependence on Him. And, beloved, if we are judging ourselves, through the Spirit of God; mortifying the deeds of the body, and looking up to God in dependence, we shall be kept in our place.

It may be we shall not exactly know what our place is, yet that will be taught us in the blessed word of God.

But, beloved, what is the cause of our getting out of our place? Not that we did not know what our place was, but because we did not walk so humbly before God as to depend upon Him. If we are walking before God in humility, we shall either know our place and keep it; or, at least, be kept from stepping out of it.

“Having then gifts differing . . . he that showeth mercy with diligence.” There are many thoughts here that are not at all associated with what people generally call the ministry. And the passage shows most evidently that ministry according to the thoughts of God is a wider thing than man’s thoughts have made it. Man esteems nothing ministering but either preaching or teaching. But what are we told here? That he that giveth, or he that showeth mercy, is as much serving (and that is ministering) as he that teacheth in the church or preacheth to the world.

Oh, beloved, we need to have our thoughts more in subjection to the word of God as to all this. We have got so schooled, everyone of us, to conventional thoughts of what ministry is that we are disposed to despise or undervalue such ministry which is as true and as blessed as any other.

The fact is, true ministry is simply service; and we are *all* servants of our Lord and Master, the Lord Jesus Christ; and *all* servants to, and of, one another for His sake—“members one of another”—and surely the members, in filling up their places in the body, are serving the whole body, as well as the Head of it.

And oh! that is what our souls need to recognise. We are to be always serving—serving every day; that is evident from this chapter and from the whole tenor of these exhortations.

(To be continued.)

Faith and Simplicity in Prayer.— I.

This paper was written by the late L. Schlotthauer, for many years a valued missionary in Egypt and Syria.)

LET him ask in faith, nothing wavering." "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James i. 6; v. 16). Man, as is well known, exercises his power and wisdom in trying to get his aim accomplished both in the world and in the church; but the simple believer, who walks with God, lets his requests be made known unto God (Phil. iv. 6).

Jehoshaphat prayed, "O our God . . . we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee" (2 Chron. xx. 12). David refused Saul's armour, saying, "I cannot go with these." They did not suit his simple faith and trust, and he could not honour God with them.

"The Lord . . . great in counsel and mighty in deed" (Jer. xxxii. 19), hears the prayer of the poor and oppressed believer, and is ready to minister to him in His power, love and wisdom. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9).

What a comfort for us to know at all times that, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry" (Ps. xxxiv. 15), and that nothing is unimportant to the Lord which belongs to His people—nothing too big, and nothing too small.

Abraham's faithful servant looked to God for guidance as to taking a wife for his master's son, and his simple child-like prayer was fully answered; thus Abraham's faith was not disappointed (Gen. xxiv.). How much young people and parents could learn from this in such important matters, looking to God for guidance and waiting upon Him. There are so many unhappy marriages, not ordered of God, though per-

mitted of Him. There are also sad speculations in business matters—trying to get rich quickly! This is not faith, and has driven many a man into an asylum or to suicide.

How simple and instructive is the prayer of Jabez—he went the best way—straight with all his requests to the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. iv. 10).

“The Lord is nigh until all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them (Ps. cxlv. 18, 19). Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed in her heart. She was a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and poured out her soul before the Lord, and her grief was changed into joy.

We, knowing the Father who spared not His Son and numbers the hairs of our head—we have access to God as children; and can sing and say,

“Lord! I thank Thee; Thou dost listen,
 Thou dost reckon groans for prayer,
 When the tears of sorrow glisten,
 'Tis enough to claim Thy care.
 Thine is love supremely tender,
 Grace to fathom every grief,
 God Almighty, Thou dost render,
 Rest of balm—divine relief.”

Nehemiah, as king's cup-bearer, being sad over the state of Jerusalem, prayed to the God of heaven (Neh. i, ii) and was answered; and there were then special enemies of that beloved city at work. Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian; all these were enemies to God and His work.

The church of God, the assembly, has also her bitter enemies from without and from within—grievous wolves not sparing the flock have brought in the ruin we now see; but God is also “Our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. xlv. 1). “Salvation belongeth unto the Lord” (Ps. iii. 8); from Him alone this truth was experienced by Jonah, when, in the belly of the fish, he was heard from the depths of the sea, and his prayer was answered.

Daniel also, in his time, was found in the place of separation from evil and in prayer and supplication, confessing his sins and those of the people. The angel Gabriel was sent swiftly to him with the answer, calling him “greatly beloved” (Dan. ix. 20-23). And we ourselves, too—our prayers are accepted by the Lord, and therefore the many exhortations and encouragements to come to Him in prayer at all times.

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. v. 17). Yes, “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”; this is written for our comfort. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are,” and God answered the prayer of His servant who was jealous for his Master’s honour at a time of apostasy and ruin.

So it was also when the king of Syria sent his armies against Israel; Elisha the prophet, walking in communion with God and in prayer, destroyed the whole policy of the enemy and delivered Israel (2 Kings vi.). This also is written for our encouragement, so that we might be found patiently waiting before God in prayer.

At a time when the enemy comes in like a flood, we shall prove the truth of the words in Job v., “God . . . which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number”; and how precious are the words of the Lord in Luke xi. 9., “Ask and it shall be given unto you,” etc. !

The Lord Himself it is who gives us such beautiful similitudes to convince us that we have God our Father’s heart and hand ready to give good gifts—even

much more than parents give to their beloved children. Children sometimes ask things which, from very love, cannot be given to them; and so our Heavenly Father: He only gives good gifts, as the apostle John says, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing *according to His will*, He heareth us" (1 John v. 14).

How sweet and trustful was the prayer of Asa when a thousand thousand came against him; he cried unto the Lord and said, "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them which have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude . . . let not man prevail against Thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians," etc. (2 Chron. xiv. 11).

Sennacherib also, with his great and mighty army, came against Jerusalem, but could do nothing. The reason was that there were two godly men who were crying to God in earnest and united prayer—king Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. In answer to their cry, God sent an angel, and cut off all the mighty men of valour in the camp of the king of Assyria.

The result was that he returned with shame of face to his own land (xxxii. 21). And, according to 2nd Kings xix., God said of this proud king who dared to lift up himself against the Holy One of Israel in blasphemy, "I will put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest"; and He did so.

The Malines Conversations.—I.

NOW that the Report of the Malines conversations has been published, and that a summary of it has appeared in the Press, it is possible to form an idea of these efforts to bring about an agreement of the Church

of England with the Church of Rome. It must be apparent to any unprejudiced observer, instructed in the truths of the Bible, that the Anglican Church has been rapidly sliding down an inclined plane, and that Romanism, pure and simple, lies at the bottom.

According to what we are told in the conversations, it was not as difficult as was thought to so construe and explain away the thirty-nine articles that no insurmountable obstacle stood in the way of an understanding between the two Churches. Those of us, however, who look at things from a simply scriptural point of view can see that the most grave and serious questions are at stake—questions which go down to the very foundations of the christian faith.

Take the first point named—that baptism constitutes the means of entry into the church or society which Jesus Christ founded. What is the church which He founded, and what is the foundation upon which it is built? He had just been confessed as “The Christ, the Son of the living God,” and it was upon this rock—Himself as so confessed, that the church was to be built. Hence the apostle Paul says, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. iii. 11).

Then as to the building itself; our Lord says, “I will build”; *He* is the builder of the true church—no doubt using the apostles and others, through the Holy Spirit.

Briefly, the church may be looked at in two aspects, (1) the church which is His (Christ’s) body—that mystical body of which He is the glorified Head in heaven (Eph. i. 23). (2) The house of God, a holy temple, where God dwells by His Spirit (Eph. ii. 21, 22). This latter is a “spiritual house,” composed of “living stones,” fitted together, chosen of God and precious (1 Peter ii. 5). It will be at once seen that in these scriptures it is not a question of *a* church, but of *the* church, which embraces the whole body of believers.

Our object in referring to this is, to arrive at a true understanding of what the church *is* and of what it is *not*. It is *not* simply the professing body of persons who have been baptised and confirmed, etc. Baptism, though quite right in its place, does not necessarily bring about any *inward* work of God *in the soul*.

We cannot insist too strongly on the great truth of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus in John iii., “Ye *must* be born again.” A man may be baptised and yet neither have part nor lot in the matter (Acts viii. 21). It may be entirely an outward thing—a form gone through without repentance or faith. But in the new birth, there is an entirely new life and nature communicated spiritually; “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Besides this, both the ordinances of Christianity—baptism and the Lord’s supper—are a sign of *death*, “baptised unto His *death*,” we “show forth His *death*”: new birth is the communication of a new and divine *life*.

We dwell upon this because, unless we see the difference between the professing body calling itself the church, and the true church, we shall be in hopeless confusion and shall make the fatal mistake which is common to Ritualists and Romanists, namely, applying to the *nominal* church those privileges and blessings of which scripture speaks; but which really belong *only* to the true church, and not to the professing body at all.

What, then, is the entrance into the church of God according to scripture? It is no outward ordinance but that inward work of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus when He said, “Ye must be born again”; it is the possession of a new and divine life and nature by faith; it is the purification of the heart *by faith* (Acts xv. 9). In short, it is the work of God’s Holy Spirit—not any ordinance of men whatever.

No doubt, at the very first, in the early stages of the church’s history as seen in Acts, the great mass of

those who composed the church were really quickened souls; but soon false material came in, so that the later epistles warn us against false apostles, persons of whom the apostle Paul has to speak as enemies of the cross of Christ, and against whom we are warned as false teachers bringing damnable heresies, and even antichrists.

Things got worse and worse during the Middle Ages, and now we have Christendom—a state of things in which all kinds of people making the christian profession are mixed up together. This is the *professing body*—properly speaking, it is not the church at all. But in spite of all “the Lord knoweth them that are His,” and *these only* compose the true church.

Unless we see this, our whole idea of the church is vitiated and misleading.

F.G.B.

How Joseph Knew the Lord

TO Abraham God was the Almighty and Everlasting One, the Possessor of heaven and earth, the covenant-keeping Lord. To Moses God was the great Lawgiver and Leader. To David He was the Great Shepherd. And Joseph knew the Lord in three or four distinct ways which we shall briefly consider.

He knew God as the One who was always with him (see Gen. xxxix. 3). As a lad, when serving the Egyptian, in the prison, when standing before Pharaoh, and as Prime Minister of Egypt, God was ever with His servant. “Best of all,” said John Wesley, as he was dying, “God is with us.”

During His last discourse our Lord gave the promise of the “Comforter,” who was to abide with His dis-

ciples for ever. And here we have the twofold thought of fellowship and help. Every believer has had experiences of intimate fellowship with the Lord, when His presence has been a blessed, bright reality, and when everything else has, for the time, vanished from the consciousness. And the Comforter, who indwells us, is ever working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. The action of the Holy Ghost upon our spirits is constant, although we are not always aware of this, and so are liable to grieve Him, even unconsciously.

Joseph knew the Lord as the Healer of toil and sorrow and as the One who could make a man *fruitful in the land of his affliction* (Gen. xli. 51, 52). He had been torn from his family and spent most of his life in a strange country, and Egypt was therefore to him a land of affliction in spite of his exalted position.

Probably no one of us would like to live his life over again—at all events, as we have lived it. It has been marked by too many sins and failures and mistakes. When Jacob was a hundred and thirty years old, his piteous exclamation was, “Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.” He was taking a backward look over his chequered pilgrimage, with its mixture of failure and success, retribution and consolation.

But Jacob knew, and Joseph knew, and we with our far greater light know, that God is the healer of toil and sorrow and that suffering has a very real ministry. Pain is often the prelude to a higher life. The pain of conviction of sin was the prelude to the joy and privilege of redemption. It is painful to be made to feel our shortcomings as believers, but only in this way do we learn to do better; the painful exercise is translated into prayer and endeavour. Affliction has a blessed educative value; and the best way to regard it is to look upon it as a work by which our salvation (in the full sense) is being wrought out more effectively.

GOD is our real possession. The highest privilege is to know Him. Christ has been given to us for our present and eternal enjoyment. "That I may know Him" is Paul's greatest desire; and in contrast with this supreme wealth he can afford to count other things as refuse. Those who live for the future at the expense of the present, for the unseen at the expense of the seen, have, even here, the richest compensation. God rewards them with more of—*Himself*.

And the inevitable consequence is that they are more fruitful. An unfruitful believer is a contradiction in terms. He is not answering to the end for which he has been redeemed. He does not justify his existence. Joseph, like Abraham and all men and women of faith in all ages, was a benefactor of men because he was a man of God.

And Joseph knew the Lord as He who brings good out of evil (see Gen. 1. 20). He was a living solution of the problem of painful providences—as far as that problem admits of solution.

God has overruled the entrance of sin into this world to the magnifying of all His attributes. Sin necessitated the atonement. And

"Truth, wisdom, justice, power and love
In all their glory shone,
When Jesus left the courts above,
And died to save His own."

And as we are sure that nothing touches our lives by chance, so our God designs that our trials and mistakes should work out for our highest ultimate good—and that of others.

The story of Dr. Moon is well known. When quite a young man, with brilliant prospects, he lost the sight of one eye. He naturally prayed that the sight of the other might be spared. But God did not grant the request, and he became totally blind. What was his

attitude towards God? Did he repine, or fret, or charge God with cruelty? Did he renounce all thought of serving his fellow-men? Did he go out into the night of a self-imposed exile?

Instead of succumbing to these temptations, he laid his life at his Lord's feet, and his prayer is one of the sublimest on record: "Lord Jesus, I thank Thee for the talent of blindness. May I so invest this talent that when Thou returnest Thou mayest receive Thine own with usury." And all the world knows how abundantly and fruitfully that prayer was answered through the use of the Braille type, which has been an untold blessing to thousands of blind people.

Although Joseph lived in the twilight of divine revelation, his faith and life anticipate the New Testament declaration, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." E.A.

The True Centre of Union.

GOD knows no centre of union but the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Himself the object, and nothing but Christ can be the centre. Whatever is not gathering round that centre *for* Him and *from* Him is scattering. There may be gathering, but if not "*with Me*" it is scattering.

We are by nature so essentially sectarian that we have need to watch against this. I cannot make Christ the centre of my efforts if He is not the centre of my thoughts. It is a great thing for a man to say, "I have no other object but Christ, no other activity in my heart but for Christ, not only that He is the chief object at bottom—every christian has that—but there may be a quantity of middle things in our hearts between the inside and the outside. These must be judged in the soul. Besides love to Christ, there may be love of company, and we must judge all that is between Christ, the Root, and the offspring.

J.N.D.

“Think on these things.”

IT was not without good reason that the apostle Paul wrote from his prison at Rome to the Philippians the words “think on these things.” What things were they? “Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things” (chap. iv. 8).

We are so often disposed to be occupied with that which is unprofitable, or even with evil things, instead of with the good. It is quite true that there are times when we must be occupied with evil, whether in ourselves or in others, in order to judge it and put it away; but when that is done we have no more to do with it.

Or, it may be a case where disputes, heresies, questions, arise amongst believers; such things often take up too much of our time and thoughts: and it will always be found that occupation with evil defiles and depresses. Have we not often proved it to be so?

To Timothy Paul wrote—after speaking of the many evils brought in by false teachers and others—“from such withdraw thyself”; and again, “from such turn away” (1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 5). It is by occupation with the good and with Christ, that the soul grows and is formed. “Set your mind on things above”; how important and how necessary the exhortation! Naturally the mind of fallen man, even of the believer, so readily dwells on what is evil—and the danger is lest we become assimilated to that with which we are occupied.

“Think on these things”; and what a range of blessed truths are those with which it is our privilege to be engaged! A living Christ in the glory of God and all the excellencies and beauties of the divine life manifested in His path through this world. If we look up by faith and behold the glory of God shining

in His face, it has the effect of transforming us from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 18).

If we turn to the epistles of John we shall find that it is by the knowledge of *the truth* that we grow, and what is untrue is detected and avoided by the soul's acquaintance with *what is true*.

Have we dwelt, as we might, on that wonderful word of the Lord in John xvii. 19, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." He surely was always the sanctified One, set apart here to do the Father's will and to glorify Him, yet He says, "I sanctify Myself." He was about to set Himself absolutely apart in the glory of God, that He might be both the model and the formative object for their sanctification.

What an object to fill the heart and soul, as we look up through the heavens, opened now to faith, and see Him seated at the right hand of God! One day we shall be perfectly like Him, seeing Him as He is; but may our hearts be more and more formed by this blessed object now!

From the "Mountains" to the Father's House.

"Peace, He shewed them His HANDS and His FEET"

(Luke xxiv. 36, 40).

"Peace, He shewed them His HANDS and His SIDE"

(John xx. 19, 20).

THE Gospel by Luke presents the Lord Jesus to us as the Son of Man, who is come to seek and to save that which is *lost*;—the Shepherd seeking, among the mountains of this world of sin, the lost sheep. He goes "after that which is lost, until he finds it. And, when he has found it, he layeth it on his shoulders,

rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls his friends and neighbours" to rejoice with him, for, says he, "I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke xv.).

Christ finds His sheep, and speaks "Peace" to them;—"It is I Myself."

Hence, we find His *hands* and His *feet* were engaged in the search; His wounds in them speaking to us of His *love unto death*.

"Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way,
That mark out the mountain's track?
They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."

.

"Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?
They were pierced, dear one, by many a thorn."

Truly, it has been written of Him, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the *feet* of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth *Peace*." (Isaiah lii. 7).

* * * *

The Gospel by John presents the Lord Jesus to us as the Son of God; God's precious love-gift to the perishing, in this lawless world (John iii. 16).

He was about to leave His beloved disciples (for the Gospel by John speaks of "His own" as *disciples*, and not as apostles,—their official capacity); but, before doing so, He tells them of His "*Father's house*." "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . and will come again to receive you unto Myself, that where I am you may be also."

For this, however, necessity demanded that He first go to the cross. A work had to be "finished" there (John xix. 30), that would open the way for them to be with Him in heaven's glorious abode. His life must

be surrendered; His blood shed; the consequences of sin met. Hence we read:—

“One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His *side*, and forthwith came there out blood. . . (John xix. 34).

Every true believer may, therefore, with confidence, sing:—

“Our *title to glory* we read in Thy blood”;
inasmuch as, “the blood met the spear”; so that,

“The very spear that pierced His *side*
Drew forth the blood to save.”

How perfect is God's holy word! Taking Luke's and John's gospels together, we find His hands, His feet, and His side all referred to, in connection with His messages of “Peace,” of salvation, and of “the Father's house.”

N. L. N.

Faith and Simplicity in Prayer.—2.

This paper was written by the late L. Schlotthauer, for many years a valued missionary in Egypt and Syria.)

THE same God and Lord answered the prayer of the church for Peter when He sent the angel and opened the prison doors, and it is thus also He hears and answers our prayers. But how humbling to think that when Peter actually came, they would not believe (Acts xii.). Is it not too often the case with ourselves—we are not prepared for the answer when it comes? It was when Paul and Silas were praying and singing praise to God, that He answered with an earthquake and with the conversion of the keeper of the prison.

God allows all kinds of trials that we may be convinced of our great need and danger, and so have constant recourse to the throne of grace. He says, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Ps. l. 15). What a privilege to have that throne of grace, as we often sing:—

“Ah! whither could we flee for aid,
 When tempted, desolate, dismayed?
 Or how the hosts of hell defeat,
 Had suffering saints no Mercy-seat?”

But, thank God, His treasure-house is larger than all our need. Look at Ps. cxxi., where we have two expressions of need, and about twelve answers. We sing in a German hymn, “Greater than the Helper can the need not be”; and He helps willingly. “Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John xvi. 24). His is the never-failing treasury filled with boundless stores of grace.

Abraham, the Friend of God, when he interceded for Sodom, was answered in every request; but when he stopped asking, the Lord ceased answering (Gen. xviii.). So it was with the poor widow who was in such need (2 Kings iv.), as long as there were vessels to fill, there was a plentiful supply of oil; but when the vessels failed, then the oil ceased.

Another example of the same is, when Joash, king of Israel, came to the prophet Elisha and was told to ask largely from God; but he failed in this, and the deliverances of Israel from the enemy failed also. Oh! to be enabled to ask largely and in faith.

We sometimes hear complaints from believers that God does not answer their prayers; but He has His own time, and says to us, as we do to our children, “Be quiet and wait a little.” We dare not dictate to God. May we be enabled to say:

“Whate’er Thou deniest, Oh! give us Thy grace;
 Thy Spirit’s blest witness, the smiles of Thy face.”

The Lord says, “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord” (Ps. xxvii. 14). So it will be with Israel in a future day; they will confess, after a long waiting time, “This is our God; we have waited for

Him. . . . we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. xxv. 9).

We read of Solomon's prayer, "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in," etc.; "and the speech pleased the Lord." Often a short, simple, hearty prayer revives a whole meeting: as a long one too often deadens.

It is also important to notice that in Acts vi. 4, prayer is mentioned before the ministry of the word. How much we owe to the prayers of the Lord's servants in many places! We read of Epaphras, that he was "a servant of Christ. . . labouring fervently for you in prayers," and a very full request his was, "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

A great comfort it is to know that, in prayer, we can reach the more difficult and distant cases than in preaching. The humble believer—it may be even lying on a bed of sickness—can pray for God's work and workers in China, India, Africa, and many other parts, and can have his part in the work.

What a wide field this opens for every praying brother and sister, and what a mission work, without learning foreign languages! Prayer is one of the ways that "God's fellow-workmen" can help forward His work, no matter in what part of the world it may be; and they can do it in fellowship with all who are labouring in the service of the Lord in distant lands as well as at home.

Divine Life and its Effects.—4.

(An Address by W. Trotter, of York, given November, 1850.)

THERE are three distinctions which men make, and which have come to be made largely throughout Christendom, which are just the practical denial of the grace in which God has set us. You have the distinction between sacred and common persons; sacred and common places; and sacred and common times.

Now the fact is, that every christian is a sacred person, and one is just as sacred as another. Every place to the christian is alike; there is no more sacredness attached to the building in which we are now assembled than to any other buildings in this city. All times too, beloved, are alike to the saint.

True, indeed, there is, in the perfect wisdom and mercy of our God, one day in seven set apart, and most evidently sanctioned in the New Testament; set apart for our associated worship; and that being the case we rejoice in it, and bless God for it. But there is no such distinction between that day and the others, as there is in the Old Testament between the Sabbath day and the other six.*

In the Mosaië dispensation there were sacred and common people, sacred and common places, and sacred and common times. The priesthood were the sacred people, and all the other people were common. The temple was the sacred place, and all other places were common. The Sabbath, and some other sacred feasts were sacred times, and all other times were common.

But all these things are done away with in Christianity. We are all sacred to God, all priests to God; the feeblest saint, who has just been converted, is as entirely a priest to God as any in the church. There is One who is the Head of the church, who is our great High Priest; and that priesthood, so far as distinguishing one from another, only belongs to Him. In any other sense we are all alike priests to God and His Father.

* It is well to remember that the christian is highly privileged in having the Lord's day, as distinguished from all the other days of the week, to be occupied with His things; to **assemble together to break bread, to worship, for the preaching of the gospel, etc.** This is the more important now, because in Christendom, the disregard for the Lord's day has been very much on the increase, since those early times when this lecture was given. Any tendency towards bringing it down to the level of a common day, would be a grievous mistake.—ED.

And as to places—our Lord says plainly enough, “The hour is coming, when neither in this mountain”—which they had supposed was a sacred place—“nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father” (John iv. 21). But they that worship the Father shall worship Him in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

And, beloved, as to the time—when is the time in which we are not to be serving God? And which is the way in which we are not to be seeking the glory of our Master? We seek it indeed on the first day of the week; and blessed be God for the opportunity of assembling together as we have directions, and the sanction and examples recorded for us in the New Testament to warrant us in so doing!

We serve Christ on that day, but are we serving Him less on the other days? No—if we recognise what sacred persons are, as being priests to God—whether it be the mother in her domestic place, the merchant in his counting house, or the artisan in his workshop; we should, in the humblest places, know that we are servants of Christ every day; not in one place only, but in every place.

Nor does this service attach to any particular persons in the church. We are servants to Him, and brethren to each other; and you will find throughout this chapter (Rom. xii.) these principles taken for granted—they are the foundation of almost everything in the inspired instructions to the churches.

But we cannot go further into it at present. The Lord bless what has been spoken and give us every day and in every place to walk worthy of the Lord: every day and in every place presenting our bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable in the sight of God, which is our reasonable service. Amen.

The Malines Conversations.—2.

AS to points 2 and 3 in the Conversations, which run as follow:—

2. The social life of christians is organised round an episcopal hierarchy.
3. This social and organised life finds expression within the Church in the existence and use of the Sacraments.

We have only to remark that the modern idea of a bishop is quite different from what that office was in the early church. To-day a bishop has a whole diocese under his authority; it may be a large one; in the early church there were several bishops, or overseers as the word simply means, in one city. This was the case at Philippi and Ephesus (see Phil. i. 1; Acts xx. 28). They were men of known godliness, who took an oversight of things in the local assembly where they lived, and were appointed to this office by an apostle or his delegate.

The mention of the Sacraments under number 3, leads on to points 4 and 5, where it is said:

4. In the Eucharist the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are verily given, taken, and received by the faithful. By the consecration Bread and Wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.
5. The sacrifice of the Eucharist is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, but offered in a mystical and sacramental manner.

This is very much the same as what is laid down in the Roman definition of the doctrine of the Mass and transubstantiation as given in the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

Now the doctrine of the Mass is a direct contradiction of Hebrews ix. and x., wherein it is taught that the sacrifice of Christ can never be repeated, that it was "once for all," that in virtue of it the believer is

sanctified or set apart to God through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; that he has a purged conscience and a perfect standing before God, as well as access into the holiest, at all times, through the rent veil.

These glorious truths, which shine with such brilliancy on the page of holy scripture, are darkened, weakened and set aside by any system which *denies*, in practice, the perfect efficacy of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, accomplished once for all upon the cross.

But, it may be asked, What place then has the Eucharist (or, as we should prefer to call it, the Lord's supper)? It is not a *repetition* of the sacrifice of Christ, but a *commemoration* of it. In the old Jewish sacrifices there was constant repetition, because the blood of bulls and goats "could not take away sins."

But when Christ, "through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God," all was *done*, and in such a way as to meet every requirement of a holy and righteous God. How could a work so glorious, so complete, in which the whole Trinity were concerned (Heb. ix. 14), be repeated? It could not be. But the Mass is said to be a daily repetition, not merely a commemoration. This is simply a return to the old Jewish ceremonial; to the putting up again of the veil, so to speak, and is a denial of the efficacy of the death of Christ.

Next, as to transubstantiation, the doctrines of the Anglicans and the Romanists are practically the same. What the Anglicans say is that "By the consecration Bread and Wine become the Body and Blood of Christ," and the initial capital letters, used in the formula, are intended to emphasise this theory.

What especially strikes us in all this is, how the original simplicity of the supper has been lost, and in its place a human institution has been set up, invested

with superstitious performances, designed to produce a sense of mystery and awe in the mind of the worshipper. This is also well calculated to add to the importance of the priest who consecrates the elements, and, in the minds of the simple and uneducated, to show the greatness of the man who can, to use a vulgar phrase, "make God"!

Another reason why the idea of transubstantiation took such a hold is, that it is natural to man to look for something for *sight* and *sense*. *Faith* is not a possession of fallen man; he wants an object which he can see. But where there is faith (which is the gift of God), there must be a work of God in the soul and in the conscience; no ceremony or work on our part can produce it.

"This is My body. . . this is My blood"—words spoken by our Lord; plain enough when interpreted by faith; but what a vast system of idolatry has been built upon them! "Up, make us gods," said the Israelites to Aaron, when Moses ascended the mount and was hidden from them, and they believed not in the true God. And Aaron made them a god out of gold and said, "To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah," and they tried to mix up the worship of the true God with that of the idol, to God's dishonour and their own shame and ruin. This is just what many in Christendom have tried to do.

But those misled by this delusion *will* build everything on the literal, or *material*, use of the words, "This is My body," etc. Any unprejudiced student of scripture can see that the word "is," is frequently used for "represents"; this is so plain that one ought not to be obliged to insist upon it. For example, "The seed is the word," "This is the Lord's passover"; of John the Baptist it is said, "This is Elias," because John *represented* Elias.

Again, "We, being many, are one bread and one body" (1 Cor. x. 17), words which, if taken in a

literal or material sense, would have no meaning, but when understood spiritually, they are quite simple. Strange, too, it is that those who advocate transubstantiation do not ask themselves the question; How could our Lord have meant His literal body, when He was sitting at the table *in His body*: He did not hold His own body in His hand! That blessed body is now glorified in heaven and cannot be changed or offered in sacrifice.

So, when He said "This is My blood"; His blood, in the literal sense, was not yet shed, therefore could not have been in the cup; and if it had not been shed afterwards, there could have been no remission of sins—no salvation. Thank God, it was shed for us. How then can the wine be changed into His blood?

We find in Deut. iv., Moses also warning against this tendency of looking to *something visible*; he says, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude. . . lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure," etc. Israel's besetting sin was idolatry, right on until the Captivity.

But *simplicity* is what marks the Lord's supper, according to scripture. He Himself dispensed the bread and the wine; we are not told the *words* that He used when He "gave thanks"—no doubt for a good reason. What could be more touching to the heart than to think that it was on the very night on which He was betrayed that Jesus, looking forward through all the ages, provided this feast to call Himself to the remembrance of His own, till He should come again. Then it would be no longer needed, for they would be *with Him* above. Therefore we partake with deep thankfulness, and we worship and adore—not indeed the bread and wine, which are but emblems—but the *One* of whom these speak, Christ Himself.

F.G.B.

Drawing Near to God.

(Hebrews x. 19-25).

FOR a guilty creature, the question of being able to draw near to God is of the deepest importance. This question must be settled here below, for if it is not settled on earth, he who has not believed cannot draw near to God when the scene of this world shall have passed, and he will not be brought before God except to hear the final sentence of condemnation.

It is, as we have said, very important to be permitted to draw near to God, for this is the delight of those who know Him; and He desires to share with us His own joy and the cloudless enjoyment of His presence.

In Old Testament times God chose an earthly people; He set them apart for Himself, He deigned to dwell amongst them, but none could enter His immediate presence. An Israelite was forbidden to enter into the tabernacle; still less could he go into the holiest of all. The high priest alone could enter there, once a year, and for this, various ceremonies were appointed by God, all being figures of that which Christ should one day accomplish.

But now that Christ has finished His work of atonement, it is no longer a question of being permitted to enter on one day in the year; the Christian may at all times enter by faith into heaven itself.

On the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi.) one goat was slain for sin; its blood was carried into the sanctuary by the high priest and sprinkled before the mercy seat and on the mercy seat. The other goat was for the people and bore away their sins. The goat offered for sin came first, showing that the claims of God must first be satisfied before our sins could be forgiven.

This took place each year, and the sins of the people which had accumulated during the past year, were confessed by the high priest and laid, so to speak, on the

living goat, which was led without the camp into the wilderness.

But, the next day again, sin was there, a proof that the sacrifice could not purge the conscience. Moreover, the veil which hid the presence of God still remained. Now, it is entirely different: Jesus came in order that the work which He should accomplish might enable those who draw near to God to *abide* in His presence. The righteousness and holiness of God having been fully satisfied by His work, those who believe are without fear before God and can enjoy His presence.

In Heb. ix. we find what corresponds to this. In v. 11 we read: "But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come," etc. He was, at one and the same time, both the High Priest entering into the presence of God, and the offered Victim. He was the Victim once for all, and now no more offering for sin is needed, so perfect was His work; but He remains High Priest for ever: "By a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained *eternal* redemption for us."

We find there the first thing of which we have spoken—the blood of the goat for propitiation; but now there is brought before us a blood far more precious than that of bulls and goats—the blood of Christ, which has been shed once for all, and this redemption, which He has accomplished, is an *eternal* redemption. The value of this blood abides everlastingly: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God"—He was the Victim offered for sin—"purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (v. 14).

Now I pass to the *second* point (vv. 21-23). The shedding of the blood of the spotless and unblemished

Lamb was necessary in order that that which was defiled by sin might be purified by a better sacrifice than those under the old covenant.

A *third* thing is found in v. 28. All the claims of God against us have been satisfied by Him who offered Himself to bear the sins of many, and by His one sacrifice, the sins of those who believe have been for ever blotted out from before the eyes of God.

In chapter x. we see the application which is made to man of this work. In vv. 1-4 the apostle shows that the conscience could never be purified by the sacrifices under the law. That is why Jesus said, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (vv. 5-7). All the sacrifices which could not render the sinner perfect are set aside, and Jesus comes to do the will of God, a will by which we can draw near to Him. It was necessary that God should no longer see sins upon me; this spotless Victim has taken them away and, by His precious blood, we are sanctified and made fit to draw near to God.

We find in vv. 11-13, that this work has been accomplished, this one sacrifice has been offered, well pleasing to God Himself, and Jesus Christ is seated, and remains seated, at the right hand of God, for He has nothing more to do to take away our sins; He awaits the moment when His enemies shall be made His footstool.

Then comes the application of this sacrifice for us (v. 14). Those who receive blessing through this work are sanctified and brought into the presence of God in a perfection which nothing can change.

He comes, bears Himself the judgment in our place, and the Holy Spirit gives testimony to this work in these words of God: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." What precious words—and if this is so, what have we to do but to look up to

Him by faith and give Him thanks! This work, which has removed our sins from us "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. ciii. 12), has also made us perfect with God!

The apostle now says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," etc. If we have laid hold, by faith, of the fact that God is fully satisfied with the work accomplished on the cross, we have liberty to enter into His presence. There is only one way to draw near to God: neither good works, nor repentance, nor prayers, can give us an entrance into His presence; the blood of Jesus alone is the way. It is a "new" way, because it has set aside the things of the old covenant; and it is a "livings way" because He who died, having shed His blood, is risen and now lives at the right hand of God.

After the Lord Jesus had passed through the three hours of darkness on the cross, where He bore the judgment and cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the veil of the temple was rent. God is no longer hidden, and we have access into His presence. And now, by faith, we can enter into the holiest of all. What grace!

When we enter there what do we see? The adorable Person who has opened the way, He who has expiated our sins once for all, crowned with honour and glory, His sacrifice completed. He is there as our High Priest representing us before God. Whilst we are passing through this wilderness world, we have One who is ever before God for us in all the acceptance of His Person, and who bears us upon His heart continually.

He succours us in going through this world until He has led us on to the end of the journey. Let us draw near without fear!

Then follow some exhortations: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He is faithful that promised." What is this hope? We are travelling across a desert where often we find the road long and fatiguing, but there is a hope at the end of the journey, namely, that of entering into God's rest. This hope cannot fail, being founded on the very words of God.

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (v. 24). Instead of seeing faults in one another, let us walk in love, in the footsteps of Him who has so loved us.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." There are not only individual blessings for the christian, but collective ones also; he ought not to isolate himself. The only centre of gathering is the Lord Jesus. "The day approaches"; "our salvation is nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11). The Lord Jesus said, "I will come again," and we see that day drawing near when He will appear and take us to Himself in glory. "For yet a very little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (v. 37).

May we live in this attitude of waiting! We shall soon see the One who has so loved us and Who will take us to be for ever with Himself.

A.L.



The Lord knows what the hearts of His people want here—it is Himself, His own blessed person. Ah! is the Lord Jesus looked for by us as the bright and morning star? It is not the glory, but *Himself* that is set forth. "I am the bright and morning star"; and, oh, it is Himself that I want! What would glory be to me without my Lord?

G.V.W.

The Glory in the Cloud.

(Exodus xvi. 10).

NOW freed—no more a slave—'tis God has saved thy soul,
 Proud Egypt's army lies where those deep waters roll,—
 God wrought alone, not man; His arm the mighty slew,
 His mighty power shone forth where I my weakness knew.

But now no place of rest my straining vision greets :
 Is this blank barrenness th' exchange from Egypt's sweets?
 Is there no food, no drink, through all this desert waste?
 Is Marah's bitter well all that my soul must taste?

'Tis true, God showed the tree which made the bitter sweet,
 And gently led His own to Elim's glad retreat,
 Not less this barren waste doth yet with grief oppress
 My heart, so slow to learn for suffering to bless.

But stay,—what do I see? What is yon glorious cloud?
 What hidden light of God doth penetrate its shroud?
 True forecast of the light which once from Jesus streamed,
 Fit dwelling-place of rest prepared for His redeemed.

Upon the "holy hill" without a veil between,
 For one short moment blest, by favour'd eyes 'twas seen,
 When Jesus gave a glimpse of God the Father's plan,—
 Glory divine revealed, and shining in a MAN!

This glory cheers my heart and lights my pilgrim way,
 Reveals how ev'ry trial prepareth for that day
 Which soon with joy shall crown the sorrows of the road,
 Explaining outward grief that hides the hand of God.

By tribulation thus my heart's for glory form'd :
 How shall I count my days,—all by His love transform'd?
 "Years of His own right hand" I find them now to be,
 For GOD delights to show what HE can do for me.

Now shall my way-worn harp give forth a clearer sound ;
 'Tis in the desert, Lord, Thou makest to abound
 That grace which e'er shall lead my chasten'd soul along :
 Then let no loosen'd string henceforth afflict my song.

E'en death, in his approach, will bring no dread, no fear ;
 Jesus, not death, I see ; not earth, but heaven is near :
 He fills my heart anew with a more glorious note ;
 Though high the waters rise, GOD keeps my ark afloat.

79

The sting of death is gone since Jesus died and rose,
The captive's chains are riv'n, and vanquished all my foes ;
E'en Satan and the grave must bow before His word,
Unwilling yield each saint in likeness to his Lord.

Yet more,—that glorious cloud the wilderness endears,
E'en in its dreariest wastes my drooping spirit cheers :—
Thy footprints there, O Lord, by its blest light I trace,
There, Thou'lt unfold to me new secrets of Thy grace.

The desert now, for me, gleams with a new-found joy ;
The heart Thy hand has freed Thou wholly wilt employ,
Thou leav'st me in the place where Thou, my Lord, hast been,
And I've to learn **THY** path amidst this weary scene.

Thus treading in Thy steps, I follow on and see
Th' o'erflowing bitter cup, man, heartless, brought to Thee,
So blind to all Thy love,—slave of his wicked will,—
But Thou didst drink it up, and then . . . 'twas Thine to fill !

O fitted "Man of Sorrows" a human heart to melt,
And fill with joy, a soul which ne'er true joy had felt,
How didst Thou make our ruin the servant of Thy love ?
How take a dying thief up **WITH THYSELF** above ?

Midst hatred, love-provoked, midst evil, only good ;
Thy meekness wins the heart Thou'st wash'd in Thine own
blood ;
In secret teach me, Lord, the movements of Thy grace,
And thus prepare my soul to gaze upon Thy face.

Keep, me, my God, in peace where Marah's tree was found,
And feed me on that "root out of the barren ground,"
Thy substance clothed in flesh, Thine own effulgent light,
Shine in and through my heart, mid darkness make me bright.

Here for a "little while," I wait Thy rest above
When I shall see the **SON**, and fully know Thy love ;
Crowning the life-day's work, Thou hast in grace allow'd ;
Thou'lt bring with Him Thy saints in *glory on the cloud*.

W. J. LOWE.

Rewards.

BEHOLD I come quickly and My reward is with Me" (Rev. xxii. 12). What sort of reward would you like the Lord to give *you*? If the Lord allowed you to choose the kind of reward you were to have, what should you ask for?

A touching story is told of Queen Victoria when she was once visiting wounded soldiers in Netley Hospital. One poor fellow was frightfully mutilated; he was bashed almost beyond recognition. As Her Majesty stood by his bedside she seemed greatly moved with pity, as though her heart went out with real compassion and she longed to say something that should really comfort the sufferer. Taking one of his hands in both of her own, she bent over him, saying, gently, "Thank you so much for all you have done *for me*."

Personally, I could wish for no other reward than this, just to be able to hear His dear voice saying (what indeed I feel I so little deserve): "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Why should the King recompense me with such a reward?

It is exceedingly important in these days to have Christ the centre of everything to us, so as to be able to say, "to me to live is Christ"; to be walking in the light of His glory shining down upon our path, in everything that glory kept uppermost; not to be allowing *two lives* in us, the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit, but to be sinking the life of the flesh, and having only the life of Christ living in us.

G. V. W.

Justified and Set Free.

IF a man were brought up in a court of justice, charged with some offence, and the judge, after having examined the case, were enabled to say to him, "You can leave this court cleared of all charge, there is nothing whatever against you"; what a happiness and relief it would be to his mind.

Now God does even much more than that; He "justifies the ungodly." How can He do this and yet be a righteous God? Because the death of Christ has so fully met all His holy and just demands that He can be just and yet justify the ungodly. God has set forth Christ, a propitiation through faith in His blood, and now He can be just and justify the one who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26).

Freedom from our sins. The apostle Paul set forth this truth in the plainest possible words in his address at Antioch about the year 45 A.D., and it remains as true to-day. He said, "Through this man (Christ who died and rose again) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). This statement is so plain and so full that nothing we could say could make it plainer.

Freedom from sin. This is the next step. "Sin" is the *root*; "sins" are the bad *fruits* that grow from this root. Romans vi. looks at sin as a master by whom men are held in bondage and who pays his wages. The wages of sin is *death*. Wretched slavery in which to be held, is it not? How are we to get deliverance? Well, the full gospel of God's grace declares that, not only has Christ died *for* me, but that I have died *with* Him. It is therefore my privilege to *reckon* myself to be dead to sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus, Blessed freedom into which I am brought!

Freedom from bondage to the law. To seek to be justified by keeping the law is a hopeless task, and yet many are trying to obtain salvation that way. Not only so, but many are looking to the law as a rule of life. But the christian is not in bondage under the law. Is it, then, that we are to be lawless or to do what we like? Oh no! We have a much higher rule of life; even Christ.

"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19). It is by believing the fact that I have died with Christ, that I get deliverance. How simple! And again, let us remember that *liberty* is not *licence*. I am set free, but it is to "live unto God."

How many souls are groaning under the yoke of legal bondage; trying to do their best and to live up to the standard of the law! Our standard is, as we have said, a much higher one, viz., "to walk even as He (Christ) walked"; "to purify ourselves even as He is pure" (1 John ii. 6; iii. 3). We have a new life, a new nature, and a new object—Christ.

God said to Abram of old, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect (or upright, or sincere)." This places us directly in contact with God Himself, under His eye; and we may be assured that he who walks aright *before God* will walk aright before his brethren and the world also. This delivers us from bondage to men, and seeking to be men-pleasers, which is so great a snare to us.

So let us take to heart the exhortation, "Stand fast therefore in the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1).

A Word of Exhortation.

To love as God loves.

LET us not make our love to our brethren dependent on what they are as regards us or in our eyes. If we did, would that be *love*, as God loves?

If God showed His love to us in the measure of our worthiness or according to our spiritual state, should we have it even in the smallest degree? Thank God it is in Himself that the source and motive of His changeless love is found; He bestows it on us in its entirety, calling us His children (1 John iii. 1). We possess it in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. viii. 39); it surpasses all our knowledge, so as to fill us up to the measure of all the fulness of God (Eph. iii. 19).

Then let us measure our love to our brethren with the same divine measure. May our love flow forth from its true source and with the same motives as God Himself has.

To forgive as God forgives.

Do we forgive as God forgives? Do we forgive without remembering any more the wrongs which have been done to us? God says, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more"; "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins." This is the perfection of complete forgiveness.

How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seventy times seven; without ceasing, without limit, whatever may be the greatness and the number of failures of my brother. We are to forgive one another *as God, in Christ*, has forgiven us. "Be ye imitators of God as dear children" (Eph. iv. 32). "Forgiving one another, if any man hath a complaint against any; even as Christ also forgave you, so also do ye (Col. iii. 13). As God has forgiven us, as Christ has forgiven us!

United because God is one.

“Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are.” Do we realise this unity in our walk? Have we the same thought, the same love; thinking the same thing, without party spirit, in humility (Phil. iii.)? All the apostle’s epistles bring out, by the exhortations they contain, how the believers from the beginning (and how we also in our day) need to be thus exhorted.

To the Romans he writes, “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. xiv. 19); “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” He exhorts the Corinthians to all speak the same thing, and not to have divisions amongst them, but to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

To the Galatians he says, “By love serve one another . . . but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” To the Ephesians, “Forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” To the Colossians, “Forbearing one another . . . And above all these things put on love, which is bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which also ye are called *in one body*.” To the Thessalonians, “Be at peace among yourselves”; and that their love one towards another might abound more and more.

What a beautiful picture of *unity* the word gives us and how our failures in this unity hinder the edification and progress of the assemblies! The world sees this and makes it a subject of mockery, to our shame. How serious the word of the Lord is in His prayer, “That they also may be one in us; *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*”

The Lord also has declared, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another." Nothing is more injurious to the testimony rendered to the world than the want of love and all the divisions that result from it. Our communion is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and we have communion also one with another in the light of God, who is light and love. May we make this manifest!

M.K.

God's Answer in the Cross.

THE Cross of Christ is that by which God has revealed what His salvation is; especially in relation to certain facts connected with man—*facts* which none can deny.

We will consider briefly four of them, though there are others.

First, there is the question of "*sins*"; an unpleasant subject, but who can deny their existence? Is there no such thing as *right* and *wrong* in the universe? As to "*sins*," then—

1. We see them referred to in the scriptures.
2. We see them in all the world around us.
3. We see them in ourselves (for the first thing the prodigal said, on returning to his father, was, "I have sinned").

But what is the relation of God's salvation to this great question of "*sins*"?

The Spirit of God points to THE CROSS of Christ, where we learn: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

* * *

Look again at another question—that of “*sin*,” the root, of which “sins” are but the branch and fruit.

1. We see it referred to in the scriptures.
2. We see it in all the world around us.
3. We see it in ourselves.

The Spirit of God yet again points to THE CROSS; and there we learn what God’s salvation is in respect of this root—“*sin*.” “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the *sin* (not the “sins,” as is so often wrongly quoted) of the world” (John i. 29). “He appeared to put away *sin* by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. ix. 26).

The day will come when—

“All taint of *sin* shall be removed,
All evil done away;
And I shall dwell with God’s Beloved,
Through God’s eternal day.”

* * *

Further, look at “man,” “the old Adam”; “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. iv. 22), who, led by lusts, has become alienated from God, and must not be allowed to glory; he must therefore be *crucified* (not dead only, for “man” will glory even in *dying*; but he must not be allowed to glory).

1. We see it referred to in the scriptures.
2. It is seen in all the world around us.
3. It is seen even in connection with ourselves.

Has the salvation of God anything to say to this? Yes, indeed, for the Spirit of God still points me to THE CROSS; and there I read, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I” (Gal. ii. 20). “Knowing this, that our old *man* (“old” in contrast to the “new”) is crucified with Him” (Rom. vi. 6).

* * *

Lastly, “man,” this objectionable thing, is an “*enemy*” to God; and, here again we have to repeat:

1. This is referred to in the scriptures; for all the four gospels respectively testify to the fact that, whether presented as *God's King, Prophet, or Priest*, Christ was set aside for Barabbas, who was man's choice (see Acts iii. 14).
2. We see the same thing in all the world around us to-day. We see hatred towards God and His Christ: *God beseeching, man despising His grace*.
3. We have also discovered the same evil principle in ourselves (Rom. viii. 7).

But here, again, the Spirit of God points to THE CROSS, where we learn that, "when we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 10).

* * *

It is here that the truth of *reconciliation* comes in; for God "hath set forth Christ to be a mercy-seat through faith in His blood" (Rom iii. 25); and the message, "*Be ye reconciled to God*" (2 Cor. v. 20), has now gone forth. Already the *guiltiest* sinner (1 Tim. i. 15) of the *guiltiest* city (Jerusalem) of a *guilty* world (Rom. iii. 19) has been reconciled and saved, "for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe."

Can the reader look up by faith to the glory of God, and say in all sincerity, "*I see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*"? The cross is empty; the grave is empty; but the throne is occupied, inasmuch as all that required to be effected in regard to sins, sin, man, and foes, has been so well done, that now "*glory crowns His brow*."

Believing, I rejoice

To see the curse remove:

And bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,

And sing REDEEMING LOVE!

N.L.N.

Scriptural Arithmetic.

(Substance of an address to young Christians.
Scripture read 2 Peter i. 1-11.)

FIRST of all let me explain, after reading these verses, why I have given my subject such a peculiar title; one which might have led some to suppose that I was intending to speak of some of the numbers found in the Bible. But that is not my purpose.

You will all remember—and not only those who are but a few years from school life—that all arithmetic is based upon the familiar four rules, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and you have doubtless often heard that the most intricate sum in mathematics can only be worked out by the use of these four well-known rules.

Now, looking at our scripture again you will see that the word *add* is actually used, and I want you first of all to look at this sum in addition, if I may so call it. It is a lesson we all need, young and old, because it gives us the essentials for practical every-day life, and solemnly warns us against neglect of them. But it supposes that we have something to start with, and that something is faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. xi. 6). Peter takes it for granted that the Jewish converts to whom he is writing have that God-given faith in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, without which they would not be christians at all. So we start with having this and are told to add to it *virtue*.

The word *virtue* needs a little explanation, because it does not mean virtue as opposed to vice, in the way we speak of a virtuous life, a virtuous woman, but it means valour, or we might call it courage, moral courage; an actual need of every-day life for our walk in this world that is away from God, which daily grows in the spirit of independence of God and His word, even where it is not actually despised.

Another point of importance in understanding this exhortation is that the addition of these elements is not to be made in the way that we build a wall, by adding brick to brick; but the better meaning is that we are to *have in* our faith, or along with it, this element of moral courage, and the others that follow. It seems to me more like a prescription given by a medical man which contains several ingredients, say four or five or even more, of which one is the vital element and the rest contributory to a perfect whole.

In this case moral courage seems to be the most important, next, of course, to the indispensable one of faith. Why? Because of its need in daily life. Do we not need courage to confess Christ before our friends, our neighbours, our shop-mates, to kneel down at our bedside in the barrack room, which, amongst soldiers and airmen, is always felt to be the crucial test, and often has to be done amidst jeers and taunts, if nothing worse?

The next element to be added is knowledge, or discretion, so as to use our courage wisely. Peter himself gives us more than one example of courage, but in drawing his sword to defend his Master he was not wise and had to be rebuked. We may give offence sometimes in defending the truth, but let us seek to do it wisely, with tact (see Proverbs xv. 2*). And now the third element. Why is temperance added? Temperance means self-restraint. It is well said that, "He cannot govern others who cannot govern himself." Proverbs xvi. 32, says, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." There will be a constant need of this kind of temperance, and also patience or endurance, which follows in perfect order, as we can easily understand.

How much we find in the epistles about patience and endurance, especially in those of St. Paul, and how

* The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright.

much you will need these exhortations as you go through life if in any degree you wish to adorn the doctrine of our Saviour God in all things! It would be a delightful task to trace these several graces in the life of our blessed Lord, where they shine so conspicuously in His intercourse with men and women on the earth. This is no doubt what is typified in the fine flour offering of Levit. ii., for we all know there is no roughness, no inequalities or irregularities in fine flour.

Then we have a fifth element added—"to patience, godliness," a reminder, no doubt, that all must be done and said with reference to God, His claims and His name. We have only to look at 1 Timothy iv. 8. to see that godliness is indispensable, for it is profitable unto all things "having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

When we come to the sixth and seventh elements of this divinely-given prescription, we are told to add two kinds of love, brotherly love and love—for in the original, I understand, it so reads. Our love is not to stop at our brethren, or friends, or those we meet with, but after the pattern of the love of God, to flow out towards the world and all around us. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples in the sermon on the mount (Matt. v. 44-46), "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you . . . For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

This gives us a key to the twofold use of the word "love" in our passage—we are to love not only those whom we should naturally have affection for, but love after the pattern of God's love to us (see 1 John iv. 9).

Before we look at the answer, or sum total of this addition sum, let us turn to the subject of subtraction.

T.R.

(To be continued, D.V., next month.)

Laodicea.

(Revelation iii. 14-22.)

WE have been asked by a correspondent to write some comments upon the address to this church, and we would approach the subject with a sense, we trust, of the gravity and solemnity of what the Spirit says to them.

There have not been wanting those who have had the most peculiar and exaggerated views as to the message to Laodicea—we might almost call them “erratic”—so that it is well to keep from mere unbalanced sentiment or speculation and to humbly look up for guidance and wisdom as to anything that is said or written.

First of all let us remember that these addresses to the churches do not look at the church of God in the aspect in which it is seen in such a portion of scripture as, for example, the epistle to the Ephesians or Colossians. It is not the church in its place of privilege and blessing, united by the Holy Spirit to the glorified Head in heaven, and where all the nourishment needed by the members on earth flows down from Him, for their progress and growth of soul.

Nor is the Lord Jesus looked on as supplying those rich blessings to the church, of which we read in these scriptures. These things are very true and blessed in their place; but we have to be careful to give each scripture its proper place in order to understand the mind of God in it.

In the first chapter of Revelation the Lord Jesus is seen as a Judge, in the midst of the candlesticks (or churches), coming to see what use has been made of the blessings conferred and the truth committed to each. It is the church viewed in its place of *responsibility* as a witness for Him on the earth. These seven addresses, therefore, take the church in its wider meaning; not as the body of Christ, where all is vital and real, and

where there is no "wood, hay, and stubble"; but rather as the house of God, which includes the professing body, and which is held responsible as such.

In the historical aspect of these seven churches, Laodicea is the last of the seven, and points to the close of the church's history on earth.

It is to be noted that the way in which the Lord is presented to each church, has a distinct connection with the state of that church. Here it is, "The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

What is the significance of these opening words of the message? To answer this question we must have followed, in some measure, that very brief but divinely-given outline of church history—if we may so call it—given us in the preceding six addresses. Without going into details, we may say that it has been a history of failure on the part of the church from the beginning to the end, with occasional gleams of something brighter here and there.

In Ephesus they had left their first love; this was the root of all the subsequent evils; it was that *inward* decline which opened the door for all sorts of other evils—and this went on till it reached its climax in the Middle Ages in the state of utter corruption in Thyatira, where Jezebel ruled and christianised idolatry was set up under the Church of Rome. And yet even here there was a little remnant of faithful ones, who stood for God amidst much persecution and trial.

There was some recovery in the Sardis state, at the Reformation period, and further light in Philadelphia later on, though much weakness also.

Laodicea presents the last and worst phase of the church's history, the marked feature of which was—lukewarmness, being neither cold nor hot. This *lack of heart* is the worst of all evils. Hence the Lord is

presented in the way we have just referred to ; showing forth in His own Person those very qualities which ought to have been seen in the church ; but which, alas ! were not.

“The Amen.” He is the One in whom all the purposes and counsels of God will be made good and verified. Amen means sure and eternal verity and truth (see Isaiah lxxv. 16 ; also chap. vii. 9). Everything committed to the first man failed ; but there is no failure in the Second Man.

Then He is the “Faithful witness” ; this, too, the church ought to have been, but was not. Like Israel of old, whose ways were such that the name of God was brought into discredit amongst the nations by them, so it was with the church too.

“The beginning of the creation of God.” Christ was the beginning, the archetype, the true representative and embodiment of all those moral qualities of that new creation where all things are of God. In James we are said to be “a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” The qualities of this new creation include love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, truth, and many others. In Christ all the features of the divine life were shown out in their blessed perfection.

One thing to be noted here is that in the preceding church, Philadelphia, God had mercifully granted fresh light and truth ; very feebly apprehended no doubt, but there it was. But Laodicea would none of it ; she was too much taken up with her own acquirements and outward prosperity, too much occupied with her own boasted riches, to have any relish for what belonged to a rejected and crucified Christ.

Nothing is more blinding, spiritually, than pride and self-sufficiency : and the history of Laodicea stands as a warning beacon, to warn us off those dangerous rocks on which, alas ! many have made shipwreck. What does the Lord think of this condition of lukewarmness ?

He says, "I will spue thee out of My mouth,"—as something utterly nauseous to Him.

Some, perhaps, will ask the question, "Could a real believer be spued out?" No, certainly not. But, as we have pointed out, these addresses to the churches take in the whole *professing body* calling itself the church, and held responsible as such.

At the same time, it is well to take to heart all that is said here, as elsewhere in scripture, and to ask ourselves the question, "How do I stand—is there to be found in me, or in my church association, something of the same spirit as that which marks Laodicea?" If so, let us be assured that we need to humble ourselves and to "repent."

And having first set our own house in order, we may look round us in Christendom and see the features of Laodicea developing rapidly. Solemn fact indeed!

Has Christendom "continued in God's goodness"? Have the churches stood faithfully and loyally for the honour of the Lord Jesus, and maintained what is due to Him? They have, on the contrary, sunk more and more into worldliness; whilst Ritualism and Romanism have been advancing at an alarming rate. Then, at the other extreme, Modernism and infidelity have been on the increase also.

Scripture shows us that all this will go from bad to worse and merge into "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. xvii. 5). There is no possible hope of recovery in any corporate sense, nor does scripture warrant such. Judgment, not re-union or betterment, will be the end of the professing church—of Christendom.

But perhaps the reader will say, "You are a pessimist, you have not said much to encourage or to uplift." The only way to be truly encouraged is to see things as they really are, to bow down and confess all before God, as Daniel and others did of old, and to look for

grace and strength to walk in the truth in separation from evil.

But, after all, there is much to encourage. We can learn, even amidst the ruin of the professing church, that Christ is still the same—His love, His grace, His sufficiency, is always to be counted on. If we are only simple, humble, and dependent, we may have communion with Him and know the joy of His presence with us as truly as they did at the beginning of the church's history.

He says here, "Behold I stand at the door and continue to knock." Alas! He is *outside* the professing church. Will any hear His voice and open the door? If so He will come in and sup with him, and he with Him. What patient grace! What a character of love, which never gives up its pleading until judgment actually falls!

To sup with anyone shows fellowship, intimacy, communion. And the Lord still stands at the door, till there is no more hope: the execution of the threatened sentence is deferred till all the patience and longsuffering of God is exhausted.

In the end, as we have said, all will be merged in the abyss of "Babylon the great" after the true church has been taken to be with the Lord; on which the most terrible judgments will fall (Rev. xvii.-xix.). Let us, then, seek to walk with garments undefiled, in communion with the Lord Himself, ere the stroke falls; waiting for Him to come and take us to the joy of His presence above.

F.G.B.

The Reply to a Lawyer's Quibble.

(Luke x. 25-37.)

DEEPLY humbling is the reflection that the Saviour in His mission of matchless mercy to our sinful world became the object of causeless hatred; His words of wisdom and grace being met by the religious teachers with contradiction, cavilling and futile efforts to entangle Him in His talk.

Great is our privilege, however, in having the inspired record of His dealing with this teacher of the law.

God manifest in the flesh, tabernacling among us, in infinite grace, the blessed Saviour is here being tempted by the lawyer with a question of how much he should do to inherit eternal life. The Saviour at once takes up the lawyer on his own ground of doing; and asks him, "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" Then, accepting his summary as loving God perfectly and his neighbour as himself, He confirms, with authority, the word given to Moses, that the *doing* of what the law demands is the essential condition for life. This brings home to the teacher of the law, his failure, his inability to fulfil the law's demands. Alas! the conviction produces neither humility nor contrition.

Desiring to justify himself, he resorts to the unworthy quibble, "And who is my neighbour?" What a reply it elicits! The blessed Saviour brings into view an illimitable ocean of all-surpassing grace in a parable that simply but powerfully presents Himself as the rich One, for our sakes becoming poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

He was even now "stedfastly setting His face to go to Jerusalem." Knowing the plight of those He had come to save, as none other did, He draws a vivid picture of it, in the man who fell among thieves. They leave him naked, robbed of everything and wounded to death except for prompt pitiful intervention. The keen

eye of the vulture may have already discerned him from afar, or the lion may have started on his search for prey, guided by instinct to the road in which ruthless robbers were wont to leave their victims. And neither priest nor Levite will avail him anything—the temple service being utterly inadequate to meet the dire need of a dying man on a barren, dark and distant road. The Lord does not stop here, blessed be His name! He goes on to the rescue of the wounded man by a despised Samaritan. This modest, self-denying but resourceful benefactor, as he journeys, comes to where the poor man lies, has compassion on him, goes up to him, binds up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, sets him on his own beast, brings him to an inn and takes care of him.

The morally stripped, robbed and wounded sinner is in such plight as is beyond the law to remedy. Only a Saviour who could meet God's righteous claims in sovereign grace could avail anything. And He is here, patiently opening out the precious truth to this quibbling lawyer. Despised and rejected of men, a "Samaritan," so-called in malice, He has come to the rescue. "The love of His heart has made Him a neighbour" to us; the Seeker of lost ones in order that He might save them. He is not being ministered unto, but is ministering, giving His life a ransom for many. How beautiful is the summary of His journey indited by the Holy Spirit in Phil. ii. 5-11! And how blessed the full results of it as shown in Revelation xxii. and other scriptures!

The Samaritan benefactor, unable to stay with the rescued man at the inn, assumes responsibility for him. The inn is not a permanent dwelling-place; it is for travellers; but the use of the word "host" for the proprietor is, perhaps, significant. The Samaritan has confidence in him, and leaves the rescued man in his charge until he should come again. He gives the comprehensive injunction, "take care of him"—a care

corresponding to the activities of his own love for the rescued one (ver. 34). For this service he gives the host two pence which indicates a short absence. The rescued one would surely take note of this and daily watch for his return. He might say, "It is all I can do for my deliverer, I have but 'little strength,' but I can watch for his coming again. I will be the first to welcome him."

Our beloved Saviour and Lord has imparted confidences to us which go beyond the parable. Cherishing us with unutterable love, He has not only left us the cheering promise, "I will come again," but has added (words that should ever burn in our hearts), "and receive you unto Myself; that where I am (in the Father's house) there ye may be also." And again, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit abides with us to glorify Him and lead out our hearts in the earnest desire for His coming for us. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Lord's last inspiring word on His own is, "Surely, I come quickly." With hearts aglow they respond, "Amen; even so, come, Lord Jesus."

No one can have part in the doing of the Saviour's *atoning* work (Heb. i. 3; John xiii. 36), but there are aspects of His gracious path in which His redeemed ones may reverently "follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21; Eph. v. 1, 2; Phil. ii. 5; 1 John iii. 16). To them the exhortation, "Go, and do thou likewise," pressed on the reluctant conscience of the lawyer, will be esteemed a high favour conferred on them.

A.J.H.

The Person of the Christ.

"No man fully knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27).

"In Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily "
(Col ii. 9).

"I N the progress of this (the Arian) controversy, which convulsed the universal church, Apollinarius, a bishop of Latakia, while he 'earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints' on the supreme Divinity of our Lord, was betrayed into the error of denying His literal humanity; not, indeed, in the old Gnostical sense, but by maintaining that the Saviour did not possess a human mind, the divine nature supplying within Him the place, so to speak, of the rational soul

Now to mark the variation of this dogma from the truth, we must remember that divine revelation most clearly makes known, first, that the Saviour of mankind is really and truly God; secondly, that He is really and truly man; thirdly, that He has therefore a twofold nature, the divine and the human; the one pre-existent and eternal, the other conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin; and, fourthly, that nevertheless, these two natures constitute, in a manner altogether inexplicable, ONE PERSON, who is Christ."

(Extract from a history of the Syrian Churches, by J. W. Etheridge. Published in 1846.)

"How wondrous the glories that meet
In Jesus, and from His face shine!
His love is eternal and sweet,
'Tis human, 'tis also divine.

His glory—not only God's Son—
In manhood He had His full part,—
And the union of both joined in one
Forms the fountain of love in His heart.

The merits and worth of His blood
 Have freed us from hell and from fear,
 That we, as the blest sons of God,
 Should make His good pleasure our care.

Oh, then may this union and love
 Make us walk in the service of Heaven,
 'Mid obedience and suffering to prove
 That we to the Lamb have been given."



That I may know Him.

A YOUNG Christian, having just entered into the enjoyment of the knowledge of Christ as his Saviour and the possession of eternal life, being desirous of telling others of this wondrous blessing resolved that on this particular morning, he would speak to all with whom he might come in contact in the little village, of their soul's salvation.

The first person to approach him was a tall, well-built Irish labourer, with whom he entered into conversation.

After a little while he somewhat timidly said to him: "It's a grand thing to be saved!" Much to his surprise, the Irishman replied, "Indeed it is, sir; but I know something *even grander!*" "And what may that be?" he asked. Then, doffing his cap, and in words which came from his heart, the workman answered: "To know the companionship of the One who saved me."

“Even So, Come, Lord Jesus.”

HOW remarkable it is that both the Old and New Testaments should close with the coming of the Lord! In the former He is viewed as the Sun of Righteousness about to arise with healing in His wings, to usher in the *day* of Millennial blessing for Israel. In the latter He is seen as the bright and Morning Star, which appears *before* the dawn of day, during the darkness of the night; the proper hope of the church, for which we wait.

It is now about 1,830 years since the book of Revelation closed and the Lord has not yet come. Why tarries He so long? The answer is given us in 2 Peter iii. 9, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

So He waits still until the last one is gathered in and the number of the elect, who form the church, is complete.

What purposes of grace God is accomplishing towards this poor world during this, the time of the “patience of Jesus Christ”! And it is our blessed privilege to be, in heart and soul, in sympathy with His desire, “that all men should be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

The coming of the Lord may take place this year, this month, this week, yea, to-night! The last one of the “living stones” which go to compose the spiritual building, may be fitted into its place, and the house of God be complete. What a joyous time it shall be for all who know the Lord, to hear His assembling “shout,” which, in one moment, shall raise the sleeping saints and change the living ones; giving to each one a body like His own!

And there is no doubt that purposely and designedly we have not been told *when* He is coming, so that we might be always looking, waiting and watching for Him. Do not His own words sound upon our ears to-day with all their unchanged freshness and unutterable love, "Surely I come quickly"; what response do we give to them? Do we say, "Yes, come, Lord Jesus."

Dear reader, would *you* be glad if the Lord were to come to-night?

Scriptural Arithmetic—2.

The substance of an address to young believers.

NOW as to subtraction, let us look at an example in Colossians. In the eighth verse of the third chapter we read, "But now put off all these—anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth; lie not one to another seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." I can imagine some young christian here saying, "Surely it is hardly necessary to tell christians to leave off such things as these." But we may be sure it is so, or such admonitions would not be in the word of God. There are many such scattered through the epistles, but I can only point out one more (see Ephes. iv. 25 to end) and pass on to our third rule, multiplication.

For this let us turn again to the Epistles of Peter, in each of which the words occur, "Be multiplied." They do not often occur in the New Testament, but here is sufficient for our purpose. In the second verse of the first chapter of the first Epistle, after the beautiful salutation, it says "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied." What a comprehensive wish! We cannot have too much of either. Grace is such a large word and covers so much in the scriptures that it is beyond

definition, but in the second epistle, the first chapter and the second verse, the words are added "through the knowledge of God."

There is the inexhaustible supply. One great blessing characteristic of Christianity is that it gives the knowledge of God, and we are exhorted in Col. 1. 10, to grow by the true knowledge of God. What a contrast to the great leaders of science and worldly wisdom who profess to be in search of this, and hope at some future day to reach it. God grant that ere too late they may find it in Christ.

And now for our last exercise—Division. What are we to divide? Look at 2nd Timothy, 2nd chapter, 15th verse, "Rightly dividing the word of truth."

This is a large subject and we can now only look at it in the briefest possible way, but there is much that a young christian should learn and go on learning. One reason is that we may not confound things that differ, and learn to discern, when reading our Bibles, between the hopes of Israel and the hopes of the church; as also between the promises to Israel and the promises to the christian. If we do not discern something of these things we may miss what we ought to be in the enjoyment of now, and look in the wrong direction for our blessings.

Now let us very briefly return to the first scripture we considered, and we shall find there is a very definite result, and a special blessing connected with really doing what we are there exhorted to do. "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The next verse is a warning against slackness, followed by a further exhortation to diligence, and the grand reward is, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Is there a young believer here to-day that does not desire to bear fruit for Christ? Well, having this desire, here is your equipment for service; and mark the end. Rewards, as you have often heard, are always associated in scripture with the kingdom. There are things present and future in which all share alike; the joys and privileges of the Father's house we shall all enjoy who are His children—members of His family; and we are all alike sheep in the flock of Christ the Good Shepherd. But what we have been looking at this evening is equally important in its place, and the profit and loss is definitely set before us. If these things be in us and abound, we are made neither idle nor unfruitful, but lacking them we become blind or short-sighted, and might even forget that we had been purged from our old sins—a sad picture indeed!

On the other hand, we have a beautiful and attractive picture as the result of diligence. An abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

Caleb's history is a striking illustration of this reward. Read it for yourselves in the 4th chapter of Joshua.

The Israelites, as a whole people, got into the land because God is faithful to His word; Caleb got an abundant entrance into Hebron, his promised portion, because *he* was faithful and *wholly followed* the Lord his God.

A word or two more before I close about the question of rewards. It is sometimes thought that a triumphant death-bed is meant by this entrance described here, but that is not the meaning of it, for many of the Lord's most devoted servants have had very little that is remarkable about their death, and the Lord's coming to take us to Himself without dying is the christian's blessed hope. Rewards are always connected with the kingdom aspect of future blessing. We see this in the

parable of the talents in Matt. xxv. and other scriptures, very plainly.

But in the Lord's word about the Father's house, John xiv., He does not speak about rewards for faithfulness; all is grace, and the fruit of His work, His death, for all alike that are His by faith in His name. In the Father's family all are equal, and a place is prepared for us by the precious Saviour's presence in heaven after His death and resurrection. In the kingdom of the Son of man, when He sits upon the throne of His glory, there will be differences and rewards, according to our faithfulness and diligence in watching for and serving our Master and Lord. May He grant that we may all be stirred up by these scriptures which we have been considering.

T.R.

“Whose Faith Follow”

(Hebrews xiii. 7.)

SUCH an exhortation as this is needed by us, and surely we ought to feel deeply grateful to all who have helped and taught us in the truth of God, as well as, most of all, to the God who gave them the wisdom and desire to be used in His service.

We give below a translation of a letter written by our beloved brother Dr. H. Rossier, of Vevey, Switzerland, at a time when it appeared as if he would not be long with us. He fell asleep in Jesus on the 20th March, 1928. His ministry and godly counsel will be much missed, especially in the French-speaking countries.

It was given to him to serve the Lord during an unusually long period of time. For 58 years he edited the magazine *Le Messager Evangelique*, a paper for christians, of much value, and from which translations of his and other articles, have frequently appeared in

this Magazine. His writings savoured of the spirit of Christ, and showed much spiritual intelligence in the truths contained in the scriptures. (Ed. W. of H.)

Vevey, 16th November, 1921.

The thought of departing to be for ever with the Lord is very sweet to me and nothing comes in to disturb it. All is perfect peace with God. In spite of very happy family bonds, I have no regrets, and God knows that I love all who are mine, and all the brethren, and I appreciate their affection.

If there is no bitterness to me in leaving these dear ones, there is even stronger reason that there should be none in leaving things here below. The only thing which might cause me some regret is the interruption of the work which I had begun; but, as regards my *special* work for the assembly, I have full confidence that the Lord will provide for it by raising up, until the time of His return, instruments fitted for this task.

He has already provided for the most important of all publications, a better translation of the Holy Scriptures. As regards the "Synopsis" (in French), I find to my joy that there does not remain a single volume to be completed and corrected according to the English edition, so that the work will henceforth be easy and limited to the simple reprinting of different volumes as and when they become exhausted.

There is one thing which I desire to realize more and more, as leading up to eternal happiness, and that is the personal presence of the Lord, at a time when we do not see Him yet—His presence expressed by these words, "*Thou art with me.*" That is what I believe we ought to long after more.

I leave to all my brethren these words—Colossians iii. 13-15; and to those of the brethren occupied in the Lord's work this other word—Romans xii. 3.

As to what concerns myself, I desire to thank all for their long continued support, for their constant affec-

tion, increased yet more by their affection towards my loved ones.

It only remains for me to ask the forgiveness of all those whom I may have wounded or offended during my long career, or whom I may have often failed to help.

May the Lord raise up amongst the young brethren hearts devoted to Him, nourished by the word of God, persevering in prayer that they may be engaged in His work, servants of the assembly, full of zeal for the gospel, of energy for the warfare we have to carry on, and may they be kept without stumbling until the day of Christ.

In conclusion, I desire to put all the brethren specially on their guard against two dangers—First, that of *worldliness* which shows itself to-day in being interested in the things of this world, and in proportion as they are so, their interest in the word will diminish. Secondly, *latitudinarianism*, that is a weakening of christian principles, which will be the absolute ruin of the testimony which the Lord has entrusted to us. Brotherly love is so much the more true in proportion as it is bound up with a walk in the narrow path of separation from the world, that is to say, in strict obedience to the whole word of God. These things are the earnest desire of your feeble brother in Christ,

H. ROSSIER.

The Assembly at Prayer.

LET us consider a little, for our encouragement, two examples of divine intervention in answer to prayer on the part of the assembly, which we find in Acts :—

(1) The assembly asks God for boldness to confess the name of the Lord Jesus in the face of persecution (Acts iv. 24-31).

(2) The assembly makes urgent prayer for the deliverance of Peter (Acts xii. 5-12).

In the *first* case it was a question of witnessing for Christ at Jerusalem. Peter and John were under the condemnation of the great council of the Jews. By their authority in religious matters, they had been strictly commanded "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (ver. 18). The apostles were thus placed in the alternative position, either of obeying God, or of submitting to the heads of the nation. They had to choose between prison and death on one hand or disobedience to the Lord on the other.

In these circumstances they acted with the decided determination of free men who would persist in following a certain path in spite of all obstacles, but as true men of God who realized their own weakness. They had recourse to prayer. But they did not pray as units, as Elias for instance (1 Kings xviii). They acted as members of the body of Christ and went to their own company and reported "all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them," then, "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord." The assembly, as such, presented its request to Him who is Sovereign Lord and who made heaven and earth and the sea. The communion of hearts realized by these early believers characterised the beginning of the assembly's history in the Acts. They proved that amongst them there was but one thought produced by the Spirit, so that "with one mind and one mouth" (Rom. xv. 6) they glorified the Lord Jesus and presented their requests to Him. This is a precious example of that co-operation in prayer which ought always to characterise every action of the assembly.

Amongst other features of this request, we may remark: (1) that the assembly recognised the supreme power of God (ver. 24); (2) that they understood that the opposition of the great ones of this world to the

servants of the Lord Jesus had the same character and the same origin as that which also arose against Him (v. 24-28), (3) Also that the faithful ones who were gathered together asked God for strength that "with all boldness they may speak Thy word," in spite of the decree which had been made against speaking in the Name of "Thy holy servant Jesus" (v. 29-30).

This earnest coming together of the assembly for prayer had an immediate result, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (v. 31).

This hearing of their request manifested the powerlessness and futility of the band of wicked men who, in their council, had threatened the servants of God in order to terrorise them and reduce them to silence. In the midst of the assembly of the saints there was "the voice which shook the earth" (Heb. xii. 26): the Holy Spirit was there as the all-powerful Witness to the Lord here below. It is not surprising, therefore, that the disciples, in answer to their prayer, had all boldness to preach the word without fear.

The *second* example which is given us in the Acts of a meeting of the assembly for prayer is found in chapter xii. 1-3. The civil authority threatened the life of the saints, and Herod the king, having killed James, proceeded to attempt the life of Peter. In order to accomplish this evil design, he caused him to be thrown into prison during the feast of the Passover, thinking to put him to death as soon as the feast was over. What could the feeble flock of disciples do to oppose this Idumean king and his troop of soldiers and deliver one of their number from prison? They did what the assembly should always do in *all* circumstances. They must neither lean upon an arm of flesh, nor forget that the "gates of hades" will never prevail against the

church which Christ is building (Matt. xvi. 18). The constant attitude of the saints during all the days of their pilgrimage should be the realisation of this word : "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18).

Under these circumstances, the disciples at Jerusalem prayed for Peter, not merely separately, but unitedly, "prayer was made without ceasing of the *church* unto God for him." Thus, realising its character as the assembly of God here below, they persevered in earnest supplication for the beloved servant of the Lord, whom the enemy desired to destroy, during the days of the feast of unleavened bread and during the night which preceded the day when he was to have been executed.

It was then that Peter himself, appearing suddenly within the circle of those who were assembled, gave them the living proof of the power of prayer, made collectively to the Lord, to put in motion here below the strong arm of Him who controls all things both in heaven and on earth.

What place has assembly prayer amongst us? In considering these incidents narrated in the word and the exhortations which they give us as to united prayer, we would seriously press the above question on the hearts and consciences of our readers. Is the united prayer of the assembly the arm which we value most in the spiritual arsenal to which access is open to us? If such is not the case, why is it so?

We would wish it to be clearly understood that we are not speaking of the prayers of an individual believer, or of several, who may come together *as such* for particular objects, such as the advancement of the work of the gospel. Requests of this character have their importance both in time and place; but the word of God shows us that a very special place is reserved at the throne of grace *for the prayers of the assembly*.

III

If the prayer meeting is neglected or given up injury and great loss will result. It would be difficult to find an excuse to justify a state of things so dishonouring to the Lord. Those who are assembled may be but few, possibly the majority of them sisters; they are, nevertheless, assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus. They recognise that He is in their midst and that the Holy Spirit is present with them to guide and direct; they are filled with pious fear of grieving the Spirit and hindering His activity.

In such conditions, the assembly at prayer is led as a single organism by the Spirit who dwells in it; by Him it can call, with one voice, upon the grace from on high, to obtain help in time of need.

The prayer of the assembly is not a collection of different prayers on the same theme, but one single request, although presented by different organs, according to the harmony produced by the Spirit of God who animates all the members of the body. The weekly meeting for prayer is a meeting of the assembly in the same way as the meeting for the breaking of bread. The assembly, as such, then comes to the throne of grace, even if it is represented by only some of those who compose it.

May the assembly, then, in no wise neglect the prayer meeting, and may no individual absent himself from it habitually without some very imperative reason!

W. J. H.

God and His Word.

IF we read the words spoken about the time of the close of their ministry by those whom God has largely used as leaders of His people in the past, we shall see that their messages turned into a kind of prophecy of what would take place after their departure.

Thus Moses says, "I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands" (Deut. xxxi. 29).

So also Joshua charges the people, "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. xxiv. 15).

These faithful servants knew well what the tendency of the heart was; they had seen it all along in the history of those whom they had sought to lead in the ways of the Lord. As they themselves walked and lived in nearness to God and faith in His word; the unbelief and departure from Him on the part of many, was quite evident to them during their lifetime, and they foresaw only too plainly what the end of it would be.

Paul's last address to the elders of the Ephesian church, whom he called to meet him at Miletus, is most touching, and is still another example of the same thing. He refers first of all to what his own manner of life had been at all seasons, and he commences with those striking words, "Ye know." His life, since his conversion, had been one of faithful and untiring service to the Lord—not simply as a lecturer or preacher who, becoming familiar with a good deal of truth, could give it out very eloquently, but as one whose whole soul and heart were thrown into the work he carried on.

Now his ministry was coming to a close and he speaks of what they well knew—his lowliness of mind, his tears and trials; of the individual interest he took in each one, visiting them in their own houses as well as preaching publicly. What an example for servants of God to-day!

He presented the gospel with such fullness and earnestness that he could say, "I am pure from the blood of all men." He did not bring before his hearers some pet notions or special doctrines, but declared *the whole counsel of God*.

Then what a solemn word he speaks to them (and to us also)! "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers" (ver. 28, new trans.). Let us observe the order of the words; they were to take heed first to themselves, then to the flock. Alas! how many have been much occupied about the flock, but their own walk and conduct in their home or business life, or in the church, has not been at all in keeping with what they sought to impress on others.

We find the same order in the apostle's exhortation to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." If a man is not governed, in his own life and conduct, by the truths he teaches; his preaching will have very little power, and very little effect on those who hear him. This we know too well.

These elders are exhorted to feed, or shepherd, the church of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His own One (as it should read). The church of God is precious in God's eyes; it is dear to Christ as that which He has purchased at such a cost; what a privilege, even in some small degree, to feed or shepherd the sheep; but what a responsibility also!

And now we come to Paul's prophetic words as to the future: "After my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock"—these were one class of enemies—those from without coming in. Besides these, there were those from within—those who, from among themselves, would speak perverted things to draw away the * disciples after them.

* In the better translations the article comes in before "disciples," which makes it more specific who are meant.

We have only to read church history to see how this prophecy was fulfilled. The root of "self" is very deep in the human heart, and it shows itself most evidently amongst professing christians, who, just like other people, desire position and place for themselves, making themselves a centre of attraction.

In such a state of things what was to be done? Men could not be relied on as guardians of the truth or safe guides to go by. Nor could the church be counted on, although, of course, we ought to respect assembly judgments when arrived at after full inquiry before God and in accordance with His word.

But here is the apostle's answer; "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up," etc. Can God and His word ever fail the faithful soul? Impossible! Let the days be ever so dark, and the deceptions of Satan ever so seductive, we always have a sure resource in God and His word. Indeed we find, seven times over, in Rev. ii. and iii., "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," which is, for us, hear the written word.

And we may well connect this with what the same apostle says to his dear son in the faith, Timothy, in his second and last epistle, "Every scripture is divinely inspired, and profitable for teaching" Everything that comes under this designation "scripture" (*graphee*) is God-breathed. Here is something that the man of God can rely upon with all confidence at all times, even in the darkest hour of the church's history; what a comfort and stay to the soul!

But this gives no warrant for selecting *certain portions* of scripture and pressing them to an extreme as that which is especially suited to some particular section of the church, as some have done; we want *every scripture*—the *whole* truth of God, evenly balanced. We need Paul's ministry, with its blessed unfolding of the

truth of the church ; we also need John, with his presentation of Christ as the Life, the Light, the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and many other truths. And we need Peter and James, and the Old Testament ; each giving us, by the Spirit, that which is necessary for our salvation and our daily walk.

But to get the needed help and guidance from the scriptures we must come to them in a humble and dependent spirit, counting upon God for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and living out in our daily life the truths He teaches us. A merely intellectual acquaintance with the letter of scripture, without the heart and conscience being in exercise in the presence of God, is of little value.

Paul appealed to those to whom he wrote, as to how he had walked before the Lord and before the saints. For the most part he earned his own living besides carrying on the work of God so wonderfully as he did. "These hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." What an example of practical Christianity !

And is not this most needed as a lesson for ourselves who live at the close of the dispensation? There are dangers on every hand, but the Lord is faithful ; let us rely upon Him with more implicit confidence and trust.

The path of faith is clear and definite for the individual believer, and the word of our apostle still sounds on our ear, "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace." The apostle's active ministry was drawing to a close and we may well take heed to his word in 2 Tim. ii., "He (Christ) abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (new trans.). The Spirit of God, if unhindered and ungrieved within us, will always furnish from the word of God that which is needed for the days in which we live.

F.G.B.

The Evolution Theories.

IT seems as if, from time to time, various phases of Unbelief passed like a wave over Christendom. Recently the theory most in favour seems to be evolution, which has been strongly advocated by at least one leading Bishop of the Church of England, by some of the clergy, and by many of the thoughtless multitude who are only too ready to adopt any fashionable idea.

Of course serious efforts are made by those holding positions and emoluments in the churches to prove that one may be a good evolutionist and a good christian; but, as we shall see, these two are mutually destructive the one of the other, and no one can honestly be both at the same time.

If the doctrines of evolution are true, the early chapters of Genesis are not true. But our Lord Himself has put His seal upon the truth of Genesis, both before and after His death and resurrection. "Have ye not read," He said, "that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?" (Matt. xix. 4, 5).

This reference is found both in Genesis i. 27, and in chap. v. 2. When risen, He referred His disciples to Moses, the prophets and the psalms, the three well-known divisions of the Old Testament so familiar to the Jews. It is impossible, therefore, to hold with both Christ and with evolution at the same time; as impossible as it would be to serve Christ and Antichrist.

Before saying a little on the question of evolution itself, let us consider briefly what the Bible teaches us as to creation. The Bible is not opposed to true science, but its object is not to teach science, but to meet the moral needs of man's soul, and to make known God,

who, but for it, would still be to us, "The unknown God."

One cannot fail to be struck by the sublime simplicity with which Genesis i. opens, "In the beginning God created." There is no uncertainty about it; no effort to account for anything by a process of reasoning; we are brought immediately to *God* and to *creation*, His workmanship.

Why is this account not accepted universally? The answer is, because, "faith is not the portion of all men" (2 Thess. iii. 2). "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3).

Men can see things as they are around us, they can observe phenomena, but they are ignorant of the originating cause. "God created," His will and His word was the source from which creation came. The evolution theories, however, *must* leave God out, because they are man's attempt to account for "things seen" simply by his own observation of the laws that govern material phenomena, as he understands them.

When we come to the Bible, it is not a question of man groping after a first cause; it is God coming out to reveal Himself to man—a very different thing indeed!

"God created": it has been truly pointed out that there is a marked difference between the word "created" and "made." W. Kelly, in his book "In the Beginning" says, referring to Exod. xx. 1-11, "The Sabbath is not *a* but *the* seventh day, the memorial of creation finished—of the Adamic world. 'For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth'; the language is precise. It is not said "created" but "made." This was the right phrase as a whole for the work of the six days, however well creating is said of a part within that work. It was not the original production but a special construction of divine will and power *with man in view*."

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This "creation" was *before* the six days, and, as has often been remarked, there may have been an immense period, eons upon eons if we like to call it so, between Genesis i. 1, and ver. 2, which latter brings us to a subsequent state when the earth *became* waste and empty; so that there is ample room left for the formation of strata, etc., of which geology speaks. Verse 2 and onward is in *contrast* with the *order* in which God created the worlds—an order which marks all His ways (see Isaiah xlv. 18, and read, "He created it not a waste." R.V. : "waste," Heb. *tohu*, same as Gen. i. 2).

When the Persons of the Godhead are distinguished as regards creation, it is attributed either to the Son or to the Spirit. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3). It is well to note here the very strong and emphatic manner in which creation is attributed to the Son, the Word.

Again, "By Him were all things created . . . all things were created by Him, and for Him" (Col. i. 16).^{*} In Hebrews i. 3, we have the added fact concerning the Son, that by Him God made the worlds and that He upholds all this vast creation by the word of His (the Son's) power. To *uphold* creation in its order is just as necessary as to create, and both are ascribed to the Son.

It would not be possible here to go into the various scriptures dealing with creation, profitable as such a study might be, but if we follow the teaching of the Bible throughout, both in the Old and New Testaments, we shall find that it gives a uniform testimony as to the fact set forth in the very first words of Genesis i., "In the beginning God created"

^{*} Referring to the three prepositions here used, a note in the new translation says that *en* signifies the one whose intrinsic power characterised the act of creation, *dia* the instrumental power, and *eis* the ultimate object or end for which it was done.

To adopt the theories of evolution is, therefore, to set aside and invalidate the uniform statements of scripture : both cannot be maintained at the same time. Men who, like Dr. Barnes, speak with contempt and pity of those who, as they say, are antiquated enough to still accept the testimony of Genesis, ought to resign their positions as christian teachers if they want to be consistent. But when people are under a delusion they are generally self-confident. Bible believers, who fully accept the account of creation as given in the scriptures, are at least consistent in the position they take and the doctrines they teach.

Let us listen to the apostle Paul, who gives us *true* wisdom. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" God chooses the things that are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence (1 Cor. i. 27-29).

But to go back from truth once professed and to adopt the speculations of the human mind in place of it, leaves men in utter darkness and blindness; this has been so from the beginning. Romans i. throws a solemn light on this subject, as we shall see.

God made Himself known at the first in creation, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." But men did not discern God in the creation which they saw around them. And further, when they had a traditional knowledge of God through Noah, etc., they turned away from Him. And as they did not think well to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a mind void of understanding, and they sank into a pit of moral corruption almost below the brute creation.

Evolution sets aside and ignores the true God as given us in the Bible, as the First Cause, the Originator of everything, and gropes in darkness for a beginning, an origin, which it cannot discover. Reasoning from the lower creation to the higher, it drags down man, who was created "in the image of God," to being a development from the lowest forms—from proto-plasm—through various stages up to apes, and finally to men.

Has it not to be said of the advocates of these theories also, that as they did not think well to retain the truth of God, as given in His word; God gave them up to a mind void of understanding, to debase man, who is "the image and glory of God," down to the brute creation, to "natural animals without reason, made to be caught and destroyed" (2 Peter ii. 12)?

(To be continued.)

An Interesting Incident.

I WAS visiting a sick brother, who was very deaf, so that, in reading to him, I had to read loudly. We were seated in the front room reading the seventeenth chapter of John. As I did so, the landlord of the house, himself an old man, was flitting from the dining room back to the front room, into the kitchen and beyond. As he did so he caught snatches of what was being read.

One verse particularly laid hold of him, the 23rd, and, getting his Bible he came to me with it opened at the place and said, "Excuse me for interrupting you, but as you read those words, 'Hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me,' they sent a sort of thrill through me," and his face beamed with delight. Thank the Lord he could be thrilled in some measure with the wondrous, stupendous fact of God's love!

F.W.

Stern Reality.

“I WON’T DIE! No, I won’t die!” Poor thing! She was a victim of influenza during that terrible year when the late Duke of Clarence died, and the epidemic was raging so mercilessly on every hand. Her father was a British officer of good rank. Her mother, in years long ago, was considered one of the most beautiful young women of her day in Society, in one of the great capitals of the British Isles. They were Irish; and being all Roman Catholics by religion, the world, in a very special sense, seemed to claim her as one of “its own.”

But, how true it is! that “all flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth.” So, in this case; unexpectedly the death-summons came; and she overheard the doctor sorrowfully announce that *she must die*.

It was an awful moment for her, and with that amazing strength of which the dying are sometimes capable, she arose from her bed, on hearing this, in the energy of despair, exclaiming the distressing words already quoted, “*I won’t die! No, I won’t die!*” Then, in a paroxysm of terror, throwing herself across her pillows, she passed away—into the vast and dark eternity.

Perhaps, my reader, you can recall some such incident in your own family circle: and the writer can vouch for the truthfulness of this one in his.

But, say, what if it had been your case, and the angel of death had laid his icy hand upon your heart? What if, this night, this *very night*, or, as you peruse these lines, he knocks at *your door*, and *your soul* be required of you?

Useless, indeed, would it be then, to cry "*I won't die! No, I won't die!*" For, if still in your sins, and unforgiven by God, unsaved by Christ, the *only* Saviour, *die you must*, according to God's appointment. And, "after this," the Scriptures assure us, will be "the judgment"; for the same authority asserts that the *very day* is *fixed*, "in which God will judge the world by that man whom He hath ordained." Yes, the *day fixed*, and the *Judge ordained* (Acts xvii. 31).

The sneers of the infidels, the jeers of worldly companions, the pretensions of so-called learned men, weigh, perhaps, with you now, as affording a very fair pretext for not heeding the beseeching of "God, who is rich in mercy" (Eph. ii.); and for ignoring the free offer of Divine forgiveness to the "*Whosoever*" in the gospel of His grace.

Have you ever reflected what a moment that will be, what a realisation of opportunity lost for ever, when, seated on His own throne as Judge, upon the throne of judgment, the long-neglected Saviour shall no longer issue, from His Father's throne, His present invitation: "Come!"

Then the whole history shall be unfolded, and the sins of a lifetime passed under review; for "we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ."

Oh, be warned in time to *repent and believe the gospel!* The door of mercy still stands widely open, that "*Whosoever will*" may come! It is not yet too late; God's love continues to be proclaimed. Grace, like a mighty river, flows onward still! The Lord Jesus waits to be received (John i. 12), and to bestow the priceless blessings of God's "Eternal salvation," pardon, peace, and eternal life! Will you have them? for,

“Life is found alone in Jesus,
 Only there 'tis offered thee—
 Offered without price or money,
 'Tis the gift of God sent free.
 Take salvation !
 Take it *now*, and happy be.”

N.L.N.

Peter's Exhortations.

NO doubt the apostle Peter was well fitted by his experiences to be the instrument in the hands of the Lord to exhort others. Between the time when he was first called to follow the Saviour, and the time when He said to him, “Feed My lambs,” “Shepherd My Sheep,” “Feed My sheep” (John xxi. 15, 16, 17), Peter had gone through many trying but valuable experiences. The gracious Lord was training His servant for the work He intended him to do—a work which is for *our* blessing also, through his written epistles.

Let us just look at four out of the many exhortations in his first epistle :—

(1) “*Be ye holy for I am holy*” (chap. i. 16).

The law said the same thing ; and both the law and the gospel agree in pressing upon us the truth of the holiness of God. It is always true that “our God (*i.e.*, the christian's God) is a consuming fire.” Grace in no wise changes this truth : we dare not therefore trifle with sin, if we do we shall come in for God's chastening discipline.

(2) “*Be ye all of one mind*” (iii. 8).

This oneness of mind cannot be *enforced* ; it can only be produced in a spirit of grace. Just consider the

context, "sympathising, full of brotherly love, tender-hearted, humble-minded." If these qualities are found, it will go a long way to bring about that unity amongst believers, which is so much to be desired.

(3) "*Be clothed with humility*" (v. 5).

It is something we have to "bind on"—a garment suited for all weathers, all seasons, and all climates. Not the kind of humility which is proud of being humble, but that which comes from occupation with Him who was "meek and lowly in heart." Christ went *always down*, from Godhead glory to Calvary's cross of shame; and, "Let this mind be in you" is a word for each of us (Phil. ii. 1-8).

(4) "*Be vigilant, watch*" (v. 8).

We have a sleepless and vigilant enemy, therefore we need to be always on the watch. Satan is always ready to trip us up if he can, and the only place of safety is in nearness to Christ and complete dependence on Him.

Then, besides this, the shadow of the closing days of Christendom is upon us, and if it could be said in Peter's day, "the end of all things is at hand," how much more so now! To the servant of the Lord, whose greatest desire is to serve and follow Him, this must impart sobriety and seriousness in his walk and ways. Not, of course, despondency, for God is equal to every time, no matter how difficult it may be; but that gravity and sobriety which Peter so often urges upon us in his epistles, and which is so needed if we are to be witnesses for Christ here.

The Coming of the Lord

And the effect of waiting for Him.

IF one lives daily as waiting for the Lord from heaven, there will be no planning for the future, no laying up for the morrow; such a man will learn more and more, as other truths will open round this grand central one, and he will be kept in the truth. If, on the other hand, he drops this centre truth by saying, "He cannot come yet; so many things must happen first," then is the progress of such an one's communion with God, hindered, for, as we have said, it is according to what a man has heard and holds with God that there can be any growth.

What is the use of teaching me that the Lord may come to-morrow, if I am going on living as though He were not coming for a hundred years? Or where is the comfort and blessedness of the truth to my soul, if I am saying in my heart, "My lord delayeth his coming"? Though I cannot lose my eternal life, yet if I am losing the truth and light I have had, I shall be merely floating on in the current of life—half world and half Christ—and all power of christian life will be dimmed in my soul.

If the truth is held in communion with God, it separates to Himself. Truth is to produce fruit, and you have no truth that does not bear fruit. Truth must build up the soul. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth."

Christ becomes precious in and by the truth that I learn; and if it has not that power, it all drops out, comes to nothing, and is taken away. If Christ is precious to me, I shall be waiting for Him with affection, and if it is not so, the bare truth will soon be given up.

J. N. D.

The Death of Abraham.

THERE are few men whom God has been pleased to honour as much as Abraham, few men whose name is known as his is—and this for thousands of years. The Holy Spirit Himself speaks largely to us of him in the word of God.

The end of such a man should certainly interest and instruct us. It is related for us briefly and simply in some verses in Gen. xxv., “and these are the days of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.”

We know from chapter xii. 4, of this book that he was seventy-five years old when, in obedience to the call of God, he left Charran and came out from his country, kindred and father’s house, to go into a country which the Lord had told him of. Then, for the space of a hundred years, he remained as a stranger in the land, without possessing anything of the country which Jehovah had promised him, except a field in which was the sepulchre where he was buried—and his family—a field which he had bought for money from the sons of Heth.

If he had been mindful of the country from which he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned. But no : he lived and died as a stranger in a country which Jehovah had shown him. He never looked back ; but even on the threshold of death, his eyes were always fixed upon heavenly things, on the city whose builder and maker is God, and into which he would one day enter.

He enjoyed these glorious realities in such a way that he could build an altar to God who had appeared to him, and worship. Besides, he did not desire for his son anything better than he himself possessed.

“Beware,” said he to his servant, in speaking to him about the country from whence he came out; “Beware that thou bring not my son thither again.” The things that he possessed were much more valuable than what he had left: his faith knew how to value them at their true worth. “Then Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years; and was gathered unto his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth.”

What simplicity there was in the burial of this great man! Isaac and Ishmael, his sons, buried him in the sepulchre of the household of faith, of those who believe in the God of resurrection. There were no vain ceremonies, no long discourses recounting all that Abraham had been—his life spoke sufficiently, there was nothing to add.

Everything unfolded itself as suited the house of those who have their part outside the course of this passing world. Let the dead bury their dead with great pomp, let them build sumptuous tombs; this is scarcely suitable to those who have a part in the glorious realities of heavenly things.

Two disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, took down the glorious Saviour, the Prince of Life, from the cross and laid Him in a new sepulchre in which no one had ever been laid. These two burials resemble each other in their simplicity.

After Abraham's death it is the faith of his son Isaac which shows itself. If he had been disposed to reason, he might have said, “My father has died and he possessed nothing; he was mistaken, he lived on illusions. I am going to return to the country of my fathers.” But, no! he remained in the promised land,

thus showing that he walked by faith, in the footsteps of his father Abraham.

Considering the end of his life's history, he scarcely imitated Abraham's faith. After the latter's death, God blessed Isaac his son. What encouragement for those who mourn, and for all of us to-day. We have here one of these numerous examples which God gives us in His word and which faith alone can comprehend. He never places before us things which we cannot attain : faith always knows how to lay hold on them.

May we, as did Isaac, go and dwell near the wells of the Living One who reveals Himself. May the sorrows we pass through bring us near to Him in order to draw without ceasing in His presence the waters of grace which have refreshed, strengthened and encouraged those who have been before us on the road. These waters cannot dry up, they are at our entire disposal as they were for them.

A.G.

The Onyx and Sardonyx Stones of Scripture.

THERE appears to be some uncertainty as to what stone is meant by the word translated onyx in the A. V. Young, in his dictionary, gives it as the leek green beryl. However that may be, it is the only stone which as a separate stone is called precious in scripture until we come to the living stone, the chief corner stone in 1 Peter ii. 4 and 6. Then in Revelation xxi., the light of the "holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God" is likened unto "a stone most precious" and the foundations of the wall of the city are described as being "garnished with all manner of precious stones."

The onyx is the first stone mentioned in scripture with bdellium in Genesis ii. 12 ; and is also first in what

has been called the *creation* group in Job xxviii. It is therefore considered to set forth Christ's glory as Firstborn of the creation. The bdellium, coupled with it in Genesis ii. is only mentioned again once in scripture in connection with the manna. If we have the glory of Christ as the Firstborn of all creation in the onyx stone, we are reminded that when He came into His creation, He came in lowly grace as the Manna, whose appearance was as bdellium. He was the One who humbled Himself, blessed be His name! But He could ask those who murmured in the presence of this lowly grace "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" (John vi. 62).

The onyx stone is in the centre of the grouping linked with *government* in Ezekiel xxviii; and is the middle stone of the last row in the breastplate, the stones of which are sometimes referred to as the *grace* grouping.

It is a striking symbol of Christ's glory and dignity as the Firstborn of all creation. It is not, therefore, found in the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation xxi. because that is the "Lamb's wife," the "bride's adorning." But the mention of the sardonyx there—the only time it is mentioned in scripture—would seem to show a special relation of the assembly to Christ in this character; and its connection and combination with the sardius stone to have a meaning of divine importance for us. The sardius is the deep blood-red stone, very valuable, reminding us of the precious blood of Christ.

The sard-onyx is a combination of onyx, sard and milk-white chalcedony in alternate layers. Of what then does this stone speak in its fifth place in the heavenly city's wall? Do we not find the beautiful answer in Hebrews xii. 22, 23? Though it may not present precisely the figure of Revelation xxi. verse 22 speaks of the "heavenly Jerusalem"; and in verse 23 the character symbolised by the sardonyx stone is given

—the only mention of it in the Bible as in the case of the stone. It is the assembly of the firstborn ones who are written or enregistered in heaven.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stands alone as *the* Firstborn; but there is an assembly of firstborn ones in close association with Him (through divine grace), redeemed by His precious blood and taken out of the world to be exalted in heavenly glory. The sardonyx then in its fifth place is a bright witness of divine grace; for its connection and combination with the sardius remind us that our glory and nearness is through the precious blood of Christ, the blessed One who has taken up our responsibility. As set after the fourth stone, the numerical symbol of the earth, of which the emerald also speaks, we are reminded of whence we are taken.

It is significant that the onyx is mentioned eleven times in the scriptures, the one mention of the sardonyx thus completing twelve, the number of administration. Our beloved Lord will associate us with Himself in this, such is His grace, but it is through redemption. And it will be our privilege to learn in His blest presence that righteous rule in which He will give us to have part with Him. To understand the distinctive glory of the assembly of the firstborn ones, also, we must learn of Him who is the Firstborn and pre-eminent in all things. On the onyx stone were engraved the names of God's earthly people. But now, those who are called to share in this new dignity and favour are enregistered where Christ Himself is—even in heaven.

“Called from above, and heavenly men by birth,
(Who once were but the citizens of earth)
As pilgrims here, we seek a heavenly home,
Our portion, in the ages yet to come
But then! the height of bliss, oh Lord, shall be
To owe it all, and share it all with Thee.”

(*Collated.*) A. J. H.

Fulness of Joy.

WHEN the soul is awakened as to the consciousness of our sins, there can be no true joy until the sin-question is settled and we have peace with God. But when that question is divinely set at rest by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, then we have that peace which nothing can disturb because founded on a foundation which is unchanging. *Then* it is that we can know and possess true christian joy.

One of the things whereby our Lord sought to comfort His disciples just on the eve of His departure to be with the Father was, by expressing the desire that His joy might be in them and that their joy might be full. So John xv. 11, reads, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full."

The words "My joy" mean the joy which was specially His own, and they are put in the same form as "My peace," "My love," "My word," etc. It may at first sight seem a contradiction in terms, but we can well understand what is meant by the joys of the "Man of sorrows."

The man of the world finds his joy in the things of the world and he thinks that without these things which minister to his desires and ambitions, life would be very dull and miserable. But the new nature, the divine nature, of which the believer is made a partaker, has its own joys, which are infinitely deeper and more lasting than anything this world can afford.

How many men and women, too, are like the bee seeking honey, which goes round to every flower to gather a little of something sweet and is unceasing in its quest; but over all the world's resources may be written the words, "Whosoever drinketh of this water

shall thirst again." These things do not satisfy and they are but passing at the best.

But the joys the christian has are not derived from this world—however thankful we ought to be for all the mercies God gives us daily—they are all treasured up in Christ, they are derived from that perennial spring outside this world which is in Him, and they are not dried up by the heat of summer or the frosts of winter.

It is truly comforting to know that the Lord did desire, now that He was about to leave His own in a scene of which He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," that they should have His joy—and not only have it—but that their joy should be full.

Here in chapter xv. of John's gospel, it is in connection with the keeping of His commandments. And what was His commandment? "That ye should love one another as I have loved you." Alas! how many things have caused alienation of heart and anything but love amongst the Lord's people; but even this should not prevent the expression of the love of which the Lord spoke here—a love which has its root and spring in the new nature in the believer.

In chapter xvi. we have still the same desire of Christ's heart for His own, and here it is linked up with prayer, with asking in His name, "Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." Thus He gives to His own all the value of His name to plead before the Father in prayer.

No doubt they had asked Him many things when He was with them; soon He would be absent, gone back to the Father from whom He came; and He places them in direct communication with the Father Himself, of whom He could say, "The Father Himself dearly loveth you, because ye have dearly loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." What

wonderful depths of divine love and forethought we find in Jesus!

Turning now to chapter xvii. 13, we get another intimation of His divine love, "And now come I to Thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." This chapter gives us, as we well know, the outpouring of the Son's desires into the ear of the Father concerning "the men that Thou gavest Me out of the world"; who were so dear to Him, not only as those for whom He died, but as the gift of the Father.

Of these not one was lost, save Judas, "that the scripture might be fulfilled." Whilst He was with them He had kept them; now that He was about to return to that glory from which He came, He commits them to the keeping of a "Holy Father," and He spoke these things that they might have "My joy" fulfilled in themselves.

Dear reader, this prayer is for you and for me, and Christ's desire is that we should have His joy fulfilled in ourselves. Are we to go about with our head bowed down like a bulrush? His wish is that we should be filled with joy. Let us remember that if He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," He did not fail to add, "But, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The Lord's own joy was found in the happy path of perfect obedience and submission to the Father's will; hence the wellspring of joy in His heart was never dried up, whatever the sorrows of the path might be. And He says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me."

If we now pass on to John's epistle we shall see how carefully the blessed Spirit of God has provided for this fulness of joy. The opening words of this epistle bring before us the Person of Christ, whom the apostles had

heard, seen, contemplated and handled, speaking concerning the Word of Life.

And this life *has been manifested*. But where am I to see it? Looking around I may see features of that life in this saint or the other saint; but, alas! how often blurred and hindered by the flesh in one way or another. But I look *back* and I look *up* and there I see the perfection of the divine life in all its beauty in a Man on earth, now glorified at the right hand of the Father.

The apostles had seen and heard, and now they report to us "the life, the eternal (life) which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." Here we have these sweet and precious titles of the "Father" and the "Son," for we also are brought, through grace, into a place answering to His own; we know God as Father, and we are children, born into the family of God.

What a privilege to be brought into the position of having fellowship or communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord! This the Holy Spirit has caused to be written that our *joy might be full*. And if we are delighting in what Jesus is in Himself, what He is to the Father; and in what the Father's thoughts about Him are; we are led, so to speak, into an atmosphere outside this world, where divine affections, seen in these divine Persons, fill the scene.

It would be impossible for us to know anything about these things had we not the scriptures which reveal them, and the new nature in virtue of which it can be said, "which thing is true in Him *and* in you." And we have received the Holy Spirit, whose blessed office it is to glorify Christ and to lead us into all truth. But, having these, we are qualified for "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

To say that these divine Persons are infinitely above us is, of course, quite true; but *grace* has wrought, and we remember that our poor shallow thoughts are never the measure of God's grace, which flows out from Him in a manner worthy of Himself. Just think of it—common thoughts and feelings with the Father about the Son, and with the Son about the Father! Will this puff us up? Will it not rather prostrate us in adoration, worship and praise, and fill out hearts with that joy which it is our privilege to experience?

In the second and third epistles of John, the apostle also speaks of fulness of joy. In the first of these he anticipates seeing the "elect lady" face to face, "that our joy may be full." In the second, the cause of his joy was in finding of Gaius' children walking in the truth—both are a happy expression of that mutual love amongst christians which characterised the early church, and of which John himself was so blessedly the instrument to make it known.

Much more might be said on the same subject, but we can only here call the reader's attention to the epistle to the Philippians where joy is spoken of in every chapter; and this, too, although it was written from Paul's prison at Rome, after he had been a prisoner for four years, and in spite of many things to deplore in the state of the church itself.

May we be enabled to experience this joy also!

"Why should His people, then, be sad?
None have such reason to be glad
As those redeemed to God:
Jesus, the mighty Saviour, lives,
To them eternal life He gives,
The purchase of His blood."

F.G.B.

The Evolution Theories.—2.

WE have already remarked that Genesis i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," is not by any means an isolated statement; on the contrary it is the uniform teaching of scripture. Let us collect together some testimonies from the Bible as to what it says on that subject.

We find both the words "created" and "made" in Genesis ii., "And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made . . . He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (R.V.). Again, "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven."

In fact it is quite remarkable how frequently this truth is pressed, in the opening chapters of the Bible; so that the fact of the unity of the Godhead (to which His people Israel should have witnessed), also God's power and glory in creation might be made plain; in contrast with the vague and foolish reasonings of the heathen nations around. So also in chapter. v. 1, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them . . . in the day when they were created."

Moses refers to the same thing when God gave the law, when they were permitted to hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire—Had there ever been anything like it "since the day that God created man upon the earth"?

The Psalmist, too, in those incomparable songs of praise to Jehovah, gives suited expression to the divine thought as to the origin and source of creation, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all

the host of them by the breath of His mouth . . . He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm xxxiii.); "Let the heavens . . . praise the name of the Lord; for He commanded and they were created," etc. (Psalm cxlviii. 5). How worthy of the God of all power and wisdom, and how contemptible it makes to appear all the base and degrading speculations of fallen man as to his own origin and that of creation!

The prophets bear witness to the same, "Thus saith the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it" (Isaiah xlii. 5); "I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens . . . For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; He is God; that formed the earth and made it; He established it, He created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah xlv. 12, 18 (R.V.)).

Just one more quotation from the Old Testament, "He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by His understanding" (Jer. li. 15). How necessary all this testimony to God as Creator was, we may judge from its fulness. Men, in their unbelief, quickly turned aside from Him, and set up gods of their own devising, to whom they attributed the creation they saw around them, consequently they fell into a debasing idolatry and became vain in their foolish imaginations, as we learn from Rom. i. 19-30.

Turning now to the New Testament, we read the words of our Lord Himself, "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female"; "affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time" (Mark x. 6; xiii. 19). So that to question God's actings in creation and to ascribe it to a succession of merely physical causes, is

to contradict the words of Christ Himself; this surely is a very serious consideration.

Further, the various epistles and the book of Revelation prove that creation is most plainly ascribed to God. We might refer to many passages, such as Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16, iii. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 3; Rev. x. 6, etc. The evolution theories, on the other hand, would shut God and His creative power out of His own universe, and lead to thoughts which are degrading to men and dishonouring to Him. Is this too much to say of such ideas as that man's origin is to be traced back to an improved ape? But if men give God up, God gives them up to a reprobate mind (Rom. i. 28).

We have a striking reference as to the *why* and *wherefore* of creation in Rev. iv. 11, "For thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created" (R.V.). Here, in the heavenly scene described in this chapter, the twenty-four elders give glory and worship to Him that sits on the throne, and ascribe creation to *God's will* as its source and origin. And why should not God, in his own sovereignty, act as *He* sees fit? "Shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say to him that framed it, He hath no understanding?" (Isa. xxix. 16).

Science can only judge of what *is*; as to a first cause or *why* creation exists, it can only reason from what it considers to be fixed laws; but these fixed laws must have had a cause: they must have been imposed by a superior Intelligence, by someone who had the power and capacity to impose them. The christian knows that man is *not* now *as* he was created, he is fallen. Science, of course, ignores the fall, and necessarily it takes no notice of the new birth, which is a *spiritual* thing.

The creation of man, according to scripture, was an

entirely distinct thing from that of the earth, the trees, the animals, etc. *Then* it was not said "Let the earth bring forth," but God took counsel with Himself and said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" The Bible shows us that, in a bygone eternity before the world was, man had a place in the purposes of God, and so Wisdom says, speaking before this creation, "My delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31).

In the new heavens and the new earth it will be true that, "The tabernacle of God is with *men* and He will dwell with them" (Rev. xxi. 3). And (oh, wondrous truth!) Christ, passing by angels and other beings, *became man*, "The Word was made flesh"; "the life was the light of *men*." That humanity He will retain for ever.

"Thus also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit . . . the first man out of the earth, made of dust; the second man out of heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 45-47, new trans.). The origin of both Adam and Christ is here traced out—in agreement with Gen. i. as to the former. Adam was made out of dust, though God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Christ, the second man, the last Adam, was "out of heaven," a life-giving spirit; not only having life in Himself, but the source and fountain of life for others (see John v. 26, xvii, 2).

Thus we cannot read the Bible with any degree of intelligence without seeing how wide is the gulf that separates man from the brute creation; and how consistently throughout its every part the fact is maintained that all creation owes its origin to the great First Cause—the will and work of the Creator-God. This is impressed on its every page.

Are we not fully justified, then, in charging the

evolution theories with being a contradiction, not only of the first chapters of Genesis, but of the *whole* revelation of God called the Bible? If this be so—and no honest reader can question it—how solemn the position of those who attempt to go on with evolution and christianity at the same time! As well attempt to serve both God and Satan—it cannot be done.

(To be continued.)

Knowing the Good Shepherd's Voice.

(John x. 4, 5).

IT is not (as I have already said in passing, and we should notice it well) the sheep's knowledge of the stranger that keeps it from the snares which he tries to set for it; but there is one voice which is known by the sheep, the voice of the Good Shepherd, and they know that what they hear is not *that* voice.

It is thus the simple are kept; the wise wish to know everything and are deceived. The voice and the person being known, encourage and authorise the sheep to follow them. Israel remains there, in the hardness of its heart: but Christ is the door of the sheep.

Now the happy results are given to us—the position of the sheep that follow this voice. If anyone enter by that door, he shall be saved. Salvation was found in the Shepherd, that which the fold could not give. The sheep should be free; the fold afforded it a kind of security, but it was the security of a prison; it would find pasture, it would be fed in the rich pasturages of God: it is Christianity in contrast with Judaism.

Christianity was salvation, liberty, and divine food. Security is no longer imprisonment, but the care of the Good Shepherd. Free under His care, the sheep feed in safety in the vast and rich pasturages of God.

J.N.D.

“A Stranger in the Land.”

“O the hope of Israel . . . why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land . . . ?” (Jer. xiv. 8.)

LUKE xxiv. has often been referred to as the “opened” chapter. In v. 2 we find the open grave; v. 27 and 32 the opened Scriptures; v. 45 the opened understandings; v. 47 the opened door of grace; v. 51 the opened heavens; v. 53 the saints’ mouths opened; but in v. 31 we find *eyes opened*, to look upon the Object of heaven’s contemplation (Matt. xvii).

The scene of death, in chapter xxiii, has for ever passed away; and the new creation is unfolded to view, where one Man occupies the entire vision, viz., Jesus, the risen Lord. “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself” (v. 39).

The story of the two sorrowing ones journeying from Jerusalem to Emmaus, has ever been one of the deepest interest to the children of God. They were talking of “His decease,” and were sad; for disappointment, indeed, had nearly overwhelmed them. Listen! “Jesus of Nazareth . . . condemned to death . . . and crucified”; “and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.” The women’s word had startled them, certainly; but, “they found not His body.” Certain of their acquaintances, also, had seen the empty tomb; “but Him they saw not.” And, “we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.”

Oh! the desolation of the heart that has lost Christ! “I sought Him whom my soul loveth; I sought Him, but I found Him not” (Cant. i. 7; iii. 1, 2). Such were the apparently shattered hopes of these two sorrowing ones, at the moment when “Jesus Himself drew near,” and elicited from them the suggestive question, “Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem . . . ?”

Yes, indeed, “a Stranger”; and more emphatically such than ever before. Despised, and rejected of men;

born in a manger, dying on a cross of wood, buried in a borrowed grave.

He had been but as "Jesus of Nazareth"; save where the eye of faith penetrated the garb of His humiliation, and discovered Him to be the "Son of David," or, the owner of a kingdom (Luke xviii. 38; and xxiii. 42).

It has been truly remarked that we naturally open up about ourselves to those who take an interest in us; so the Lord will speak to those about "Himself" who take an interest in Him. On the holy mount He had conversed with His beloved servants, Moses and Elias, touching "His decease"; looking, as it were, from the heights of glory, into "Calvary's depth of woe"—infinite measure of eternal love! And now, to these two other sons of Israel likewise, He, the unrecognised "conqueror both of death and hell," expounds the Old Testament record "concerning Himself," types, shadows, prophecies, being all passed under review.

In the wilderness journeyings it was the brazen altar alone that was covered with the purple, for "the glory rests upon the cross." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

"*Only a stranger*"! But He was freighted with the very fulness needed for their condition (Comp. Luke x. 33 with Luke xvii. 18). They were wandering from Jerusalem; but He journeys with them to the end of their wandering; for He went in, as desired, to tarry with them; and, repeating the action of that wonderful evening in Matt. xiv. 19, "He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them."

Their eyes were opened! They recognised Him! but,—He was gone! The "*Stranger*" had disappeared, and "*JESUS*" filled their wondering minds! It was enough! Their hearts were entranced! Each could now say: "I found Him whom my soul loveth" (Cant. iii. 4). The glorious antitype of the ark, with the covering of blue, on the resurrection side of Jordan, filled,

for them, the whole scene; and, like the disciples on the holy mount, "they saw no man any more, save Jesus only" !

With souls enthralled, they rose up that same hour of the night; and, drawn by the loadstone of the love of Him who revealed, in this way, that His occupation was at Jerusalem, and not at Emmaus, they retraced their steps over the three-score furlongs back to Jerusalem; and there returned to the gathered ones in time (may we say it?) to meet the Lord "in the midst"; in time, to hear His precious word of "Peace"; in time to behold Him "carried up into heaven," with hands uplifted in blessing; in time to return again (but, in the company of their fellow-believers) to Jerusalem, "*with great joy,*" "*continually . . . praising and blessing God.*"

And this is the will of God concerning His people.

N. L. N.

The End of All Things.

"**T**HE end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter iv. 7). In what attitude should christians be found, in view of the imminence of this event? "*Be sober.*" They should avoid everything that would intoxicate or carry them away with the spirit of the world, of which things a part had been already described in verses 3-4 of our chapter. Is it worth while to be preoccupied with things which are about to be dissolved, and of which the apostle declares to us in his second epistle nothing will remain—not even the most desirable, the most noble, or the most attractive in appearance?

Spiritual sleep, the fruit of worldliness, is what most exposes us to the danger of being led astray by these things. Let us *watch* then! But with what should we occupy our watching hours? With *prayers*. The object which prayer brings constantly before us is not

simply our needs, it is above all God Himself, it is the person of our Lord Jesus, our beloved Saviour.

Prayer is, then, a means of escaping from the attractions of the world. But there is a still more important preventive remedy, that is, love put into practice; "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves": love as brethren. Happy position! On the one side a life of intimacy with God; on the other, love in practice. And why this latter? Love keeps us; love covers a multitude of the sins of our brethren, as it also covers ours on their part. Is not this what the love of Christ has done for us? We find this same thought in James v. 20.

Love shows itself in many ways in practice; in mutual hospitality, the absence of being put out or overtaxed in exercising this hospitality. Remark here this entering into details of practical life which we find so largely at the end of the epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xiii. 2, etc.). There was doubtless a special reason for these exhortations: the Hebrew Christians were poor, having been spoiled of their goods, and we see in the epistles of Paul to what an extent. All this touched upon their relations, in the matter of love one towards another.

It is the same thing as to the gifts of grace received amongst the saints. We should "minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." We have to take care, then, how and for whom we use them.

In verse 11 the apostle continues to enter into the details of service. It should not be the case that the one who speaks, should speak of himself or for himself. If this were so, it would be a thousand times better to be silent. What a lesson for those whom God calls to preach! It is God who should speak through our mouth. It is no question here of inspiration, but of the action of the Spirit of God, quite independent of human

facility in speaking or talent. Such was the apostle Paul; apart from inspiration (1 Cor. ii. 1-5).

Even in service, our own natural ability is nothing. This should be "as of the ability which God giveth," which should be at the root of all our activity for the Lord. There are, then, two things in this connection—the *Word* and *Service*. This puts *man* entirely on one side. In this way only is God glorified in all things by Jesus Christ who is in heaven, but whom His servants represent here below. This exhortation recalls, in a condensed form, that of Rom. xii. 9-21.

After these words, we find what men call a doxology. The heart, filled with the power of what has just been presented, rises in accents of praise to Him who is its source and loses itself in the contemplation of His eternal glories; "through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

How much it is to be desired that our hearts, forgetful of ourselves, should more often be carried away by the contemplation of such an object! Besides this example, the New Testament presents others. The first is in Rom. xi. 36, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." The second is in Eph. iii. 20-21, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

The third is in Rev. i. 6, "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The fourth is in 1 Peter v. 11, "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." It is in this glorious praise that, in the Old Testament, the four books of psalms end. These carry our thoughts back to the sufferings of Christ and forward to the glories which should follow. These are the passages :—

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen and Amen.” (Ps. xli. 13.)

“Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen.” (Ps. lxxii. 18, 19.)

“Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen.” (Ps. lxxxix. 52.)

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen! Praise ye the Lord!” (Ps. cvi. 48.)

H. R.

The Presence of the Holy Ghost.

ONE of the most neglected truths amongst christians at the present time is the presence and acting of the Holy Ghost on earth, and yet it is a truth of immense importance to the believer. The coming of the Comforter was one of the things by which the Lord Jesus sought to comfort His disciples just on the eve of His departure, in those chapters which make such an appeal to the christian's heart, John xiv-xvi.

All these chapters are the expression of that divine love which was so solicitous for the good of its objects, so thoughtful as to their feelings and sorrows, so confiding in them, and which counted on their affection so that they would rejoice because He would be gone back to *the Father*. If He told them to love one another, as He surely did, it was *as* He had loved them, and His was a love beyond all measure because truly divine.

In chapter xiv. the Lord says that He would pray the Father, who would send another Comforter, and this Comforter would abide with them, not merely for a time as He Himself had done, but for ever. This was the “Spirit of truth,” a title which is found in each of these chapters, and which it is well to note; for any doctrine

or teaching that is not in keeping with *the truth*, is not from Him.

The world does not receive this Comforter; it cannot. How could it, since He is invisible? and the world, without faith, cannot see that which is invisible. But the disciples knew Him, small as their intelligence at the time was; He dwelt *with* them then, and, when Christ would be gone, He would be *in* them.

This then is one of the distinguishing marks of the present dispensation since Pentecost, the presence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the believer. Sent by the Father and the Son, He came at Pentecost, and indwells the believer (1 Cor. vi. 19) as well as dwelling in the church or assembly (Eph. ii. 22). This is surely a blessed privilege as well as a great incentive to holiness of life.

Again, the Holy Ghost, when He came, would teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance which Jesus had said to them. It is true therefore to say that the disciples knew the Lord better when He had left them and the Holy Ghost had come, than they did even when He was with them on earth. And we find the whole Trinity are linked together here, and that in connection with the blessing of those whom the Lord calls "His own." The Father sends the Holy Ghost in Christ's name—that name which was so powerful before Him, and in chap. xv. 26, Christ sends Him from the Father and He testifies of Christ.

In all these chapters we see that the Lord pours into the troubled hearts of the disciples all the comfort He knew so well how to give. Sorrow filled their hearts because He was leaving them, but they would see Him again and rejoice. In the meantime the "other Comforter" would take His place during His absence.

But He must leave them or the Holy Ghost would not come, if He went away He would send the Comforter (xvi. 7). As the ascended Son, glorified along

with the Father, He could act according to the rights of His Person in His care and provision for His own, and this He does in sending the Spirit.

And now the blessed Spirit of God has come to guide into all truth. He does not, as the Lord here says, speak from Himself, *i.e.*, as a witness independent of the Father and the Son, but what He hears that He speaks. He is here to glorify Christ, taking of His things and showing them unto us.

So it is the blessed office of the Holy Ghost thus to minister Christ, to illuminate the page of the inspired word, so that under His teaching it may speak with its living power and freshness to the soul. And we are always assured that what the Holy Ghost gives us will glorify Christ; thus we have a plain and evident mark that anything that does not glorify Him is *not* the work of the Spirit.

And why is it that we do not advance more in the knowledge of the truth and enjoy more uninterrupted communion with the Father and the Son than we do? May it not be because we do not allow the Holy Spirit to have His way with us as we should, that we are not wholly subject to His leading and teaching.

Let us remember also the exhortation given in the epistles, "Grieve not the Spirit." If we grieve Him by our ways and wrong doings, He becomes within us a rebuker, and is not free to lead us on to a fuller knowledge of divine things; being obliged to occupy us with ourselves so that we may judge ourselves and be again restored to communion with God.

Besides this we have also another exhortation, "Quench not the Spirit." To "grieve" Him is in ourselves, to "quench" Him is in others. If we set up a system of rules and regulations which prevents the free action of the Spirit of God in using whom He will in prayer, in ministry, etc., so far as this goes we quench the action of the Spirit.

In this connection, however, we may well add a few words—words which, we believe, are much needed in the assemblies of God's people just now.

When we come together in assembly (1 Cor. xiv. 26), in the Lord's presence, with the Holy Spirit to guide, to lead, in prayer or worship or ministry of the word, etc., do we really count on the presence and power of the Spirit to give that which it is *His* will should be ministered?

If we had this more on our hearts when coming together, what restfulness of spirit it would give, how it would calm and silence the restlessness of the flesh which is ever ready to assert itself, how it would deliver us from undue haste to make oneself heard; how it would glorify and honour the Lord instead of glorifying man!

The presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the assembly is a great *reality*, not a mere idea or doctrine; a reality which faith takes account of and which cannot be overlooked or neglected in practice, or set aside without much loss and a lowering of the whole tone of our worship, our prayers and our ministry. Indeed, the subject is so serious that it calls for our most prayerful consideration.

What blessed times we might have in such meetings if all who came together, came with a sense of the Father's grace, with Christ as the sole object before the heart, and with the Holy Spirit ungrieved within us, and thus free to lead in worship, prayer, ministry, or whatever might take place! This is what we should look for, and nothing else.

F.G.B.

Obedience to the Word of God.

IT is obvious that, in order to be obedient to the word of God, we must be acquainted with it, we must carefully study it. And how should we study it? With an

earnest desire to understand its contents, with profound reverence for its authority, and with an honest purpose to obey its dictates, cost what it may. If we have grace to study scripture, in some small degree, after this fashion, we may expect to grow in knowledge and wisdom

The powers of darkness are abroad. The enemy is succeeding, to an appalling extent, in drawing hearts after various forms of error and evil, in casting dust in the eyes of God's people, and in blinding the minds of men.

It is true we have not got Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Milcom as of old ; but we have Ritualism, Infidelity, and Spiritism. We have not to cry out against burning incense to Baal and worshipping the host of heaven ; but we have something far more ensnaring and dangerous. We have the ritualist with his sensuous and attractive rites and ceremonies ; we have the rationalist with his learned and plausible reasonings ; we have the spiritist with his boasted converse with the spirits of the departed

We hold that one great object of ministry, whether oral or written, is to bring the word of God to bear upon hearts and consciences, with direct references to the principles and influences abroad at the moment. No doubt there are certain great cardinal truths—truths lying at the foundation of Christianity—the unfolding and application of which must always be in place, always important. But, at the same time, we believe that the public teacher or writer is called upon, at times, to deal with certain forms of error and evil actually at work, and to bring the edge of truth to bear upon them

We doubt if the minds of christians generally are alive to the real character and extent of these formidable influences. There are, at this moment, millions of souls, throughout the length and breadth of the professing church, who are building their hopes for eternity upon

the sandy foundation of ordinances, rites, and ceremonies.

There is a most powerful revival of the superstitions of the Middle Ages; a return to the traditions of the fathers, as they are called; an intense longing after those things which gratify the senses—music, painting, architecture, vestments, lights, incense; all the appliances, in short, of a gorgeous and sensuous religion.

The theology, the worship, and the discipline of the various churches of the Reformation are found insufficient to meet the religious cravings of the soul. They are too severely simple to satisfy hearts that long for something tangible on which to lean for support and comfort—something to feed the senses, and fan the flame of devotion.

Hence the strong tendency of the religious mind in the direction of what is called Ritualism. If the soul has not got hold of *the truth*, if there is not the living link with Christ, if the supreme authority of holy scripture be not set up in the heart, there is no safeguard against the powerful and fascinating influences of ceremonial religiousness.

The most potent efforts of mere intellectualism, eloquence, logic, all the various charms of literature, are found to be utterly insufficient to hold that class of minds to which we are now referring. They *must* have forms and offices of religion; to these they will flock; round these they will gather; on these they will build By all alike are souls led away from the holy scriptures, and from the blessed Saviour those scriptures reveal.

C. H. M.

The Work of the Shepherds.

(Ezekiel xxxiv).

“**S**HOULD not the shepherds feed the flocks?”
 Yes, certainly they should. How touchingly, in this chapter, God takes up the whole matter with the

shepherds as to their treatment of the flocks committed to their care.

Alas, these shepherds in Israel, like many of those who take the place of being shepherds in Christendom, had bestowed more work upon themselves than they had upon the flocks. What solemn language He uses, "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock."

They were thinking of themselves and not of others, seeking their own ease and comfort, forgetful of their responsibility to guard and feed the flock. They had failed to strengthen the diseased, to heal the sick, to bring again that which was driven away, to seek the lost. But, on the contrary, they had ruled with force and cruelty.

The consequence was that the poor sheep were scattered, they were torn by wild beasts, they wandered through the mountains and there was no one to seek them out. They themselves (the shepherds) had eaten up the good pastures and fouled the water with their feet.

This surely is a heavy charge against those who took upon them the work of shepherding the flock. But is it not so in our own day? There are, it is quite true, some true and godly men who lay themselves out to feed the lambs and sheep of God's flock; but, alas! how many that feed themselves instead of the flock.

These false shepherds had ruled with force and violence, they compelled the sheep to go the way *they* thought right; if they were weak and sickly and inclined to wander—instead of going after them in a spirit of love, careful lest that which was lame might be turned out of the way, they used the whip and the stick, and so the sheep have been sadly scattered. Has not God a controversy with the shepherds about all this? Surely He has; and the lesson is one which we all need to remember.

But what is so touching and so beautiful to take note of is, that Jehovah Himself says *He* will undertake the work which the shepherds ought to have done, but failed to do. "I will both search My sheep, and seek them out I will bring them out from the people I will feed them in a good pasture I will seek that which was lost," etc.

And, above all, He says, "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." We know well to whom this refers, even the true David, the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep (John x). This Shepherd does not drive the sheep but gently leads them; they hear His voice, they know His voice and they follow Him.

And not only so, but this Shepherd has both a service of grace and a place of royalty, "And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it." All His power and His resources are at the disposal of the sheep; and they will be so in that day when, turning to Him whom they had so deeply sinned against, they will look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son.

The prophet Jeremiah also, in speaking of the pastors who had destroyed and scattered the sheep of the Lord's pasture, ends on much the same note. He, the Lord, would gather the remnant of His flock from all the countries whither He had driven them, and bring them again to their folds, etc.

And then He concludes with the following precious promise, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the

name whereby He shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (Jer. xxiii. 1-6).

Truly He is a God ready to pardon, willing to forgive, as soon as ever the heart turns to Him in true repentance. He delights in grace and mercy, judgment is His strange work. "I will bring them again," He says, "I will build them I will give them an heart to know me they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Jer. xxiv. 6-7).

Had the shepherds amongst God's people only acted in the spirit in which He Himself acts, how much sorrow might have been spared and how many a wandering sheep might have been restored instead of being driven farther away on the dark mountains on which they had been ensnared, or estranged from the path in which He would have them to walk.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you," says Peter, "taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." Here is a most necessary and important word to all who undertake the work of service or ministry amongst the people of God. Let us ponder over them for our soul's good and profit, as well as for the good of others.

The Evolution Theories.—3.

"LET us make man in our image, after our likeness"; and then we have the historical account in the words that follow, "So God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him . . ." (Gen. i. 26, 27). Divine revelation, when accepted in faith, takes us entirely out of the region of mere speculation, on which unbelievers amongst scientific men are entirely dependent. There are, however, as we know, many eminent men of science, who have faith in God and His word; this is something to be thankful for.

So far from creation being fortuitous—something that came by chance—or the result of the independent working of certain laws of nature, it most evidently was the work of one master Mind, of One who had the *whole* in view from the beginning; and the creation of man was something entirely distinct from all the rest.

It was not till the Adamic earth was set in order, was beautified, furnished and fitted for man, and that it was said that “God saw that it was good”—it was not till then that God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

This statement we may contrast with what is said of herbs, animals, etc., “Let the earth bring forth”; but now God took counsel and said, “*Let us* make man.” Then follows the historical account, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” It was the act of a beneficent Creator, who blessed them and said, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,” etc.

But above all, and of prime importance, as we know from the New Testament, was the fact that Christ, the Son of God, was to become man—the Second man, the last Adam, a life-giving spirit; and, in resurrection, the Head of a new race and a new creation.

There is, as we have already pointed out (and it is well to go over it again), an evident contrast between what is said of Adam and of Christ in 1 Cor. xv., “The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit.” It was by the inbreathing of Jehovah Elohim that Adam became a living soul; but, in speaking of Christ, it simply says, “a quickening spirit”; He not only possessed life Himself but He could communicate life to others. Adam was, “out of the earth, made of dust”; Christ, the Second man, was “out of heaven,” *i.e.*, heavenly in His origin and character.

In this connection let us point out one thing amongst many, which is specially hateful and repellant to the Christian, in the evolution theories. Christ was, as scripture shows us, "made of a woman, made under the law," "He also Himself likewise took part in flesh and blood" (Gal. iv. 4; Heb. ii. 14). Of Him it could be said to the Virgin Mary, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). Truly and really man, apart from sin in every sense, as well as truly and really God, He was born by the action of the Holy Ghost, acting upon the human vessel, Mary. Now place side by side with this truth, the theory that man is a developed ape, and we might well ask, Is not the malice of Satan, whose aim is to dishonour Christ, most apparent?

But to return to Gen. i. and ii., Adam was set in a place of responsibility to represent God in government. He was given authority over all that was made and was in intelligent relationship with God, thus showing the wholly distinct character of man as compared with all other created things. It is said, "In our image, after our likeness." Here we may profitably quote from W. Kelly's book, *In the beginning* :—

"In God's image is the truth insisted on, though here also man is declared to be made after or according to His likeness. To man only was it given to represent God here below. Angels are never called to such a place. They excel in might. They fulfil God's word, they harken unto the voice of His word. Yet no angel rules in His name, nor does he represent Him, as a centre of a system subjected to him, and looking up to him.

"But man was made to represent God in the midst of a lower creation dependent on him; though in order to be created in God's image, he was also made after His likeness, without evil and upright. But even when

through sin the likeness existed no more, he abode His image ; however inadequate to represent God aright, he was still responsible to represent Him. Hence in chap. v. 1, 2, we read that God made man in His likeness ; male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day of their creation.

“But it is significantly added in ver. 3 that Adam begat in *his* likeness. Seth resembled his father, now fallen, as well as representing him. Again, when after the deluge animals were given for the food of man, blood was interdicted, and most jealous care of human life insisted on ; for in the image of God made He man. To kill him was rebellion against God’s image, though a man was now anything but like God”

“How utterly false in presence of the Bible are the speculations of evolution, an hypothesis logically at issue with those fixed laws of nature, which the same philosophers cry up to the exclusion of God ! For how reconcile invariable law with change of species ? The truth is that real science depends upon the uniformity of results, and consists in discovering and classifying them. This does not hinder variation through circumstances, failing which the original type returns.”
(Page 90-92.)

We are well aware that in speaking as we have done we are arguing from the Bible and the sceptics do not admit the Bible as an authority. But in discarding the scripture, what have they got in its place ? nothing but vague and uncertain speculations which, as Prof. Fleming has said, are “powerless to explain the past or to inspire hope for the future of humanity. The only solid and secure progress that can come is from the teaching and truths laid down for us in the inspired writings which, in spite of all attacks upon them, remain to multitudes a revelation from the Creator of the universe and the Father of human spirits.”

(To be continued.)

The Path.

SAVIOUR divine—perfection of all grace !
 The path on which I walk is known to Thee,
 Though dark—Thy faithful care and love I trace,
 For by Thy powerful hand Thou ledest me.

And though my childlike steps may falter now,
 Though still this feeble frame but weak may be,
 Yet not one stone upon the path wilt Thou allow,
 Beyond what Thou dost see is best for me.

Then come the trial ! where the soul is bowed
 Beneath the burden heavy to be borne ;
 Days without sunshine—yet of Thee allowed,
 Sharp pebbles spread, which make me oft to mourn.

For thus this truth Thou wouldst to me impart,
 That no resource this passing world supplies,
 Has aught of merit, as a broken heart,
 Or aught of value in the Master's eyes.

And Thou to my distressed soul hast said,
 “ ‘Fear not,’ ‘Fear not,’ thou poor and stricken
 ’Tis on the feeble ones My strength is laid, [one ;
 ’Tis out of weakness, power alone is had.”

Then let the world give vent to all its rage,
 Let storms, and winds, and waves, against me rise,
 Let men their hate, and scorn, and warfare wage,
 Yea let them speak contempt—my faith despise.

E'en though it be to me to live or die,
 O Saviour ! Thou my Guide, my Shepherd art ;
 To Thee I cling, Thou, Thou, art ever nigh,
 And if all fails ; 'tis Thou who failest not.

I follow Thee, though heart and flesh should fail,
 The chilling blast of death !—e'en that may come ;
 I sow in tears, but I shall yet prevail,
 With joy, with triumph, I shall enter home.

And in Thy footsteps, e'en the darksome vale of death
 Is changed to fountains and perennial streams,
 And the whole land, throughout its length and
 breadth,
 As in the springtime sunshine, sweetly beams.

Yet still I follow Thee—till now at last,
 The bright horizon seen—no more I roam;
 O'er woodland, vale, and fen—the journey's past,
 And I have reached at last my blessed home.

I enter in— O joy ! what purest light !
 O Saviour ! now I see Thy beauty there !
 O splendour of the Father's throne—how bright !
 O rest eternal, which 'tis mine to share !

*The above is a free translation of a poem by the late
 Dr. H. Rossier, of Vevey, Switzerland.*

An Encouraging Incident.

IN connection with the article entitled, "An Interesting Incident," published in the June number of "Words of Help," the following may be helpful to God's dear children to enable them to witness a good confession for Christ in this present evil age.

The writer of this present article is the subject of the incident recorded in it, having served for a prolonged period afloat in His Majesty's service. On one occasion, when dining at mess in the Dépôt, some 150 men being present, I hesitated to give thanks, inwardly asking myself the question, "What is the good?"

Then the Spirit of God brought to my mind in a most distinct manner, that portion of scripture in Psalm xcii, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." This was immediately supplemented by the one in 1 Thess.

v. 18, "In everything give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Well, if this is so, I said to myself, I will hesitate no longer, as I desire to please the Lord. Thus strength was supplied in a moment of weakness, and a testimony maintained for the Lord.

The following sequel gives a further note of encouragement for God's dear children :—Passing down Princes Street, Edinburgh, one Lord's Day evening, some eighteen months after, I stopped at a street corner to listen to the preaching of the gospel, and saw a man whom I knew by sight standing in the ring.

Having observed me he drew near and said, I know you are a christian ; and then he added that he had often watched me at the mess in the Dépôt, giving thanks at table. He confessed how ashamed he often felt, as he also was a christian, but never had the courage to own the Lord in the manner indicated.

May the Lord in His wondrous grace and mercy enable us not to lower the testimony, but to maintain it in the power of the Holy Ghost, for the glory of Christ, the honour of His precious word and the strengthening of God's dear saints, in this evil day in which our lot is cast.

J. W. E. C.

Beloved, in a day like this, what a thought it is for us that we are set in God's righteousness before Him ! His righteousness has set aside all man's reasonings, as the rising sun not only dispels the darkness, but causes even the stars to vanish because of its brightness.

The Lost Opportunity.

“**I** have missed my chance!” Oh, what sad words are these! how often uttered, and still oftener felt! Had only the golden opportunity been seized, how much might have been spared of wretchedness, sorrow, and regret! But no! the chance was missed, the opportunity neglected, and the saddest consequences entailed.

It *might* have been thus with blind Bartimæus who sat by the wayside begging, had he heeded the rebukes of the passing crowd. It would seem that Jesus was passing that way for the last time, so that the moment was important. And, as the need was urgent, he cried out so much the more; and, casting away his garment, came to Jesus. Happy Bartimæus! Hindrances were nothing to him. Had he noticed the rebuffs of the crowd, or thought of his garment, he *might* have lost that precious opportunity, and so have remained blind to the end of his days.

It was *almost* thus with Naaman the Syrian, when, in the pride of his heart, he turned away in a rage from the last available resource that presented itself for his cleansing. Happy for him that he repented, and bowed to the word of the man of God; or he never would have been healed.

It was *quite* thus with Lot's sons-in-law, who, when urged to flee from the doomed city, regarded him as one that mocked.

Lot escaped; and the sun had risen, as usual, upon Sodom as he entered Zoar; but, when the fiery storm was seen and felt, bursting forth as he had warned, then the sons-in-law perceived that escape was hopeless, and that they had lost their opportunity, and missed their chance!

“An accomplished and amiable young woman in the town of —,” wrote the late respected Mr. John

Angell James, "had been deeply affected by a sense of her spiritual danger. She was the only child of a fond and affectionate parent. The deep impressions which accompanied her discovery of guilt and depravity awakened all the jealousies of the father. He dreaded the loss of that sprightliness and vivacity which constituted the life of his domestic circle. Efforts were made to remove the cause of her disquietude. The Bible, and other books of religion, were removed from her possession, and their place was supplied by works of fiction. An excursion of pleasure was proposed, and declined; an offer of gayer amusement shared the same fate; promises, remonstrances, and threatening followed. But the father's intimated perseverance at last brought compliance.

"The end was accomplished; all thoughts of piety, and all concern for the immortal future, vanished together. But, oh, how in less than a year was the gaudy deception exploded! The gay and fascinating L—— M—— was prostrated by a fever, that bade defiance to medical skill. The approach of death was unequivocal, and the countenance of every attendant fell, as if they had heard the flight of his arrow. I see, even now, that look directed to the father, by the dying martyr of folly. The glazing eye was dim in hopelessness; and yet there seemed a something in its expiring rays that told reproof, and tenderness, and terror in the same glance. And that voice—its tone was decided, but sepulchral still—

My father! last year I would have sought the Redeemer. Fa—ther,—your child—is——"

Eternity heard the remainder of the sentence; for it was not uttered in time."

My reader, suffer a word! for *how shall we escape if we neglect God's great salvation?* "Now is the day of salvation," but, remember the day of grace will not

be prolonged for ever, neither will the door of mercy be eternally open. "A few more rolling suns," a few more transient moments, and then the soul will find itself amidst the solemn realities of Eternity.

But, thank God, the door of mercy is open *now*, will you enter it? The day of grace is upon you *now*, will you neglect it? The way of salvation is before you *now*, will you take it? The voice of love is calling to you *now*, will you heed it?

Oh, when the storms of life shall have ceased, and this poor, empty, evanescent world shall have receded from your view for ever, may it be found that you, *in time*, had your faith firmly fixed upon the Rock of Ages,—the risen, exalted, and glorified Jesus, the Saviour and the Friend of sinners! N.L.N.

Stock-Taking.

THE apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy, used the illustration of the soldier, the athlete and the husbandman; he also spoke of the race and the reward or crown. So that it is quite legitimate, and even useful, to illustrate what we want to convey by familiar illustrations.

We should like to speak a little about stock-taking. In every well-conducted business stock is taken periodically; a complete valuation of it is made, everything relating to the affairs of the business is looked into and examined so as to see exactly how matters stand at a particular date. To neglect this would probably lead to disaster.

It is not out of place to take stock sometimes in the things of God and see how we stand. God said to Jacob, after many years of wandering and many vicissi-

tudes, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there." Jacob at once began to take stock and he found that things were not at all as they should be in his household; he had to say to them, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments."

Alas! how often it is so. God calls us by some circumstance or in some way to look and see exactly how we stand, perhaps after years of Christian life, and we find that there are things with which we are associated, or which have slipped in, yet which are quite out of keeping with the Christian's calling.

Again, Samuel has to say to the people of Israel at a moment of crisis and danger, "If ye do return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only." It was useless to expect that God would interfere on their behalf if the whole moral state of the people was not right with Him. They needed to take stock of their state and to judge themselves, purging out the evil.

So also it was with Ephraim, "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not" (Hos. vii. 9). Ephraim had not taken stock, he was unaware of the true state of things as God saw it, and of the need of repentance.

How easy it is to go on in a course, perhaps of religious activity, without being really conscious of our shortcomings and failures—of our true state before God.

Then, stock-taking must be carried on in good light; it would never do to attempt that work in semi-darkness. So, if we are to judge of things according to God's thoughts about them, we must do so in the light

of His word, not in the dim shadows of our own opinions or ideas. When that light shines, it shows up everything as it really is.

Again, we need a true and correct standard to measure things by. A cloth merchant who would attempt to measure his stock by a defective measure, two or three inches short, would court disaster. We must have the correct and original standard measure to go by.

Does not this remind us of what is said to the church at Ephesus, "Thou hast left thy first love"? Was it possible that Ephesus, to whom the apostle had unfolded such wonderful truths about the love of Christ to His church only about thirty years before, had to be told this? Ephesus, where there was so much zeal and activity—works, labour, patience, faithfulness, etc. Alas! it was true.

Who said that Ephesus had left her first love? Ah! it was not a mere man, who might be prejudiced or misinformed; it was the One who judged truly and gave credit for everything that was good; who knew all that passed, not only on the surface, but deep down in the heart. They needed to "repent," if they did not repent their candlestick would be removed.

And mark, the Lord judges according to the *original* standard; and just because *His* love had never declined, He feels the loss of a ready response on the part of the church.

Is it not well, then, sometimes to take stock so as to see how we stand? A certain body of christians, after a considerable upheaval which took place amongst them, met together to seek God's face in prayer and to speak over matters. We well remember the remark made by one who was present; he said the question was "Where are we?" But why wait for an upheaval? Why not take stock before then?

Moreover, things as seen before God, in the light of His word, and measured by the measure of the sanctuary, are often very different to what they appear on the surface. Are we as separated from the world, as devoted to Christ Himself, as earnest in looking out for His return, as once we were?

See how the apostle Paul longed after the saints at Corinth when he wrote, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." We may go on for years in a round of religious work (very good in its place) and yet the heart slip away and we ourselves get into formality, until something wakes us up and leads us to see where we have got to.

And if we take stock of the church collectively what must we say? How much departure there has been from the simplicity of the truth as it is found in scripture, from non-conformity to the world, from devotedness to the Lord Himself. And what confusion has resulted! In all these things we need each of us to judge ourselves; and surely he who is wise will walk in the spirit of the word, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."

As for the world-church, the great professing body calling itself christian but not belonging to Christ; it is more than ever permeated by Ritualism, Modernism, and worldliness of every kind, and it is going on to judgment.

Surely an occasional stock-taking is a good thing. Self-occupation is not good, but self-judgment is most important, as we read, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32).

To Christian Parents.

BEING personally exercised as to our own duties, we desire to bring before the hearts of Christian parents a subject of great practical importance. May the Lord enable us to respond more faithfully to what He looks for from us in the family circle.

In Proverbs xxii. 6, we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." All those who have the charge of the young should give attention to this divine exhortation. Again, in Deut. vi. 6-7, God says, "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house," etc.

This is more than the duty of bringing up our children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," it concerns even the forming of their spiritual intelligence and the education of young hearts according to God. It is the wholesome instruction which young Timothy had received from his childhood, to whom the Lord gave, later on, the grace to walk after the example and in the steps of his pious mother and grandmother.

Alas! Do we not see that these duties are more than ever neglected now? Yet have we not here the most pressing and precious of parental duties? With what care we look after the physical health of our children! And shall we think less of their spiritual growth? What forethought we give to their earthly future! Do we consider *most of all* their eternal destiny?

It is too common a mistake to leave the education of their young minds to the dear brethren who engage in Sunday school work. This work is precious certainly, and there are blessed fruits from it, thank the Lord. But it is to every Christian parent that God

says, "Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house . . ." etc.

Is the word of God read in the family circle regularly and daily? Are our children present at it? To what extent do they understand it?

Ah! how many things come in the way of persevering in this service, most blessed as it is. What difficulties there are to overcome, small and great (small especially) in order to ensure that each day the whole family may be united around the word of the Lord and under His eye. But are they not gathered together several times for the meals necessary for our bodies? Would it indeed be impossible to gather them together once *at least*, and as far as possible in the morning, for nourishment of their hearts and the building up of their souls?

It is true that, in order that the children may be present, a continual effort will be required, and the mother of the family, particularly, will need to watch over the details necessary to this end. But if christian parents understood the great importance of this and stand firm, the habit would be kept up, with the Lord's help.

And what should this reading be? A chapter here or there, without order? There is a special blessing connected with a patient, continuous, reading of the holy book throughout.

Then it is well to sustain the attention, which is often lacking. And perhaps the method which some would judge to be out of date, although so effective, of a verse or paragraph read in turn, should be advocated, as it obliges all to pay attention to what is being read.

A little explanation of the text is equally necessary But nothing will better assist in fixing divine lessons on young hearts than some simple reflections on the import of the passage read. One can assure oneself, by two or three questions, that the

instructions of the previous day have not been forgotten, and one can patiently renew them.

This will require perseverance and personal preparation by the head of the family; but is not everything that exercises our hearts before God always profitable? We should be building up ourselves, whilst at the same time giving to our children something of that which we receive from the Lord. A precious exercise, truly, bringing with it refreshment and blessing, not only in the family circle but assuredly also in the assembly of God.

We often deplore defections amongst the children of christians, who become captivated by the world, the things of the world getting hold of them and turning them away from the narrow path which leads to life. But merely to deplore this is not sufficient. We must act; and especially we must pray. Have we been, are we, sufficiently on the watch-tower for our dear children? God encourages and rewards faithfulness by the precious promise, "When he is old, he will not depart from it." And we know of many answers given in grace to the fervent prayers and persevering care of christian parents on behalf of their children.

May we, then, have increasing consciousness of our responsibility and our duty in the Lord. What more solemn picture can we have of a family visited by the discipline of God than that of Eli, the priest, powerless to put down the evil in his sons, "he restrained them not" (1 Sam. iii. 13). But what holy encouragement is given us in the circle of the pious and persevering Caleb; what zealousness for the conflict! What thirst for blessings! What ever-increasing zeal for the people of God! (Judges i. 12-15; iii. 10-11).

"Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not." May God encourage us in the work which He deigns to entrust to us, a labour of love with our dear children, in obedience to Him, and faithfulness to His word.

L.G.

The Evolution Theories.—4.

ARE we, then, to abandon the teaching of the Bible, which if read with the respect and reverence due to it as a revelation from God and claiming to be able to say, "Thus saith the Lord"—are we, we repeat, to set all this aside in order to take up the vague speculations of evolutionists? No, indeed! These speculations rest on incomplete data and have gaps in the evidence produced, which have never been, and never will be, filled up.

Man was created for a purpose and an end very different from the merely animal creation. He was made to stand erect and look *up* to God, from whom he received his being. When Nebuchadnezzar was bereft of his senses in punishment for his pride and folly, for even seven years, he looked *down* and a beast's heart was given to him; losing his sense of responsibility to God for the time being (Daniel iv.).

Under the power and blessing of the gospel of Christ, man is capable of answering to God's thoughts, of serving Him intelligently, of doing many acts of kindness to his fellow-creatures, of relieving the sufferings one of another, of producing in the world much that is of beauty and order in his earthly surroundings. Where are any such qualities to be found, even in their most attenuated form, in the brute creation?

Again, man is tripartite, "spirit and soul and body"—1 Thess. v. 23—(not body, soul and spirit, as sometimes misquoted). In man alone, of all creation, all these exist. The spirit and soul are very closely related; the spirit is the energising or directing part, if we may so say; it is a distinct entity (1 Cor. vii. 34); the soul is linked with the emotions, feelings and affections. But both spirit and soul survive the death of the body, as we may see from such scriptures as, Acts

ii. 27, 31; Matt. x. 28; Luke xxiii. 46; Acts vii. 59; 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22.

It is, and always has been, impressed on man's mind, even apart from the Bible and amongst savage races, that there is a hereafter, and that man will have to account to some Being who is infinitely above him. Needless to say, in this also man is absolutely distinguished from the beasts, which die and perish. Indeed one cannot review these facts, which are illuminated and made clear by the light of scripture, without feeling how great the blinding power of Satan, who would fain persuade men that their origin is to be traced to apes and lower forms of life, etc.

But the God of the Bible is a God of order, power and glory, far above man's petty imagination. When we consider the vast universe, in which our little earth is relatively but a speck, we may well say in the words of the prophet, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?" (Isaiah xl. 13-14).

Astronomers have, by years of diligent study, got to understand more and more of the vastness of the heavens, and yet they acknowledge how little they know compared to what is to be known. So it is also in the domain of what is exceedingly small and minute. The "atom," it is said, is so infinitely small that a thousand million million atoms would about make up a speck of dust, just visible to the naked eye. These atoms are—so we are told by scientists—made on the pattern of the solar system—a nucleus, or sun, with revolving planets or electrons. And all things, great or small, are co-ordinated and worked out harmoniously together.

Who that considers such things can honestly deny that there must have been a master Mind, a profound Intelligence, which originated and set in motion this wonderful creation, with its immense variety of animals, trees, flowers with their beautiful colours, each deriving its nourishment from the soil, the air and the sunlight, also numbers of materials necessary for human food and clothing? There was, unquestionably, a directive Power, of vast intelligence, which arranged and set all in motion, producing the whole according to His own sovereign will and plan.

We find the words "after his kind," referring to the various species of plants and animals, nine times in Gen. i., three times in chapter vi, four times in chapter vii., and nine times in Levit. xi., showing us that God definitely arranged and classified the various parts of creation as He saw fit.

But what is so striking is, that when we come to the creation of man, there is no such phrase as "after his kind." Man was a separate and distinct creation, with a destiny far beyond this world, and complete in a single pair, Adam coming from the hands of God, and Eve a "help meet" for him. And, as has been proved again and again, the various genera or species remain fixed, as originally settled by the Creator Himself.

There is of course infinite distinction and variety of species or life-forms of plants and animals, but the barrier of species cannot be crossed but remains permanent. To quote from Prof. Fleming, "We can by cross-breeding or cross-fertilisation create varieties sometimes very diverse, as in dahlias, roses, pigeons and dogs, etc., but there is a limit beyond which we cannot go, and, if the parents differ much, as in the case of the horse and ass, the progeny is sterile." If varieties produced by culture are left to themselves, after a time they revert to the original type.

Thus man stands in a position entirely above, and separate from, the animal creation. He has an immortal soul and spirit, he is placed in a position of responsibility to God, in which he can have intelligent communion with his Creator, he can advance in learning and discovery and make use of many facts concerning the creation which surrounds him; and, since the Fall, he has a conscience which can, at least in some measure, take cognisance of good and evil. So, as one has said, "Man was, by his existence, in immediate relationship with God, as deriving his life immediately from Himself; hence he is called in Acts xvii. the offspring of God, and in Luke it is said, 'the (son) of Adam the (son) of God.' "

In view of what we have been considering, it is plain that it is impossible to maintain the truth of the Bible and the testimony of Christ to that truth, and at the same time to adopt the evolution theories. The compromise has been tried by some leading men in the churches, for reasons of their own no doubt; but it cannot be done. As well try to serve Christ and Belial, God and mammon.

In Christ, and Christ In Us.

SCRIPTURE has its own way of expressing truths and it is always the best way. The mind of man wearies itself over philosophic explanations and cannot understand the things of God; but to the child of God, who is born again and has received the Holy Spirit, the truths it teaches are plain and filled with comfort to the soul.

"The natural man (man in nature, not born again) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them,

because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Two things are necessary for the understanding of the things of God—the new nature and the Holy Spirit.

Are we puzzled to understand how it is that, in the ranks of learned men, we sometimes find those who make grave mistakes in the interpretation of scripture—how it is that they deny the truth of portions of the Bible, that they are Modernists and sceptics? Well, let us remember that without the two things we have named, there can be no true understanding of the things of God.

But we (i.e. Christians) who are sealed and indwelt by the Holy Ghost—"we have the mind of Christ." What a blessed truth this is! The word "mind" here means the intelligent or thinking faculty, which belongs to the new nature; and therefore we have the *capacity* to understand spiritual things, which are foolishness to the natural man—things which he cannot know because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. ii. 14-16).

In speaking, therefore, of such words as "in Christ," we do not need to analyse them or speculate as to what they mean. They convey blessed truths and privileges to the soul of the believer. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). How could there be condemnation to those who are in a risen Christ before God?

His place determines ours. We are in Him, and as He is. How completely this answers the question at the end of chapter vii., "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" etc. It is a new position in which the believer is clear of all charge of sin and everything to which judgment could apply.

"No condemnation!—O my soul,
'Tis God that speaks the word,
Perfect in comeliness art thou
In Christ, the risen Lord."

Now look at the following contrast, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. xv. 22). We have all had our link with the first man Adam, from whom we derived the natural life we live in this world; but the believer has a link with the last Adam, Christ, from whom he derives the spiritual life which is his as a believer—eternal life.

"If any man be in Christ (there is) a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new (2 Cor. v. 17, new trans.) This is not an improvement of the old Adam nature, it is something entirely new. We belong now to that new creation where all things are of God, and where what is of man and of the flesh has no place. It is a new order of things entirely, of which Christ is the pattern and the head; and there all things are *of God*: and the believer is already made the righteousness of God in Him (Christ).

In Ephesians we are instructed still further in the blessings that flow from being "in Christ"; for there it is a question of God's own sovereign grace, acting for His own glory. So we read of "the riches of His grace," "the riches of His glory," "the exceeding riches of His grace," and other expressions which show us how God finds His joy in acting towards us according to what *He is* in Himself.

We are carried back into the past eternity and find that we were "chosen in Christ" before the foundation of the world—a most wonderful truth surely! And this was with the object that we should be holy and blameless before God in love. And, as if the Spirit of God were looking for expressions which would set forth the grace of God in a very special way, we are said to be "taken into favour" in no less a person than "the Beloved"; the One who is the special object of God's love!

Is it that we have attained to these blessings by any efforts of ours?—far otherwise; it is the sovereign grace of God, which has reached down to our ruined condition and placed us before Himself in Christ—not in the way our poor thoughts might expect, but according to the riches of His grace, which has quickened us together with Christ, raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Let us note that this is a fact true *now*. There is, we know, a time coming when we shall be *with* Christ in glory, we shall sit *with* Him on His throne (Rev. iii. 21); but what we have before us in Ephesians ii. is a *present* thing—we are already seated in the heavenly places *in* Christ; that is our place even now. How far we make our own of it by faith is another thing, but it is our present place and position in Christ.

It would indeed be a profitable study to consider further this place of blessing and privilege which is ours “in Christ”; but we must now turn to the other side of our theme, “Christ in us.”

The Lord said to His disciples ere He left this world, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you” (John xiv. 20). He referred to the Holy Ghost’s “day,” the day when He would come, as He did at Pentecost. Then He would give them to know these things; that Jesus was in the Father, in the unity of the divine nature above; that they were in Him above before the Father; and that He was in them down here before the world.

If we think of our being in Christ above, we lift up our head and rejoice at such grace; but if we think of His being in us, we must feel how poorly He is seen in us here!—and yet the one truth answers to the other, as every privilege carries with it a consequent responsibility. This is also true of the believer *now*, because

we have already been made partakers of the divine nature and have received the Holy Ghost.

Now if we turn for a moment to Romans viii. 10, we read, "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Is this not a very practical truth?—Christ being in us (christians) the body is dead; and the power against sin is to hold it for dead, not allowing the natural will to work, for Christ, who is our life, is in us.

"Christ in us" reminds us of our responsibility to manifest the life of Christ and the character of Christ in our daily walk and conduct. "I am crucified with Christ," says Paul, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). Thus he reckoned himself to be dead—crucified with Christ—and he lived in the power of the new life, of which Christ was both the source and the object.

On this subject one has said, "The bitter waters of Marah must be tasted when the salt waters of the Red Sea have delivered us from Egypt for ever. Put the wood of the tree, the cross of Christ, into our cross, and it will be sweet." And we must never lower the standard of truth because we are not up to it, but seek grace to walk in accordance with it.

How precious, then, and how well-balanced is the word of God! If it shows me the extent of my privileges and blessings in Christ above—a blessed reality for faith—it shows me also my responsibility to live out the life of Christ down here, in a path of humility, dependence, and obedience to God's will and word. All my fresh springs are in Christ, who can sustain the soul through every difficulty and in every step of the way.

F.G.B.

On Worship.

WHAT is worship? It is the honour and adoration which are rendered to God, by reason of what He is in Himself, and what He is for those who render it.

Worship is the employment of heaven ; and a blessed and precious privilege for us upon earth, if the enjoyment of it be vouchsafed to us. One might, indeed, add to the above definition, by describing it as rendered in common. . .

All that God is, has been manifested in the cross ; and we can now enjoy God Himself as our portion according to His infinite love in Christ. Such is the basis of worship ; and no one recognises as he should the glory of the work of Christ, or of the love of his God, to which he is a debtor for everything, who does not recognise this place as his. No one can render worship worthily to God on any other ground. . .

And not only has Christ borne away our sins, cleansed us from all defilement, and made us fit for the presence of God ; but, in order that we may enjoy this blessed reality, He has gained for us, at the same time, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we, when being born again, receive a new nature, which is holy and capable of sentiments suitable to the position in which grace has placed us before God, but we receive the Holy Spirit, who shows, and reveals, and communicates to us divine things, and inspires sentiments such as they should awaken. . .

But there is yet another element in our intelligent service—the character of “the Father.” God must be worshipped in “spirit and in truth,” for He is a Spirit : but it is as “the Father” that He “seeketh such to worship Him.”

To worship "in spirit" is to worship according to the true nature of God, and in the power of that communion which the Spirit of God gives. Spiritual worship is thus in contrast with the forms and ceremonies, and all the religiousness of which the flesh is capable.

To worship God "in truth," is to worship Him according to the revelation which He has given of Himself.

Thus we are perfect in Christ, united to Him, brought into the presence of God, whose love and holiness are manifest without a veil; as children beloved of the Father, and objects of the same love with Christ the first-born, we worship together, according to the power and affections which the Spirit, who has been given us, inspires.

We worship the God of glory, whose presence is the stay, instead of being the terror, of our souls. We worship the God of love, whose will it is that we should be perfectly happy in Him, that He Himself might enjoy our happiness, Himself finding more joy in it than even we ourselves. . . . We adore Him for that which He is in Himself. We adore Him for that which He is to us, the children of His house for eternity. . . .

How delightful to be able thus to adore God! What a source of joy is He whom we adore! How great the blessedness of finding oneself in His presence, no cloud between Him and us, no tinge of fear, because no vestige of sin! Being made "the righteousness of God in Christ," the presence of God becomes but an inexhaustible spring of happiness for that new nature which He has given us, and which finds its enjoyment in Himself. . . .

Worship is now offered in weakness, but it is in truth through the Spirit, and therefore on the principle of the unity of the whole body. It may be there are but "two or three" present; but, being assembled in

the name of Jesus, He who is the centre and bond of all the members is found there; and, being offered through His Spirit, we are necessarily, and in love, bound up with all the other members of His one body. . . .

At times the Lord Jesus will be more specially before the mind; at times thoughts of the Father will be more present. The Holy Spirit alone can guide us in this; but the truthfulness and spirituality of worship will depend upon the state of those who compose the assembly. Effort in such things has no place.

If there were thousands of disciples gathered in one place, how great soever the encouragement given by such a work of the Spirit, the presence of Jesus Himself—the most precious of all things—is vouchsafed even to two or three of the least of those that are His, if it is truly in His name that they are met. Let it be only His name in which it is done. The fleshly pride which loves to make much of a gift, and would claim lordship over God's heritage—human arrangements which would seek to avoid simple dependence upon God—the narrowness which would welcome upon the ground of peculiar views—none of these is in the name of Christ.

Those who unite in the name of Christ embrace, in heart and mind, all those who are His—all the members of His body; they embrace them in the principle upon which they are met; otherwise it would not be in His name that they were united; for one cannot exclude from the power of His name all that are His. . . . Clearly His name does not embrace the world, nor sin, nor that which denies the truth which that name reveals.

J.N.D.

The Gospel of God.

“**T**HE gospel of God” (Rom. i. 1); how comforting to the soul to remember that it is the gospel of *God*! He is the source and Author of it. The subject is “Jesus Christ our Lord.” Its sphere is the wide world—to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

In it God’s righteousness is revealed—how He can be just and yet the justifier of those who believe. It is not on the principle of works or doings, but by *faith*, and it is to everyone who has faith, whoever or wherever he may be, there is no limit.

How blessed for the evangelist to go forth with such glad tidings to proclaim! He speaks of God as the source of all the blessing, of Christ who came in divine love, who died for our sins and who is now risen and gone up to glory; and he proclaims full remission of sins and complete justification as the present portion of all who believe.

If we look around us in the world as it is to-day and dwell on the great indifference, the hardness of heart, the carelessness and unbelief, we may well be discouraged; but when we turn to God’s side and think of His great and wonderful grace in Christ, we can look *up* and give thanks. It helps us to go forward still, proclaiming the glad tidings, according to our measure, whether in preaching from a platform, or in the open air, or by the distribution of books and tracts, or in whatever way we can.

If our prayers go with our efforts, as they must ever do if we are right; we have the comforting assurance that God’s word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that for which it is sent.

“O Lord revive Thy work,” we may well say; but God *does* honour faith and earnestness whether we see it or not. Some of us can well remember how, on

certain occasions before we were brought to Christ, we went away from meetings feeling deep conviction of sin, and we can recall still further, how we were enabled to look outside ourselves and rest *wholly on Christ*; finding as a result, complete rest and peace of soul. And on these occasions the preacher did not know what was passing within and how God, in His grace, was using and blessing the preached word. So we can say, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

The Will of God.

THE will of God concerning His people is *that Christ shall be their supreme Object*; as the hymn expresses it:—

"Jesus, Thou are enough
The *heart and mind* to fill."

In Acts vi. 3-5, we find that Stephen and Philip were amongst those who were mentioned as "full of the Holy Ghost." In ch. vii. Stephen's ministry is recorded, and in ch. viii. Philip's ministry.

Persecution had scattered the church at Jerusalem; and that city, having rejected the Holy Ghost's testimony rendered through Stephen as to the risen Son of man (Acts. vii. 55-59), Philip (his work as regards the widows being at an end) "went down to a city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts viii. 5, John iv. 39-42); and Samaria, "with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake"; and, "there was great joy in that city" (Acts viii. 8; Luke ii. 10; xxiv. 52).

But, the gospel of the grace of God was to spread to "the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8; Matt. xii. 42), as well as to be proclaimed in Samaria. His

word, therefore, came to Philip to quit that scene of revival work, and carry the water of life to a needy soul in the desert (2 Chron. vi. 32-33), whose longing after God had found no satisfaction in the ritual of Jewish worship.

This man of Ethiopia was seated in his chariot, home-returning, reading God's word concerning Christ. In the right manner Philip approached him, and (*precious instance of the leading of the Spirit*—would that there were more of it to-day amongst us, God's people!) at the right moment too, for he was reading aloud from that remarkable prophecy in Isaiah liii. concerning Christ, respecting "His decease"; "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. . . His life is taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 32-33). This suggested the question by the reader,—“Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of *some other man*?”

“Some other man”! What a sad tale this question revealed! Man, by nature, knows not God. “Art thou greater than our father Jacob?” (John iv. 12). “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me. . . .?” (John xiv. 9; ix. 36; xvii. 25; Acts ix. 5). And is not this the condition of things to-day? Christ is but a man, like “some other man”; or, “one of the prophets,” etc., for, “the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image* of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. iv. 4).

* “‘Likeness’ is a simple word for all of us, it is *being like*. ‘Image’ is somewhat different. An ‘image’ *represents*, be it like or unlike. The image of Jupiter represented him to men. . . . Christ is never said to be like God, or the likeness of God, because He is God: but He is said to be the image of God, for He does represent and glorify Him, and He will be displayed in Him in the millennial glory.”—W.K.

"Some other man"! And Philip began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him "*JESUS*"; and now, from the heart and mind of this Gentile stranger, Jerusalem and its "desolate house" receded for ever (comp. John iv. 21; Rev. xxi. 10). He would identify himself with Jerusalem's rejected One; and be of the company of His disciples; hence, coming to a certain water, he enquires, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" So, "they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him."

Happy decision! "I have learnt," quotes a beloved writer from one of the martyrs, "that there is no freedom like that of the heart that has given up all for Christ; no wisdom like that learnt at His feet, no poetry like the calm foreseeing of the glory that shall be." Thus, "when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of God caught away Philip, and the eunuch *saw him no more*, and he went on his way rejoicing." Blessed freedom!

On the resurrection side of Jordan, *one Man alone* occupies the scene. It is now no longer Moses or Elias, Cephas or Paul, Philip or "some other man." All must disappear before the presence of this one Man. The happy convert, therefore, was not to be occupied with Philip. The personality of the preacher must not be allowed to stand between him and his Saviour. Hence, *Philip must disappear* (Acts viii. 39) so that "the Man" of God's "right hand" (Psalm lxxx. 17), might fill the vision "the eyes of his heart" (Eph. i. 18, R.V.); and that he, like Naaman of another day, should go, and bear his witness in a distant land (Acts i. 8), to "the God of all grace," who had so condescendingly caused him, also, to be cured of his leprosy.

N. L. N.

Christ, the Water which Quenches Thirst and the Bread that Nourishes.

(John vii. 7; 1 Kings xix.)

IN the first of these passages we see the Lord refusing at first to go up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Jews—that feast which marked the rest after the vintage—for at that time there could not be rest for the unbelieving people. But He goes up later, in secret, and, on the great day of the feast, He reveals Himself as the Rock from which flows the water which we need—that water which is free for all who thirst.

From the moment when our thirst is quenched by it, this water produces marvellous effects, and the Lord makes this known so that those who thirst may come and drink of the Rock, which is Christ. But in order that the water may flow out effectually the gift of the Holy Spirit is necessary, and we read that the Holy Spirit was not yet (given) because Jesus was not yet glorified.

We now possess the Holy Spirit, what then remains for us to do? To come to Jesus and drink. This applies to every need of the soul. An unconverted person can, under the powerful efficacy of the Spirit of God, come to Christ and drink and thus receive life: whoever drinks of this water shall never thirst.

But here it is spoken of in a way more particularly applicable to us christians, who have already received the Lord Jesus as our eternal life. With us also the question is, Do we thirst? Is there in our hearts a deep desire, that nothing outside of Himself can satisfy? Do we feel the need of coming to Him so that the source of life might be kept fresh in our souls? Or would we be amongst those who traverse the desert of this world without feeling thirst?

Too often it happens that the christian's soul does not experience a true desire to be kept in contact with the Lord Jesus, the Source of living water. If this is so, the soul becomes dried up like a plant which suffers from drought and ends by perishing. If this does not go on for too long, it is sufficient for the plant to have some drops of fresh water so that it may have again an appearance of health; and, with perseverance, it will recover its original vigour.

I remember being at a meeting with a friend. When we came in we felt so downcast at the state of the brethren who composed it that the one who accompanied me proposed to leave immediately. "No," said I, "on the contrary we must remain; this dryness has need of water." And, in fact, it was sufficient only to present Christ, when a new life manifested itself in that assembly.

What is true of an assembly is true also for each christian. We can judge of our own state and of that of the christians around us by the thirst which we have for Christ. We possess the Holy Spirit, and from the moment when we put ourselves in contact with the source, blessing flows without limit. Everything is there. This is the great secret of christian life.

It often happens when we read the word of God, we find little interest in it; we realise that there is something lacking—namely, communion. The soul has not been in touch with the source, that is to say, with the person of Christ; we have not felt the need of coming to Him to receive the living communication of His thoughts.

We may groan about our state, but to groan is not sufficient. To thirst, is to thirst after Christ, after Christ Himself, and not after things about Him merely. There are very interesting things about Christ, but

these do not quench the thirst. "If any man thirst, let him come unto *Me* and drink." This then is the first point.

We find the second in figure in the history of Elijah (1 Kings xix.). What was lacking in the prophet—that man so full of energy, who knew no fear, who could present himself before Ahab, who could brave Jezebel? At a particular moment this hero of faith leaves everything, and, under the threat of a woman, flees to the desert and desires to die. He sleeps under a juniper tree and an angel awakens him. He finds at his pillow water and a cake baken on the coals; the food which the angel had prepared for him. Elijah arises and eats, and his strength returns to him.

We have here a very beautiful figure of the word of God. The prophet finds the resources which God Himself puts into his hands. He uses them, but he lies down again and sleeps. He must be awakened a second time. "Arise and eat," the heavenly messenger repeats. The prophet shakes off his sleep and eats again.

What a lesson for us who need continually to be exhorted afresh to feed upon the word of God! The food prepared in the desert is the only means which could be given to Elijah so that he might meet the Lord. It was by this food that he found the strength necessary to walk forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. Without it he never would have arrived there, and yet this man had long since been the Lord's.

What I wish to bring out here is this: from the moment when we would be in direct contact with God, we have no other means of getting there than this heavenly food—the word of God. We must be awakened to return to this word for nourishment in order to draw out from it the strength we need. We

do not do this merely because we find the food good, but because it is absolutely necessary for us; in it alone shall we find strength to reach the end of our journey in the presence of God.

Elijah started off. He travelled a long way and what did he find there? First, his own estimate of himself: "I only am left" to bear witness of Thee! We know the divine answer. He had a high opinion of himself—and self is the first thing which must come down. Note that if we have a good opinion of ourselves, we have, generally, a very poor opinion of others. Elijah becomes the accuser of God's people.

The Lord then takes from him his ministry, and charges him to entrust it to another. He learns that he is not necessary to God and that God judges of him quite otherwise than he judges of himself. Did not God say to him: There are seven thousand men whom thou knowest not, but I know them?

In the presence of God Elijah learns many things that he could not learn elsewhere and he never could have arrived at Horeb if he had not eaten the divine food. For us, when we find ourselves in the presence of God, we meet, in the first place, judgment—the judgment on what we think of ourselves and on what we think of others. After that what remains? One thing—grace.

Elijah hears a still small voice; all the judgment had passed in the great wind, in the earthquake and in the fire, and now the prophet goes out to the entrance of the cave to meet there a God of grace.

In concluding we may say that in Christ we find the water which quenches our thirst and the bread which nourishes our souls. It is by the knowledge of our beloved Saviour that we can find the path which will lead us up to Horeb in the presence of the God of grace.

H.R.

Faithfulness to Christ.

FAITHFULNESS to Christ in a day when Satan, as an angel of light, is seeking to rob souls of the truth, binds hearts very closely together. We must not be astonished at the enemy's refined subtleties. Nor are we astonished at them when we remember the scene at the temptation in Luke iv. There every subtlety was employed in order to induce the Lord to leave the place of dependence and put forth Godhead power.

But the Lord had entered, voluntarily, into that place of dependence on, and submission to, the will of Another. He took that place as man, in grace and love to us. And oh ! how completely the subtle enemy was foiled ; not by our Lord using His Godhead power, but by His use of the written word.

Had He used His divine power for Himself, or to defeat Satan, this would have been no example or encouragement for us ; He simply used the scripture, the written word, which was sufficient to answer the devil ; never leaving the place of dependence which He had taken.

What makes it so wonderful is, that He who did so, never at any time ceased to be *God Himself*. This character of humiliation, whether seen here or on the cross, is even more wonderful than the dazzling brilliancy of the glory He had with the Father before the world was. He came into this world, taking the body prepared for Him ; He came to die ; and thus, through death, to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, as well as to annul Satan's power.

I have found generally that it is those who have not true, settled peace with God who are ensnared by the enemy. Peace with God, in no sense, rests upon what

we are now, or what we shall be in heaven ; the only foundation of our peace is the work of Christ, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification ; and "being justified by faith we *have* peace with God."

The display of the glory, in which we shall have our part, will of course be different from our experiences here ; but there will be no difference whatever in the *foundation* of our peace, whether here or in heaven. The source and spring, too, of all our blessings is now, and always will be, the love of God ; and that love is as true, as perfect, and as manifest now as it will be above, for God cannot give a greater proof of His love to us than He has already done at the cross.

God could give no greater proof than *that* ; and even in the glory we shall always remember the cross, for all the love that will fill heaven was seen there. Also, we must never measure the love of Jesus to us by a less standard than the cross, where He bore all those agonies in making atonement for our sins, and *this* it is that makes us hate sin.

May the Lord keep us faithful to Him and always able to distinguish between what God is doing, and what Satan is doing, in this world ; and enable us to call things by their right names, not calling evil good and good evil, or putting bitter for sweet or sweet for bitter.

H.H.M. (*Revised*).

A Divine Mission and a Divine Power.

(Notes of an Address.)

AMONGST the many precious things recorded in the well-known seventeenth chapter of John's gospel we find these remarkable words of our Lord Jesus, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (verse 18). And in the 20th chapter, verse 21 and 22 we read: "Jesus said therefore again to them, Peace be to you, as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you, and when He had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

This is the charge given by the Lord to His disciples, which we have ventured to call "A divine mission," and we draw attention to it with the hope that the Lord may impress our hearts with something of the greatness of their import so that it may really influence our life's testimony. The place where we find the words first uttered must give them a special character. Where is the christian that has not felt something of the preciousness and special value of the Lord's words in the 17th of John? The time when spoken and the fact that the words were addressed to the Father Himself in prayer, give them an importance that cannot be over-estimated.

It is not on the same lines as when, for instance, the Lord sent His disciples out to preach the gospel and to heal, as in Mark iii. 14; Luke x. 1, etc. In these instructions we have the Master and the servant, the great Teacher and His disciples, but in John xvii. we have something of a totally different nature, and we do well to weigh such words, coming as they do in the midst of prayers and breathings of the Son to the Father, treading with unshod feet these holy courts, as we do so.

How are we to understand our being sent into the world as Christ, the Son, was sent by God His Father? We had first to be taken out of it (verse 6) by the mighty power of grace, and we need that same grace in constant exercise to preserve us from falling back into it (verse 15). But now having been taken out and sanctified, separated from the world by the action of the word of God in actual power over our lives, we are sent back into it to represent the Lord Jesus. As we ponder these words, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world," we are cast upon God Himself for the grace to enter in any degree into their meaning; how much more so to walk and act in the power of such a mission.

"The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," but in that character of His blessed work we can have no part, except it be to proclaim Him as such. Is it not therefore more in that special way which we find so markedly prominent in this gospel—Christ as the revealer of the Father—that He is here presented? "Jesus said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John xiv. 9). Even when speaking of God as in the first chapter of this gospel (verse 18) it reads "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of *the Father*, He hath declared Him."

As we meditate on these truths we cannot but be struck with their import, and we learn something of what a christian's life should be in this world—taken out of it and then sent back to follow in the footsteps of the Son of God as sent by the Father to make Him known.

The Apostle Paul in addressing the Athenians (Acts xvii.), commenting upon one amongst their numerous

shrines which bore the inscription "To the unknown God" said, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Most important and appropriate message to a people searching after God; but now in addition to this we have an important and very precious advance—to know and make known the Father.

We might surely say that God's greatest thought was to make Himself known, and man's highest attainment and blessing is to know God. Charged with this divine mission the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is sent into the world; and to accomplish this purpose, He becomes a man and meets the condition of those to whom the blessing is to be communicated of the knowledge of God. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." But it involved the cross, "The Son of man must be lifted up," to draw man to God; and He must be "made sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

The communication of divine life is a further and additional blessing to the believer besides pardon and peace, that God may be known and His presence enjoyed. How evidently must the One by whom such a work was accomplished be a perfect expression both in life and in death, of all that is needed both by God and by man. Well may we say, "What a Saviour," "One who might lay His hand upon us both" (Job ix. 33).

Turning to the second of the scriptures referred to above, we come to the morning of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the first Lord's day; when the risen Christ stands in the midst of His disciples. He finds them filled with the fear of the Jews and wondering as to the next steps; and, standing in their midst, He calms their troubled hearts with the blessed reassuring

word, "Peace be unto you." Showing them His hands and His side He removes any misgivings there might be in their hearts as to His identity and says again, "Peace be unto you." Having thus doubly fortified their hearts with peace, He says in much the same words as in John xvii., "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21).

But this is followed by the impartation of the necessary power for such a mission, "He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

Evidently this is not Pentecost. That waits for the "fifty days" to be fully come. Was it not the impartation of the capacity for the mission entrusted to them, to follow out the work commenced by the Son Himself, to be the representatives to the world of God the Father?

We often hear to-day of the "fatherhood of God" and the "brotherhood of man," but spoken of in a way that evidently shows the speakers have never learned of either from Him who said, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which thou gavest Me out of the world." How a holy God and a sinful creature can be brought together in righteousness and peace can only be learnt in the cross of Christ, the Son, who is the true and only revealer of the Father. But what comfort and rest it is to know that He has done it in this world for the glory of God and the eternal blessing of man.

No questions remain unsettled that conscience can raise or Satan suggest. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. May our hearts be more deeply impressed with the character and true dignity of such a mission as it rests upon One who said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

T.R.

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To-day and To-morrow.

(Lines written for an aged Christian on her 89th birthday.)

TO-DAY.

“Your Father knoweth” (Luke xii. 30).

Not a hair unnumbered,
Not a need unknown,
Not a sigh forgotten—
Never left alone.
In my age and weakness
Thou art ever near;
To Thy heart, my Father,
I am ever dear.

TO-MORROW.

“Surely I come quickly” (Rev. xxii. 20).

Thou art coming, Saviour,
Coming soon for me;
Then with all Thy loved ones
I shall like Thee be.
I shall gaze upon Thee,
Feast upon Thy love,
Dwell with Thee, Lord Jesus,
In Thy home above.

C.H.V.P.

Romans viii.—A Dialogue—I.

A. SHALL we take up Romans viii., it is one of the most remarkable chapters in this very edifying epistle?

B. Yes, it would be profitable to do so, especially as it contains so much that is of practical help to us.

A. The opening words, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" give us the believer's standing or position before God—"in Christ Jesus" is a new place altogether.

B. Suppose a christian fails or commits sin, is his place in Christ changed or altered thereby?

A. This is a very important question, because, through not understanding scripture teaching as to it, many are plunged into constant doubt and uncertainty.

The *grace* of God, which has given us a place in Christ, is one thing; the *government* of God is quite another. The believer's place in Christ is unchanged and unchangeable; but besides this, he is a child of God, and this is a relationship which cannot be broken.

B. But what if he does sin?

A. If he does he comes in for the chastening of the Father, so as to lead him to repentance and self-judgment. When David sinned his relationship to God was not changed thereby, and grace could work and lead him to acknowledge, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," etc.; he needed to have the joy of God's salvation restored to him (Ps. li.); but he was forgiven, as he says in Psalm xxxii., "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

B. What did you mean in speaking of the government of God?

A. In God's governmental dealings David had to bear the bitter consequences of his sin, although it was confessed and forgiven, as we read in 2 Samuel xii. 10, "The sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised Me," etc. This was the sentence given in the government of God.

B. And does this same principle apply to us now?

A. It does, and it shows us what a solemn thing it is to have to do with God. But, thank God, we can say that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have One to plead our cause, so that, if we confess our sins, God our Father is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thus in virtue of the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous, and on the ground of His shed blood, we are again restored to communion, which had been broken by the allowance of sin.

B. This has been a long digression from our chapter, but I am sure that the importance of the subject is sufficient reason for it.

A. As to being "in Christ," let us remark here that it is in a *risen* Christ we are; One who has passed through death, met and overcome every enemy and won the victory for us; we are in Him and as He is before God. It is all the work of God Himself, who has placed us there.

B. Why does it add the remaining part of verse 1, about not walking after the flesh but after the Spirit?

A. It is well known that this clause was mistakenly brought in here; evidently the error of a copyist; it comes in in its proper place at the end of verse 4—see the New Translation or Revised Version.

B. What is meant by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus having set me free from the law of sin and death? Does it refer to the law given by Moses?

A. No : that is not the meaning of the "law" in verse 2. The word "law" there means a regularly acting principle, as we say, the law of gravity. It is that *order of things* which belongs to the Spirit, who is here

called the "Spirit of life." This is in contrast with the law or order of things which is connected with "sin and death," from which we are set free. How complete, then, is the victory through Christ over all the consequences of sin and death !

B. The Holy Spirit seems to be spoken of very much in this portion of scripture, and in different ways. Why is He called the "Spirit of life" ?

A. If we turn to John xx. 22, we shall find the risen Lord breathing upon His disciples and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This is not the same thing as the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, though a kind of little foreshadowing of it. But just as the Lord God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul, so now the Lord breathes upon His disciples, communicating to them of His risen life—it was the Spirit as the power of life.

B. Will you please explain that expression "the power of life," which I have heard before but not understood.

A. When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we have life through His name (John xx. 31), but we want more than life, we want power, and that is ours by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us.

B. "The law of sin and death." Does this mean that what once marked us as children of Adam, born of a fallen race, was this order of things, sin and death; but that *now*, as belonging to Christ, we are brought into a new place and have both life and liberty ?

A. Yes, but there is even more than this, for we have received the Spirit, who acts in the new nature which is ours as born of God. Thus we have a new standing

before God—not in Adam but in Christ—and a new power—the Holy Ghost.

B. In verse 3 we have the “law” again, “What the law could not do,” etc. What does this refer to?

A. It is brought in to show the powerlessness of the law to control “the flesh” which is in us. Chapter vii. gives us the struggles of one under the law; but who was set free and was now looking back, so to speak, upon his past experiences; we find that he consents to the law that it is good, but he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. At last he cries out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death?” (new trans.).

B. Do these struggles of an undelivered soul bring before us the doctrine of the two natures, the old and the new?

A. Yes, as children of Adam’s race we have the old nature, with all that belongs to it; but as children of God we have the new nature, as born of God.

B. How, then, are we to get deliverance or freedom from bondage to the old nature? Can the law improve it or help us to restrain it?

A. No: the law is “weak through the flesh”; but what the law could not do, God has done, through Christ. We should note that the Spirit of God in all such passages as this carefully guards against the thought that our blessed Lord was in any way tainted with sin—God sending His own Son in the *likeness* of sinful flesh and as a sacrifice for sin (this latter being the well-known form of words for the sin-offering, as used by the Greek translators of the Old Testament), has condemned sin in the flesh. Thus sin has been condemned, but not the sinner. On the cross, God

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made Him (Christ) who knew no sin, to be sin for us. Our *sins* are forgiven, and *sin* is condemned in the death of Christ.

B. What is meant by sin being "condemned"—it does not say "forgiven"?

A. There is a difference between *sin*, the root, and *sins*, the bad fruits produced by it. Chapter vi. shows us that "our old man" has been crucified with Christ, that the "body of sin" (that is sin looked at in its totality) might be annulled. Thus we are set free and have no longer to serve sin, the old master, being exhorted to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

B. Then it is not by an improvement of the old nature that we are delivered from bondage to sin?

A. The old nature, the flesh, never can be improved "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing." But we have the new nature and the Holy Spirit as power, so that what the law requires in the way of righteousness is fulfilled in us, whilst still we are not under law. See also Galations ii. 20.

B. Would you, then, sum up what we have had before us in these four verses?

A. It is the complete answer to the question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Far from it—we have died to sin, and he that is dead is justified from sin, he has done with it altogether (chap. vi. 7). When Christ died, I died, in God's account and in the reckoning of faith. Then, we are "in Christ" where there is "no condemnation." We also possess a new life and a new nature, and we have the Holy Spirit as power so that we might walk, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Blessed and complete deliverance!

F.G.B.

Peace.

THOU wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee," and then we have the ground of it, "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength (the Rock of Ages). (Isaiah xxvi. 3, 4). It is in God Himself that the soul's rest is to be found, even in the midst of the storms of life, whether in the world or in the church. The Rock of Ages remains unmoved, whatever else may fail.

And if this was so in Old Testament times, we, christians, have even more. We have the throne of grace, to which we are invited to come boldly at all times and unburden our hearts, getting God's peace instead of our cares. "Be careful for nothing," how wide this exhortation is! The trouble may be in our private circumstances, our health, in the state of things in the church of God, or in many other things.

But whatever it be, we have the blessed encouragement of the word, "Be careful for *nothing*, but in *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." This is not carelessness or indifference, it is the result of going to God in prayer, casting the burden over upon Him, laying it down at His throne, and *leaving it there*.

Then *His peace*—that peace in which *He* dwells, whose throne is never shaken, will garrison the heart and mind—just as a city is garrisoned against the enemy—through Christ Jesus. It is well expressed in the words of the hymn:—

"Through scenes of strife and desert life
We tread *in peace* our way."

So it was with our Lord Jesus Himself. Who ever tasted the trials of this world as He did—He who was a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? Yea, He passed through all in perfect calm because He took

everything from a Father's hand, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

And He has left us that rich legacy—peace—"Peace I leave with you; *My peace* I give unto you." It was His own very peace that He left to us. That peace which comes from simply doing the Father's will, whatever it may be. This, so far from being a kind of fatalism or stoicism, is faith in Him and gives true peace to the soul under all circumstances.

It is true that we have to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" when called on to do so; but, in general, the christian's path is one of peace.

Let us note the two exhortations that the apostle Paul gives to the Colossians in chapter iii., "Let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body, and be thankful" (New trans.). And again "Let the word of the Christ dwell in you richly," etc. With these two exhortations before us we may well go forward on our journey, leaving our cares down at the throne of grace, and comforted by the "word of Christ"; yea, Christ Himself dwelling in our hearts by faith—He who is the never-failing spring and source of every blessing.

The Ark and the Staves.

EVERY true christian recognises that the Holy Scriptures, being the word of God, contain nothing that is insignificant, even in the smallest detail therein recorded; and that precious instruction may often be found by the diligent reader, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to underlie even these details.

Such is the case with reference to the remarks contained in 1 Kings viii. 8 (R.V.) and 2 Chron. v. 9 (R.V.), concerning the *staves* of the *ark* of the covenant of the Lord, when it was brought into its place in the Oracle of God's house.

We read that the *staves* were so long that the *ends* were to be seen from the ark before the Oracle, but they were not seen without; and, there they are to this day.

The priest, entering the peaceful seclusion of the holy place, would know the ark rested in its surroundings of "gold" (type of the intrinsic righteousness which is His). Standing before the Oracle, he could see the *ends* of its otherwise hidden staves; and, if he meditated thereon, he might have recalled that it was by *means of the staves* (Ex. xxv. 13-15) the ark was brought through the wilderness (Num. iv. 6) unto its present dwelling, in accordance with the prayer expressed in Psalm cxxxii. 8, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest: Thou, and the ark of Thy strength."

Has not all this some precious instruction for us?

There was *but one place*, and that was, not in the court, but before the Oracle, the place of divine nearness, where the *ends* of the hidden staves could be seen. Surely now, for us, there is *but one place*, that of communion with God, where that which brought Christ, the true Ark, through the sufferings on the cross, unto His present abode in glory, can be rightly understood (Mark xvi. 19).

The *ends of the staves* may also have reminded the priest that wilderness dangers and conflicts were over, or the ark would not be thus at rest. So, also, in like manner, the pierced hands and side of our Saviour and Lord spake to the wondering disciples in the upper room, that the work was done, and peace obtained. To us, also, the type now speaks, as, by faith, we behold Him in the glory, who was once made a little lower than the angels for the *suffering of death*. And to all, throughout eternity, will it testify of "the Lamb as it had been slain."

The *staves* were too long to be *entirely hidden* from view. So, likewise, will the story of the pathway and sufferings of the Redeemer, which, "uncheered by earthly smiles led only to the cross," never be lost sight of through the eternal day. Of the *staves* it is said, "they are there unto this day."

In the breaking of bread we may contemplate, in measure, the Redeemer's pathway here, a "path of shame and woe"; but, with the one loaf and the cup before our eyes, it is not so much the *ends of the staves*, the sufferings of the pathway, that engage the attention, as it is the DEATH to which those sufferings led; for it is a dead Christ, the slain Lamb, that is before us; so that, "we do show forth *His death*," and thus "remember" Him, "until He come."

Cheering it is to know that, before long, the "*until He come*" will be a thing of the past; and we shall see Him, and be with Him, whom not having seen we love!

N. L. N.

The Church of God—I.

A Word for the Times.

LET us consider, in the first instance, What is the foundation on which Christianity rests? The apostle Paul tells us: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." It is Christ's Person and His work of redemption revealed in the gospel. This gospel announced to men then, as it does now, the love of God manifested in the gift of His own Son Jesus Christ, come into the world to save sinners by bearing on the cross the judgment which they deserved, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All those who believe the gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, are saved and become children of God.

But they do not remain isolated christians in the midst of that from which they have been taken. It was prophesied that Jesus should not die for the Jewish nation only, "but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 52).

This gathering together constitutes the church of God or assembly. It was "one flock" having "one shepherd," even Jesus Christ; or, under another figure, one body having one Head, Jesus Christ raised from the dead and glorified—a body of which each believer is a member, united to the Head by the Holy Ghost (Eph. i. 22, 23).

This body was formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," etc. (1 Cor. xii. 13).

Taking the place of Israel as a witness for God on the earth, the church should, by its unity, its heavenly character, its separation from all evil, its love going out to sinners, manifest the characteristics of its Head. Thus it was at the beginning. The Spirit of God acted in power, not yet being grieved. By the gifts which He raised up, He caused the gospel to be spread abroad, He taught and edified the faithful through the scriptures of the Old Testament; and by the revelation of the truths in the New, especially as to the church, its heavenly position, and its hopes. We read in Acts ii. 42 that those who were newly converted "Continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"; all these things can be realized to-day by believers who are subject to the authority of the word of God.

But if the church be viewed as the body of Christ—composed of living members, living of the life of the Head; it is also considered under the figure of a building the construction of which has been entrusted to

human workmen who build therein, and consequently there is failure in the way it is done. It is in this point of view that the apostle Paul speaks of it in 1 Cor. iii. 5-17.

Paul, as a wise master-builder, had laid the only true foundation, which is Christ Jesus; others builded upon it, but "Let every man take heed how he buildeth." One builds with "gold, silver, precious stones," another with "wood, hay and stubble," and the work of each will be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

From a very early date materials other than the true ones were built into the church, and, looked at as a responsible witness for God, it has completely failed. It has shared the same lot as everything else that God has entrusted to men; whether we take the state of innocence, or before the flood, or without law up to Moses, etc., the result has been always the same—the church is no exception.

Before leaving this world the apostle forewarned the Ephesian elders that grievous wolves would enter in among them; that men would preach strange doctrines to draw away disciples after them (Acts xx. 28-31). The whole history of the church is but the long development of what the prophetic words of the apostle of the Gentiles had foretold.

Already in his days the church had become like a great house in which there were both vessels "some to honour and some to dishonour," from which latter we should purify ourselves (2 Tim. ii. 20). What progress the evil has made since then! The present state of Christendom—the state one hears sometimes qualified by the words "evolution," and "progress," is described by the Holy Spirit in the last epistles of the

New Testament—amongst others of them 2nd Timothy, Peter, John and Jude, as well as those to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. ii.-iii.).

The church became outwardly great and extensive at the expense of its quality, when, in the fourth century, the emperor Constantine imposed Christianity on his empire as the state religion. At the present time about one-third of the population of the globe bears the christian name. Nevertheless, it is in the midst of this state of things that the true church of God is found, the body of Christ, composed of all true believers, known or unknown, to whatever community they may belong.

S.P.

(To be continued.)

Faith-Healing.

IT is a fact worthy of note that in these days various false religious systems go in for faith-healing as a kind of adjunct to the system itself—some of them indeed make it a chief point of their cult. Thus the Roman Catholic Church has its Lourdes, at which place many miraculous cures are supposed to take place. Christian Science also has its professional practitioners, to be called in in the event of sickness, who try to persuade the patient that there is no such thing as pain or sickness, and that they have only to follow out their directions in order to get well.

Then again, we have what are called the “four square” gospel preachers, of whom Mrs. Aimee Macpherson and Pastor Jeffreys are the leaders, these claim to go back to apostolic times, and to exercise the same powers as were given then in order to demonstrate the truth of Christianity to the heathen and others who were entirely ignorant of it.

But, with the christian who is subject to the word of God, all these claims have to be tested by it, for it is our only, but all-sufficient guide in these days when the deceits of Satan are abroad, endeavouring to mix up truth and error and to turn away souls from the true faith once delivered to the saints.

There are two tests given us in 1 John iv. of a true or a false spirit. The Spirit of truth will confess Jesus Christ come in flesh; that is, will own the whole truth of His Person—truly God and truly Man; God and Man in one Person. This truth the “spirit of error” will never own. The second test is, “We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us”—hearing the apostles is therefore the second test. It is true that we have not apostles now, but we have their writings; and the “spirit of error” will never acknowledge the apostolic writings given us in the scriptures.

Now, as to miraculous displays of power in healing, etc., it will be noticed in scripture that these displays were given at the beginning of a dispensation, but not at the end of it, when failure marked the children of God.

Take the case of Israel for example — there were remarkable displays of power when they were leaving Egypt, passing through the wilderness and entering the promised land. But in the days when failure and idolatry had come in and they were carried away captive to Babylon, we do not find these displays. *Then* God, in His providential mercy, inclined the heart of the Persian king to be favourable to them and help their return.

God was faithful, as He always is, to those who owned the ruin and bowed under His discipline, as we find in Ezra and Nehemiah. See what marked this remnant in Ezra: they set up the altar of God in the unwallled city, trusting Him for protection, and He was

with them. But there was no shechinah of glory, no sacred fire came down upon the altar as in the days of Solomon (2 Chron. vii. 1), they had no priest with Urim and Thummim to make known their genealogies (Ezra ii. 63). Had they claimed to be possessed of the power manifested in the days of old, they would have simply put themselves out of the position where God could bless them; but they did not pretend to what they had not competence for and God owned their faithfulness.

And what shall we say of Christendom? It has sunk into worldliness and is broken up into a number of sects and parties, in some of which are to be found persons who teach the most unsound doctrines. And yet, so blinded are some of these, that they make claims to supernatural power which would have been unbecoming even when the church was one, and was in its pristine purity and simplicity.

But to the humble christian, whose only guide is the word of God, it is quite evident that God would not accredit a broken and ruined state of the church by any outward mark such as miraculous powers. The pretension to these only shows ignorance as to what is in keeping with the ruin of these closing days of the dispensation.

At the same time, God is faithful to those who take a humble place, and He is always to be counted on no matter how difficult the day may be. All the later epistles, such as 2nd Timothy, 2nd Peter, Jude, John's epistles, etc., show us what the professing church would come to, and there is no hope held out of any corporate recovery. Nor do any of these epistles warrant us in claiming miraculous powers of healing or otherwise.

What a christian who is wise will seek to do is to walk humbly, dependent on the Lord for wisdom and

strength, and to hold fast the truth as contained in the scriptures, which are sufficient to fully equip the man of God for every good work (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

As to miraculous power of healing, etc., being available *now*; it is of course no question of God's *power*, which is the same to-day as at the beginning of the church's history, but of what is in keeping with the end of the dispensation in which we are found. But novelty and excitement generally has much attraction for the multitude and thus unstable souls are beguiled.

The passage in the epistle of James seems to be the chief one referred to by those who make these claims. The sick one is there told to call for the elders of the church, who are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. Remembering that the "church" includes all true believers in the locality, whatever denomination they may belong to, it would not be easy *now* to find these "elders"; they may be scattered in various sects.

There can, of course, be no objection to a sick person calling together a few godly men for prayer, if it were on his mind to do so, especially if he believed that the sickness were a chastening allowed of God for some sin which he felt he ought to confess one to another (see ver. 16).

Moreover, in chapter ii. 2, James uses the word "synagogue," but in chapter v. 14, it is "church." It has been truly said that, "There must be true faith, in order for blessing: now God sets blessing in the assembly of true believers; in His government and discipline, it is found there for faith. . . . In this passage in our epistle, it is not a question of sins which draw upon the individual the judicial action of the assembly; but of the ways of God Himself, in the ordinary circumstances of life, and more especially as regards the chastening of God.

“Now the individual seeks the intervention of God, according to His grace, not viewing what has befallen him as an accident, but owning the hand of the Lord. . . . When it is said, ‘if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him,’ it means, that when such a brother has come to himself, owning the hand of God, if sins have drawn upon him the chastisement of God, and have hindered the healing of the sickness, they shall be forgiven as regards the discipline of God in His government” (J.N.D.). It is not a question of confessing our sins to the elders, but to one another, and praying one for another that we may be healed. This is an expression of brotherly confidence, not of an official position.

There are cases in which it is *not* God’s purpose to give restoration*; “there is a sin unto death” and “there is a sin not unto death”; in the former case, “I do not say that he shall pray for it” (1 John v. 16). This is very evident proof that promiscuous attempts at healing are wrong. Remark that what is here referred to is the death of the *body*; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v., would be a case in point. Their souls were saved, but they were taken away in judgment for their sin. Again, at Corinth, some were weak and sickly (in body) and some had died; this was God’s chastening hand on them on account of the way they were behaving at the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. xi. 30).

Even the apostle Paul, who had healed so many, did so as a proof of the truth of christianity to others.

* As to cases in which it is not God’s purpose to give restoration, it must not be supposed that this is always, or even usually, because of a “sin unto death”; this latter is rather the exception. Sickness may be chastening of those whom the Lord loves, or it may be due to weakness of this body in which we groan (Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 2). It is allowed of God to come upon His people for His own wise purposes, and that they might know the power of Christ resting upon them.

He did not use this power on his own immediate helpers. Thus he says that Epaphroditus "was sick; nigh unto death, but *God* had mercy on him" (Phil. ii.); again, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. iv. 20).

As to Isaiah liii. 4, quoted in Matt. viii. 17, so often referred to by advocates of faith-healing, the context in Matthew clearly proves that this passage is brought in to show how the Lord entered in spirit into the sorrows of the one He was healing, and how His divine sympathy went out to such. The passage has nothing to do with His work of atonement, which was done only on the cross.

What is so wrong and evil is, *making a system* of faith-healing: in which, no doubt, mesmerism and telepathy have a part in acting on the nervous system of the patient. In one way or another, it is a considerable source of money-making to those engaged in it; and when money and the gospel are mixed up together, the mixture is always to the detriment of the latter. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none" when he healed the lame man, who, of course, could give him nothing (Acts iii.); and to Simon the sorcerer he said, "Thy money perish with thee" (Acts viii. 20). Humble dependence on God and simplicity of faith is what is wanted in these days, not a system which makes claims quite inconsistent with the broken state in which the church is found.

F.G.B.

Earth's Drought and Heaven's Springs

Psalm lxiii.

THIS Psalm begins thus: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Let us consider and see on what this desire is founded.

Christ was in the world, but the world was to Him "a dry and thirsty land where no water is." It is not that there was little water, or that the water was bitter, like the waters of Marah; there was no water. There was not one single thing to refresh. It was a dry and thirsty land where no water is. His soul was longing altogether for God. Even His poor disciples were "as brooks that deceive, as streams of brooks that pass away," though He graciously owned all that grace had wrought in them. "Ye are they," He said, "who have continued with me in my temptations."

"O God, Thou art my God (He says), early (or, earnestly) will I seek Thee." I am longing after God—my God—and that, in the distinct, settled consciousness that there is not anything to be looked for from the world.

Absence of sin and communion with the Father, necessarily made this world to His soul a "dry and thirsty land." Morally, there is not anything of God in it. "In me, that is in my flesh" (writes the apostle) "dwelleth no good thing." And he adds further "The carnal mind (that is, the mind of the flesh) is enmity against God." If we look a little at all that the mind of the flesh has reared up in this world—its joys and its pleasures—at that which is fair and lovely in it—where was it all found out? Not that this or that particular thing is evil, but where was it invented and why? Man had departed from God, and he wished to be happy away from God.

It was in Cain's family that these things were invented. Cain "buildded a city and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." He established his name in the earth. Then, if he has a city, he will not have a disagreeable city, a dismal city: he invents harps and organs. Gone out by the judgment of God, vagabond and a stranger, he builds himself a city; and he must embellish his city and make it agreeable to live in, apart from God. This is the world. If the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, the world is incessantly employed in making itself happy without God. If He comes in, everything is spoiled. It may be objected, that this is not the time for God to come in; but how is it that you are finding your joys and your pleasures, when it is not the time for God to come in? That is the world. Let it be as fair and as lovely as you please, it must be away from God.

When Christ came from the bosom of the Father, that He should find such a world to His soul a "dry and thirsty land" can be no matter of surprise. And what was the consequence? He could not go back to the place from which He had come until that was accomplished for which He had come. But He says in the words of the Psalm, "Early (or rather, Earnestly) will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee; my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary."

It is this alone that gives a right apprehension of the world and works the power of separation from it. The soul that knows what it is to be in the sanctuary and see the power and the glory of God, cannot find a home in the world: that soul must look up to God as it has known Him there. True, the saint has not as yet (except in spirit and by faith) been there; but he has seen "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). "He that hath seen Me hath seen the

Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father," the Lord told Philip, when down here in humiliation.

And "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We have seen this glory and have known the perfect, unhindered flow of affections that belong to it. The world is no place for this: it is all too selfish. There will be everything to minister to it in heaven. I can let my heart out there, and the heart I have to let out will be a heart of holy affections, of which God is the centre.

And mark how we get this; the way in which we can speak of the soul being athirst for God.

How can we (sinners as we are) see God, such as He is in the sanctuary? If I am desiring to be there, in the blessed presence of God; and if the world with all its joys and pleasures can give me no refreshment, how is it that I have this entire confidence in the blessedness of His presence? While Christ came and found it a dry and thirsty land, there was in Him the outflow of God's love to sinners.

He did not ask us to go to Him until He had first come to us. He does not say "Come unto Me" until He is in the condition, down here, in which the sinner can approach Him. He puts His hand upon the leper without taking the leprosy. He was above and beyond sin, but He placed Himself in contact with the sinner only to give confidence in love and put away his sin. "Be thou clean," is what only Jehovah could say.

Nor is this all. His coming down here was not His taking us up there. Having completed the atonement, He has gone back; and we now see "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Mark how this gives peace to the sinner. If I see the glory of God in the face of

Christ, Who is this Jesus Christ, in whom I see it? It is the very One who has borne my sins. Had Christ come in glory down here, instead of in humiliation, it would have confounded and destroyed. But when I see the glory above, instead of this glory shining upon me in my sins to confound and destroy me, it is the settled proof that my sins are all gone. In the marvellous mystery of God's love, His glory itself asserts my deliverance.

And moreover, it is not a cold, dry proof; love unsearchable is there; that which angels desire to look into. The Son of God has been made a man down here, and to what a depth has He come—this Son of God—down to the dust of death! But He is now up there; and He has carried me up there. What love is told out in that humbled Man! What love in that glorified Man!

If everything of tenderest affection is brought out by Christ's coming down here; if He says (speaking to the Father about those given Him out of the world), "that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me" (John xvii. 23), this is the love wherewith I am loved. I am up there, not only in the confidence of righteousness, but in the confidence of love.

J.N.D.

Romans viii.—A Dialogue—2.

(Verses 5-16.)

- A. In verses 5 and 6 we find the contrast between “the things of the flesh” and “the things of the Spirit,” and “the mind of the flesh” and “the mind of the Spirit”; also the consequences of these two, namely, “death” as contrasted with “life and peace.”
- B. Yes, but it says of the believer, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”
- A. The believer is one who has changed his position and standing before God, he was once a man in the flesh; now, as born again, he is no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. Then we should also remember that he is linked with a *risen* Christ by the Spirit who dwells in him. There is no intermingling of the two states “in the flesh” and “in the Spirit.”
- B. But have we not, even after we believe, got the old nature still?
- A. We have: though we are not in the flesh, the flesh is in us and we need to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- B. It seems to me that, according to the teaching of this portion of scripture, nothing can improve “the flesh.” Is that not so?
- A. What is said here is very strong, they that are in the flesh “*cannot* please God.” They may do many things that are right in themselves; but as it is said elsewhere, “Without faith it is *impossible* to please Him.” There must be a new life and nature in order to bring forth fruit for God.
- B. When it says “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His,” does that mean having a Christ-like spirit; I think I have heard it so taken?

- A. It means, if we have not the Holy Spirit, who is the portion of every believer; as it is said elsewhere, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God" (1 Cor. vi. 19). No doubt this would lead to a walk in accordance with the Spirit of Christ, which shows itself in meekness, lowliness, obedience, etc.
- B. We have three titles used here, "The Spirit of God," "The Spirit of Christ," and "The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus"; what is the force of these three?
- A. The "Spirit of God" is the general title; then as to the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus—"Jesus" was the humble man down here, "Christ" is the glorious Person, made in resurrection both Lord and Christ. And He who raised up this glorious Person will raise up us also from the dead, because of (margin) His Spirit which dwells in us. So we have present deliverance and assured hope of resurrection. The body, having been the temple of the Holy Ghost, will not be left in death but will be raised by the mighty power of God.
- B. How we should long to understand these truths better and to enter into their fulness more than we do!
- A. Truly, the more we ponder over them the more wonderful they appear. We may add here that it has been said by one well taught in the truth, "We have the 'Spirit of God' in contrast with the flesh. The 'Spirit of Christ' is characteristic of our walk in the world. And the 'Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus,' the pledge of our resurrection. This is the triple character of the Spirit of God as given to the christian." What a deliverance this is and how completely it answers the question at the end of chapter vii., "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"

- B. Are there not practical consequences flowing from the deliverance we have been speaking of?
- A. Yes, very practical indeed! "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." Our debt of sins was all paid at the cross, the Christ who paid it is risen and we are free; but free, not to live as we once did—the end of that road would be death—but "to God."
- B. And what is the spring and power for living to God?
- A. Well, chapter vi. shows us that; not only has Christ died *for* us but we have died *with* Him, and we are to "reckon" ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. And not only this but, having the Spirit, we have *strength* to overcome the flesh. We have life, liberty and power; so that there is no excuse for the christian living after the flesh.
- B. Is being "led" by the Spirit of God different from being "born" of the Spirit?
- A. The Spirit not only *quickens* but *dwells* in and *acts* in the believer. Without being "born of the Spirit" we have no divine life at all; but when we are so born, we find that He is the Spirit of life and liberty, in contrast with the law and bondage (see also Gal. v. 18).
- B. The Spirit is here called the Spirit of adoption, what is meant by "adoption"?
- A. It is placing us in the position of *sons*, in contrast with fear and bondage under the law. The Spirit gives the consciousness and enjoyment of the relationship into which we are brought. It is by the Spirit we cry "Abba, Father."
- B. Are not both terms used here, "sons of God" and "children of God"?

- A. Yes, both are used by Paul; John only speaks of "children": the great point with him is the possession of the new life and nature, being *born* into the family of God. "Children" involves a birth-tie, "sons" is more our *position*, in contrast with our being servants as under the law.
- B. What is the meaning of the word "Abba" which is used as well as Father?
- A. "Abba" is the Hebrew word, so that it makes the sentence more emphatic by the use of both words, Father, Father. We find this expression, Abba, Father, three times in the New Testament. It is employed by the Lord in His prayer to the Father in Mark xiv. 36, when He prays that, if it were possible, the cup might be removed from Him. Then in Gal. iv. 6, because ye are sons, God has sent forth the *Spirit of His Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So it is His desire that, by the Spirit, we might have the conscious knowledge and enjoyment of the relationship. And in our chapter we have the Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God.

This bringing together of the Spirit personally, with the effects of His working, and the christian character and affections of which He is Himself the source in us and which He produces, is very precious indeed. Whilst He is distinguished as a Person, He is intimately linked with the work of God in us, giving us to have the affections proper to, and the knowledge of, the blessed relationship into which we are brought as children of God.

What Wait I For ?

“**A**ND now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee” (Ps. xxxix. 7). It is quite fitting that we should ask ourselves this question as we draw near to the close of another year. Time slips away so quickly that sometimes we hardly realise its rapid flight.

The hope which should animate our souls, which should encourage and sustain us on the road to glory, is well known to us; it is the coming of the Lord Himself. It shines like a beacon light amidst the moral darkness of the night of Christ’s absence and rejection by the world.

There are times when we are all put to the test—we find the world drifting more and more into infidelity on the one side and superstition on the other. Then, in the church of God; what weakness, what unrest, what preoccupation with mere *questions*, how little cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart, how little counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!

But, as the apostle Paul said to the church at Corinth, in spite of the deplorable condition in which that church was, “God is faithful.” Yes, **He can always be counted** on whatever the condition of things within or around may be. Have we not often forgotten our place, our hopes, our destiny? The church should have gone through this world showing forth Christ, as a light and witness for Him, separated from the spirit and aims of the world in which men are vainly seeking to satisfy the cravings of the heart away from Him.

The one whose heart and affections are true and loyal to Christ has hopes and expectations, true to faith, entirely outside the course of this world. He is *in* the world, he does his daily work and business in it, but he is not *of* it. He looks on with joyful expectation to the moment when he shall hear the Lord’s assembling shout, and when all will be caught up together in the

clouds, to meet Him in the air, and so to be for ever with Him.

What can give the power needed to persevere and to walk thus? It is the Holy Spirit, ungrieved within us, occupying us with Him who is the bright and Morning Star, the unchanging lover of His own. Oh, how far are we responding to all His grace? How bright our meetings would be if Christ were thus before our souls, if His coming were in deed and in truth, livingly our hope! One ray of His glory will wither up all that the heart may be set upon here apart from Him.

A thousand things may come in as competitors with the place Christ should have in the heart. That blessed hope *may* become a mere doctrine held in the intellect without power or vitality in the soul—but, if so, *what a loss!* Just at the close of another period of time, drawing daily nearer and nearer to the moment of His coming, may we not well earnestly desire and pray that this hope may be revived afresh and that a ready response may go up from all His people to His closing word to His church, “Surely I come quickly,” and answer, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”?

The Church of God—2.

A Word for the Times.

BUT in spite of everything, believers can, if they take the word of God as their sole guide, enjoy the blessings which belong to the church. At an epoch in the history of the people of Israel which has a strong analogy to the present state of Christendom, the Lord said to His people, “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. vi. 16).

At all times there were men of faith who obeyed the word of God and conformed their conduct to its teach-

ing. All through the history of the church of God we see the faithful standing fast for the truth; many underwent persecution, torture, and death under pagan and even nominally christian Rome, rather than give up the truth.

It was a return to the word of God which led to the great work of the Reformation; and, in our days, when the faith of the reformers is being given up by many, this word remains still the resource of all those who have an ear to hear the exhortation of the apostle John, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning . . . " (1 John ii. 24).

We can all count upon the Lord's promise as we gather together, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). That is to say, where the Lord's name is sufficient for the gathering together of two or three, they can enjoy His presence and the blessings which flow from it; they can count on the help of the Holy Spirit who uses the word of God to edify, to instruct, to comfort and to proclaim the gospel of salvation to the world.

If the manifestation of spiritual power which was so brilliant at the beginning, has ceased on account of the state of ruin in which Christendom is found, what is necessary for the church remains; besides this, it was not in these miraculous gifts that the edification of the faithful consisted.

To-day, as then, believers have to "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). They possess this doctrine of the apostles in its entirety. They can "cleave unto the Lord" according to the exhortation of Barnabas to the christians at Antioch (Acts xi. 23). The apostle Paul taught the Corinthians what the meaning of the Lord's supper was and how it should be partaken of, recalling the institution of it by

the Lord Himself, the same night in which He was betrayed, and adding, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

He taught them also that it is the Lord's table which expresses the unity of the body of Christ, saying, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

What was true for the christians at Corinth then, is true for those of to-day. This table can therefore still be set up, still maintained, so as to proclaim by it the unity of the church, the body of Christ, and to remember the Lord's death whilst awaiting His return, each believer breaking the bread as a member of the body of Christ and not as a member of a sect.

Christians who conform to these teachings can gather together to the Lord's name, and, far from thinking that they alone constitute the church of God—forming as they do but a small portion of it—they are, nevertheless, an expression of it—an expression, alas! very weak, very poor when compared with what the church ought to be—and far from being filled with pride, they humbly take their place amidst the confusion which reigns in Christendom.

It is much to be regretted that a number of believers, instead of gathering together according to the teaching of scripture as to the church, should be grouped together on the ground of various doctrines, some of them erroneous, with which a seriously-minded christian, desirous of obeying the word of God, could have nothing in common. And yet the truths set forth in the scriptures remain, and will remain as the resource for faith to fall back upon, until the Lord shall come to take His church to be with Himself above.

S.P.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

OUR Lord Jesus, ere He left this world, told His disciples that they were to await, at Jerusalem, the promise of the Father, and that they would be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence and receive power to be His witnesses (Acts i. 5). After Pentecost Peter said, "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear (Acts ii. 33). Acts xi. 15, 16, confirms that this outpouring of the Spirit was the promised baptism.

Beyond prophetically, in the gospels (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33), the above, and 1 Cor. xii. 13, are the only places where the word "baptism" is applied to the Holy Ghost coming upon any.

The quotation from the prophecy of Joel given by Peter in Acts ii. 16-21, shows us that at Pentecost there was a fulfilment of that prophecy; but, as is sometimes the case in scripture, the *complete* fulfilment awaits another day (the "last days"), when the Holy Ghost will be poured out upon all flesh (see also Zech. xii. 10).

Peter ends his quotation with the words, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"; what follows in the prophecy, "For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call," shows that the *complete* fulfilment awaits the day when the remnant of Israel shall be delivered and brought into blessing.

Later on Samaria received the gospel (Acts viii.) and the Holy Ghost was given to the company of believers, after prayer by the apostles Peter and John, and the laying on of their hands. These Samaritans were not Gentiles but a mixed race, with whom the Jews had no

dealings, as we see from John iv. But now they were brought into the church of God—another step in the transition from Judaism to Christianity which is found in the Acts.

In the case of Cornelius (Acts x. xi.) we find the bringing in of the Gentiles, which, to the mind of a strict Jew, was altogether out of place; so much so that Peter needed a special vision, repeated three times, in order to remove his prejudices.

Finally, in Acts xix. we see Paul conferring the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, on twelve men who knew only of John's baptism. No doubt this is brought before us to show that Paul was in no way inferior to the other apostles; otherwise it might have been said that *they* had conferred the Holy Ghost but *he* had not.

The only remaining verse where "baptism" is applied to the Holy Spirit is 1 Cor xii. 13, "By one Spirit have we all been baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free," but there can be no repetition of this. When persons heard and believed the gospel, they were added to the church as living stones built into the spiritual building and received the Holy Spirit; but there is no fresh baptism promised. Viewed as the "one body," the church has always been complete since its formation by the baptism at Pentecost; but viewed as a spiritual building, when the last living stone has been brought in, the building will be complete, and then the Lord will come.

We might also refer to Eph. i. 13, 14, where we find the *sealing* and the *earnest* of the Spirit, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

We seal a document when it is complete, and there is to be no change after that, so God puts His seal on His people as belonging to Him. The earnest is a part paid down beforehand. Christ has purchased the

possession, the inheritance belongs to Him, but the time has not yet come for Him to take up possession of it; when He does so He will associate His church with Himself as co-heirs in His glorious kingdom. Meantime we have the earnest—the assured pledge of the fulfilment of the promise.

Besides this, the Holy Ghost is said to dwell in the individual believer (1 Cor. vi. 15) and in the church collectively (Eph. ii. 22); blessed privilege truly, but a very serious consideration also lest we “grieve” that holy guest!

And, lastly, we come to the “filling of the Spirit”—a phrase so often used by some believers. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. v. 18). We are not to give way to the excitement of the flesh, but to be under quite another power and control. To be drunk with wine is, for the christian, a sin to be repented of and confessed; it would be indeed to grieve that Holy Spirit who dwells within us. What power, then, is to move and govern the believer? It is the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit “of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. i. 7).

But the Holy Spirit does not occupy us with ourselves; He directs the heart and thoughts to an object outside ourselves—to Christ. Alas! we have met some who were constantly speaking of the “filling” and the “second blessing,” but whose walk and ways were not at all in keeping with what they professed. Thus it is quite easy to deceive oneself, and perhaps to deceive others also.

What then is meant by being “filled with the Spirit”? As we have said, the Spirit dwells in every true believer; but it is another thing to be “filled” with Him, that He may be the source of all our thoughts and all our actions, and take complete control of the heart,

which is His vessel, occupying us with Christ who is our life and our object.

If a man is filled with the Spirit, he will not glory in his experiences and personal holiness, but there will be an absence of "self," and his life and walk will be in keeping with the fact that he now belongs to the One who has purchased him with His precious blood that he might be no longer his own but wholly His.

It is, perhaps, well to remark that "one baptism" mentioned in Eph. iv. 5, is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but water baptism; which is necessarily connected with "one Lord" and "one faith." It is the owning of the lordship of Christ (whether it be real in the heart or only nominal) which is found in Christendom, and of the "faith" or body of truth contained in Christianity. Baptism here is the outward sign of these things.

F.G.B.

"I Will be to them a Sanctuary"

THESE words occur in Ezekiel xi. 16 (R.V.). What a comfort they must have been to the faithful of that day! Carried away from the land of their fathers, and removed afar off among the nations, "Yet," said the Lord, "I will be to them a sanctuary . . . in the countries where they are come" (R.V.).

The prophet Ezekiel had been carried in spirit to Jerusalem, and given there to behold terrible enormities and scenes of idolatry. He saw an idol, called the image of Jealousy, at the gate of the altar. Then he witnessed seventy elders of Israel adoring unclean beasts in a darkened room. There were also women shedding idolatrous tears for the heathen god Tammuz (Adonis or Osiris); also twenty-five fire-worshippers,

with backs to the temple between the porch and the altar, worshipping the sun. In consequence of these iniquities judgment was announced, and the glory of the God of Israel went up from the threshold of the house, to leave it, and stand apart upon Mount Olivet (Ezek. xi. 23).

The terrible sentence then went forth, "slay utterly . . . but come not near any upon whom is the mark, and begin at my sanctuary" (Ezek. ix. 6, comp. 1 Pet. iv. 17); but not until after those who sighed and cried on account of the defilements had been marked upon their foreheads.

"Begin at my sanctuary"!—hitherto the most wonderful place on earth, God's dwelling-place among His people (Exod. xv. ; Ps. lxxiii. 17-22 ; Ps. lxxiii. 2) ; for it was a primary thought with God to have man ever in His immediate presence (Rev. xxi. 3 and 22).

And now, to those faithful ones in a foreign land, the Lord promised to be to them Himself a sanctuary. They should still thus enjoy His presence and protection ; and would continue to fulfil their responsibilities, for they would remember they represented Him of whom it was written, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins" (Isaiah xi. 5). Of old, the divine standard of weights and measures was preserved in the tabernacle, and any question raised could be referred there for divine decision (Prov. xi. 1 ; xvi. 11 ; Ps. xi. 17 ; xix. 9). And this they, morally, continued to do.

Witness Daniel, for instance, weighing according to "the balances of the sanctuary," as to the king's food (Dan. i. 8), the king's gifts (Dan. v. 17-27), the king's idolatrous decree (Dan. vi. 10) ; witness, also, the three faithful youths refusing Babylon's gods (Dan. iii. 18) ; witness, too, Mordecai, in Persia, declining to bow the knee to "Amalek" in the person of Haman. In this

way these men of God, in the lands of their captivity, still remembered "the balances of the sanctuary."

Turning to our own times, when "the Gates of Hades" are seeking to prevail against everything that is of God, the Lord has assured His people that, even where two or three are gathered together in His name *He is in the midst*. Surely He is thus His people's "sanctuary." Are there no balances connected with this sanctuary? Indeed there are; for instance, Matt. xviii. 15-17, 22, with reference to gaining our "brother"; Matt. xviii. 18, a wonderful "Verily," which finds apt illustration in ver. 27, etc. Also 1 Cor. v. 13; Gal. v. 7, 9, etc. Surely all these with Rev. ii. and iii., indicate the need for a rightful use of "the balances of the sanctuary." They are, so to speak, the divine standards as to lawlessness, bad doctrine, and brotherly kindness. Then there are the evil men of 2 Tim. iii., "from such turn away," which must not be confounded with Matt. xviii. 15-18, the man who still remains a "brother," though ungained.

Saviour, before Thy face we fall,
Our Lord, our life, our hope, our all;
For we have nowhere else to flee,
No sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

N.L.N.

Trust in God and Dependence.

IS not all the history of Israel from the Passover till their arrival at Sinai, when the people declared three times over, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do"—is not this history also our own, though we are not under the law? In passing through this world we learn what we ourselves are, as also we learn what God is for us.

Is it not remarkable to notice that this unhappy people, who are a figure of ourselves from beginning to end, were discontented with *their* lot? *They* desired a change, an improvement in their material condition, and they did not take account of what the Lord was to them. They did not consider for a moment that He who orders all our circumstances is Master of all things.

And yet, in spite of all the sad failures of this people, God always showed Himself at the height of His ways of grace towards them. His heart is always open and nothing can close it when it is a question of leading His own people in grace through this world.

They murmured at Marah, then God brought them to Elim, but they were continually discontented. Is not this a lesson for us? Circumstances are often apparently against us; but have we not absolute confidence in God that He will order everything to bring about the final blessing of His own?

They complained of thirst; God led them to the twelve springs of living water and the seventy palm trees; which testify to His care of us here below. They wanted bread, and on this account they murmured; it did not occur to them to ask of God in order to obtain what they wanted; they turned their eyes towards Egypt. Have we not in this an image of our natural hearts and of what we so often prove ourselves to be in our walk here below? We lack confidence in God; our eyes turn towards the world as if we could find

there what is necessary to meet our needs. This, however, does not dry up the streams of divine grace. We learn, above all things, that the heart of God is always open to us. He has provided for us His Lamb to avert His judgment; He has set before us the death of Christ to lead us to Himself. He is the God of all grace, and never do either the state of His people or their murmurs cause Him to turn aside from what He is.

He gave His people all they needed for the wilderness journey and, above all things, He gave them rest. It was there, in the wilderness, that the rest of God was provided. We know now that there is a rest of God into which we are called to enter and in which we can have our part. This is not that of Canaan: it is rest in the presence of God. He gives it to us as a special and peculiar blessing.

For us, christians, this divine rest is rest of heart. It is that peace which the Lord Jesus enjoyed and which He gives to us. What are we doing with these blessings?

The Israelites ate the Passover and appropriated eternal life, in figure, by feeding on the lamb, type of Him who was to come; and then they were led into the wilderness, where they found, day after day, the bread which came down from heaven—the Lord Jesus Himself,—bread by which they could be fed and strengthened for the journey.

Do we rise early in the morning as they did to gather our manna and to feed on the perfections of Christ, who is presented to us as our perfect example? Is it our first occupation for the day, or do we indeed forget this duty, putting it off until to-morrow? If this is the case we are not fed; we become puny creatures, sickly and undeveloped.

When an Israelite forgot to fetch the manna, it meant starvation for him and his family. This is often what

happens to us. Our spiritual life does not develop in its normal way; we have our ups and downs. This comes from not being occupied with Christ. If we do not think of Him, if, instead of following Him, we follow the world, and if, consequently, our soul is dried up, it is because we have not risen early to gather our manna.

Before the Passover the people knew nothing either of rest or of this new food. When they possessed these things they murmured again because there was no water. They tempted the Lord! Under the law the judgment of God must have come down upon them; now God reproves them, but in grace.

It is just the same for us, christians. Moses must take his rod, draw near to the rock, smite it; and from the rock living waters flowed out. God said to His servant, "Thou shalt stand upon a rock" (Exod. xxxiii. 21). It was there that Moses went to meet God. The rock is Christ. The Lord Himself said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink"; that is to say, let him come unto a Christ who has died upon the cross under divine judgment.

When Moses found God on the rock, the refreshing springs gushed out. This is what is given to us in virtue of the work accomplished on the cross, by which we have received the Holy Spirit. We need rest, and for us, that rest is Christ; we need food, that food is Christ: Christ by the Holy Spirit.

But there is unceasing warfare. In order to be able to fight, it was necessary that the people should go to the smitten rock, that they should receive the waters—the Spirit of God. Against whom must they fight? Against the flesh and against Satan, who incites the flesh to do evil. It is a continual combat; for the flesh lusts against the Spirit.

This fight never ceases, but we can be always victorious, not only because we have the Spirit of God,

Christ by the Spirit, but because we have a Mediator who pleads for us. He is ever there, as Moses was on the mountain (Exod. xvii.)—a feeble image of what Christ is for us—Christ whose arms remain always uplifted before God, in order that we may be assured of victory.

Why, instead of being always victorious, are we overcome by the flesh, since we have all the resources needed in order to walk without stumbling? Simply because we get away from the army of Israel to follow our own way, instead of resting in the hands of our Moses (Christ), who abides on high for us. The moment we fail in this vigilance, which occupies our souls with the Person of Christ, we succumb. All our blessings are summed up in one word, in one name—Christ. If we have Him before us and in our hearts, we can be sure of walking without stumbling. H.R.

Romans viii.—A Dialogue—3.

(Verses 17-30.)

- A. In verse 17 we have three “withs” which we may express thus—Co-heirs, co-sufferers, co-glorified. Israel was an heir (Rom. iv. 13, 14), but they forfeited their position through sin; Christ is the true heir and inheritor of all things, and *we* come in on the ground of grace: for when He takes the kingdom He will associate His people with Himself in it. Wondrous grace truly!
- B. What is meant by suffering with Him: it is not atoning suffering, is it?
- A. No, but *now* is the time when the christian is called to *suffer* with Christ. This is not exactly the same

as suffering *for* Christ, but, in the midst of this evil world and groaning creation, we who have been made partakers of the divine nature suffer because of the state of things around us. The Lord suffered in this sense as we see when He wept at the grave of Lazarus and indeed all through His pathway. How could it be otherwise with One who was perfectly holy in His nature, as He looked upon what sin had brought upon God's fair creation?

- B. Both here and in verse 30 it speaks of glory almost as though it were a present thing ; but we have not yet entered into it.
- A. That is true, but the purpose of God takes in the whole range of the blessings which belong to the saints as identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. This present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed *to* us. Elsewhere it is said that our affliction is "light" and "momentary," but the glory is a "weight" and "eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 17).
- B. And yet we feel these afflictions sometimes very much, do we not?
- A. The christian who did not feel them would be very much lacking in heart and sympathy, but it is one thing to feel them and another to be unduly pressed down by them. Faith, whilst feeling the state of things consequent on the Fall, would enable us, through grace, to rise above it, in measure at any rate.
- B. When it says that the earnest expectation of the creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God, what does this mean?
- A. The creature is now subject to vanity—all is passing away, and its deliverance will not be until the sons

of God are manifested, that is, until the time when Christ will come. Then we shall be raised or changed, and manifested with Him in glory.

B. Who is meant by "him who hath subjected the same in hope"?

A. It was man's sin—Adam's—that brought in the ruin, it was not of the creature's own will; and not only man suffered by it, but even the animal creation around us. The words "in hope" belong properly to the next clause of the sentence, "in hope that the creature itself shall be set free from the bondage of corruption. . . ." But the creature and the whole creation will share in the deliverance from this bondage when the sons of God are manifested in glory.

B. Is there any difference between the liberty of glory and the liberty of grace?

A. The liberty of glory looks on to the time when the glory shall shine forth at the appearing of the Lord when blessing will be brought to this earth. The liberty of grace is that by which we are set free from bondage under the law and brought into blessing now as to our souls. But, being for the *soul*, it is plain that the creature should not share in *that*.

B. Is it the case that a groan is constantly going up from all over this earth?

A. Yes, everything is under the blight of sin and the consequences of the Fall. And even we ourselves, believers, groan within ourselves because we are linked with the old creation by our bodies. Whilst we wait for the redemption of the body, we suffer even in these bodies whilst here. But the Spirit helps our weaknesses and Himself groans with us:

so that ours is an intelligent groan, which could not be said of the creature.

- B. Why is it said that we know not what to pray for as we ought?
- A. In the midst of this mingled scene, where everything is out of order, we are often at a loss to know what to pray for as we ought; but there is a blessed contrast in verse 28; we *do* know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Here the heart rests, knowing that God can turn everything to good for those that love Him. How wonderful that the Spirit Himself should associate Himself with us in our groans! And here we may profitably call attention to what has been said by another:—

“What a sweet and strengthening thought, that when God searches the heart, even if we are burdened with a sense of the misery in the midst of which the heart is working, He finds there, not the flesh, but the affection of the Spirit; and that the Spirit Himself is occupied in us, in grace, with all our infirmities. What an attentive ear must God lend to such groans!” (J.N.D.)

- B. What a wonderful chain of blessings, stretching from eternity to eternity, is given us in verse 29—foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified!
- A. It is truly so indeed! It takes in the counsels and purposes of God as though they were even now accomplished — though we know we are not yet glorified. When predestination is brought in in scripture, it is with a view to some blessing, as here “to be conformed to the image of His Son.
- B. Does this answer to what we have in 1 John iii., “when He (Christ) shall appear we shall be like

Him” and Phil. iii. 21, “the transforming of our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory”?

- A. It is the same word “conformity” to Christ’s body of glory (Phil. iii.) as “conformity” to the image of His Son (Rom. viii.) Wondrous grace that should have counselled such a destiny for us! And the chain of blessing remains unbroken until we are landed in the glory as foreknown, called and justified ones—such are God’s purposes of grace for the glory of Christ and our blessing!

Another Interesting Incident.

THIS occurred in Halifax, Nova Scotia, early in September, 1928. I was staying there a day longer than I expected in order to be present with a few other christians at a meeting in the evening for the reading and study of the word of God.

Not having anything particularly to do in the afternoon I went to what is known as Point Pleasant Park. As I approached what seemed to be a most attractive spot on the shore, looking down the beautiful harbour and out beyond to the ocean, I noticed five ladies who had preceded me sitting down and talking together. The brilliancy of the sun, the glorious colour of the water, the green shores and trees caused me to break out without previous introduction and exclaim, “There, ladies, is a little bit of the work of the Lord’s hands.” (I couldn’t help myself because I had been thinking much of the tremendous solemnity and responsibility contained in the words found in Romans i. 20.)

I then went on to call attention to the work of the Creator’s heart, REDEMPTION, both works being set forth in Hebrews i. From that I went on talking

about the folly of infidelity, citing the case of a man washed overboard in a storm, from a vessel on its way to Halifax some fifty years ago. He was an infidel before he was washed overboard, and he was washed overboard because he refused to go below when told to do so. Rough as the sea was they put out a boat for him, picked him up, and when he came to, his infidelity was gone. The other case was that of Lord Everleigh, in England, who while shaving had a paralytic stroke and fell to the floor, exclaiming, as soon as he came to, "Thank God, I'm alive."

Thus we talked for some time till the ladies had to go, and then I said, "Ladies, I give you Romans i. 20," and they went off repeating "Romans i. 20."

Imagine my surprise and pleasure when I got to the house where the Bible-reading was to be held, to be greeted immediately by one of the ladies I had met in the afternoon in the Park. She was equally surprised to see me, and went on to tell me that she, with two friends staying with her, had been praying that morning that something might be said that day for the good of the other two, who were neighbours, but indifferent to the claims of God. May God in His abundant grace bless what was said to the two neighbours.

F.W.

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

LEAVE thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me."

This beautiful and touching promise comes in very remarkably in the judgment pronounced upon Edom (Jer. xlix. 11). The three nations bordering upon Palestine, often referred to in scripture, were Moab, Ammon and Edom. They were also connected with Israel by ties of relationship.

Though these nations were very hostile to God's people, it would seem that they will be brought into blessing in the last days—at least a sufficient number to represent them—except Edom. The latter will be made utterly desolate, on account of their bitter hatred to Israel (Ezek. xxxv. 14). And yet it is concerning the widows and orphans in Edom that the beautiful promise we have referred to above is given.

So it is that, in the case of the weak and desolate ones, the widows and orphans, God's grace triumphs over judgment.

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It is striking to see that the reticence of scripture (in speaking of Melchizedek, Heb. vii.) is only less instructive than its disclosures. All has to be weighed; but who is sufficient for these things? Our sufficiency is of God, who now works in us that believe, by the same Spirit who inspired both Testaments, and works to glorify (not the christian nor the church, blessed as both are, but) Christ, whose grace and glory are the substance of our best blessings.

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"The gospel of God." In Romans i. we read of "the gospel of God," the subject of which is "His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Remark, it is *God's* gospel, that glad tidings of which He is Himself the source and Author. The end of chapter iv. speaks of believing on *God*, who raised up Jesus our Lord from amongst the dead. In chapter iii., the point is faith in Jesus; at the end of chapter iv. it is believing on *Him* who raised up Jesus. Abraham believed in God's power to fulfil His word; we believe that God has raised up Jesus after He stood in our place as sinners.